

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 20 November 2024

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON AGEING AND DISABILITY

Membership

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council informing the Legislative Assembly that it has this day agreed to the following resolution:

- (1) That this House agrees to the resolution in the Legislative Assembly's message of 19 November 2024 relating to the appointment of a joint statutory Committee on Ageing and Disability.
- (2) That the representatives of the Legislative Council on the Committee on Ageing and Disability be Ms Abigail Boyd, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones and the Hon. Emily Suvaal.

Bills

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (NSW MOTORWAYS) BILL 2024

First Reading

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

The SPEAKER: I order that the second reading of the bill be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AND DOMAIN TRUST AMENDMENT BILL 2024

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

Returned

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

Notices

PRESENTATION

[During the giving of notices of motions]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): A number of Opposition members have gone over time when giving their notice of motion. I remind all members to remain within the time limit.

Bills

STRATA SCHEMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anoulack Chanthivong, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (10:20): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill implements 37 recommendations from the 2021 statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, as well as other reforms raised by stakeholders since the review. The Government remains committed to reforms that will protect owners' corporations, improve the accountability of strata management services, ensure owners' corporations maintain their buildings and make strata living easier for residents. That is what the bill does. The Government is committed to meeting our State's housing needs, and has already introduced significant reforms to planning, building quality and rental affordability. To meet our housing targets, we must make strata living a key part of the discussion, which includes ensuring that people want to live in strata because it is safe, affordable and reliable.

There are already more than 86,000 strata schemes in New South Wales, with 50 per cent of New South Wales likely to be living in strata in the next 15 years. However, the benefits of strata can only be realised when the regulatory framework overseeing the sector is effective, supports good governance and fosters public trust in strata professionals. This is why the Government is pursuing an extensive reform agenda for the strata sector that started with reforms implemented by the Strata Legislation Amendment Act 2023 that passed the Parliament in November last year. This was followed by the Strata Managing Agents Legislation Amendment Act that passed in September this year to enhance disclosure obligations for strata professionals to ensure owners can make informed decisions about their homes.

I now turn to the specific reforms contained in the bill. The bill introduces important reforms that aim to improve accountability and confidence in strata managing agents and building managers. These reforms build on the Government's reforms to disclosure requirements that will commence in February 2025 by ensuring that owners have confidence in their strata manager and building manager. These key reforms in the bill will ensure that an agent cannot avoid liability when they act outside their agency by prohibiting management agreements, including terms that require the owners' corporation or association to pay for the agent's professional indemnity liabilities or terms that limit an agent's liability to a specified monetary amount, except if the agent's agreement is covered by a professional standards scheme within the meaning of the Professional Standards Act 1994; increase the frequency managers need to provide key reports; and allow schemes to terminate a strata managing agent agreement, building management contract or facilities manager contract where the agent or manager is carrying on their business in a way that is contrary to law.

While the reforms will enhance protections for owners from misconduct by strata managers, they will also strengthen accountability of building managers. The bill imposes a statutory duty on building managers to act in the best interests of the owners' corporation or the association in carrying out their duties, unless doing so would be unlawful. To ensure that the new obligations are fit for purpose, the bill includes a regulation-making power allowing for further obligations to be imposed.

I now turn to a significant reform in the bill that many stakeholders have been calling for to protect owners. Owners' corporations or associations are run by volunteers who may be vulnerable to unfair contract terms. Owners are not legal experts and may not understand the implications of certain contract terms until they are in operation. The bill prohibits unfair terms in standard form contracts for the supply of goods or services as well as the sale or grant of an interest in land to an owners' corporation or association. The bill does this by amending the Fair Trading Act 1987 so that prohibited unfair contract terms and associated remedies under the Australian Consumer Law apply to such contracts. Prohibiting unfair contract terms will help strengthen consumer protections and encourage suppliers of goods or services to ensure their contracts have compliant terms. This change will also complement reforms to prohibit certain terms from agency agreements. This is a significant realignment of contractual rights of the owners' corporations and associations as buyers of goods and services. I am proud that New South Wales will set a new high watermark of protection for owners' corporations.

The bill also improves the governance of strata and association committees. Currently, committee members must carry out their functions for the benefit of the owners' corporation or association and with due care and diligence. While many members take this duty seriously, there are concerns that many are falling short of expectations. The bill introduces additional duties and obligations on members, including complying with strata and community land scheme laws and acting with honesty and fairness. This will be a big change for some committees, so the Government will work with the sector to roll out mandatory training to support committee members in meeting their duties under the Act.

Another important duty of strata committees can be considering minor renovation applications from lot owners. The review highlighted some committees repeatedly refusing minor renovations without providing reasons. This can create a sense of uncertainty for the owner and reduce trust within the owners' corporation. The bill addresses these concerns by requiring written reasons for any refusal of minor renovation requests and providing deemed approval of an application for minor works if the committee fails to provide written reasons for refusal within three months of receiving the application.

Buying into a strata or community land scheme is a significant investment, and it is imperative that the safety and amenity of buildings are maintained. It is a legislative duty that falls on the owners' corporation and association of a scheme. Feedback received during the review, and verified during inspections by NSW Fair Trading and the Building Commission, found that too many schemes are failing to properly maintain and repair common property. This can lead to rising insurance costs and special levies being imposed. These costs could have been avoided or reduced if the scheme had been proactive about the problem. Failing to repair and maintain common or association property can also impact lot owners who face damage and loss of amenity of their lot. Impacted owners must then attempt mediation and go to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, or NCAT, to help resolve disputes over repairs. Feedback to the review found that owners' corporations have ignored or delayed compliance with a tribunal order, resulting in further damage.

The bill will address noncompliance with the owners' corporation and association's obligation to look after its building by stopping an owners' corporation or association from deferring works if safety or access or use of a lot or common property is affected; mandating that the 10-year capital works fund plan meet minimum requirements that set up the schemes to properly maintain the building and avoid bill shock for owners; extending the time that lot owners can make a claim for damages as a result of a scheme's failure to maintain and repair the common property from two to six years from when they first became aware of the loss; and enabling NSW Fair Trading to enter into enforceable undertakings with, or issue compliance notices to, owners' corporations or associations to take action to remedy a breach of duty to maintain and repair property. NSW Fair Trading will also have associated powers to help investigate compliance with the duty to maintain and repair, including powers to require information and records, require answers, enter premises and issue search warrants.

I turn to measures in the bill that ensure the original owner, usually the developer, hands over the scheme to the new owners' corporation or association with the information they need to properly fund maintenance and repairs into the future. Currently, the original owner, such as a developer, must prepare an initial maintenance schedule ahead of the first annual general meeting. The schedule includes information about the obligations and costs in maintaining scheme property such as maintenance of lifts. The schedule informs the first 10-year capital works fund plan and is also critical in estimating the initial levies for the new owners. Owners have told us that the quality of this schedule varies from scheme to scheme, leaving many schemes with initial levies too low to meet ongoing costs. This tactic prevents incoming owners from having a realistic indicator of what it will cost them to live in the building.

The bill makes several changes to address this problem, including mandating that the schedule meet the minimum requirements set out in the regulation; requiring the original owner to engage an independent surveyor to review the schedule and certify that it has been prepared in accordance with the prescribed form; requiring the original owner to engage an independent surveyor or other prescribed expert to certify that the estimates of initial levies meet the scheme's expected expenditure for the year, based on the expenses provided by the original owner; and mandating that the original owner must give evidence of the certification and that the certification was carried out by an independent surveyor or other prescribed expert at least 14 days before the first annual general meeting.

All these new requirements will be backed with a maximum court-imposed penalty of \$55,000 on the original owner to ensure they prepare quality schedules and realistic estimates of the initial levies for current and prospective owners. The bill will help guide how this new information is used by requiring that schemes consider the initial maintenance schedule when preparing its first 10-year capital works fund plan. A further important reform in the bill relates to utility supply contracts and embedded network arrangements in strata and community land schemes. Currently, section 132A of the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 puts the power of choice into the hands of owners by providing an automatic end date for contracts entered into by an owners' corporation for the supply of electricity, gas or other utilities to the whole scheme. It prevents owners' corporations from being permanently locked into uncompetitive supply agreements, but it does not apply to agreements entered into for the supply of electricity through an embedded network.

Embedded networks are private arrangements made by or on behalf of an owners' corporation for the supply of utility services, including electricity, to all of the owners in a scheme. To support these arrangements, infrastructure is often installed during construction of the building by the developer, with services arranged by the owners' corporation to be onsold to owners. These lock-in contracts can lead to higher costs for owners, as well as prevent owners from entering more competitive contracts for services. The bill addresses these concerns by extending section 132A so it applies to the supply of electricity through an embedded network. The bill also applies this change to community land scheme laws.

As an added protection for consumers, the bill also imposes new requirements for disclosure of embedded networks at the point of sale of a property. For established strata properties, the bill requires vendors to warrant that, unless disclosed in the contract, the relevant strata or community land scheme does not include an exclusive supply network. Buyers will be able to test that warranty by consulting the strata information certificate issued

under section 184 of the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, which is obtained before settlement. If the certificate reveals the existence of an exclusive supply network that the vendor did not disclose, the purchasers may rescind the contract for breach of the vendor warranty.

For strata properties sold off the plan, developers must disclose in the off-the-plan disclosure statement attached to the contract whether the development includes or is likely to include an exclusive supply network and details of the type of service. The developer must notify buyers before settlement if that disclosure changes during the development. Materially impacted buyers can rescind the contract or, in some cases, claim compensation if they can show they would not have agreed to buy the property had they known the true position. The bill will encourage the uptake of environmental sustainability infrastructure, such as solar panels, electric vehicle charging and efficient water fixtures, in schemes. This Government is committed to working with home owners to support the appropriate adoption of sustainability infrastructure by helping them plan and budget for these upgrades in a measured way.

The bill seeks to enable this process by prohibiting by-laws that block sustainability infrastructure due to external appearance, unless the property is heritage listed or within a heritage conservation area; and by requiring schemes to consider environmental sustainability within their scheme at each annual general meeting. This includes consideration of the annual energy and water consumption and expenditure in common areas. The bill also requires a scheme to consider sustainability when estimating how much money it will need for the capital works fund each year. These reforms will help reduce the environmental impacts of running schemes and contribute to the Government's vision to be a leader in energy transition.

Members on both sides of the House recognise the cost-of-living pressures communities are facing around New South Wales. This Government has already taken comprehensive action to support people through this cost-of-living crisis, and the bill builds on this work by assisting owners in financial hardship. The non-payment of levies can be a significant issue for strata and community land schemes. If levies are not paid on time, there can be detrimental impacts, particularly if the levies are for urgent or necessary maintenance or repair work. However, some owners who struggle to pay their levies are unnecessarily facing legal or bankruptcy proceedings. This could be because they do not understand the consequences of non-payment or the options available to pay their levies, or because debt recovery is being pursued prematurely.

In response, the bill proposes a suite of reforms that aim to assist owners experiencing financial hardship without restricting the ability of owners' corporations or associations to make decisions that suit the circumstances of their scheme. The reforms include requiring levy notices to be accompanied by information approved by NSW Fair Trading that will set out a person's options, including payment plans, free financial counselling services and dispute resolution support from NSW Fair Trading; and allowing strata and association committees to enter into a payment plan with an owner in financial hardship, rather than requiring it to be approved by an owners' corporation or association at a general meeting. While a payment plan can be reasonably refused, the impacted party will be able to challenge the decision in the tribunal where the refusal was not a reasonable refusal.

Further reforms include enhancing the take-up of payment plans by prescribing processes and requirements of plan conditions and reasonable refusals in the regulations, by preventing an owners' corporation or association from taking debt recovery action if a payment plan is being complied with, and by increasing the notice of debt recovery action from 21 days to 30 days to give owners more time to seek support and pay off their overdue levies before debt recovery action is taken. These changes will make payment plans more accessible to owners in arrears and reduce the instances of owners' corporations or associations initiating debt recovery when it is not necessary.

Finally, the bill will make it easier to install accessibility infrastructure to assist owners in better accessing the lot where they live and the common areas of their scheme. The bill responds directly to stakeholder concerns by lowering the voting threshold needed for changes to common or association property to facilitate a person with a disability having access to the common or association property, or the lot in the scheme in which they reside. The person only needs a majority vote to make changes to common or association property for accessibility purposes. Importantly, the scheme will be required to consider the impacts of refusing to install the infrastructure on people with disability, and whether a given building can support the type of infrastructure required to provide access.

The bill also makes some other minor amendments to enhance the operation of New South Wales strata and community land scheme laws, including clarifying the role of the chairperson of an owners' corporation or association by prescribing obligations on how they carry out their duties; updating inspection and record-keeping obligations, including allowing for digital inspections; and increasing the fee for inspections to reflect the cost to agents in facilitating this service. The bill is an important next step in the Government's reforms to improve the lives of residents, modernise and bolster strata and community land scheme laws, and restore trust and confidence in community living. These reforms target areas of need, including uplifting developer and strata management professional accountability, enhancing the way owners' corporations look after their buildings, making it easier

for people to get the help they need to live in their homes, and ensuring that strata living is sustainable and affordable.

In addition to those who contributed to the statutory review, I thank key strata sector stakeholders who have supported the development of the bill, including the Strata Community Association NSW, the Owners Corporation Network, the Real Estate Institute of New South Wales, the Law Society of New South Wales, the Australian College of Strata Lawyers, the Property Council of Australia, Animal Care Australia, the Financial Rights Legal Centre, Financial Counselling Australia, Marrickville Legal Centre, Redfern Legal Centre, the Economic Abuse Reference Group of New South Wales, the Urban Development Institute of Australia NSW, the Australian Resident Accommodation Managers Association, and Australian Apartment Advocacy.

The bill shows that we are committed to implementing recommendations of the review, as well as addressing other issues facing strata and community land schemes in New South Wales. The Government is determined to deliver reforms that improve the lives of strata and community land residents in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

VICTIMS RIGHTS AND SUPPORT AMENDMENT (VICTIMS SUPPORT COUNSELLING) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 13 November 2024.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:39): I will be relatively brief. The Opposition will be supporting the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. We agree that victims of road trauma, victims of acts of violence and victims of acts of modern slavery should have access to the Victims Support Scheme in the manner proposed by the bill. We support the extension of those services to those categories of people. As you would know, Mr Temporary Speaker, in recent times there have been some horrendous road incidents that have caused victims of road trauma, including the Greta bus crash near your own electorate of Cessnock. Another example is that of the horrible circumstances that confronted the Abdallah family and Bridget Sakr, whose daughter was also impacted in that incident.

These road traumas can have a significant impact upon the immediate family of those concerned, so it is appropriate that the Victims Support Scheme be available to them. Indeed, that was recognised by the Coalition when we were in government and referred these matters to the Law Reform Commission, whose report is still pending. Once that referral has resulted in a report, there may be opportunities for further reform in this area. We support the bill. It is the least the Parliament and the Government of New South Wales can do for people who, through no fault of their own, have suffered the terrible impacts of having family members die as a consequence of road trauma. We support the bill.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (10:42): I support the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. This bill is extremely important, particularly this week, given 17 November was the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims. The Road Trauma Support Group had a moving ceremony, as it is wont to do, at Grace's Place out at Doonside. Unfortunately, I could not attend due to other parliamentary commitments. The group has played such a major role in getting the Government to this point with this legislation. In fact, it was an election commitment that we would work to ensure that people who are victims of road trauma through family members having passed are eligible for counselling, financial assistance and recognition.

The Victims Rights and Support Act sets out the rights of victims of crime and establishes the support scheme, the whole purpose of which is to provide that practical support. As I said, the Government commitment was to extend that counselling service to families of people killed in road crimes. Currently, 22 hours of free counselling are available to family members of homicide victims. However, road fatalities were excluded because they were not categorised as violent crimes. But the member for Cessnock, the member for Upper Hunter and I know, from having been close to such a terrible incident, that road crimes have a huge impact on those communities. The family members go through everlasting grief and tragedy. It is important that we help them to recover from the psychological and emotional impacts of these crimes.

I acknowledge the Road Trauma Support Group for the advocacy work it does every day. It has come up with some excellent resources and talked about the ongoing human impact of road trauma and death. Martha Jabour, OAM, who helped to establish the Road Trauma Support Group after her excellent work in establishing the Homicide Victims Support Group, was recently announced as a 2025 New South Wales Local Hero for her work in this space. It is a terrible thing to lose someone in a road crash. From the many people I speak

to around the State who have lost someone, I know that it has an ongoing, long-term impact on their lives. To extend counselling to them will really help. Many of those family members go on to develop post-traumatic stress disorder. It will make such a difference to their recovery to get early assistance, talk about it, have the ability to do something and feel supported, not only for spouses but also for parents, guardians, step-parents, children, stepchildren and even brothers and sisters. The Government wants to ensure that we can roll out this support.

No-one can ever bring back the victims of road crimes. Their family members will have to live with an awful tragedy for the rest of their lives. But extending these counselling services to family victims of road crime will ensure that they have the support they need to get on with their lives. We can never say that they will recover, because that is not something that happens for these people. It is an ongoing part of their lives. They live with it forever. After the Greta bus crash, people came to me who had experienced the loss of family members from the Kempsey-Clybucca crash 35 years before. I think that many of us do not understand that trauma is brought back up again every time those people see the news of another crash. That happens every time the families of the Hunter Valley victims see media reporting of it, which is why I am deliberately not naming them in my speech. They have been through enough.

I will not talk too long on this bill. I just want to give my support to it as the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. One-third of the population lives in the regions but has more than two-thirds of the fatalities. This bill will have a significant impact for regional communities. We in the bush know that regional people are much more likely to closely know someone involved in one of these incidents when they occur, and so those impacts seem to spread much further through the community. I commend the bill to the House and thank the Attorney General and his team for putting it together. I particularly thank all of the advocates for victims of road crashes. Their work has not been forgotten and has not been in vain.

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (10:48): I thank the Government and the Attorney General for this amending bill, the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. It is not an easy thing to speak on the subject of the victims of road crime and incidents involving acts of violence and crime that often end in the worst way—with the loss of loved ones. Unfortunately, such incidents have affected my community far too much. To that end, I recognise the families of the young people known as the Buxton five. The families would prefer not to be known as that, but, unfortunately, that is how they are recognised. Those families lost five children in a crash caused by reckless driving. The loss of those young people is still felt in Wollondilly today. In the past couple of weeks, there have been some unfortunate incidents, and those parents have again been triggered and have come into the office to talk about issues they have. I thank those parents for not giving up and staying strong. I cannot imagine their loss or what it is like.

This bill is about caring for those who, through no fault of their own, are forced to deal with the loss of an immediate family loved one. I have sat with the families of the five, listened to their pain, supported their community awareness campaigns and taken them to the Government. The Attorney General has listened. I thank him for his comments in his second reading speech that recognised that time frames sometimes do not work. He said he will take that into consideration if any request falls slightly out of the time frames. I thank the Attorney General also for recognising my advocacy.

This amendment bill does much to provide for families who may be caught by similar tragic events in the future. It will provide counselling for immediate family members of victims of accidents similar to the tragic accident that happened just over two years ago in Buxton. The Government's stance on backdating the amendment and being open to having this provision open for others is right. I am glad to see bipartisanship and that this bill will pass unanimously through both Houses. Victims of road crimes, including the surviving family members of the five, need to know that this Parliament is there for them when they are most in need.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (10:50): I contribute to debate on the very important Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. One of the most difficult things that I have done since I was elected as a member of this place was meeting with the family of two siblings killed in a road crime. I met with their mother, Angelina Kauffman, her surviving daughter and friends. Their devastation, pain, grief and anger at the actions of the person who caused the deaths of two children was understandable. It was difficult for me to feel anything but helpless to assist in that particular moment. The emotional and psychological impact on families is profound, but support can be difficult to access and expensive, especially for those who live in areas that already struggle with the demand for mental health services. This bill takes that into consideration and extends support for victims to the families of people killed in road crimes.

The bill amends the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013 to extend support and counselling to the families of victims killed in road crimes. They will be able to access 22 hours of approved counselling services under the Victim Support Scheme [VSS], with further hours available if approved by the Commissioner of Victims Rights. A person will be eligible for counselling through the VSS if their family member died in a motor vehicle crash and another person was charged with an offence in relation to the crash. A charge will not be required if the alleged

offender has died or cannot be located but there is sufficient evidence to establish that an offence has apparently occurred.

Eligible family members will be able to access counselling under the VSS if the road crime occurs on or after a date two years prior to the commencement of the new law. The commissioner will have the discretion to approve counselling for crashes that occurred before that date in exceptional circumstances. This bill also updates the Charter of Victims Rights to make clear that victims of criminal offences involving motor vehicles are victims of crime for the purposes of the charter. That is incredibly important. It is difficult for many within our community to access mental health support, particularly those in regional or rural areas that already struggle with demand. Applying this scheme to people who have experienced unimaginable pain and grief at the hands of another will ensure that the support is available to them. Helping them access that support that will make a huge difference.

As the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads mentioned, it does not take days, weeks or months to recover from these kinds of losses. Often, families who have experienced such tragedy never recover from their losses. However, access to the counselling and support that will be made available through this bill will hopefully help them process their losses and move on with their lives in a different way. Last week, when this bill was introduced in this place, I had the privilege of meeting some of the members of the Road Trauma Support Group, who have been instrumental in campaigning for this change. They are one of the key stakeholder groups who have been consulted on this change to the Act. The work that they do and the way they have channelled the significant grief and tragedy in their lives into a scheme that will hopefully help many others in the community is inspirational. It is also quite timely.

As other members know, it is not easy to help community members who have experienced loss to access support when it does not exist. As a result of this change, there is potential for quite specialist mental health services, support and counselling to develop. My hope is that those who have experienced the loss of a family member killed in a road crime will be able to access tailored support and services that develop as a result of this support opening up. I acknowledge the work of the Attorney General and his team, who have brought this change to this place. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (10:56): I support the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024, which was introduced by the Attorney General. The bill seeks to amend the Victims Rights and Supports Act 2013 to extend access to approved counselling under the Victim Support Scheme to family members of victims killed in road crimes. The bill is a measured and compassionate step towards ensuring the needs of victims' families are met in their darkest times. As someone who served as a police officer and police prosecutor for more than 20 years, I have witnessed firsthand the devastating ripple effects of road trauma. I have stood at crash sites and seen the devastation. I have knocked on doors to deliver tragic news. I have seen the anguish of families when they learn their loved ones are not coming home. I have sat in courtrooms with grieving relatives who are waiting for justice, knowing full well that no legal outcome could ever heal the wounds inflicted upon their hearts.

Road crimes leave behind more than just physical wreckage; they shatter lives. The families of those killed in such circumstances are often left grappling with not only their grief but also unanswered questions, guilt and the weight of a loss that feels both sudden and senseless. The trauma lingers, often unspoken, and leaves lasting scars on the emotional and psychological wellbeing of those left behind. Thankfully, there support services are available for families who are grieving loss from road trauma. In fact, on Monday I had the privilege of visiting Grace's Place at Doonside, a facility dedicated to supporting children and families affected by homicide. There I met with Martha Jabour, OAM, and her dedicated and compassionate staff, who are now running a road trauma support group for families who have lost loved ones in road trauma. The work being done at Grace's Place is extraordinary and underscores the need for accessible and specialist support services for families. What struck me most during my visit was the way the programs provide a safe space for individuals to share their grief and begin the slow, painful process of healing while being cared for by professional counsellors and support staff who genuinely care.

The bill recognises that such trauma requires a specialised response. By extending access to counselling under the Victims Support Scheme, we are sending a clear message that the justice system sees and values the needs of those families and that we will stand with them as they navigate their path forward. The statistics on road trauma are sobering. Each year hundreds of lives are lost on our roads due to preventable and often criminal acts such as drink driving, speeding and reckless behaviour. Behind each number is a grieving family left to pick up the pieces. About two-thirds of the annual road toll are people from the country, and country people only account for one-third of the population of New South Wales. I am sure that deaths attributable to road crime would be proportionately higher for country people, so this announcement is hugely important.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I extend a very warm welcome to our guests in the gallery. Sitting in the front row is Mr Mark Parton, MLA, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory. Welcome, Mark, and I look forward to meeting with you later. We cannot forget Tom Duncan, who has also joined us. Tom, welcome to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. It is great to have you here. I will see you again later.

I acknowledge Amanda Lawson, guest of the member for Vaucluse. Welcome. I also acknowledge and welcome a guest of the member for Davidson, Amit Horovitz. I welcome teachers and students from Ambarvale High School in Campbelltown, guests of the member for Campbelltown. I acknowledge and welcome guests of the member for Northern Tablelands, Warren Isaac and Emma Ratajczyk. Finally, I welcome guests of the member for Lake Macquarie, who are volunteers from the Hearts and Hands organisation.

Mrs Leslie Williams: And the nurses.

The SPEAKER: I have not forgotten the nurses. Welcome to members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association.

Question Time

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:05): My question is directed to the Premier. When will the Premier finally show some leadership and meet with the rail union and end the chaos?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:05): Could I please get a lesson on leadership from the Leader of the Opposition? Honestly, is anyone calling for his intervention in this dispute? Of course I have spoken to the secretary of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] and the Secretary of Unions NSW. The Minister for Transport is meeting those unions this afternoon. I will as well, of course. We will try to do everything we can to solve this dispute on behalf of the people of New South Wales. It is important to acknowledge that we are not confident of an imminent breakthrough. We have to be transparent with the people of New South Wales. If there were prospects of an imminent breakthrough, we would announce that.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister for Transport has been clear with the people of New South Wales that, as a result of the work bans put in place by the RTBU—particularly its insistence on 24-hour train services—for Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, it was not possible for us to run maintenance and repairs on the rest of the network. In an effort to show good faith, the Government tried that last weekend. It was not possible to do it this weekend. We have asked the unions to lift those bans. Thus far they have not done that, which obviously is regrettable.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order. The member for Keira will come to order. I call the member for Keira to order for the first time.

Mr Mark Speakman: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was what is the Premier doing? Why is he washing his hands of this chaos?

The SPEAKER: The nature of the question is such that the Premier will have quite a bit of latitude in his answer. The Premier has been directly relevant. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I do not think I need latitude. I answered the question directly.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Leader of the Opposition's definition of "leadership" in this context—and I think this is particularly important for nurses, midwives, rail employees, teachers and Corrective Services officers—is to reintroduce the wages cap.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have a rolled gold way to fix this. Members opposite are saying, "We know what to do. We are going to introduce the wages cap." That is what they think about this dispute. They think they can reform the public service, ensuring that we have a fit-for-purpose public service in New South Wales.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I want to make it unambiguous: We reject that.

The SPEAKER: Members got that out of their systems. We will now return to business as usual.

PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (11:08): My question is addressed to the Premier. What is the New South Wales Government's response to calls to reintroduce the wages cap?

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

Mr Mark Speakman: I refer to Standing Order 128. Questions should not contain hypothetical matter. This question is entirely hypothetical.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:09): It is hypothetical! That should make you all happy; it is hypothetical whether they are going to reintroduce a wages cap. "It's hypothetical. We might; we might not." It reminds me that during the COVID emergency they said, "The wages cap is not 2½ per cent; now it is zero." The Opposition has been gleeful over the past 24 hours, and its solution to industrial problems in the State is to put its thumb on 400,000 public servants in New South Wales and say to each and every one of them that it is not worth investing in their future.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It has reached ridiculous epidemic proportions when we have members opposite who served in the Cabinet of the previous Government and defended a wages cap, and then walked on Macquarie Street and pretended to protest with people who wanted more than 2½ per cent. Under the previous Government and its wages agreement, this is what happened to public services in New South Wales: We had 8,000 cancelled or merged classes in New South Wales public schools every single day.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Under the previous Government, the Police Force had 2,000 vacancies. We had double the number of resignations in the previous term of Parliament than the one prior to that because we had so many dedicated, experienced public servants leaving the NSW Police Force. Moving to Health, the situation is even worse. We had resignations beating retirements. We had a massive, chronic underfunding of the people who are required to deliver public services in New South Wales—the human capital. Yes, there is a major industrial dispute happening with railways in New South Wales. We are not going to sugar-coat that. If we had a breakthrough in negotiations, we would announce it right now in the Parliament. But I urge the people of New South Wales to not return to a wages cap.

The SPEAKER: The member for Willoughby will come to order or he will be removed from the Chamber. I call the member for Upper Hunter to order for the first time.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: As bad as the public services were in New South Wales over 10 years, imagine what it would be with another 10 years of a wages cap in place. Imagine how bad it would be with another 10 years of a wages cap.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Would it be 10,000 merged or cancelled classes a day or would it be 15,000 cancelled classes a day?

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Would we have 14,000 people waiting on the elective surgery waiting list or would we have 20,000 people waiting on the elective surgery waiting list? Would we have a situation where paramedics cannot get to emergencies inside four or five minutes or would it be 10 minutes or 11 minutes?

The SPEAKER: The member for Davidson will come to order or he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr Edmond Atalla: I seek further information.

The SPEAKER: An additional two minutes is granted. The Premier will be heard in silence.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I urge members of the House and members of the public to not listen to the crocodile tears of members opposite, particularly when they have the gall to turn up to a protest for a wage claim that they have spent the past 12 years trying to stop.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The reason for that, and it is very important, is that their solution to chronic underfunding in public services in New South Wales is to say, "Let's make it 2½ per cent, unless we have a pandemic, in which case it will be zero."

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: If they want to go to the next election saying to a young 25-year-old—

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have full employment in New South Wales. The object of recruitment for public services in New South Wales is to say to a 25-year-old who lives in Blacktown, for example, who could go to university, who could start their own trade or who could join the NSW Police Force, "We want you to join the Police Force. This is a great vocation. Your life will be transformed. Yes, you won't be rich, but you will be able to meet your mortgage and raise a family in Sydney."

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That is not going to happen if the Liberals and The Nationals are returned to government in New South Wales.

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:14): My question is directed to the Premier. In 2022 the Premier tweeted:

Over a million people stranded. A train network in chaos. Total incompetence.

The NSW Transport Minister has got to go.

Will the Premier apply his own standard and sack the transport Minister?

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order or they can leave the Chamber. The Premier will be heard in silence. Government members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:15): I have had the benefit this morning of working out Opposition members' question time strategy because they put it on Twitter before they walked in here. I refer members to a February 2022 article by the ABC, which stated that then Premier Dominic Perrottet said:

... he should have been consulted before bureaucrats shut down NSW's passenger rail network ...

And this is the best bit:

After new Transport Minister David Elliot admitted he went to bed and let subordinates make the call on Sunday night—to close down the rail network. It gets better. He was going to have an inquiry as to whether they broke the law.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I direct the member for Oatley to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A for 10 minutes.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Oatley left the Chamber at 11:16.]

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister for Transport has been incredibly direct in relation to this. Those bans that have been put in place by the union would mean that unless 24-hour transport was running—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order: It is a genuine direct relevance question. Will the Premier apply his own standard—

The SPEAKER: Thank you.

Mr Dugald Saunders: It is direct relevance.

The SPEAKER: I understand the point of order.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Will he sack the transport Minister?

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Dubbo to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the Premier has concluded his answer. The member may ask a question but he does not get to interpret it. The Premier is answering the question. I decide whether it is out of order.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Dubbo left the Chamber at 11:17.]

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister for Transport is getting on with the job in difficult circumstances, and we have been up-front about it. The Opposition has explicitly criticised that. Part of the reason the Government has been so clear about the potential disruptions is to avoid the situation that happened in 2022. I will remind members what happened in 2022. Sydney went to sleep the night before, expecting transport services would be available the following morning, and they were not. It resulted in the then Premier asking whether bureaucrats broke the law in those circumstances.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour rises on a point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: The question was quite direct: Will the Premier apply his own standard and sack the transport Minister?

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Coffs Harbour to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the Premier has concluded his answer.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Coffs Harbour left the Chamber at 11:18.]

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I want the transport Minister and the Government focused on a solution here. I do believe, by any objective measure, that the circumstances are different between now and 2022, and the Government's decision to clearly articulate the impacts on the public is motivated by the mistakes that Opposition members made when they were in government.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Point of order: I point out that when the Speaker directed the member for Coffs Harbour to leave the Chamber, the member did not actually leave the Chamber. He stood on the other side of the gold bars.

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the point of order. The member for Charlestown is correct. I also consider that to be outside the Chamber. Members cannot participate in proceedings if they are on the other side of the bar of the House. Members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber, which is disorderly.

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:19): My question is addressed to the Minister for Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the rail network this week? More directly, will my daughter be able to get to Pearl Jam on Saturday night?

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill—Minister for Transport) (11:19): I thank the member for The Entrance. I appreciate that he and his community, like all of our communities, want up-to-date information about how our public transport services are faring and how they can get where they need to go. That is why I need to be very clear with the House and with the public that rail services will not run from Friday for almost three days unless the union lifts its industrial action.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: Unless the union changes course, the services that the people from The Entrance and all across our communities need will not be running. We need to understand that industrial action has already degraded the State's rail services and compromised the maintenance of the system. Industrial action that demands 24-hour services and progressively reduced crew time on the network, and that will impact signalling work, will have a massive impact on the delivery of train services. The fact is, a train cannot be driven on one wheel. It does not work like that. The whole system needs to work together. These industrial actions mean that it is becoming harder and harder to deliver the train services that people need.

It is important to understand that the rail union's industrial actions are not about industrial matters. It is taking passengers hostage by using populist talking points—for example, 50¢ fares, no more metros and a 24-hour running of the rail system. The union knows that the system is not built to operate that way. Those items are not in its 245-plus log of claims that have been negotiated and discussed over six months.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: Those matters are critical to the employees of Sydney Trains. They are really important matters that we have been discussing for six months, but they are separate to the actions that are now affecting the ability of passengers to get around. We are talking 4,000 services on a weekday and 3,000 services on a weekend—one million passengers a day. That is what the Sydney train network does. I have to say, the timetable is not a plaything. It is not a toy train set that can be tinkered with and changed overnight and then expected to work in the morning. *[Extension of time]*

That is why the Government has been very clear not only to keep the public up to date but also to ask the union to lift these bans so that we can keep our city running. Without lifting these bans, our system will be constrained. It will be strangled, like a boa constrictor sucking the life out of it. The Government wants to deliver services and the only way to do that is to make sure that these bans are lifted. It is also really important to understand about maintenance on our railway.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. Opposition members will cease having private conversations in the Chamber.

Ms JO HAYLEN: If trains are running 24/7, hundreds of workers cannot be on the railway doing critical maintenance. They cannot be on the tracks or repairing the wires when there are trains going through. That is dangerous. This action absolutely jeopardises the maintenance of our system and takes us backwards. Let us remember what this Government was left by those opposite.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume her seat. The member for Canterbury will come to order. I will hear the point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: The member for The Entrance asked specifically whether his daughter could get to the Pearl Jam concert. We have not heard anything about that.

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

Ms JO HAYLEN: The answer to that question is that unless the union lifts its bans, there will be no rail services on the weekend. It is really important to make sure that the system can be maintained. We do not want to go backwards. We were left a massive maintenance backlog by those opposite, so we spent \$97 million of taxpayer money and took 12 months to remove thousands and thousands of defects and temporary speed restrictions across the network that meant it could not deliver for passengers.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Badgerys Creek to order for the first time. I call the member for Myall Lakes to order for the first time.

Ms JO HAYLEN: I will do two things. Firstly, I will keep the public informed; and, secondly, I will continue to negotiate with the unions to get an outcome and keep our city moving.

BALMAIN WEST FERRY

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (11:25): My question is directed to the Premier. Since the opening of the Rozelle interchange late last year, there has been an urgent need for improved public transport services in my electorate. When will the Balmain West ferry be reinstated?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:25): I thank the member for Balmain for her question. I can inform the House that there is a new stop at Pirrama wharf in Pyrmont. I understand that Transport for NSW is looking at the Elliott Street ferry wharf as well. The Government acknowledges when the Rozelle interchange was commissioned and completed, that resulted in many people on the peninsula looking for access to the city via public transport. Everything old is new again. Ferry transport has proved to be an effective and efficient way for members of that community to get into the city.

The member for Balmain has been very vigilant in lobbying the Government for more money for public services, in particular public transport, for her constituents. Ultimately, if we can get more people to use those modes to get into the city rather than use their cars, that is a good thing, particularly for communities closer to the city. Members would appreciate that the challenges with public transport ferries are particularly difficult. Members would also remember the former Minister for Transport, Andrew Constance.

Mr Jihad Dib: Is he still on the comeback tour?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: He's on a comeback tour.

Mr Jihad Dib: Is he on a John Farnham comeback tour?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Yes, the John Farnham comeback tour. This is his third go. He commissioned Ferry McFerryface. Do members remember that? That was great. He also got some ferries from Indonesia that, if you stood on the top deck, would decapitate passengers as they went underneath the bridge. These became euphemistically known as the "duck ferries", because that is what passengers had to do if they were standing on the top deck. The Government has been working diligently with the member for Balmain. I completely understand that due to the changes from that infrastructure, we need to boost public transport in the inner west, and we are working on that with the member for Balmain. Hopefully I can report back to the House with more information on that very soon.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:27): My question is addressed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to address the undersupply of early childhood education places across the State?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:28): I thank the member for Leppington for that very important question. I know he has been very passionate about this, particularly expanding places in south-west Sydney, where there has been an undersupply and access has been a challenge for the local residents the member represents. The jury is decided on this case. The evidence is clear that access to early childhood education impacts on the trajectory of young lives. In fact, what happens in the first five years of a person's life impacts their next 80 or 90 years. It is not just what the education system does in transitioning students to other levels of schooling and education, including access to it and the ability to learn the critical blocks of numeracy and literacy, and all the other wonderful things we learn at school, like the ability to regulate and interact with one another.

There is also a direct link between access to early childhood education and things like incarceration rates. It impacts on our society in so many ways. As I have spoken about in this Chamber many times, and members know because we experience it in our own communities, the cruel irony is that those who need to access it the most are the least able to access it. It has been out of reach for too long. That might be because of distance or cost. Today we can announce a new \$20 million program to create extra places for children in areas with that undersupply. It will target 31 areas, including Western Sydney—the member for Leppington will be happy to know—the North Coast, the South Coast and throughout regional and rural New South Wales.

A big and complex challenge confronts us, but it is another step in the right direction. It is part of our commitment to deliver better preschools and early childhood education for the children of New South Wales so they can get the best possible start in life. It is important to also acknowledge that this is in addition to the 100 public preschools that we are building in New South Wales. The member will know that we are building them at Leppington and Greenway Park in his electorate and right across New South Wales. We can announce to the House and to the people of New South Wales that all tenders for the standalone preschools will be out by the end of this year. I am proud to say that 81 of those tenders are already out to market. *[Extension of time]*

Mr Paul Scully: There are good ones in the Illawarra.

Ms PRUE CAR: Those include—the planning Minister reminds me—Wollongong, Shellharbour and the South Coast areas. In fact, while we are on the topic of planning, I suggest that people would have more luck finding a Liberal Party housing policy than a Liberal-built public preschool. I remind members that for more than a decade that those opposite were in government, they did not deliver one public preschool. Since the election, we on the Government side of the House have delivered on our commitment to build public preschools, with the opening of the public preschool at Gulyangarri in the Liverpool electorate.

Mrs Leslie Williams: One in two years—awesome! What about the community preschools we built?

Ms PRUE CAR: Members opposite are saying, "That is just one." I put our record over 21 months as opposed to theirs over 12 years. In fact, the member for Gosford will probably be interested in this. On the Central Coast, where we are building several public preschools—

Mr Adam Crouch: You're building two. "Several" isn't two.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Terrigal to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Terrigal left the Chamber at 11:33.]

Ms PRUE CAR: The member for Terrigal is so upset and angry about it that he is calling on us to fast-track them. How does he go from "delivering none" to saying "deliver them quicker"? We are not going to take a lecture on early childhood education from members opposite. We are getting on with the business of actually

delivering them, as well as providing funding to community preschools and others so that we can give our kids in this State the very best start in life.

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:33): My question is directed to the Premier. What will be the cost to the New South Wales economy of the weekly industrial chaos in the transport network?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:33): I cannot report on that cost to the House right now, but we are collecting that economic data. It is important that we log it and note it. When we have that information, we will be more than happy to share it with the House and the people of New South Wales. It will be significant. Part of the Government's negotiations with the union overnight was a change to the circumstances of the bans that were in place so that the action did not impact Thursday, which is important and good. Looking at travel patterns, many workers in the public sector and the private sector tend not to travel to the CBD for work on Fridays. Whilst we have returned to the pre-COVID level of patronage on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, that is not the case for Fridays. I understand many people have made alternative travel arrangements.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Premier has been asked a question and his answer will be heard in silence.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am not going to sugar-coat it. It will have an economic impact on the city, and it will have an economic impact on the State.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:35): My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to build better regional communities by investing in regional transport and road?

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:35): I thank the member for the question; those opposite were not going to ask it. The member is very much an advocate for his regional communities. Yesterday the Federal Albanese Government and the State Minns Labor Government announced a \$32 million investment in betterment for the Regional Transport Resilience Fund for the Central West. It is great news to build back better for those communities of Cabonne, Lachlan, Forbes and Parkes. The funding is integral to that piece on resilience recovery and also building back better, which is vital. For every dollar we spend in betterment, we get \$10 in recovery.

The betterment funding is going to cover new bridges on The Bogan Way and Middle Trundle Road; pavement upgrades on the Henry Lawson Way; sealing, culverts and pavement on Lake Cargelligo Road; as well as benefiting Manildra, Ophir, Cargo and so many other communities across the Central West. This is because we stand for more resilient roads and transport infrastructure in the bush. Why? That is because we are the party of the bush. I thank the many councils for their advocacy. I particularly give a shout-out to the mayors who have been so integral in this process—Kevin Beatty at Cabonne; Neil Westcott at Parkes; John Medcalf, OAM, at Lachlan; and Phyllis Miller, OAM, at Forbes. I also thank the strong local members for their advocacy on this: the member for Orange; the member for Barwon; and Andrew Gee, the Independent member for Calare—long may he reign. I also give a shout-out to the member for Cootamundra, the former Minister. Some in her community have been impacted.

The damage bill on our road network in the past five years was in excess of \$5 billion, which was made worse by the lack of investment before that period by those opposite. We came through that five-year period starting with a \$2 billion backlog on maintenance. The previous budgets of \$190 million or so have never allocated enough money for recovery. At that rate of \$190 million a year, I can tell the House that, after the flood period of those five years, it would have taken us nearly three decades to catch up on recovery. That is why we invested \$3.3 billion on disaster recovery over the next four years—that is \$825 million a year, on average—to really get down that recovery rate. *[Extension of time]*

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: How are we going to spend \$825 million a year? We are going to do something that has never been done before: We have increased the approval rate for recovery projects by 700 per cent, as councils ask us for those approvals. How have we done that? We have rolled out the tripartite agreements piloted under this Government with Minister Dib, Minister Scully and the Premier. We have boosted specialist resources, like engineers. We have stood up a new, permanent business unit. Compare this with what

the aspirational member for Calare in the other place did. He was a "gunna". He was gunna get quicker on recovery and betterment. He was gunna build the Orange bullet train.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. I do have a very special gift from the person the Minister loves most of all in the world. It is a signed cap from the bloke who could do the job better than she could.

The SPEAKER: One more word from the member for Dubbo and he will be removed from the Chamber.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Does she want the cap?

The SPEAKER: I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Dubbo from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

[The member for Dubbo left the Chamber at 11:40 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Someone needs to tell members opposite that in the bush we want a gun; we do not want a gunna. We want gun roads Ministers, not gunnas. That is what the Hon. Sam Faraway is. The Federal member for Calare, Andrew Gee, meets with me. I met with him yesterday. He advocates for his community. He does not say he is "gunna" do things and not deliver. I urge the people of the Central West to look at the candidates in the election and vote for someone who advocates for their community, not someone who breaks promises all the time.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Myall Lakes to order for the second time. I remind the member for Coffs Harbour that he is on two calls to order. The member for Oatley was directed to leave the Chamber and has returned. I note that the member for Dubbo was also directed to leave the Chamber and will be back tomorrow. The member for Terrigal was directed to leave the Chamber until the end of question time. I am getting tired of members' behaviour. They are too energetic. I thought they would have got it out of their systems last night. Members will calm down.

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (11:41): My question is directed to the Premier. When large pay rises are not available to the 90 per cent of workers not employed by his Government, does the Premier condemn the rail union's 32 per cent wage claim?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:41): I have made it clear that I am not going to condemn anyone for a wage claim. We are in dispute with the Nurses and Midwives' Association. I am never going to condemn them for their wage claim. I am not going to condemn any union for it. But I am going to say that we cannot pay that. We cannot pay eight, eight and eight. We do not have the funds for it. We cannot squeeze the New South Wales taxpayer any further with tax increases. We are not in a position to do that. What we are saying is that we want to negotiate an agreement with unions progressively. The Government has done just that over the past 18 months.

During that time, the Government has inked a historic deal with the Teachers Federation that will see first-year teachers competitive for the first time in comparison with independent and Catholic schools when they graduate in New South Wales. I think the member for Goulburn said they are all just resigning. That is not true. Do not listen to the propaganda from the Liberal Party. In fact, vacancies have been reduced by 25 per cent. That is with the Teachers Federation.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Government has inked an agreement with prison officers in New South Wales, with 45,000 Crown employees in New South Wales, with child protection workers in New South Wales, with 45,000 Health Services Union members and with paramedics and park rangers in New South Wales.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I answered the question at the beginning.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. I still need to hear the point of order. It might be a different one.

Ms Eleni Petinos: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The question was in relation to rail workers, not other workers in this State.

The SPEAKER: The member for Miranda will resume her seat. The Premier achieved direct relevance in his first utterance.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am not going to condemn workers in this State, but I am going to be clear about what we can afford. It is unambiguous that we have a dispute with some public sector unions. The central dispute is that, whilst we are in agreement that there has been 12 years of wage suppression in the State, we cannot fix it in 12 months. We need more time to do that. In other jurisdictions around Australia where a Labor government has been elected following a Coalition government, real wage increases have been able to be achieved over time. Private sector wages outstripped public sector wages in New South Wales for periods under the previous Government. This is just the economic situation. We are in what economists would call full employment. Unemployment is at decades-low levels. We are competing with school leavers, with university leavers and with those who can elect a profession in any part of the private or public economy. We want to get staff into our hospitals. [*Time expired.*]

RURAL AND REGIONAL SAFETY

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:45): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the Minns Labor Government to make regional communities safer by preventing and responding to crime?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:45): It looks like it is prop day today. I wonder if the member for Bathurst has brought a fake badge to be like his predecessor. In any case, I thank the member for Bega. He is a tireless advocate for his community and a tremendous supporter of his local police. They tell me that, and I thank him for that. No-one is more committed to making sure that regional communities are great places to live, play and work. To be that, they also need, above all else, to be safe. The police are doing a brilliant job in the bush. I know that because I have been there. I have met cops all over New South Wales who absolutely love living and working in regional towns across this great State. In fact, just a few weeks ago I visited with the member for Murray. We had a fantastic trip, and we also had a chance to visit three excellent police stations in her electorate: Dareton, Wentworth and Buronga. The Wentworth mayor was at Parliament yesterday and he thanked me again for our meeting. I thank the member for Murray for that.

I have listened closely to local MPs like the member for Murray, local councillors, mayors and local residents about the struggles many of those communities are facing when it comes to community safety. Most importantly—and I am glad that members are silent—I listen to the police, because they are the experts. I know that they are working day and night to keep local communities safe. I am so tired of members opposite trying to blame the police for entrenched social problems in our communities—problems that they did zero about for 12 long years. We have heard loud and clear that we need to do more as a government to break the cycle of crime. Prevention, diversion and disruption is what we need. I report to the House that our police in New South Wales are doing exactly that. In fact, in light of the nonstop criticism that the police get from the Opposition, I will give members a small sample of what our cops have done in just the past week.

Mr Mark Hodges: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Port Macquarie will come to order. The Minister will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Castle Hill. The member for Canterbury will come to order.

Mr Mark Hodges: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. As a former police officer, I am tired of being criticised. My father was a police officer. There are three police officers on this side of the Chamber. It is not directly relevant to criticise us.

The SPEAKER: We will deal with the matter in another way at a later time. I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Castle Hill will resume his seat.

Dr Michael Holland: I seek further information.

The SPEAKER: An additional two minutes is granted.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: We thank you for your service. We are recruiting at the moment, so if you want to change your career, head on back. In Dubbo, police arrested and charged a 30-year-old man after testing positive—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order while I hear the point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order relates to Standing Order 74. The Minister was quarrelling across the Chamber and not directing her comments through the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wahroonga will resume his seat. I uphold the point of order. The Minister will cease being quarrelsome. It is not helpful.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Last week New South Wales police stopped a vehicle in Dubbo during Operation Raid, searched and found 30 kilograms of methamphetamine with an estimated street value of \$30 million. I thank the member for Northern Tablelands for bringing Mayor Susannah Pearce into my office last week so we could sit down and talk cooperatively about issues in that electorate and take some real action together. I also thank the member for Oxley. This morning we were talking about crime in that electorate. The member for Myall Lakes—

Mr Paul Toole: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Paul Toole: I am hoping that the Minister will explain to the House why we have record vacancies on her watch and why she supports the Rising Tide protesters who are impacting on peoples' livelihoods.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order. Under Standing Order 249A, I direct the member for Bathurst to leave the Chamber until the conclusion of question time.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Bathurst left the Chamber at 11:51.]

The SPEAKER: Government members will remain silent. The Minister will conclude her answer.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: We know that we want more cops in our regional towns and cities, not to mention what that lot opposite left us with—their hated wage cap that sent the wages of our police backwards and vacancy rates escalating. We have introduced Be a Cop in Your Home Town and the remote and regional incentive scheme. We pay recruits, but most of all we pay them what they deserve.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:52): My question is addressed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, and Minister for Women. Next week marks the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's commitment to improving women's safety in New South Wales?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:52): I thank the member for Lismore for her question and ongoing advocacy and commitment to improving the safety of women in her local area—in fact, across the State and internationally. This has been a difficult year. In Australia, we have continued to see a distressing number of deaths of women killed by a current or former partner. I have said many times before and in this place that the status quo, what we have been doing in recent years, is unacceptable. Our investment cannot stop at crisis response—although that is obviously critical and we are committed to it. We have clearly demonstrated our ongoing commitment to holistic, wraparound support for victim-survivors through the expansion of Staying Home Leaving Violence, the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program, the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services and significant justice reforms that the Attorney General has led to keep women and children safe. But these focus on crisis response and do not turn the tide on the prevalence of domestic and family violence.

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign that begins on Monday 25 November with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Each year the United Nations campaign focuses on a specific theme. This year's theme is "UNiTE! Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls". I am proud to say that for the first time the New South Wales Government is leading with a prevention response. For the first time in New South Wales we have a dedicated primary prevention strategy called Pathways to Prevention to address the gender drivers of violence. Crucially, we have committed \$38.3 million to implement that strategy. We will engage with people where they live, learn, work and play in local organisations, sporting clubs, workplaces and schools. We will engage with Aboriginal-led organisations because we know that that will lead to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We want to be consistently reinforcing healthy messages about gender equality and relationships to change the beliefs, attitudes and cultures that tolerate and condone the use of violence against women. *[Extension of time]*

This year in our budget we committed \$8.1 million to All In, an innovative early childhood education program to challenge rigid gender roles and promote healthy relationships. We are implementing a holistic, respectful relationships education curriculum led by the Minister for Education and Early Learning. We are also implementing a resource hub, including resources for parents to have conversations with their children about healthy relationships. We are having these important conversations to achieve generational and cultural change

and to create a future free from violence. Through our \$48.1 million investment to expand and extend the Specialist Workers for Children and Young People program, up to 1,800 children and young people experiencing domestic and family violence each year will now have access to specialised support services to help them recover and disrupt the cycle of violence. An additional \$15 million has been invested in research and the expanded Men's Behaviour Change Programs, supporting men to recognise their violence, recognise their triggers and reduce risk to their loved ones.

In conclusion, ahead of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence I acknowledge the women and children who have tragically lost their lives to domestic and family violence. I also thank the domestic and family violence sector that stands with us every day as we work towards eliminating this scourge in our community. Last but not least, I thank each frontline worker who is helping a victim-survivor escape from violence and get back on their feet. Their support and incredible resilience changes lives and in fact saves lives. It is difficult work, and I thank them.

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:58): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier condemn the rail union's industrial action?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:58): No, I am not going to condemn workers in New South Wales. What I will try to do is get an outcome. I suspect that is what most people want. Do we really want to be in a situation where we prolong a dispute? This is the situation in New South Wales. We need to get an outcome. The union has demanded 24-hour services through the weekend—Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Many people who do not know the intricacies of maintenance or repairs on the transport network would not know that we have people who work at one o'clock in the morning, two o'clock in the morning and three o'clock in the morning on either the train lines or the platforms to keep them safe and repaired and perform much-needed maintenance on the transport network.

If rail services are running on lines at two o'clock or three o'clock in the morning, it is not safe to do that work. If it is not safe to do that work, we cannot keep the reliability and the safety of the network at the level we need it to be. Those are the circumstances that we find ourselves in. I do not want to condemn the union; I want to get an outcome. I am calling on everyone to sit around the table and get an outcome as soon as possible so that we do not inconvenience the public over the next few days.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Thus far, our request for the union to lift those bans has not been agreed to, which of course we regret. That is the situation. I am hopeful we will get a breakthrough. If there is anything to report, we will report it immediately.

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

SILICOSIS

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:00): My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister please update the House on action taken by the Minns Labor Government to protect workers from the scourge of silicosis?

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: Under the standing orders, the next question was required to be from the crossbench.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. With the indulgence of the House, I will allow the question. I was confused because the previous question should not have come from the Leader of the Opposition. The Minister has the call.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:01): I thank the hardworking member for Campbelltown. He is a strong advocate in this space. The Minns Government was elected on a platform to protect workers from silicosis, a deadly disease contracted from exposure to silica dust. It is a challenge we are determined to meet. Every member of the House is making sure that we are at the front line of dealing with this important issue. This disease has affected miners, quarry workers and tunnel workers—that is, until the rise of the engineered stone benchtop industry, which added exponentially to the deadly toll associated with silica dust. That is why the Premier, when he was the Opposition leader, led the call for a national ban on engineered stone. Last December Australian work health and safety Ministers unanimously supported a world-first national ban on engineered stone, which began on 1 July 2024. I am proud to be a part of the Government that led that national call.

To enforce the ban on engineered stone, the Minns Government has funded a new \$2.5 million silica inspection taskforce. Specialised silica inspectors have been out in numbers, issuing prohibition notices to stop work that generates high levels of silica dust. In the two months since inspections began the silica compliance team issued 125 improvement notices and seven prohibition notices in workplaces. As drastic as it was to eliminate risk by banning engineered stone outright, it does not mean there is not more work to do to protect the workers in this State from silicosis, including quarry workers and tunnel workers.

On 1 September this year we were the first jurisdiction to introduce the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Crystalline Silica Substances) Regulation, which requires employers to undertake air monitoring and provide results to the regulator if the airborne concentration of respirable crystalline silica in the workplace exceeds the workplace exposure standards. Our Government also passed legislation last year to establish a silica worker register, and work is underway to implement it. In April this year the Government committed \$5 million to the Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute. That critical funding will enable silicosis research and a patient support program for individuals and their families navigating the health risks associated with exposure to silica dust. *[Extension of time]*

The Government remains committed to providing health assessments to current and retired workers who are at risk of developing workplace dust diseases such as mesothelioma, asbestosis or silicosis. The icare mobile clinic—or the Lung Bus, as it is known—continues to serve the people of regional New South Wales. Onboard the bus is advanced lung function testing equipment and specialists in lung and respiratory health. In the new year, the Lung Bus will travel the length and breadth of New South Wales, including stops in Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Gosford, Dubbo, Bathurst, Broken Hill, Griffith, Wagga Wagga, Tamworth and Newcastle. I have asked icare executives to provide me with the dates of those visits so that MPs can work together to ensure that chambers of commerce, industry and councils know when the Lung Bus will be at those locations. We should never forget that workers in this State continue to battle the deadly legacy of asbestos. Next Thursday we remember the many lives lost to asbestos-related disease and the continued important work in this area. The Minns Labor Government will always stand up to protect the rights of workers and the right for a safe workplace.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (12:05): My question is directed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. What is the New South Wales Government doing to cut red tape to make it easier for community housing providers to turn buildings into temporary crisis accommodation so that we can meet the growing demand for emergency shelter from those facing homelessness?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:06): I thank the member for Wakehurst for the question. Minister Jackson and I have been working on fixing this issue. It is a policy shortcoming that should have been fixed long ago. Instead, members opposite spent 12 years selling off social housing and reducing the available stock, including temporary crisis accommodation. They allowed waiting lists to skyrocket. That system did not work for them, and it certainly does not work for our Labor Government.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Wahrenoonga does not want to see this fixed. He is happy with the disadvantage he entrenched, but we are not.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will cease inciting the member for Wahrenoonga.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: In the budget we committed the largest ever investment into social housing. The member for Wahrenoonga did not do that when he was Minister, I might add. We have also committed a billion dollars for much-needed repairs and maintenance. While that is the largest ever amount of funding for social housing in a New South Wales budget, we know that more needs to be done. That is why we are taking action to make it easier for existing buildings to be used as much-needed temporary crisis accommodation.

Under members opposite, the planning system was so confused and wrapped up red tape that a development application had to be submitted to change the use of a single home from general residential to temporary accommodation. That is right: A development application [DA] had to be submitted to change a house into a house. Those were not cases of commercial or non-residential buildings becoming residential buildings for temporary homes. It had nothing to do with changes to buildings. It is ridiculous that changing one form of residential accommodation to another form of residential accommodation needed a DA. There is no other way to describe it except ridiculous. The member for Wakehurst agrees that it is ridiculous and has spoken to me about ways to fix it.

The Minns Government is committed to making sure that we provide homes, which is what governments should do to fix these problems. As I look around the Chamber, I see that most members are surprised to hear

about the red tape that has to be dealt with to change residential buildings to temporary crisis accommodation. Every time I think about the nonsense of such a system, I shake my head. As I have said before, the planning system in New South Wales is not a system anybody would design if they were starting from a blank piece of paper—but it is the planning system we inherited from members opposite. They are almost always opposed to putting a roof over someone's head, and this is just another glaring example of that. [*Extension of time*]

That is why we are making changes to facilitate the greater use of buildings as temporary housing. These changes will introduce exempt and complying development pathways to deliver temporary housing so that we can use certain types of existing buildings to provide temporary housing for a period of five years. By providing an expedited planning pathway, we are removing unnecessary delays in the planning system and ensuring time-sensitive opportunities to provide immediate housing. The member for Goulburn does not like hearing about it, but it is a sensible policy change. The pathway will be available to Homes NSW, the Aboriginal Housing Office, the Department of Communities and Justice, registered housing providers, Aboriginal housing providers, councils providing affordable housing, and charities and not-for-profits providing rental housing.

The changes will make available an exempt and complying development pathway for dwelling homes, dual occupancies and multi-dwelling houses. A complying development pathway will be available for temporary housing in other building types such as residential accommodation, tourist and visitor accommodation, healthcare and aged-care accommodation, and accommodation in education establishments. However, the pathway will not allow any changes in the approved land use, so new buildings cannot be built and existing buildings cannot be altered. It means that where there are buildings that people used to live in for short or long periods of time, people will be able to live in those buildings as temporary accommodation for a period of up to five years.

The changes will provide innovative temporary uses without getting caught up in red tape. For instance, a former aged-care facility that is no longer operational and will be knocked down and redeveloped can be used as temporary housing while the project is being finalised. The policy has been worked on with stakeholders, including Homes NSW and industry. The member for Wakehurst and many other members will be pleased to know that the legal drafting of those changes is underway, and we expect the changes will be in place by the end of the year. I hope we can stop more people ending up homeless.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Reports

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: As Chair: I table report No. 3/58 of the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure entitled *Critical transport infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis*, dated November 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

Petitions

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Michael Daley—Daylight Saving Time—lodged 15 October 2024 (Mrs Helen Dalton)

The Hon. Ryan Park—Tweed Valley Early Childhood Intervention Service—lodged 15 October 2024 (Mr Geoff Provest)

The Hon. Ryan Park—Calvary Mater Newcastle—lodged 16 October 2024 (Ms Sonia Hornery)

Bills

VICTIMS RIGHTS AND SUPPORT AMENDMENT (VICTIMS SUPPORT COUNSELLING) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:13): I continue my contribution to debate on the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. Until now, our Victims Support Scheme has not fully acknowledged the profound and enduring impact of such trauma. This amending bill is a long-overdue

correction. It recognises that the pain experienced by victims and the families of victims of road crime is no less significant than that endured by other victims of crime. It also aligns with the broader principles of the Act, which aim to uphold the rights and dignity of victims while providing them with practical support to aid their recovery. As a former police officer, I know how crucial it is to provide timely and effective support to those affected by crime. In the immediate aftermath of a road death, families often face a whirlwind of legal, financial and practical challenges.

Without access to professional counselling, the emotional toll of these experiences can compound, leading to long-term mental health issues, which can have a ripple effect. The Victims Support Scheme plays a vital role in mitigating those impacts. This amending bill will ensure that the benefits of the scheme are extended to those who need them most. By providing access to counselling, we are not only addressing the immediate needs of grieving families but also investing in their long-term recovery and wellbeing. I commend the Attorney General for introducing this important legislation to the House. This amending bill not only expands access to counselling but also recognises the humanity of those left behind, acknowledging their pain and giving them the tools they need to heal. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:15): I contribute to debate on the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. Recently I was reminded of a tragic incident that occurred on our North Coast in July this year. A 47-year-old man was charged with 13 offences for driving a van into bystanders and buildings at Wooli and Minnie Water. Cars and boats were damaged, and the glass doors of family homes were smashed. An 80-year-old resident, Edna Fuller, was treated for abrasions and a broken rib after the van maliciously swerved into her. She remarked that she "just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time." I am glad and relieved that no-one was killed or seriously injured.

Psychological scars can be just as real as physical scars. Treatment for the impacts of events like road crimes, which are unpredictable and potentially life-ending, have historically fallen outside the scope of the Victims Support Scheme. Through this amending bill, the Minns Labor Government has taken the initiative to provide victims of intentional road crime and families who have lost loved ones to intentional road crime with access to counselling services under the Victims Support Scheme. The scheme has previously supported persons and family members of persons impacted by violent crime or modern slavery by providing counselling services and financial assistance for immediate needs or economic loss, as well as assistance for funeral expenses and a recognition payment.

Those benefits were previously inaccessible to victims of intentional road crime and families who had lost loved ones to intentional road crime. The Minns Labor Government rightly recognises that in previous iterations, the bill failed to cover individuals whose lives had been damaged or destroyed by violent road crime—especially the parent of a child. That sort of event can break people and families. The amending bill recognises those people and tries to help them to move forward in some way. We recognise that the disruption to one's life and the damage to their bodily and psychological health is no less real because an aggressor used a vehicle as a means of assault. The devastation of losing a loved one is no less salient. I am proud of this Government's amending bill to support victims of intentional road crime and families who have lost loved ones to intentional road crime through greater access to counselling and psychological support. It is an act of care for those who happen to be, in Ms Fuller's words, in the wrong place at the wrong time. It is what compassion, justice and decency demand. I commend the Minns Labor Government and the Attorney General, who is in the Chamber, and his hardworking staff for their tireless efforts to expand support for those in need. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (12:19): I support the Government's Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. I note that the Attorney General and the police Minister are in the Chamber for the debate. The bill is an important step in expanding counselling services and in supporting families affected by road crimes. I acknowledge the pain and loss experienced by families who have lost loved ones to road tragedies. My condolences go out to them. The bill is a step forward in providing the support and care they deserve. As a former police officer I have knocked on a mother's front door late at night to tell her that her son has been killed in a motor accident. I cannot understand the pain that persons such as her suffer, but I certainly understand that it must be deep and dark.

Counselling plays an important role in helping people to navigate grief and trauma, and this bill takes a critical step towards recognising that. It provides affected people with a path to support and healing. The bill is not only about addressing immediate needs; it is also about building resilience and trying to move forward. Amending the Victims Rights and Support Act is a meaningful way to improve the wellbeing of affected families while also strengthening our community as a whole. It is about creating a system that is more inclusive, supportive and focused on justice for anyone impacted by crime. It is a step in the right direction and will make a real difference in the lives of those who need it most. Furthermore, the bill recognises the pain that families go through. It is never easy to experience the passing of a loved one. Including these groups of people is a key step towards

improving access to much-needed services. The legislation offers up to 22 hours of counselling, with more available where needed. That is a clear improvement across a range of health standards.

Another feature of the bill is the Act's definition of "road crime". Both the families seeking support and the authorities managing the process will have better clarity. By aligning the bill with broader principles of fairness and compassion, the Government has created a framework that the Opposition supports. I am proud to have been a member of the former Coalition Government, which acted on these issues early by referring them to the Law Reform Commission. The Coalition understood the importance of increasing support. Families of road crime victims, like victims of violence and modern slavery, deserve equal access to the mental health resources they need to heal.

I acknowledge the incredible work of advocacy groups such as the Road Trauma Support Group. They have done so much to highlight the struggles that families and relatives can experience in times of grief. Their work is much appreciated and is becoming more vital in shaping the community's values. It is now the Parliament's responsibility to make sure that this bill is passed. Members on this side of the House will ensure that the bill is not a standalone measure but part of a broader commitment to supporting victims of crime and their families. I am committed to making sure that the bill delivers on its promises and that the Government continues to prioritise sensible, compassionate changes to support victims across New South Wales. I believe that the bill is a solid step in the right direction to support the families of road crime victims. Those families go through immense trauma, so it is only right that they be included in the Victims Support Scheme. I thank the Attorney General and the police Minister for bringing this bill before the House.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:23): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. Many members who have spoken on the bill already come to this debate with some relevant experiences in their lives. For us parliamentarians it is often accidents that have occurred in our electorates. I acknowledge and thank the member for Winston Hills, because he was once a police officer who knows what it feels like to knock on people's front doors to give them terrible news. I cannot begin to imagine how difficult that must be for the men and women in blue who serve our State, and I thank them every day for their service.

As explained in the Attorney General's second reading speech, the bill is about extending support for people who have experienced deaths as a result of road crimes. They will be entitled to access a number of sessions of up to 22 hours with a support service so they can work through their grief and suffering. Importantly, as the Attorney General said, as people go through their journey of grief and loss, they may not make an immediate request for access to those 22 hours, because they may not be ready for that counselling. This bill makes an amendment so that it is okay for a person to use the service when they are ready; there will be no rush and no limit on their ability to access the service. When the bill is implemented, the previous two years are covered for people who might have found themselves in this terrible situation and they too can seek this same support. There will be special circumstances in that if an incident occurred earlier than two years before the introduction of this bill, people can make an application to the commission to be considered whether they are eligible to access these services.

As members know, in 2023 in Greta on the June long weekend, a terrible bus crash ultimately killed 10 people and injured many more. That bus driver was charged with more than 50 crimes as a result of his negligence and his failure to provide his passengers the necessary duty of care to ensure their safe arrival at their destination. This bill will have a direct impact on that type of circumstance. I cannot be prouder of the Government for making this necessary change. I acknowledge that the bill has the full support of the Opposition.

A number of Opposition members have spoken about particular circumstances in their electorates, which reflects the grief and tragedy that can also happen in the electorates of Government members. These types of events do not recognise electoral boundaries in any way, shape or form. I know that the member for Upper Hunter will speak in debate on the bill, and I am sure he will join me and the member for Maitland in recognising that terrible bus crash at Greta and the impact it has had on the families. I commend this sensible and incredibly important bill to the House. I look forward to it passing this Parliament and becoming an Act of New South Wales so that people can access the services captured by the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (12:27): I make a contribution to debate on the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. I acknowledge the good work that has gone into the bill. It was approached in a bipartisan way and has significant benefit to the community. I acknowledge members on all sides of this Chamber for their support of the bill. I believe that it will make a great difference in our society. My electorate has already seen a number of serious road traumas in the past couple of months, and I believe that every member here has similar stories. The ripple effect these incidents have on their victims, some of whom passed away, and their families is enormous. It goes right through the family.

The bill will extend counselling services to those families. I think that is an absolute positive going forward. In those families there is significant grief and mental trauma. When communities see road trauma, particularly when they see some of their young people killed, it has an enormous ripple effect. The ability of counselling services to help people through that is enormous. The Hunter Valley bus crash was a significant accident. It certainly opened my eyes to the impact an accident has not only on the families involved but also on the wider community. It takes a huge amount of time for them to process that grief and move forward. I acknowledge that the bill allows families to take up counselling services in the time after an accident has occurred because there are many stages of grief. Families go through their own pathways to try to repair the emotions they have felt.

Last weekend I spent some time with the parents of some of the victims of the Hunter bus crash. We had another conversation about the amazing role police liaison officers played to help those families. I will not name those officers, but their assistance played an important part in the grief process those families went through. My eyes were totally opened to the role police play in our communities. The bill strengthens the ability of government services to help families through the grieving process.

I acknowledge that the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism is in the Chamber. I say to all the police under her control that they do a wonderful job. When I became a member of Parliament I looked at police with a different light. I see the things that they have to deal with and the moments they have to step into leadership roles. I am very thankful for the great police service we have in New South Wales. A bill like this one can only help victims and victims' families with the process of dealing with the many road trauma incidents that occur in our community. I commend the bill to the House and thank all members for supporting it.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:32): I make a contribution in support of the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. On Sunday I represented the police Minister at the annual event for World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims at Grace's Place in Doonside. The member for Blacktown and I heard stories from family members who have lost loved ones due to road trauma. It was a very solemn service and some of the stories were heartbreaking. The bill is very timely and gives support to those victims. It is crucial legislation that aims to amend the Victims Rights and Support Act of 2013 to extend the reach of the Victims Support Scheme [VSS] to include the family members of individuals killed in road crimes, enabling them to access necessary counselling services. The amending bill seeks to address the unique needs of families who experience devastating losses due to road-related incidents.

All members of this place have been touched by the loss of life as a result of a road crime. Such incidents have a profound impact on individuals and communities. I can relate to that impact. Recently in my electorate a 27-year-old man lost his life in a road-rage incident. The man was allegedly dragged for 100 metres down a busy street in front of countless witnesses during school drop-off hours. His tragic death not only impacted his family but also left the community traumatised. Additionally, in another incident in Western Sydney, a man in his late seventies was fatally struck in a hit-and-run accident. Cases like these serve as stark reminders of the wide-reaching pain that road crimes cause. They affect not only the primary victims but also family members, witnesses, and communities as a whole.

The object of the bill is straightforward. It allows a family member of a person killed in a road crime to access counselling services under the Victims Support Scheme. It recognises that families suffer profound emotional trauma when a loved one dies as a result of criminal acts on the road. The amending bill acknowledges family members' victimisation and gives them the support they need to begin the difficult journey of healing. The bill's provisions are organised thoughtfully to address the legal and practical frameworks necessary to implement the changes.

Schedule 1 to the bill contains the key changes to the Act. Notably, schedule 1 [3] revises the definition of a victim of crime to clarify that it includes individuals harmed directly as a result of a motor vehicle-related criminal offence. This change is essential to ensure that family members of road crime victims are unequivocally recognised as victims within the scope of the Act. For too long those families have fallen outside the purview of support provided to victims of other types of crimes. This bill changes that. Another critical aspect of the bill is outlined in schedule 1 [4], which establishes that one of the primary objectives of the Victims Support Scheme is to provide support for family members who lose loved ones to road crimes. By formally establishing this objective, we underline our commitment to those families and reaffirm our belief that they are indeed victims in their own right.

Schedule 1 [6] adds clarification that a road crime is not considered an act of violence under the scheme unless it involves an intentional killing where murder charges have been filed. This distinction is important as it separates unintentional, albeit tragic, road crimes from deliberate acts of violence, ensuring that the legislation is clear and applicable. In terms of eligibility, schedule 1 [8] establishes a definition for a "family victim of a road crime". That means immediate family members who suffer the deepest emotional impact will be able to access counselling through the Victims Support Scheme. Under this amending bill eligible family members will have

access to 22 hours of approved counselling services, with the possibility of additional hours if deemed necessary by the Commissioner of Victims Rights.

This support will be available for not only future cases but also incidents that occurred up to two years prior to the Act's commencement, with further backdating possible in exceptional cases. Furthermore, schedule 1 [14] clarifies that while support will be made widely available to family members, there are limitations. Specifically, if a family member is also closely related to the alleged offender, they will not be eligible for support under the bill unless they are also an immediate family member of the primary victim. The provision ensures that the support remains focused on those who have directly suffered the loss of a loved one due to the crime. The bill also makes an essential update to the Charter of Victims Rights to specify that victims of motor vehicle-related criminal offences are recognised as victims under the charter. That recognition is fundamental, as it represents society's acknowledgment of their trauma and suffering.

While legislation cannot bring back those lost to road crimes, it can provide solace and support to their families. The additional counselling support that the bill offers will play a critical role in helping family members process their grief, cope with trauma and eventually find a way forward. The bill is an acknowledgment that the pain suffered by families of road crime victims is real and that the mental health and wellbeing of those left behind matters. It is a commitment from this Government to stand with those families, help them through their darkest times and ensure that they do not bear the burden of their grief alone. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:40): I speak in support of the much-needed Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. The bill will amend the Victims Rights and Support Act to enable the immediate family of a person killed in a road crime to access 22 hours of approved counselling under the Victims Support Scheme, with further hours available if approved by the Commissioner of Victims Rights. In his second reading speech, the Attorney General recognised the Road Trauma Support Group NSW. RTSG CEO Nadine Willis and members Katie Dokmanovic, Gail Proctor and Michael Duke have worked hard to establish the group, undertake effective consultation with the Government and provide support services for people who have suffered from tragic road crimes. I also thank Martha Jabour, who worked closely to assist and advise in the establishment of the Road Trauma Support Group NSW and has allowed its offices to be located at Grace's Place in Doonside. I also congratulate Martha on becoming the NSW Local Hero for this year and wish her all the best for the Australia Day awards.

Last Sunday, the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, an extremely moving commemoration service was held at Grace's Place. My neighbouring electorate colleague the member for Mount Druitt was also in attendance in his capacity as Parliamentary Secretary for Police and Counter-terrorism, representing the police Minister. I recognise that the Minister is in the Chamber for this debate. I attended the ceremony alongside many families impacted by road crash crimes, as well as police officers and transport officials, including Josh Murray, Secretary of Transport for NSW. In the second reading speech, the Attorney General stated that the Government acknowledges that family victims of road crime experience the same immense trauma and suffering as other people who lose a family member too soon because of a criminal act. The bill will ensure that they receive counselling support to assist them to navigate their loss.

The Road Trauma Support Group NSW works in collaboration with the New South Wales Government and the NSW Police Force, providing specialist trauma-informed grief counsellors, peer support and continuous long-term care. Unfortunately, there is a common misconception in the community in regard to victims, whether survivors of a road crash or families impacted by a death caused by a road crash or accident. Almost on a daily basis, media reports identify road accidents and show graphic images of their aftermath. It is easy for the media to find graphic stories because last year 334 people died on New South Wales roads and 1,266 people died across Australia. The constant news stories have an almost dehumanising effect on viewers until it happens to someone close to them—the sudden death, with no time to say goodbyes; a senseless road crash that was not an accident but a road crime.

Someone has recklessly—or even intentionally—done something wrong, plunging a completely innocent party and their family into a lifetime of chaos. From that moment on, no Christmas, birthday or major celebration day will ever be the same. A daughter, son, mum or dad will be missing from a lifetime of family events. The tragedy of losing someone from a road crime was highlighted when the emcee of last Sunday's commemoration service, comedian and TV producer Chris Walker, spoke of the tragedy he witnessed as a 11-year-old boy some 35 years ago. Chris was playing backyard cricket with his older brother, Adam, and a friend. The ball was hit out onto the road. Adam, being the eldest at 13 years of age, was the only one allowed to cross the road. Adam went across the road and picked up the ball. As he was returning, he was tragically hit by a car.

At 11, Chris witnessed his brother being tragically killed—or maimed, at that time—in front of him. He heard the thud and watched Adam go flying through the air as the ball rolled away. He rushed into his home to get his mum. It was Christmas Eve, and his world changed forever. Whilst Chris has gone on to a successful

career, he is traumatised by the crash—and listening to him talk about it also traumatised everyone on the day. No future Christmas or birthday, nor his wedding or the birth of his children, would include his big brother, Adam. Even today it has a massive emotional drain on him.

The story Chris shared is one that could be easily replicated across the 334 road deaths in the past year, or the 13,000 deaths since young Adam was killed on the road some 35 years ago. Whilst it is important for us to honour our election commitment with this bill, I imagine some people might ask why it was not considered with the introduction of the original bill. The bill provides support for families who have lost loved ones through road crimes by ensuring family members can access counselling through the Victims Support Scheme. Family victims of road crime experience the same immense trauma and suffering as those who lose a family member too soon due to a criminal act. As a result of this bill, they do not have to wait for associated insurance claims to be determined before being eligible for victim support.

The Road Trauma Support Group NSW is proof that a collective effort driven by passionate people can make a difference through their advocacy, which has created the change in the law. I thank the people who have set up the Road Trauma Support Group NSW, including Superintendent Katie Orr, Maybelle Galuvao, Nadine Willis, Tom Daher and Martha Jabour. Katie Orr was the police officer who assisted Tom Daher many years ago when he was impacted by a road death in his family but did not know where to turn to for further support. Katie and Tom discussed with Martha the logistics of setting up a support group.

After much lobbying and discussion with the police and other agencies, Katie got the approvals needed to establish the group. In March 2021 Katie, Martha and Tom hosted the first RTSG meeting, with other victims of road crime in attendance. The bill will allow those family members tragically impacted by road crashes to have access to critical mental health support through the Victims Support Scheme at the police command centre in Parramatta. The then Assistant Commissioner Karen Webb attended that meeting and recognised the importance of the support network. By April 2022, the RTSG was formally established, with a memorandum of understanding signed between the Police Force and the RTSG, which was followed by a launch in Parliament House. Monthly meetings have resulted since and changed the lives of many members.

At the ceremony on Sunday for the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, the CEO of the RTSG, Nadine Willis, spoke about the ripple effect of trauma and the day that changes people's lives forever. But she also said there is a ripple effect of goodness that can come from such a tragedy. She has witnessed members grieve and seen them at their lowest point. She has hugged them, cried with them and shared some of the painful experiences and memories of that day. But Nadine has also witnessed the growth in the group's membership and has watched some of them, through their own pain, come alongside and comfort others in their darkest hours. The RTSG members encourage one another and wrap their arms around family members who have been unwillingly thrust into those situations. From phone calls to cups of coffee, they are all there to assist each other—even when they are carrying their own broken hearts. That selfless support of each other is instrumental in healing. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (12:50): The Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024 is a clear demonstration of the Minns Labor Government's commitment to supporting victims of crime and their families, especially families of victims of road crime. It addresses a glaring gap in the current legislation by ensuring that families of road crime victims receive the support they deserve and desperately need. Currently, families of road crime victims are excluded from counselling under the Victims Support Scheme unless the crime was intentional or linked to terrorism. The bill rectifies that inequity. The trauma experienced by families who lose loved ones in road crimes is no less significant than those affected by other forms of crime. In my short time as the member for Leppington, having stood face to face with families who have lost their loved ones because of road crime, I cannot emphasise that strongly enough.

The bill extends counselling services to immediate family members of road crime victims. Eligible family members will have access to up to 22 hours of free counselling, with the option for additional hours if approved by the commissioner. For the first time, road crime victims will be explicitly recognised as victims of crime under the Charter of Victims Rights, ensuring they are afforded the same dignity, recognition and access to support as other crime victims. The eligibility criteria is inclusive and covers a range of incidents, including when a person is charged with a driving offence, such as manslaughter, even if there is no conviction; and if the offender is deceased, unlocatable or not charged, provided sufficient evidence of a crime exists.

Importantly, the bill allows retroactive eligibility for incidents that occurred up to two years before the law's commencement, with exceptions for older cases in extraordinary circumstances. A very important reason for me that the bill is retroactive is the case I have spoken about in this place on a number of occasions—including in discussion on a petition the member for Liverpool brought to the House—which is that of the Kauffman family. Their story has affected me deeply, as well as the communities of Liverpool and Leppington, and it shows the personal impact on families of victims of road crime and why this reform is so important.

Angelina and her daughter Ayeanna are the mother and sister of Alina and Ernesto, whose lives were lost in a horrific road incident just over a year ago that should never have happened. I met Angelina and Ayeanna in my office in October last year about two months after the incident. Being a member of Parliament is a tough job. We all know that. But having to sit, listen and support Angelina and her daughter and hear what they have had to go through each and every day was probably one of the more difficult things I have had to do in this job. To know that if and when the bill passes, they will be getting the expert support they deserve and need really hits home for me. It is good to know that we do make a difference in this job. We meet with people, they present us with a problem and the wheels of government turn and laws change, and we do make a difference to individual people's lives.

I will tell the story of Ernesto and Alina. Ernesto was working a retail job and Angelina, his mum, was going to pick him up from work because he was finishing up. But instead his sister decided she would go down and get him. They were one street away from their home when the alleged offender, who was doing well over the speed limit and driving on the wrong side of the road, hit them and killed them both instantly. Angelina still goes to that spot every day. It was initially a bit of an unofficial shrine, but we have been working with Liverpool City Council and it is now an official memorial to those two lives. As I said, that incident has affected everyone in our community very deeply.

The other thing that hits home for me is the ages of Ernesto and Alina. I have a 17-year-old daughter who has had her licence for about six months now. I also have a 15-year-old son. They are both similar ages to that of Alina and Ernesto. I cannot help but worry every time my daughter goes out in the car with my son to get some acai or Macca's. I cannot help but think of what happened in Ashcroft and the impact it has had on Angelina and her friends and family. The bill is very important for that reason. But Angelina's story is not the only one. When the Road Trauma Support Group visited Parliament last week, I spoke with Katie Dokmanovic, who lives out my way. Her son Nicholas was 18 when he was killed in an accident in Leppington on Christmas Eve. She received that horrible news on Christmas Eve, and she has been a key advocate as part of the Road Trauma Support Group to get the changes in this bill through. It was great to speak with her last week, get to know her story and see the amazing work she has done. She has turned an indescribable tragedy into something positive to push the reforms through. I thank Angelina and Katie for the work they have done, and continue to do, in this space.

The bill ensures that victims' families receive timely, free counselling services, aligning with the Victims Support Scheme core principles of compassion, equity and accessibility. It recognises road crime victims under the Charter of Victims Rights and ensures they get the dignity and respect that all crime victims deserve. The bill will commence upon proclamation, and there will be a two-year retrospectivity to the bill that will allow people like Angelina to access services. Commencement by proclamation will allow time for processes to be established by Victims Services and the Commissioner of Victims Rights. The Commissioner of Victims Rights will oversee all applications, ensuring that families receive support as quickly as possible. That pathway guarantees no family is left behind, and that the rollout is as seamless as possible and handled with the appropriate care and sensitivity it requires. Families of road crime victims will finally have access to vital mental health support, helping them navigate the immense grief and trauma they face. By formally including road crime victims under the charter, the Government reaffirms its commitment to equitable treatment and justice for all victims of crime.

The psychological and emotional wellbeing of families will be significantly improved through access to those services. Having seen firsthand as an MP the impact they have on people, this is an incredibly important amending piece of legislation and I am proud to be part of a government that is making it happen. The bill is a lifeline for families who have endured unimaginable loss, like Angelina, Katie and everyone else who has suffered from these kinds of tragedies. The Minns Government is taking a stand for fairness, equity and compassion, in line with the principles espoused by the Charter of Victims Rights. The bill recognises that every victim deserves support, no matter the nature of the crime. I urge all members to support this critical amendment and stand with the families who need us most.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:00): I contribute to debate on the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. On 28 July 2023, Bryson Dimovski was riding his electric scooter home from a friend's house. His parents expected him for dinner. But when Bryson missed curfew, his parents, Andrew and Melissa, knew something was wrong.. After an overnight police investigation and a search by family, friends and neighbours, Andrew and Melissa heard a car door close outside their house. Seeing a police car, they opened the door expecting Bryson home. But, instead, they opened the front door and their family has never been the same.

Bryson was 14 years old when he was tragically hit and killed by a driver who fled and left him on the roadside alone, dying. A young, vibrant life was ended far too soon as a result of road crime. I was privileged to sit with Andrew and Melissa earlier this year to learn what a bright soul Bryson was. I thank them for their courage and perseverance to achieve change for their son. In our meeting, Andrew said to me, "Like homicide victims, we

feel the same pain." Whether a victim is taken by a road crime or any other criminal act, the pain and grief felt by their loved ones is the same. Yet, for too long, road crime has been treated differently from other forms of violent crime when it comes to the way victims' families are supported. It is time to fix this, for Bryson and all those lost to road crime.

I support the bill and thank the Attorney General for his engagement with stakeholders to prepare it. Most pertinently, I thank community stakeholders and road trauma and motor vehicle homicide victims advocacy groups for their tireless efforts to achieve this important reform. The bill will amend the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013 to extend victims support counselling to families of people killed in road crimes. I acknowledge the fierce advocacy of my friend Martha Jabour, OAM. A 2025 New South Wales Local Hero of the Year, Martha has always been my hero. In the 15 years I have known her, her advocacy for victims of crime, particularly homicide victims and their families, has been like no other. Martha established Grace's Place in Doonside in Western Sydney, which leads the world in supporting the families of victims of crime. I thank her for her leadership. She is truly a remarkable person.

Martha has been an immovable advocate for victims of crime and their families for all the time I have known her. On behalf of the Minns Labor Government, I sincerely thank Martha for her fight and her strength. I also thank members of the Road Trauma Support Group [RTSG] NSW for their courage and persistence in developing the bill. Throughout recent months I have been privileged to meet with the RTSG and the families of those tragically lost to road trauma. I was moved by the heartbreaking stories of loss I heard and by the strength and the conviction of those families. Their courageous advocacy has led to the bill.

Victims of road crime have been largely excluded from the Victims Support Scheme in New South Wales. The scheme provides counselling, financial assistance and a recognition payment to victims of an act of violence or an act of modern slavery in New South Wales. Under the Act, motor vehicle incidents are largely excluded from being so-called acts of violence. The Government acknowledges that families of victims of road crime experience the same immense trauma and suffering as other people who have lost a family member due to a criminal act. The bill will ensure that these families receive counselling support to assist them to navigate their terrible loss.

I will address the key amendments in the bill. By inserting new section 29A, the bill amends the Victims Rights and Support Act to ensure that family members will be eligible to access victim support counselling if a person is killed in a motor vehicle accident and another person is charged with an offence relating to that accident. Schedule 1 [4] to the bill updates the parts of the Act that create the Victims Support Scheme to reflect that the scheme will now provide support for the families of victims of road crimes. Schedule 1 [5] to [7] to the bill inserts a definition of "road crime" as an act or series of acts committed in New South Wales involving a motor vehicle that causes the death of a person. It requires charges to have been laid against an alleged offender in relation to the act of road crime. However, a charge is not required if the alleged offender has died or cannot be located, provided that there is sufficient evidence to establish that an offence has occurred.

Under the Victims Rights and Support Regulation 2019, up to 22 hours of counselling will be available, with a further period available if approved by the Commissioner of Victims Rights. The bill expands the relevant family members who may be eligible to claim support. Schedule 1 [8] to [11] to the bill updates the definition of "family victim" to include a member of the immediate family of a person who has died as a result of road crime. Consistent with existing powers under the Act and the regulation, the commissioner will also be able to approve counselling services for relatives other than immediate family, where appropriate.

A crucial change brought by the bill is the removal of time constraints on support claims. With this amendment, there will be no requirement for the families of victims to apply to the scheme within a particular period after the crime has occurred. A person may seek counselling at the appropriate time for them. This vital change recognises that there is no time frame for grief. The bill also includes a clarifying amendment to confirm that the Charter of Victims Rights, at section 6 of the Victims Rights and Support Act, applies explicitly to victims of road crime. Schedule 1 [3] to the bill amends the definition of "victim of crime" that applies to the charter. This amendment clarifies that a victim of crime includes people who suffer harm in the commission of a criminal offence involving a motor vehicle.

Importantly, the bill ensures that families of road crime victims will no longer have to wait for the determination of associated insurance claims to complete their eligibility for victim support. Providing greater consistency to all victims under the Act, the bill will allow victims' families to access services sooner and reduce complexity when navigating the insurance and justice systems after a loved one's death. The bill will affect important reform by ensuring that meaningful support is available to victims' families without restrictive barriers. However, the Government acknowledges that there is more work to be done to strengthen supports for victims and their families. I am committed to working with the victims advocacy groups, like the RTSG, to see more victim-centred reforms embedded into the justice system and laws in New South Wales. It is imperative that we

minimise the secondary trauma experienced by bereaved families after the loss of a loved one. We remain committed to working with families to better support them and improve those processes.

Today I take the opportunity to ask all members in the House to pause and remember those lost on our roads. Just this year alone 294 people have been killed on roads in New South Wales. While not all of those terrible losses have been the result of road crimes, we are witnessing a year-on-year increase in the overall road toll. One in five adults in New South Wales have experienced the death of someone they knew due to a road fatality. This is much higher for young people, with 18-year-olds to 24-year-olds being three times more likely to lose a friend or a loved one to road crime. We must continue working to improve safety on our roads. We must act today to strengthen the system that supports families of victims after such terrible tragedies. [*Extension of time*]

In my discussions with the RTSG and other victim advocates throughout the year I have heard firsthand about their battles. I have heard awful stories of families who suddenly lost a loved one to road trauma and found themselves lost, grappling with debilitating grief while trying to navigate complex systems; families being denied counselling support because they applied for it two days after the designated period, but who were never advised that there was a time constraint; families being able to claim counselling support for their oldest daughter but not their youngest one—as if their children's grief could be proportioned; as well as a long-term girlfriend who was not able to claim any support because she was not recognised by victim support as an eligible family member.

At any one time, people experiencing traumatic grief as a result of road crimes are trying to navigate multiple, intersecting challenges. While dealing with the emotional, physical and psychological impacts of grief, they are also trying to comfort other relatives, manage legal proceedings, organise financial outgoings and navigate support services. They are doing their best against a system that is currently flawed in New South Wales. Today we can help to relieve that burden for many families by improving the Victims Support Scheme. We can ensure that this scheme becomes a more effective resource for people when they need it most.

The bill corrects a deficiency in the Victims Support Scheme to ensure that the families of road crime victims in New South Wales can access critical mental health support. As a parent, husband, brother, son and a friend, I fear receiving a devastating call that I have lost a loved one as a result of road crime. Unfortunately, far too many members of our community have already endured such a terrible call. The sudden and tragic loss of a loved one as a result of a road crime places insurmountable grief upon their families. To help families through this most challenging time, we must correct the Victims Support Scheme to make counselling support available. The bill strengthens and expands the support available for victims' families when they need it most. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (13:13): I thank the member for Prospect for a very moving and deeply detailed speech on the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. I think he shared the sentiments of all members in this House. By some good fortune, I can stand here and say that I have not experienced those things the member mentioned. I cannot speak about the suffering that families have experienced. I can only imagine the pain and what it must feel like to lose somebody in a completely unexpected way. That is why legislation like this makes such an enormous difference, because it is done from the heart. It is hard to fathom the devastation that somebody being killed by somebody else's actions can cause to families of loved ones and their communities.

In a few months it will be the five-year anniversary of the death of the beautiful young children—four angels—of the family at Oatlands that I had a lot to do with. I have spoken about them many times in this Chamber. I cannot believe that it has been five years. Over those years I have come to know the parents incredibly well; we have virtually become family—Danny and Leila, Bridget and Craig, and the whole family. I do not know that I could show the same strength that they have shown. I do not know that I could be as forgiving as they have. When I think about the bill, I think about people like them. I also think about Martha, whom I will speak more about.

The bill is going to amend the Victims Rights and Support Act. It will extend victims support counselling to families. It is an important starting point because grief does not go away. Grief will always be there. Families just learn to deal with it. They never stop being sad or stop feeling that they have lost something. Specifically, the bill will ensure that immediate family members of a person killed in a road crime can access 22 hours of approved counselling services under the Victims Support Scheme. A person will be eligible if their family member is an innocent victim who dies in a motor vehicle crash when another person is charged with an offence relating to the crash. A charge will not be required if the alleged offender has died or cannot be located but there is sufficient evidence to establish an offence has apparently occurred. Obviously eligible family members are able to access that support.

I acknowledge the Attorney General and thank him for the work that he has done in this really important space. I am pleased to see that he and the police Minister are in the Chamber. They are at the pointy end of the work on the bill where they deal with the families who have experienced these horrors. The key principle of the bill is to ensure that families of victims receive timely support for their immediate needs. It provides financial assistance and rehabilitation. It also recognises and acknowledges the trauma that has been suffered. It provides eligible victims with up-front counselling and recognises their circumstances.

People whose whole world has collapsed around them need support. The provisions in the bill goes a long way in providing that support to help them heal a little bit after suffering one of the most devastating things possible. By making counselling free, the Government recognises that psychological trauma extends beyond just the primary victim. Their extended family feel it too. One of the sections that I really appreciate in the bill is that there is no time limit to submit a claim for free counselling services under the Victims Support Scheme. That recognises that grief is ongoing; it never goes away. Though people might think they are doing all right, it might hit them six months, a year or two years later. An individual shows only so much strength before the impact of the trauma eventually catches up with them.

Last week I met with the incredible Martha Jabour, who is not only a tireless advocate for victims but also the most worthy recipient of our local Australian of the Year award. Martha's warmth and love is incredible, given what she has gone through. She suffered an unimaginable tragedy and, as a result of that, she has made it her mission to help other people. I met with her as well as Duncan Wakes-Miller, who shared with me his story of when the police knocked on his door to tell him that his son had been killed. It was emotional but we need those meetings. We need to be able to recognise what we can do. I am so grateful that as members of Parliament we are able to make a change and fulfil our election commitments through this legislation introduced by the Attorney General.

I am also pleased to play an important role as the Minister who is responsible for SIRA, which is the State Insurance Regulatory Authority. I acknowledge SIRA for the work it is doing through the Trauma Support Service to provide grief counselling support. It also has specific liaison officers and others who provide targeted and appropriate assistance to family members impacted by road traffic crimes to help them access support. We want to do everything we can to support them. SIRA has undertaken remediation plans with insurers that have not demonstrated this and regularly supervises compliance with those plans.

I am proud of SIRA for continuing its focused program on work to improve the experiences of people accessing the compulsory third party scheme after they have lost a loved one on the road. The program is informed by feedback and people with lived experience. This victim rights and support amendment bill complements and works well together with the work that it is doing. It further strengthens the supports that are available for families who have suffered such devastating loss. I thank the Attorney General. I am proud to be part of a government that introduced this bill. We cannot imagine the grief of the families of those who are victims of road crime, but we will not let them walk this journey alone.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (13:20): In reply: I thank the shadow Attorney General and member for Wahroonga, as well as members representing the electorates of Maitland, Wollondilly, Liverpool, Orange, Heathcote, Winston Hills, Cessnock, Upper Hunter, Mount Druitt, Blacktown, Prospect, Leppington and Bankstown for contributing to debate on the Victims Rights and Support Amendment (Victims Support Counselling) Bill 2024. The bill will amend the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013 to extend victims support counselling to the families of people killed in road crime. The bill will implement a New South Wales Government election commitment to provide better support to families who have lost loved ones through road crime.

Eligible family members of people killed in a road crime will be able to access 22 hours of approved counselling through the Victims Support Scheme, with further hours available if approved by the Commissioner of Victims Rights. The bill defines a road crime as an act or a series of acts involving a motor vehicle and occurring in New South Wales that caused the death of a person, where charges have been laid for an offence against another person in relation to the act. A road crime is also defined to include circumstances where charges cannot be laid because the alleged offender has died or cannot be identified but, on the balance of probabilities, an offence has apparently occurred.

Our Government acknowledges that family victims of road crime experience the same immense trauma and suffering as other people who lose a family member too soon because of a criminal act. The bill will ensure that they receive counselling support to assist them to navigate their loss. I thank members for their support of this bill. Many members spoke of working directly with family members impacted by devastating road crashes and the broader impact experienced by their communities. That is important and worthwhile work and I thank all members for their advocacy on behalf of those family members. I also acknowledge the immense trauma and suffering that family victims of road crime experience in losing a loved one. I am proud to introduce this bill,

which will ensure that family members receive counselling support to assist them to navigate their grief and loss, which is often long term and complex and, frankly, unimaginable.

I specifically acknowledge the work of Martha Jabour and the Road Trauma Support Group. As the member for Maitland mentioned, recently Martha has been awarded the 2025 NSW Local Hero award at the 2025 Australian of the Year Awards for her advocacy work. The award is well deserved and Martha's work is greatly appreciated by all members of this Parliament. The Road Trauma Support Group has been tireless in its love for family members and its advocacy for change. Its work has been central to the development of the bill. I am also grateful to the many other family members affected by road crime who have shared their stories with me and other members. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AND DOMAIN TRUST AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 19 November 2024

No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2024-235D]

Page 3, Schedule 1[4], line 13. Omit "Section 20AA". Insert instead "Sections 20AA and 20AB".

No. 2 GRNS No. 2 [c2024-235D]

Page 3, Schedule 1[4]. Insert after line 20—

20AB

Leases and licences with term of 35 years or more

- (1) The Trust must not grant a lease or licence with a term of 35 years or more over Trust lands unless the requirements of this section are met.
- (2) The Trust must prepare a draft written statement (a *draft statement of reasons*) that sets out how the proposed lease or licence is consistent with the objects of the Trust set out in section 7.
- (3) The Trust must—
 - (a) make the draft statement of reasons publicly available for a period of at least 7 days, and
 - (b) ensure the draft statement of reasons is accompanied by an outline of the following—
 - (i) details of the lessee or licensee and the land the subject of the proposed lease or licence,
 - (ii) the period of the proposed lease or licence,
 - (iii) the uses of the land permitted by the proposed lease or licence, and
 - (c) invite the public to provide comments about the proposed lease or licence within 7 days after the draft statement of reasons is made publicly available.
- (4) Without limiting subsection (3)(a), the Trust may make the draft statement of reasons publicly available by publishing the statement on—
 - (a) the Trust's website, or
 - (b) a website used by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.
- (5) After considering any comments received under subsection (3)(c), the Trust must finalise the statement of reasons, including by providing in the statement an outline of—
 - (a) the consultation undertaken, and
 - (b) the comments, if any.
- (6) The Trust must give the statement of reasons to the Minister when seeking the Minister's approval under section 20(3A) for the lease or licence to which the statement relates.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (13:24): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

The Government supported the amendments to the bill in the Legislative Council last night. The Opposition did so as well. The Government believes that it is a reasonable proposition that the trust publishes a draft statement of reasons for a period of at least seven days for leases or licences over a period of 35 years. The draft statement of reasons will be published on the Royal Botanic Garden website. The gardens will then finalise the statement of reasons, which will be considered by me as the Minister in the approval of a lease or licence. This is in line with transparency and scrutiny.

To be clear, it is the Government's firm intention that any lease or licence entered into by the trust is consistent with the objectives of the Act. It is widely acknowledged that the trust undertakes critical work in botanic science and conservation on behalf of the people of New South Wales. It is critical that the revenue from such agreements continues to be directed towards supporting the work of the gardens and the maintenance of those important assets, as well as keeping those community-owned gardens accessibly free for everyone. I acknowledge Ms Cate Faehrmann, MLC, in the other place and the Opposition for their discussions and cooperative attitude towards the finalisation of this bill. I commend the bill as amended to the House.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:25): I speak on behalf of the Opposition. As noted by the Minister in his contribution, the Opposition supports the amendments passed in the Legislative Council yesterday.

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

Motion agreed to.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

AUTOMATIC MUTUAL RECOGNITION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Anoulack Chanthivong, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (14:31): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Automatic Mutual Recognition Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This will further expand the operation of the automatic mutual recognition [AMR] scheme in New South Wales that operates alongside the mutual recognition scheme to allow skilled and qualified workers to move between States. The bill will introduce important amendments to five Acts within the Better Regulation and Fair Trading portfolio to remove legislative barriers hindering the uptake of AMR by interstate workers, while ensuring consumer protection measures apply equally to New South Wales licence holders and interstate licence holders working in New South Wales. Through this bill the Minns Labor Government continues to demonstrate its commitment to supporting workers by reducing regulatory burdens across key industries, while maintaining comprehensive consumer protection for consumers across New South Wales. I now turn to the specific amendments in the bill.

Occupational activities under the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003, Property and Stock Agents Act 2002, and Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 are currently exempt from the AMR scheme due to legislative barriers preventing New South Wales regulators from enforcing mandatory compensation fund obligations on AMR participants. The AMR scheme supports workers and businesses across Australia by removing red tape, reducing costs and facilitating worker movement between States. It allows workers licensed interstate to work in New South Wales without needing to apply or pay for a second licence to work in New South Wales. The bill will allow interstate workers in the conveyancing, real estate and property, and automotive industries to work in New South Wales, allowing more eligible licensed workers to work in New South Wales under the scheme. By allowing licensed workers in these occupations to work in New South Wales under AMR, the bill will ensure they will not need to fill in application forms or pay a licence fee for a second occupational licence before being allowed to work in New South Wales.

One of the key impediments to including these occupations in AMR is the need to ensure that interstate licensees play by the same rules as New South Wales licence holders. This is an essential safeguard within AMR for ensuring that New South Wales consumers can access the same protections regardless of whether they use the services of a New South Wales or interstate licence holder. The compensation funds established for key licensed

occupations are an important consumer protection measure available to New South Wales consumers who suffer a financial loss due to the actions of a licensee who does the wrong thing. These compensation funds provide consumers with a last resort means of recovery when other avenues, such as court or tribunal action, have not provided an appropriate resolution. Under AMR, interstate licensees must also meet relevant mandatory compensation fund obligations while working in New South Wales. Under existing legislation, however, there are no means of calculating the appropriate amount of contribution and no options for the interstate participant to make that payment. That is why these occupations have not been included in the AMR scheme to date.

The bill amends the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003, Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 and Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013 to allow NSW Fair Trading to calculate and collect compensation fund contributions for workers under AMR. By ensuring consumer protection measures apply equally to New South Wales licence holders and AMR participants, the bill will allow more occupational activities to safely join the AMR scheme in 2025. The bill introduces amendments to also make clear that licence holder obligations and regulatory powers will apply equally across New South Wales licence holders and AMR operators. These important changes are needed to clarify that for work that an interstate licensee undertakes in New South Wales under AMR they must comply with New South Wales laws and obligations that provide protection for the public and that New South Wales compliance and enforcement powers apply equally to AMR operators as they do to New South Wales licence holders. The bill also inserts a new provision into four Acts, being the Conveyancers Licensing Act 2003, Motor Dealers and Repairers Act 2013, Property and Stock Agents Act 2002 and Tow Truck Industry Act 1998, clarifying the extraterritorial application of New South Wales regulatory powers.

The amendment confirms that NSW Fair Trading compliance and enforcement powers have extraterritorial application so far as New South Wales powers permit. The power is already in place under the Fair Trading Act 1987, and this amendment ensures consistency and clarity across New South Wales Fair Trading legislation for occupations that have or will join the AMR scheme. The clauses seek to ensure legislative clarity on the application and powers relevant to the AMR scheme. They also demonstrate the Government's commitment to ensuring that appropriate consumer protection measures are in place for the people of New South Wales. It is intended that the new occupations will join the AMR scheme from 1 July 2025. This will allow time to amend the relevant supporting regulations and for the current AMR exemptions to expire. The bill proposes amendments that will enable more occupational activities to be captured by the automatic mutual recognition scheme. Through the bill, the Minns Labor Government will reduce regulatory burden and ensure consumers across New South Wales have the benefit of consumer protection measures. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 13 November 2024.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (14:37): On behalf of the Opposition, and as shadow Minister for Corrections, I speak in debate on the Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024. In leading for the Opposition I confirm that the Opposition supports the bill. The Opposition is supportive of strong measures designed to support and improve Corrective Services NSW to allow our officers to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. We are aware that they can face challenges in their operations, like any agency or department, and there is always room for improvement to harmonise delivery of services and operations. It is essential that agencies and departments like Corrective Services operate with the highest integrity, are properly overseen and have transparency of operations. The bill does exactly that. It improves the integrity, oversight and transparency within Corrective Services NSW.

Those factors were raised in several reports and reviews into Corrective Services, such as the statutory review into the Act, the Astill inquiry and the NSW Ombudsman report into inmate discipline. The statutory review into the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012 found that, while the purposes and objectives remain valid, amendments should be introduced to improve the efficiency of the Act's operation, provide clarity in relation to the capabilities and functions of the inspector, and recognise the importance of the inspector remaining an independent body and having sufficient access to and oversight of all custodial services in New South Wales.

Eleven of the 12 recommendations put forward by the statutory review are addressed in the bill. I note that the twelfth recommendation is a simple regulatory change to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014, and that will be made ahead of the commencement of the bill. Recommendation 1 of the statutory review addresses the matter of establishing a new objects clause in the Act, which will assist with the statutory interpretation of the Act. The objects of the Act are set out, firstly, to improve the prospects of rehabilitating offenders by improving standards in custodial centres and the provision of custodial services and, secondly, to

promote the improved treatment of and improved outcomes for persons in remand. Recommendation 2 of the review is to clarify the power to request information about a custodial service. That is addressed through the amendment to section 7 of the Act, which provides clarity to allow the inspector to require custodial centre staff to supply information or produce documents relating to a custodial service.

Recommendation 3 calls for the ability of the inspector to conduct private interviews with a detainee, people at custodial facilities and those involved in the provision of services, provided it can be conducted in a secure and safe manner. That is addressed in the bill through the insertion of new section 8A into the Act, which will provide an express power for the inspector to do just that. Recommendation 4 enacted by the bill is to amend the Act to require the inspector to have regard for the legislative framework regulating custodial services and centres while exercising functions under the Act. Recommendation 5 is to expand the formal arrangements with other agencies, allowing the inspector to enter into arrangements with additional agencies to better exercise their functions. That is incredibly important.

The bill expands this to arrangements with the Health Care Complaints Commission [HCCC], the Children's Guardian and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. I used to be the chair of the committee on the HCCC. It does an outstanding job. I share the Minister's sentiments. This change is crucial to enable the investigation of matters that the inspector may be alerted to, which can found the basis of an investigation by those agencies. With these changes, section 10 of the Act is amended to establish a duty to report to the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission that they may suspect on reasonable grounds concerns of officer misconduct or serious maladministration.

Recommendation 6 amends the Act to allow the tabling of reports in Parliament at any time. This recommendation is particularly helpful to enable the timely publication of reports for consideration. Recommendation 7 further increases accountability and transparency within the custodial services, introducing a discretionary power to request information about responses to recommendations made by the inspector. This amendment, through new section 16A, establishes that the inspector may request the head of an agency or management company to provide information on the response and implementation of recommendations made. That includes requiring the inspector to request specific information on the steps taken or proposed to be taken in response to recommendations and, if no quantifiable measures have been undertaken, the reasons as to why they have not been undertaken.

Recommendation 8 establishes a formal mechanism to allow for agencies to make submissions to the inspector on public interest considerations relating to information in reports. If the inspector considers that an agency may be able to provide relevant information regarding overriding public interest against disclosure of the relevant information, new section 15A requires that the inspector must consult with those agencies first. Recommendation 9 of the report amends the Act to expressly provide that the inspector cannot disclose and produce documents prepared and received in the course of their functions, for understandable reasons. While there are exceptions to that, including to royal commissions and special commissions of inquiry proceedings, this change will reinforce confidence to those in custody that their correspondence and engagements with the inspector are confidential and protected, and will not be used in legal proceedings.

Recommendations 9 and 10 expressly deal with the role of Official Visitors and the matter of communications between Official Visitors and inmates. It consolidates the regulations of an Official Visitor into the Act, instead of the role and provision being spread across the Children (Detention Centres Act) 1987, the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 and the Children (Detention Centres) Regulation 2015. These changes have been introduced because concerns were raised in the Astill inquiry that the role of an Official Visitor was unclear and generated confusion among corrections staff and inmates. Lastly, recommendation 12 clarifies the role of the Minister for Youth Justice and their ability to exercise functions under the Act. The bill amends the Act to ensure that the Minister for Youth Justice can exercise certain functions relevant to youth detention centres, in which the Inspector of Custodial Services also exercises functions.

The Opposition welcomes the Government's acceptance of the recommendations either in full or in principle in the bill. I look forward to working further with the Minister on tracking the implementation of these recommendations and monitoring their progress. Another review—or in this case, inquiry—which identified shortcomings in Corrective Services was the Special Commission of Inquiry into Offending by Former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre, colloquially known as the Astill inquiry. The inquiry's 806-page report is confronting and distressing to read, detailing the offences committed by Wayne Astill while employed within Corrective Services. The inquiry, presented by the Hon. Peter McClellan, AM, KC, highlighted problematic issues in staffing and governance at Dillwynia, concerns surrounding reporting misconduct, obligations of staff towards staff and inmates, managing allegations, and complaint mechanisms. I have read the report and, as I said, it is incredibly confronting and distressing to hear the findings of the inquiry.

As the Minister highlighted in his second reading speech, it would be incorrect to assume that the issues faced at Dillwynia would not be present at other correctional centres across New South Wales. I am pleased that the Government has accepted all 31 recommendations from the report, either in full or in principle, to not only address the shortcomings found at Dillwynia but also Corrective Services as a whole, and that some of those recommendations will be addressed through the bill. Further, the report provided by the NSW Ombudsman relating to inmate discipline in correctional centres highlighted a need for an internal review decision into disciplinary actions taken at custodial centres.

Schedule 2 to the bill amends the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, establishing an internal review mechanism that allows for an inmate to apply to the commissioner for a review of a disciplinary action and allows the commissioner to confirm, vary or set aside the decision and substitute it with a new decision; allows the commissioner to carry out a review of a reviewable decision on their own initiative and the commissioner to confirm, vary or set aside the decision and substitute it with a new decision; and provides inmates with the ability to initiate reviews and allows Corrective Services with the ability address any past decisions identified as incorrect, unlawful or in need of correction. The bill introduces a raft of reforms that is necessary to improve the efficiency, governance and transparency of Corrective Services NSW. It will restore confidence in Corrective Services to do its job to the best of its ability and provide the necessary protections and reform to ensure that complaints can be addressed accordingly.

I thank the Minister and his incredibly dedicated staff for their time in providing briefings to me and my office. It was greatly appreciated. I look forward to working with them on future legislation and regulation. I also highlight the great work done by Jack Robinson in my office in working with the Minister's staff and putting this information together. This is an important piece of legislation that clears the decks for Corrective Services to move forward. Every day thousands of honourable and hardworking corrections staff go into centres and do the right thing. Outlined in the Astill report was the complete opposite of the work that these staff members do. I have also had the pleasure of talking with the union representatives, who are supportive. I acknowledge the extensive work done by the Minister's office in working with stakeholders to compile this good piece of legislation. The Minister and I are passionate about this matter. It is a relatively normal and uncontroversial bill, but it is incredibly important for the good, honest corrections officers. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:49): I make a brief contribution in support of the Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024. The bill amends the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012 [ICS Act] and the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 to improve transparency, oversight and accountability across the custodial environment. The bill addresses several key issues that have been highlighted through public reports, statutory reviews and inquiries over recent years. It is a clear commitment to enhancing our correctional system's performance, accountability and public trust.

The amendments to the Inspector of Custodial Services Act are a direct response to the recommendations of the 2021 statutory review aimed at strengthening the role of the Inspector of Custodial Services and enhancing accountability in our correctional and juvenile justice systems. The bill will introduce provisions that clarify the inspector's powers and responsibilities, and it also establishes the role of Official Visitors in correctional centres and juvenile justice centres. Additionally, the bill amends the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, granting the Commissioner of Corrective Services the authority to review decisions regarding correctional centre offences. That amendment aims to address deficiencies in inmate discipline and promote fairness within the correctional system.

The context of the bill is shaped by recent critical findings. Among those are the recommendations from the report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into offending by former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre, otherwise known as the Astill inquiry. The inquiry, led by the Hon. Justice Peter McClellan, highlighted several shortcomings at Dillwynia, but Justice McClellan emphasised that those issues are likely present in correctional centres across the State. The bill introduces crucial changes based on the Astill inquiry's recommendations, including provisions to clarify the role of Official Visitors and bolster their independence in addressing inmate complaints.

Furthermore, the bill addresses findings from the recent NSW Ombudsman's report on inmate discipline, which identified several procedural issues and inconsistencies and the absence of a review mechanism within the inmate disciplinary system. Those shortcomings have led to situations where decisions were improperly administered or could not be fairly challenged by inmates. In response, the bill introduces a review process to correct those deficiencies and ensure that disciplinary actions are administered fairly, transparently and within legal standards.

The bill represents a major step forward in achieving a more accountable and transparent corrections system, which is crucial to restoring public confidence in our institutions. A major component of the bill is the establishment of an objects clause in the Inspector of Custodial Services Act, which is an essential step in

clarifying its purpose and strengthening its role. That objects clause makes it clear that the ICS Act seeks to improve standards in custodial centres and promote the humane treatment of those in remand and detention. One key recommendation from the statutory review was to empower the inspector to request information not only about custodial centre operations but also about custodial services. That is necessary to bridge any gaps in oversight by extending the inspector's ability to access and scrutinise relevant information.

The bill therefore amends section 7 of the ICS Act, expanding the inspector's information-gathering powers to include custodial services and documentation related to service provision. It ensures there is no ambiguity about the inspector's jurisdiction, enhancing accountability within the correctional and juvenile systems. Additionally, the bill enables the inspector to conduct private interviews, allowing for confidential discussions between the inspector, inmates and custodial staff members. That important new power will provide the inspector with a fuller understanding of conditions and concerns within custodial facilities. The bill also improves interagency cooperation by expanding information-sharing arrangements. The inspector will now be able to share information with a broader range of agencies, including the Health Care Complaints Commission and the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission. That will facilitate a more holistic approach to monitoring and protecting inmates' welfare, while also allowing agencies to work more closely on complex cases.

The bill also responds to inmate disciplinary concerns raised in the Ombudsman's report. New provisions within the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act will enable the Commissioner of Corrective Services to review disciplinary decisions. That new review mechanism will empower the commissioner to address potential procedural errors and issue corrections, if necessary, even if the original decision was made by a correctional centre governor. That change will reduce undue hardship on inmates due to unfair or incorrect decisions and bolster inmates' rights within the disciplinary process.

The bill represents a significant and necessary enhancement to the legislative framework governing our custodial system. By responding directly to the findings of the statutory review, the Astill inquiry and the NSW Ombudsman's report, we are acting to improve the standards and integrity of our custodial facilities. The bill reflects our Government's deep commitment to fostering a corrections system that upholds justice, dignity and public trust. It is a crucial element of the reforms necessary to deliver a system where accountability, integrity and fairness are fundamental. With that, I commend the bill to the House.

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (14:56): I contribute to debate on the Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024. In his second reading speech, the Minister declared, "The Government is absolutely committed to delivering a more accountable and transparent corrections system." Those words are striking given the blatant contradiction in the Government's 2023 decision to de-privatise the Junee Correctional Centre [JCC], which undermined those commitments. While I support the intent of the bill to improve oversight and accountability, I must expose the glaring hypocrisy evident in the Labor Government's handling of JCC. We were told that the bill responds to the findings of several public reviews and aims to instil public confidence in Corrective Services NSW. How can the Government claim to prioritise integrity and oversight when it recklessly dismantled a successful correctional model in Junee, which has outperformed many State-run facilities for over 30 years?

The Government's decision to de-privatise Junee Correctional Centre is a textbook example of disregarding evidence-based success. The Minister claimed that the bill "implements the recommendations of the statutory review of the ICS Act to clarify and enhance the role of the Inspector of Custodial Services to improve accountability". But what about the accountability the Government is shirking in Junee? GEO Group's strong performance has been acknowledged, with independent reports from the Inspector of Custodial Services lauding its operational standards. Despite that clear evidence of success, the Government blindsided the Junee community, announcing its decision to ditch GEO Group, without consultation, through a hasty press release issued on 3 November 2023. In his second reading speech, the Minister talked about "restoring and maintaining public confidence in the system".

Where was that commitment to transparency and consultation when the people of Junee were left searching for answers? The Minister did not even visit Junee until there was a public outcry and, through my advocacy, he was forced to visit. His dismissive references to the town as "down there" reveal a disturbing ignorance about regional New South Wales. Under the GEO Group, Junee Correctional Centre has operated as a benchmark for best practices, as affirmed by multiple reviews, including feedback from the Inspector of Custodial Services. In his second reading speech, the Minister said:

The objects ... of the ICS Act are to improve the prospects for the rehabilitation of offenders by improving standards in custodial centres ...

That is precisely what the GEO Group has achieved at JCC, through innovative rehabilitation programs, community integration and performance that has outshone many State-managed centres. It is deeply ironic that a

government touting improved standards and oversight is dismantling a proven model like the one in operation at Junee—not for one year or 10 years but three decades. Moreover, the centre has contributed more than \$7.5 million annually to the local economy by contracting with local businesses—our butchers, bakers and supermarkets. Over the past five years alone, the centre has provided more than \$77,000 in scholarships to local schoolchildren and \$172,000 in sponsorships and donations to community organisations.

This support is not just financial; it is deeply interwoven into the community, from in-kind services such as inmates working for the council to relieving the burden on local charities. Over 30 years this vast and varied support from the GEO Group, for which we are deeply grateful, has become essential to Junee's social and economic fabric. Yet during budget estimates hearings, when asked about continuing this support, the Government bluntly admitted that such contributions "will not continue" under State management. How does this align with this bill's goal of promoting "improved outcomes for persons in custody on remand"? The community and inmate support programs at JCC have improved outcomes demonstrably, yet the Government has offered little to no information on the future of these programs.

The human cost of this decision cannot be overstated. In his second reading speech, the Minister highlighted the bill's aim to deliver "safer workplaces for staff members". But what about the employees at JCC? The GEO Group employs hundreds of people. Many of them are deeply embedded in the Junee community and surrounding communities in the Cootamundra electorate, including Coolamon, Cootamundra, Temora, and other smaller villages. More than 12 months on from the New South Wales Government's announcement, GEO Group team members, who have dedicated years—sometimes decades—of service continue to face an uncertain future.

We are 4½ months out from handover and the New South Wales Government still fails to guarantee that their jobs will be secure or that accrued entitlements—such as long service leave, annual leave and sick leave—will transfer when State control begins. We are talking about real people with real lives, yet they are left in limbo with no new contracts or employment assurances. The Minister said:

The bill makes important and immediate changes to the laws that govern Corrective Services NSW.

How ironic is it, then, that while claiming to improve governance the Government's actions have created uncertainty among JCC's staff, causing an exodus of experienced workers. They can hardly be blamed for seeking secure employment elsewhere during a cost-of-living and housing crisis. The economic impact on local businesses that have relied on contracts with JCC for years is also devastating. The Government's procurement practices, favouring large, statewide suppliers, will shut out our local enterprises. This is the antithesis of community-focused governance that the Minister purports to champion in the Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024 before the House.

In his second reading speech, the Minister emphasised the bill's provisions for consultation and oversight, including allowing the inspector to conduct private interviews and consult with relevant agencies about public interest considerations. How does that align with the Government's failure to consult the Junee community or address its concerns transparently? During budget estimates hearings the Minister and his officials evaded questions about job security and economic impacts, offering nothing but bureaucratic jargon. Where is the commitment to the "timely publication of reports" and "greater accountability" when the Government is unwilling to be held accountable for its actions concerning JCC?

We must consider the future implications of the juxtaposition of the bill and the real-world impacts of the New South Wales Labor Government's decision to de-privatise Junee Correctional Centre. On the one hand, the Minister assures us that these legislative changes will "address systemic issues and improve governance". However, on the other hand, they are removing the GEO Group as the operator of a well-managed, high-performing facility like JCC. Such directions and decisions will only exacerbate systemic issues in our correctional system. The performance, community support and economic benefits provided by the GEO Group will vanish, leaving a void that this Government is woefully unprepared to fill.

It is important to consider the financial implications of the Government's decision to bring Junee Correctional Centre back under State control. The GEO Group contract cost taxpayers between \$50 million and \$60 million annually, but costs will now balloon to an estimated \$75 million to \$80 million per year under State management. That is an additional \$25 million to \$30 million every year in perpetuity. [*Extension of time*]

That is a staggering increase, and it is even harder to stomach when we remember that one of the first decisions of this Labor Government was to shelve the Coalition's commitment to build a desperately needed new hospital in Coolamon, which is just up the road. That hospital would have cost \$56 million—an investment roughly equivalent to two years of the increased running costs of Junee Correctional Centre. It is an outrageous misallocation of resources, prioritising an expensive and unnecessary takeover while the health needs of our communities go unmet.

Therefore, I call on the Government to reverse this disastrous decision and genuinely honour the principles of oversight and accountability that the bill claims to uphold. It is not too late to make the right choice, one that prioritises evidence-based outcomes and community welfare over political expedience. The Minister spoke of "enhancing the role of Official Visitors to resolve complaints independently". We need the same level of independence and scrutiny applied to the decision-making processes surrounding JCC. Immediate action is needed to protect GEO Group employees. They deserve clarity, new employment contracts and assurances that their entitlements will be honoured in the transition. Anything less is a betrayal of the very values the bill claims to enshrine.

The words and actions of this Government do not align. The Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024 speaks of transparency, governance and safety, yet the Government's actions regarding Junee Correctional Centre reflect the opposite. As the member for Cootamundra, I will not stand by idly while our community and its hardworking people are sacrificed for political gain. I will continue to fight for the accountability, community wellbeing and high standards of governance that our electorate deserves.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (15:08): I contribute to debate on the Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024. I thank all members who have contributed to debate. I note that the member for Cootamundra spoke about the concerns of her community members that she would like to make representations on. I draw on the words of Karly Warner, CEO of the Aboriginal Legal Service in New South Wales, who said, "When prisons are run for profit, there will always be a focus on the bottom line that competes with the wellbeing and safety of imprisoned people." That speaks to the heart of the decisions that this Government has made. When we are talking about prisons and the people who work in them and live in them, complex decisions have to be made. The Government has made one of them.

The bill will amend the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012, or the ICS Act, and the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, or the CAS Act, to improve the integrity and oversight of Corrective Services NSW. The bill implements the recommendations of several recent public reviews and reports into Corrective Services NSW, which have identified ways to improve transparency and accountability across the system. The bill implements 11 of the 12 recommendations of the *Report of the Statutory Review of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012*, which was tabled in October 2021, to improve the operation of the Act and help it meet its policy objectives in setting out the authority, functions and powers of the inspector.

The role of the Inspector of Custodial Services is to provide scrutiny of the conditions and treatment of people in custodial facilities, and outcomes in adult and youth custodial centres settings, as well as oversee the Official Visitor program. Official Visitors are independent community members who act as independent observers of youth and adult custodial facilities. The Government acknowledges the critical role that the inspector plays in monitoring and improving standards within New South Wales custodial facilities. By implementing the recommendations of the statutory review of the ICS Act, the bill will improve the efficient operation of the Act and clarify the role and functions of the inspector.

The bill also introduces amendments to the Official Visitors scheme in response to commentary in the report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Offending by Former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre. The Astill inquiry report was released in March 2024. The Government is committed to ensuring that the Official Visitor program operates efficiently to ensure the welfare and safety of inmates and detainees in New South Wales custodial centres. The bill does that by consolidating all provisions relating to the Official Visitors program into the ICS Act, as per recommendation 10 of the statutory review. This will streamline oversight arrangements so the Official Visitor program is couched within the same legislative framework as the inspector. The bill makes important changes to Official Visitor provisions to address concerns identified by the Astill inquiry, with the overarching aim of providing inmates with greater trust and confidence in the complaints-handling processes.

The bill also introduces into the CAS Act an internal review mechanism for inmate discipline decisions in response to the NSW Ombudsman's report on inmate discipline, tabled in August 2024. The inmate discipline system is critical for ensuring the safety, security and good order of correctional facilities. The NSW Ombudsman's report on inmate discipline found that some aspects of the administration of inmate discipline across all New South Wales custodial facilities were contrary to law, while others were unreasonable, unjust and otherwise wrong. The bill implements recommendations of the Ombudsman by amending the CAS Act to create an internal review mechanism for decisions made under the correctional centre discipline provisions. The amendment will improve the fairness of the discipline system.

The bill also provides an express power for the Commissioner of Corrective Services NSW to review inmate discipline decisions on application by an inmate or on the commissioner's own initiative. If the commissioner undertakes a review, they will be able to confirm or vary the initial decision or set aside the decision and substitute a new decision. This reform is an important first step in the Government's response to the serious

issues raised by the Ombudsman about the correctional centre discipline regime. Corrective Services NSW has also commenced a review of the inmate discipline system and its administration with the long-term objective of significant reform to improve the fairness and effective operation of the disciplinary system. This bill forms part of the Government's wider reform package to lift standards, deliver better workplaces for staff and protect inmates across Corrective Services NSW. In introducing this bill, the Government upholds its commitment to make the necessary changes to rebuild trust in the corrections system and ensure a safer environment for staff and inmates in New South Wales.

I have a particular interest in this bill because the Silverwater Correctional Complex is located in the Parramatta electorate. It comprises three correctional facilities: the Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre, the Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre and the Dawn de Loas Correctional Centre, which is currently temporarily closed. The Silverwater Women's Correctional Centre is a maximum-security facility for women and the major reception centre for female offenders in New South Wales. The most recent statistics confirm that a total of 150 women are housed there. The Metropolitan Remand and Reception Centre is a maximum-security correctional facility for male offenders. It currently houses 1,158 men. The Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024 proposes reforms that will impact all those housed in the Silverwater Correctional Complex and their families, as well as the dedicated employers who work there. It is important that we get this piece of legislation right and these amendments are passed. I thank the Minister for Corrections for introducing this important bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:16): I support the Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024. I thank the Minister for Corrections for its introduction and the shadow Minister for his comments. I acknowledge Inspector of Custodial Services Fiona Rafter and her incredibly dedicated team for the work they do. The Minister for Corrections has introduced this bill to improve the integrity, oversight, transparency and accountability of the Corrective Services system. I welcome any bill that advances public confidence in Corrective Services and Youth Justice in New South Wales. In 1910, after becoming Liberal Home Secretary, before his defection to the Conservatives, Winston Churchill told the House of Commons:

The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unfailing tests of the civilization of any country.

Those sentiments echo throughout history, from Dostoevsky to Benjamin Franklin. This bill implements 11 of the 12 recommendations of the *Report of the Statutory Review of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012*, dated May 2021. That report was an execution of section 28 of the Act and the responsibility of the Minister to review the Act. The outstanding recommendation is addressed by an amendment to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014. The Act passed in Parliament on 15 August 2012. It responded to the dissolving of the Inspector-General of Corrective Services in 2003 and recommendations of the then five-year review of the office. That review responded to issues of duplication of work in dealing with complaints by correctional inmates, the privatisation of prisons and prison-related services, the need for independent prison inspectors in public and private prisons, and the establishment of a prisons oversight committee. On 23 May 2012 the then member for Epping and Attorney General, Mr Greg Smith, referred to the recommendations of the Legislative Council General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3 inquiry into the privatisation of prisons and prison-related services in June 2009. He said:

By improving the standards within correctional facilities we are improving the prospects of rehabilitation of offenders. If offenders are rehabilitated properly they can become productive, law-abiding members of society on their release. Therefore, by improving standards within correctional facilities we are improving the safety of the community as a whole.

In addition to the 2021 statutory review, this bill also responds to the findings of the report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Offending by Former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre, led by the Hon. Justice Peter McClellan, AM, KC. I am pleased the Government has accepted all 31 recommendations of the Astill inquiry as it seeks to clarify the role of Official Visitors in the independent complaints process, particularly to enhance inmates' access and understanding. Finally, the bill responds to concerns outlined in the NSW Ombudsman's report, *Investigation into inmate discipline in NSW correctional centres*, published in August 2024, examining how discipline is managed across all correctional centres and the dealings of inmates who are alleged to have committed a correctional centre offence while in custody.

Put simply, the investigation found a systemic failure across all correctional centres in relation to inmate discipline as well as of legislation and policy. Amongst other things—and I will not rehash the Minister's response to the statutory review of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012 in his second reading speech—the bill acknowledges the important function of Official Visitors and that inmates may not understand their independence, function or accessibility. The Legislation Review Committee considered the bill and also the delegated legislative powers. The committee stated:

The provisions would allow an inmate who is found by the governor of their correctional centre to be guilty of a correctional centre offence, and subject to a penalty, to apply to the Commissioner for that decision to be reviewed. The Committee notes that it may be important for affected persons to understand when the provisions apply to them and when they can then access the review process.

The second component of the Minister's introduction and second reading of the bill deals with the NSW Ombudsman's report on inmate discipline concerning offences prescribed in the regulations. Conduct by an inmate that may constitute a criminal offence is dealt with in house and may include reprimand, caution or punishment. The dealing is administrative in nature but may have lasting consequences for an individual, including one's classification or parole outcomes. It is most concerning the Ombudsman found that elements of the administration of inmate discipline was contrary to the law, including cases of offences not being proven beyond reasonable doubt—criminal law 101—a standard of proof and critical component of our criminal justice and the presumption of innocence.

Other issues raised by the Ombudsman included language barriers, understanding of the process of disciplinary inquiries, excessive penalties and appeal rights, and the bill provides for the internal review mechanism to address those very legitimate concerns. I welcome and support the bill and commend the Minister for improving the framework and services offered through his department. Beyond the specifics of the bill, it is vital to consider the broader justice reform initiatives, including the "Jailing is Failing" campaign. The Ombudsman's report highlighted the plight of vulnerable inmates, with significant proportions being Aboriginal or having other vulnerabilities such as disabilities. Those issues must be addressed to ensure that our Corrective Services system is humane and just. I believe that is at the heart of this review and, indeed, the Minister's actions.

In my time as the Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, I also oversaw the Youth Justice portfolio. I dealt with the inspector very closely during that time, and I was always impressed with the commitment to that role, as well as to Official Visitors. During that time, I was proud to work on strategies that led to a significant reduction of young people in detention, particularly Aboriginal young people in detention. I was also proud to have hit my Closing the Gap targets around the reduction of Aboriginal kids coming into detention. While the Inspector of Custodial Services has a statutory role to play, they also take issues of this nature very seriously and want to improve outcomes for people who come into the criminal justice system, particularly with young people. With any inmate, no matter their background or their circumstances, the efforts of any system of incarceration should be to ensure that, whilst a person might be with them for a period, they never return.

Everyone's pathway in life is different. The inspector plays a key role in ensuring our international obligation and the legislative obligations of the State and overseeing the operational aspects of the department, as well as ensuring that reviews and revisions of the Act, such as this bill, provide the necessary powers to ensure that our system is operating as it should—more efficiently and more effectively. I appreciate the feedback from Ms Rafter and her team in that regard. I thank the Minister, his department and his staff for their good work. Getting a bill through Parliament can be challenging, but it is good to see that all sides of the House came together to back what is sensible policy and good reform. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:23): I speak in support of the Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024. The bill will implement recommendations of several public reviews of the Act. It is also part of some broader reforms by this Government to ensure that we have a transparent and effective corrective system. It is part of our commitment to making sure that we make the necessary changes to rebuild trust in the corrections system and, most importantly, to ensure a safe environment for all staff and inmates at correctional facilities in New South Wales.

I will address the comments made earlier by the member for Cootamundra. I appreciate that the Junee corrections facility is in her electorate. It is a major employer, and she has concerns about it. However, I found it striking that she also, effectively, supported privatisation in this place. This Government was elected with a clear mandate to end privatisation, where appropriate, and to stop further privatisation and bring things in house. The Minister and the Government have made the right decision to do that with Junee. I note that the decision to bring an end to the outsourcing contract for Junee came after a coroner's inquest into the death of Reuben Button in September 2020. He died at the Junee correctional facility, and the coronial inquiry found that one of the major reasons for his death was resourcing.

That is what happens with privatisation. It is driven by the profit motive. There is a view that cutting costs can increase revenue. Frankly, I find it abhorrent that anyone would consider privatising a prison. Some things are beyond the pale. We certainly do not want to go down the path of the United States of having what is, in effect, a prison industrial complex. There are noted public examples of corruption where private prisons bribe judicial officers for tougher sentences in order to send people to jail for minor drug offences so that they can make more profits. The Minister and the Government have made the right decision on Junee and with this bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:26): The Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024 aims to improve transparency and accountability in correctional facilities in response to reviews calling for improvements, including a special commission of inquiry into sexual assault by a corrections officer in a women's prison. Incarceration, even in a well-managed facility, can be a difficult experience. Inmates are isolated and disconnected from their friends and family, and subjected to confinement, strict rules, boredom, poor food options and little to no autonomy.

When facilities are poorly managed and support bullying and intimidation, prison life can be devastating. There is a practice of dehumanising prisoners and treating them as if, no matter what, they are getting what they deserve. Indeed, we do not let those serving a full-time sentence of three years or more to vote in Federal elections or those serving a sentence of 12 months or more to vote in State elections. All humans have the right to be treated with humanity, dignity and respect, and it is the State's responsibility to honour those rights to inmates through a stable, secure and safe detention environment. I welcome the bill's focus on facilitating and addressing inmate complaints and increasing the oversight of facilities.

The New South Wales prison population continues to balloon, and we now have the highest number of incarcerated adults and the second-highest number of incarcerated children and young people in the country. The adult prison population is about 12,300, and the children and young people population is, on average, 200 kids on any night. Most people are incarcerated for minor offences linked to economic inequality and systemic discrimination. The incarceration of women, which is rapidly rising, has links to sexual, domestic and family violence and childhood abuse. Those drivers of contact with the justice system are not addressed by the jail experience but rather entrenched by it, often resulting in recidivism. Children are especially damaged by detention and led into a life of disadvantage and offending.

The cost of incarceration per person is over \$100,000 a year. Meanwhile, successful programs that have been shown to break the cycle of incarceration and recidivism remain unfunded. There is no evidence that our high prison population has improved community safety, and it is time that we reset and reinvest in diversionary programs and community supports. There are excellent evidence-based, community-led programs with proven success that we could start funding now to reap significant future savings. I support the call of the Justice Reform Initiative for the New South Wales Government to establish a \$300 million breaking the cycle fund over four years. The fund would be an investment that would improve community safety, help us achieve Closing the Gap targets and see massive improvements to the lives of people who are disadvantaged.

As members know, I am a strong supporter of raising the age of criminal responsibility in New South Wales to 14, and I will be working with my crossbench colleagues to address that in the new year. I hope that members reflect on the tough on crime rhetoric that is often adopted by politicians in Parliament and its long-term impacts on vulnerable people, families and communities. There are few community benefits to this approach. It is time that we support a new, compassionate response to offending that focuses on prevention. I thank the Minister and his staff for working on the legislation and bringing it to the Parliament. I thank the many people who work in correctional facilities and who are really focused on inmate welfare. I thank the people in correctional facilities who will have a pathway to addressing their concerns through this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (15:31): In reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Inspector of Custodial Services Amendment Bill 2024, particularly the members representing the electorates of Terrigal, Mount Druitt, Cootamundra, Parramatta, Sydney, Leppington and Kiama. I welcome the support for the bill across the Parliament. The New South Wales Government is committed to improving integrity, oversight and transparency in the New South Wales correctional system. The bill is part of a comprehensive suite of reforms we are progressing to achieve that change.

The bill strengthens the role of the Inspector of Custodial Services by amending the Inspector of Custodial Services Act 2012 to implement the legislative recommendations from the 2021 statutory review of the Act. The bill also addresses concerns raised in the report of the Special Commission of Inquiry into Offending by Former Corrections Officer Wayne Astill at Dillwynia Correctional Centre by clarifying the role and independence of Official Visitors. Additionally, the bill takes a critical step in addressing concerns raised in the report of the Ombudsman entitled *Investigation into inmate discipline in NSW correctional centres* by amending the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 to introduce a review mechanism as part of the correctional centre discipline regime.

I thank the shadow Minister, the member for Terrigal, for his support of the bill and note his interest in the monitoring of the reforms. The Department of Communities and Justice will maintain regular communication with Corrective Services NSW and the Inspector of Custodial Services throughout the implementation period and will closely monitor the operation of these reforms following their commencement. I am glad to hear there is

bipartisan support for implementing the recommendations of both the statutory review of the Inspector of Custodial Services Act and those of the Astill inquiry. I am also glad that the member for Terrigal acknowledged the shocking and deplorable nature of Astill's offending. I agree that this behaviour does not reflect the thousands of hardworking correctional officers who do the right thing each and every day.

I note the concerns of the member for Cootamundra about the de-privatisation of Junee Correctional Centre. I ask the member why she is so eager for a multinational company to continue making a profit off the local community. Consistent with our election policy commitment to ensuring public-owned assets remain in public hands, the public management of Junee Correctional Centre will actually provide better pay, better conditions and career opportunities for frontline workers, including 340 well-paid public sector jobs for the region. Junee remains a crucial part of the New South Wales prison network, and I assure staff that their entitlements are safe. I am proud to lead reforms that will create meaningful change in the Corrective Services NSW system after 12 years of inaction from those opposite.

The bill responds to several recent public reviews and reports which have identified ways to improve transparency and accountability in Corrective Services NSW. Together, the amendments in the bill indicate the Government's ongoing commitment to restoring confidence in the operations and integrity of the Corrective Services NSW system. I again thank the stakeholders that have contributed to the development of the bill. In particular, I thank the Public Service Association, the Inspector of Custodial Services, the NSW Ombudsman, Legal Aid NSW, the New South Wales Bar Association, the Law Society of New South Wales and Domestic Violence NSW for their considered input.

I also thank the staff from both the Department of Communities and Justice and Corrective Services NSW who have supported the development of the bill, including consultation with stakeholders. I thank Sally Taylor, Jonathan Lee, Kate Peltonen, David Spackman, Sallie McLean and all other staff involved for their work and commitment to ensure the laws that govern Corrective Services NSW best support integrity, transparency and accountability in the operations of the system. I also acknowledge the work of the staff in my office, Alicia Sylvester, my director of policy, and Constance Piperides, my policy adviser, for their work on this bill to improve the operations of Corrective Services NSW. 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 ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (NSW MOTORWAYS) BILL 2024

Second Reading Speech

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:36): On behalf of Ms Jo Haylen: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. This bill amends the Transport Administration Act 1988 to provide for the establishment of NSW Motorways, a new entity which will own and operate publicly owned tollways and tolled bridges, tunnels and road ferries and provide competitive tension with private concessionaires. The establishment of NSW Motorways is a significant next step in this Government's program of reform of the New South Wales tolled road system. We are getting on with the job of reforming the toll road network, something those opposite did not have the courage or stamina to tackle. We are doing the hard work to ease this cost-of-living nightmare.

It is not just about easing the burden on motorists; the status quo is also a handbrake on productivity for businesses and investment in our city. Professor Allan Fels said high toll prices were driving people off the motorways and creating congestion across our other roads. The Federal transport department estimates the cost of congestion on Sydney roads is \$13.6 billion. If that looks suboptimal now, imagine how far out of step we will be when the last concessions end in 2060. Without toll reform, in three and a half decades it could cost \$34 just to drive through WestConnex. A trip from Marsden Park, one of the hardest hit suburbs in Western Sydney, could cost \$64 one way.

We made a number of commitments to the people of New South Wales before the last election. Firstly, we committed to instituting a toll cap of \$60 per week and providing refunds to those who paid more. That has been

delivered in spades. On 31 October this year the Minister for Roads was pleased to announce that motorists in the Western Sydney suburbs of Blacktown and Baulkham Hills have collectively claimed more than \$1 million in toll relief for each suburb under the Minns Labor Government's \$60 weekly toll cap. More than 224,000 claims have been made, with \$60.5 million already returned to motorists. The average rebate is \$284. More than 11,000 motorists have received quarterly toll relief rebates of more than \$1,000 since the program started. As the Premier has stated:

The \$60 toll cap is one of the most important cost-of-living measures the NSW Government is providing, and it is heartening to see that the relief is getting to where it is needed most—Western Sydney.

We also committed to establishing an expert review of the tolling system in this State. Professor Allan Fels and David Cousins delivered their final report in July this year. The review found that tolls were too high, and that the tolling system was flawed and lacked transparency and flexibility. It found that Transurban has dominated the tollway market. The review recommended a consistent, network-wide tolling system based on a declining distance model that will reduce tolls for the majority of trips for the majority of drivers. The Government is working on the right model for delivering such a system. We believe network tolling is possible. The Government is open to negotiating with the toll operators on this, as they are willing to be part of the solution. Negotiation is the Government's preferred approach, and it is currently underway.

The review also recommended the establishment of a State-owned motorways entity with responsibility for improving outcomes and transparency for motorists, and to strengthen governance and accountability over New South Wales toll roads. In response, we committed in this year's budget to establish a New South Wales motorways entity, which is the commitment we deliver on today through the introduction of the bill. We also made further commitments to review the administrative fee structure for road tolls across the network, with a view to reducing fees and capping the total in admin fees able to be charged, and to release the terms of the multimillion-dollar tolling deals between the State Government and the private sector. The Government is working through these reforms now, taking account of the insights provided by the expert review, and they will be delivered before the next election.

Members will appreciate that the tolling system in the State is complex, with many of the details kept hidden in the provisions of private contracts. These deals are often done behind closed doors between the Government, which is looking to finance these roads, and the private companies, which in the end benefit from the revenue streams that flow from the use of these roads. As I have noted, the Government has committed to making the details of these deals public. The public has a right to know the contents of these agreements. The Government is working on that but, as members will understand, it involves significant legal issues in making sure that the Government does it in an appropriate way. Similarly complex is the reworking of the way in which toll charges are calculated and imposed on drivers and how administrative charges are applied when tolls are not paid immediately. The Government is working through those issues and will deliver solutions before the next election.

The bill provides for the establishment of a new government agency, to be known as NSW Motorways. The principal objective of NSW Motorways will be to deliver safe and reliable toll roads and toll road services in an efficient, effective and financially responsible manner. The bill defines toll roads to include publicly owned tollways and tolled, publicly owned bridges and tunnels. In addition to that core objective, NSW Motorways will also be bound by the same expectations as other transport entities, like Sydney Trains and NSW Trains, including that it be a successful business, exhibit social responsibility, be mindful of its responsibilities to the environment, and be sensitive to regional development and decentralisation. In relation to that final point, I note that, while all current toll roads are located in the Sydney metropolitan area, the evidence is clear that motorists from the Central Coast and the Illawarra, like those in Western Sydney, are also heavily affected by the burden of toll costs.

NSW Motorways will take over the ownership of publicly operated tollways and tolling for the Sydney Harbour Bridge from Transport for NSW. This will happen through a transfer order made by the Minister. Private leases of tollways will continue. But when those leases come to an end, those tollways will be able to be vested in NSW Motorways by order of the Minister. As a result, NSW Motorways will own the Sydney Harbour Tunnel, the road surface of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and, on their opening, the Western Harbour Tunnel and M6. The new entity created through the bill will have a range of functions, some of which are currently exercised by Transport for NSW and others which are new functions that will assist in improving the tolling system in this State.

NSW Motorways will own and operate publicly operated tollways not subject to private concession arrangements and the road surface and tolling infrastructure of the Sydney Harbour Bridge; facilitate the collection of tolls by it and other toll operators, including taking over the existing government retailer, E-Toll, and administering toll compliance; collect and publish information about public and privately owned toll roads and toll road services to increase transparency and competition; advocate on behalf of toll customers; administer toll

relief schemes; enter into or administer arrangements involving the collection of tolls; and charge and recover fees for using tollways and the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

This new agency, with a specific focus on tolling operations and functions, will take control of and reset the New South Wales toll network and take charge of the motorist experience. As the operator of toll roads and the administrator of tolling schemes, it will provide a competitive tension to counterbalance the dominance of other players in the tolling market. The customer advocate function is an entirely new focus for the agency. The inclusion of this function responds to concerns expressed by both the independent review and the August 2022 report of the Legislative Council committee inquiry into road tolling regimes. The customer advocate will set standards for conduct and service, and advise the Minister, chief executive and Secretary of Transport for NSW on issues related to customer experience and outcomes for toll road customers.

Governance will ensure that decision-making processes are reviewed, with recommendations made to improve customer focus. For complaints received by the NSW Motorways entity regarding the services it provides, the customer advocate will review and resolve customer issues and complaints while identifying those of a systemic nature to drive system-wide improvements. The customer advocate will play a key role in ensuring transparency through supporting the provision of data to increase transparency and improve customer outcomes. The customer advocate will also educate motorists as the transition to network tolling occurs and provide a dedicated focus on motorist experience improvements.

Further support for customers will be available from the new industry tollway ombudsman proposed by the bill. A tollway ombudsman scheme will be approved by the Minister to deal with disputes and complaints between toll customers and toll operators in New South Wales. All toll operators in the State, both private and public, including the NSW Motorways entity, will be members and, as members, will be bound by the scheme. Customers, on the other hand, will be able to choose whether they wish to be bound by the determinations of the scheme. Members of the scheme will pay a contribution to fund its management and administration, and to ensure compliance with the scheme.

The high price paid by motorists to use Sydney's toll roads is a feature of the secretive contractual arrangements entered into by earlier governments and their private toll providers. I have already spoken about the Government's commitment to develop a network-wide tolling scheme that can result in lower tolls, particularly for those who use more than one toll road per journey or travel long distances. This is a complex endeavour, but the Government will deliver before the next election. In the meantime, the bill establishes the ability for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] to monitor the pricing of toll roads following a referral from the Minister or the Minister administering the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act.

I turn to the detailed provisions of the bill. I note at the outset that although NSW Motorways will be an agency with a specific remit—with its own objectives and functions, as I described earlier—many provisions establishing the entity are very similar to those that underpin the existence and activities of the other transport agencies, such as Sydney Trains, NSW Trains and Sydney Ferries. The main difference is that while the other operating agencies deliver public transport, NSW Motorways will be operating facilities for private transport. It is therefore not possible to define it as a public transport agency. Nevertheless, the bill includes a provision in new section 39G requiring NSW Motorways, in the exercise of its functions, to have regard to the common objectives that bind the public transport agencies. This will assist in ensuring that the services it provides are considered in light of, and integrated with, public transport services as appropriate.

NSW Motorways will be established under new section 39 as a statutory corporation and as a New South Wales Government agency. Its principal objectives and other objectives are set out in new section 39A, and its specific functions are in new section 39B. These are in the same terms as I have described earlier. In relation to its functions, I note that new section 39B further provides that it may also have other functions under this or other Acts, and is able to conduct business or activities that it considers will further its objectives, make contracts in relation to its functions, and appoint agents and act as agent for others. These are all standard provisions for the transport agencies. It will have similar powers to Transport for NSW in relation to dealing with land and the sale, lease or disposal of land, as well as the acquisition of land. These are conferred in new section 39B as powers under the Roads Act 1993.

In accordance with new section 39D, the chief executive of NSW Motorways will be appointed by the secretary, with the approval of the Minister, and will be a member of the transport service. Under new section 39E, the chief executive will be required to manage and control the agency's affairs in accordance with any directions of Transport for NSW. Under new section 39F, the agency will need to keep the Minister informed of the conduct of its activities and any significant developments, as well as respond to any requests for information from the Minister. I have already noted new section 39G, which will oblige the agency to have regard to the common objectives of the public transport agencies that are set out in section 2B of the Act. Subsection (2) of that provision

also requires NSW Motorways to determine its service delivery priorities, having regard to the annual statement of expectations that it will receive from the Transport secretary.

In the exercise of its functions, NSW Motorways will be, like the other transport agencies, subject to the control and direction of the Minister and the Transport secretary. It will be able to delegate powers to and receive delegations of powers from Transport, as well as delegate powers internally. New section 39H contains requirements in relation to the drafting of and consultation on NSW Motorways' annual corporate plan, which again align with requirements for other transport agencies. Similarly, new section 39I provides for delegations to and from NSW Motorways in similar terms to existing provisions applying to the other entities.

New section 39J, however, is specific to the functions of NSW Motorways. It proposes powers for NSW Motorways to be able to collect, use and disclose information, including personal information, obtained in the exercise of its functions for the purpose of administering a toll relief scheme or any other scheme that might be prescribed by regulation. That section obliges the toll entity from which information is requested to supply it. Failure to do so will be an offence attracting a penalty of 200 penalty units for a corporation or 20 penalty units for an individual. This is an important power that supports the function of collecting and publishing information about toll roads and toll road services to increase transparency and competition.

New division 3AD of part 8 provides for the establishment in the Special Deposits Account of a fund called the NSW Motorways Fund. This will be the fund in which moneys appropriated to NSW Motorways for the purposes of its functions will be deposited, as well as moneys it receives otherwise—for example, toll receipts. A provision that is vital to supporting the Government's vision for NSW Motorways is section 94. The proposed amendment to this section will ensure that the existing power of the Minister to transfer assets between the transport agencies is widened to enable the transfer of assets to NSW Motorways. As I described earlier, NSW Motorways will be vested with ownership of publicly owned tollways and the road surface and toll service infrastructure of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. This is the provision that will allow that to happen.

The Roads Act 1993 will be amended by new section 261A to provide for a tollway ombudsman scheme. The Minister will approve an independent tollway ombudsman to deal with disputes and complaints. Customers will be able to choose whether or not they wish to be bound by determinations under the scheme. All toll operators in the State, including the NSW Motorways entity, are to be members of the tollway ombudsman and, as members, are bound by the scheme. Toll operators will be required to pay to the Minister a contribution to be determined by regulation towards the costs of management and administration of the scheme, the costs of ensuring compliance with the scheme, and any other costs relating to the scheme.

New section 261B will give the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] functions to investigate and report on the operation of toll roads, including the costs of operation and providing toll services; the demand for toll roads in New South Wales; pricing, fees and penalties for toll services, including the new levels, structure and impacts of the pricing, fees and penalties on customers; the revenue related to the provision of toll services; and the impacts of tolls on different communities in the State. IPART may exercise its functions only by request of the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister administering the IPART Act. IPART will investigate and report to the Ministers and furnish its reports to the Minister who will arrange for publication.

The New South Wales Government is committed to the improvement of the toll road experience in New South Wales and the lowering of the cost impost on motorists, many of whom have little or no choice but to use these roads to access work, education or other opportunities in the State. Delivering on that commitment requires the Government to engage in discussions and negotiations, with detailed consideration of various options and their opportunities. This is not a quick row to hoe. However, as the Minister for Roads and I as Parliamentary Secretary have said before, we will deliver these solutions before the next election. Today the Parliament is presented with the opportunity to approve a crucial element of the solution—the establishment of NSW Motorways—as the foundation to drive and deliver the reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

Second Reading Debate

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (15:56): I speak on behalf of the Opposition in debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. I note the work of the shadow Minister for Transport and Roads in the other place and thank her for her expertise and insights in responding to the bill. While the Opposition has concerns about the public rhetoric and record of the Government when it comes to toll reform, it will not oppose the bill. However, it is evident that the public rhetoric does not match the detail of the bill, which does little to address any of the concerns raised by the Minns Labor Government.

I outline the Opposition's view before highlighting its concerns. We support toll reform, but we do not support rushed reform to chase a headline. We do not think we need more bureaucrats, a new agency, a new deputy secretary and more process to drive toll prices. It is clear that the Government is not providing any detail

on what is on or off the table when it comes to toll reform. It appears concession extensions are now on the table, which means drivers will inevitably pay more tolls for longer. That is not what the Minns Government said before the election or since. Before the election, the Premier was anti-tolls; now it seems he and the Treasurer cannot rule that out. We are seeing more tolls and higher tolls from potential increases on the bridge and the tunnel.

Toll reform means winners and losers. The Opposition believes that the Government should be up-front about the future of reform. I place on record again that the Government should be clear about the evidence base and share it with everyone so that we can verify it. Who wins and who loses should not be done through a secret deal but be made public. Dr Christopher Standen commented during the Rozelle inquiry:

It should be noted that, in the history of transportation planning, no traffic model has ever been able to predict the short- and long-term traffic impacts of a major road project with any accuracy ...

If the Government intends to change tolls, the baseline modelling that underpins the reform should be made public and verified before the Government underwrites a deal with anyone. Turning to the detail of the bill, I will start with two aspects that are worthy of support. The customer advocate and the tollway ombudsman scheme are worthy endeavours and we will wait to see what actual outcomes they drive. However, clearly the administrative customer experience could and should be improved.

I turn to the new NSW Motorways agency. Let me be clear: This legislation does nothing to reduce tolls or improve the Government's negotiating position with concessionaires. It has no powers to take back control of toll road pricing or influence toll road pricing. It is essentially moving Transport for NSW functions from one part of the business to another agency. The statement of public interest states that the bill will drive toll reform but that is not the case. It has zero powers to drive reform. Regarding the review, in August this year the Minister said:

It recommends the establishment of a State-owned motorways entity, called NSW Motorways, to set and control prices with oversight from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal.

The bill does not do that. It provides for no powers to ever do that. It is a watered-down version of what Mr Fels wanted. Why is that? We do not know. The bill is another example of great rhetoric from the Government that lacks substance. If the Minister wants more agencies and more bureaucrats, then so be it. But toll reform requires substance and the public deserves to know what that substance is. The Opposition hopes that detail will be forthcoming. In the meantime, we do not oppose the bill.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:01): I make a contribution to debate in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. The legislation marks a historic step forward in addressing one of the most pressing challenges faced by the people of New South Wales: the high cost of road tolls, which are increasingly burdening Sydney motorists, particularly those in Western Sydney. The bill amends the Transport Administration Act 1988 and the Roads Act 1993 to establish NSW Motorways as a dedicated public entity. With this agency, we are embarking on a transformative effort to not only relieve the financial pressures on our constituents but also reshape the future of toll roads and toll pricing across the State.

The purpose of the bill is to create NSW Motorways as a government agency. The agency will assume ownership and operation of publicly owned tollways and, eventually, the Sydney Harbour Bridge and other key tolled infrastructures. It will implement a network-wide tolling approach, delivering safe and reliable toll roads and toll services in an efficient, effective and financially responsible manner. The bill sets the foundation for a landmark Act designed to address toll reform in New South Wales. The provisions of the bill lay out in detail the structure, management and governance of NSW Motorways, establishing the entity as a statutory corporation. It creates new divisions under the Act that will assign NSW Motorways with essential functions and objectives, ensuring that the agency is focused on customer advocacy, transparency and financial responsibility.

The bill incorporates a series of amendments to the Transport Administration Act 1988, introducing definitions for key terms such as "toll operator", "toll road", and "toll service provider". The definitions underpin a cohesive approach to toll road management, reinforcing the role that NSW Motorways will play as a comprehensive, centralised toll authority. To underscore the scope of the reforms, we must recognise the findings of the Independent Toll Review, led by Professor Allan Fels and Dr David Cousins. Their study exposed major flaws in the current tolling system that have led to rigid pricing structures, a lack of transparency and prices that are simply too high for most motorists, especially those who rely on toll roads daily. The review clearly demonstrated that toll costs are driving people away from motorways, leading to increased congestion on suburban streets and impacting both productivity and quality of life for countless families across New South Wales.

The financial impact of congested roads is severe. The Federal transport department estimated that congestion costs Sydney approximately \$13.6 billion. In three decades, those costs could skyrocket if left unaddressed, as increased tolls strain household budgets and push drivers to abandon tollways. The Government is therefore determined to tackle the tolling crisis, and NSW Motorways will be the instrument to make that change. With its primary objective of delivering affordable, safe and reliable toll roads, NSW Motorways will

also focus on sustainability, regional development and equity across the transport network. The agency's functions extend to collecting tolls, overseeing toll relief schemes, administering the existing E-Toll platform and assuming responsibility for toll compliance. By putting those functions under one roof, NSW Motorways will enhance coordination, transparency and responsiveness for customers across the State.

As part of the Government's broader efforts to tackle the tolling problem, the Government has begun direct negotiations with private operators, including Transurban. The negotiations are an attempt to revise the existing toll arrangements in a way that respects contracts while striving for a fairer system. However, the Government does not intend to breach or "rip up" any contracts. Instead, it will aim to work with concessionaires in a manner that honours their reasonable expectations while pursuing much-needed reforms for our constituents. The Government is also delivering on a significant election commitment—the \$60 toll cap. The cap, which is already bringing relief to communities in Blacktown, Baulkham Hills and elsewhere, is among the State's most important cost-of-living measures. It has returned more than \$60 million to Sydney motorists this year alone. While the cap is only one component of our toll reform strategy, it signals our commitment to alleviating the financial strain of tolls on families and businesses alike.

The bill offers a unique chance to take control of our roads, instituting a fair pricing system that optimises traffic flow, integrates with public transport and puts the people of New South Wales first. We recognise the tolling landscape is complex, but we cannot allow challenges to delay action any longer. Toll reform is more than a question of road pricing; it is about empowering drivers, strengthening our economy and creating a more liveable New South Wales for everyone. The Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024 is a vital step forward. Through NSW Motorways, we are establishing a public sector leader that will manage, operate and advocate for toll road users. We are giving motorists a voice, protecting their interests and building the foundation for a fair and transparent tolling future. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:07): I am proud to make a contribution to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. The member for Vaucluse led for the Opposition and in her contribution she said that we do not oppose the bill. But the people of New South Wales will be disappointed to know that the bill does not actually deliver reform. In his second reading speech the Minister in the other House said:

Toll reform is about putting the families who are struggling to pay their bills first.

But at the end of his speech he said:

It is an opportunity to approve a crucial element of the solution—the establishment of NSW Motorways—as the foundation to drive and deliver these reforms. I commend the bill to the House.

Essentially he is saying that the establishment of NSW Motorways is not the reform. It just contributes to reforms that will happen at a later date. The people of New South Wales will be disappointed by that slow action. One would think that tollways started with the election of the previous Liberal Government in 2011. I will clarify for the House when tollways started. In 2022 Portfolio Committee No. 6 - Transport prepared a report. Table 1 on page five shows the development of Sydney toll roads by year and the commissioning government. Right at the start there is Sydney Harbour Tunnel, which was commissioned by the Unsworth Labor Government in 1987. It then goes to the Eastern Distributor, which was commissioned by the Carr Labor Government in 1997 and opened by the Carr Labor Government in 1999. Next is the Cross City Tunnel, which was commissioned by the Carr Labor Government in 2002 and opened by the Iemma Labor Government in 2005. If memory serves me correctly, Joe Tripodi opened it. Then the Westlink M7, which was commissioned by the Carr Labor Government in 2003 and opened by the Iemma Labor Government in 2005. Then the Lane Cove Tunnel, which was commissioned by the Carr Labor Government in 2003 and opened by the Iemma Labor Government in 2007.

When one looks at all of the toll roads, it is not one party that commissioned them, but the Labor Party approved many of them. In fact it could be said that it is the pioneer of toll roads. The Minister in the other place was quite inaccurate in his second reading speech when he said:

With the introduction of this bill, we are taking another major step forward to reform the toll mania that we inherited from the former Government, which is a tangled web of privatisation that has become a cost-of-living nightmare for Sydney motorists.

What is really disappointing is that he was only talking about the previous Liberal Government and has no acknowledgement of the Labor Government. Before the last election the then Leader of the Opposition made a lot of promises. One of the promises relating to tolls was about whether there would be new tolls on existing roads. On 14 March 2024 in an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Alexandra Smith called out the then Leader of the Opposition, now Premier Minns, saying "no new tolls on the Sydney Harbour Bridge". The article states:

He used his first public comments after convincing his party room that he was its best hope of electoral success to declare that NSW Labor would never allow new tolls on old roads.

We know that to be completely untrue. As a member of Parliament who comes from the north of Sydney, sadly my constituents will be hit with new tolls by this Labor Government. Toll reform under this Labor Government means it is increasing tolls on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Harbour Tunnel and the Eastern Distributor. It does not affect only my community but multiple communities across the State, including north-west Sydney, the Central Coast and the Hunter. That is extremely disappointing.

Ms Kellie Sloane: Especially on days when they can't catch the train.

Mr MATT CROSS: I note the interjection from the member for Vaucluse. Where did the ideas and content of the bill originate from? An independent toll review was conducted and its final report was handed down in July 2024. The preface in the report spoke about several reforms. The report states:

Key elements of our reform proposals remain as follows:

...

Second, the NSW Government should take control of tolls. It should establish a State-owned entity NSW Motorways to drive toll reform and to deliver overdue consumer and administrative reforms ...

Third, Legislation will be needed as soon as possible to enable the establishment of NSW Motorways and to give the government power to make timely and final decisions on tolls, and provide for the Revenue Adjustment Mechanism.

The preface further states:

Some features of the Network Toll Restructure and Reduction scenario include:

...

the main losses are for persons crossing Sydney Harbour who are caught by the introduction of two-way tolling and catch-up tolling.

In the interests of the public, I mention that at page 42 the report states:

However, there is the potential for conflicts of interest if NSW Motorways was both the network toll setter as well as the operator of some toll roads. These potential conflicts would need to be addressed in appropriate ways, such as ring-fencing governance of regulatory functions from market functions. The involvement of IPART in overseeing toll setting ... may also assist in dealing with any potential conflicts, real or perceived, if government wished to proceed with a vertically integrated operating model for NSW Motorways.

I mention that so that it is on the public record to make sure that the Government is held to account when it comes to the introduction of NSW Motorways. I believe the report did not hit the expectation level that the Government had with the public. I think they were hoping the report would be the silver bullet for solving the tolling problem. It certainly has not been that. In an article on 1 November 2024 *The Australian* stated:

... wound up handing over recommendations that blew up in the face of Minns and his Roads Minister, John Graham.

Among them were proposals for two-way tolling of the Harbour Bridge, which Minns campaigned against in opposition, and a bizarre assumption that the M5 cashback scheme, a signature election promise, would be scrapped. Minns broke a land-speed record upon the release of that recommendation to get himself in front of a camera and immediately rule out any fiddling with the rebate. Fels, meanwhile, has gone on to allege that additional parts of his review have been suppressed.

That is extremely disappointing. As a champion of transparency in this place I will be advocating for more transparency. The member for Vaucluse stated in her contribution:

This legislation does nothing to reduce tolls or improve the Government's negotiating position with concessionaires. It has no powers to take back control of toll road pricing or influence toll road pricing. It is essentially moving Transport for NSW functions from one part of the business to another agency.

The public interest indicates that it will drive toll reform. However, that may or may not be the case long term. Disappointingly, when it comes to solving problems, some people believe that the creation of public policy is establish more bureaucracy—a bigger government. We all know that is not always the best thing to do. As Ronald Reagan said:

Government is not the solution to our problem, government is the problem.

As an Opposition member, I remain sceptical as to whether this new entity will drive real toll reform. We will wait and see. The Opposition does not oppose the bill.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (16:17): I speak in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. I am proud that by introducing the NSW Motorways bill we are making our first major step to reform the toll mania that we inherited from the former Government. It is the author of this cost-of-living nightmare affecting Sydney motorists. The former Government spun this tangled web of privatisation that has become the source of great stress on family budgets right across greater Sydney. It is causing Sydney family members to leave jobs they love and move away from relatives and friends because their toll bills are just too high. If we think that the situation is bad now, the current arrangements mean that the financial pain will get worse as many of the tolls continue to rise for another 36 years—until 2060.

The Independent Toll Review, led by Professor Allan Fels and Dr David Cousins, found that the process for setting tolls was flawed and lacked transparency and that tolls are too expensive, with the greatest impact on Western Sydney. The review found that tolls are too rigid, complex and unfair, and do not operate as a system. The Government's toll reform aims to get a fairer and better deal that puts Sydney motorists first. Former Government members have a track record of standing in the way of helping Sydney motorists with toll bills. They took a stand against the people of New South Wales when they failed to support the Government's \$60 toll cap. Despite creating the cost-of-living nightmare, they have tried to stand in the way of toll relief that in just one year is offering 570,000 motorists \$160 million in vital cost-of-living relief. In my electorate of Penrith alone, that equates to \$859,000 so far. Members opposite were against toll relief and now they are threatening to stand in the way of toll reform, with a sensible long-term solution that will get a better deal for Sydney motorists. That means, once again, they are standing in the way of putting more money in the pockets of Sydney families.

Why is the Opposition opposed to a better deal for drivers? Last week in an ABC Sydney radio interview with the shadow roads Minister, the Hon. Natalie Ward, it was revealed that she does not think that Sydney tolls are too expensive. I can imagine that any driver with a big toll bill who was sitting in their car last Tuesday would have been raging, hurling abuse at their radio and banging their steering wheel out of frustration. How out of touch. It was an awkward interview because the shadow roads Minister would not answer the most basic question and the interviewer had to ask it four times. The question was "Do you think Sydneysiders pay too much to drive on our roads?" The first time the question was asked, the shadow Minister refused to answer it directly. She spoke about the "huge opportunity for toll reform" but gave no answer on whether tolls are too high.

The shadow Minister was asked the question again, "Do you think we pay too much?" Again, she would not answer and tried to deflect, speaking about the opportunity to reform the network. On the third attempt, once again, the shadow Minister gave no acknowledgement that tolls are too high or that Sydney drivers are suffering under the weight of their toll bills. Finally, on the fourth attempt, the interviewer got closer to the former Minister's real views on tolling. She said that for world-class motorways "you have to pay the price" and "it doesn't come for free". There we have it. Tolls are not too high. Drivers have to pay the price, but that price is too high, especially for those living in Western Sydney.

The shadow Minister should tell that to a constituent I spoke to last week who just claimed her toll rebate of \$900. She thanked me profusely and said that her kids will now have a brighter Christmas. The shadow Minister should tell her that tolls are just a price she has to pay. When former Treasurer Matt Kean was challenged on the former Government's sneaky plan to introduce two-way tolling on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and tunnel—and I am glad that the member for Davidson spoke about this—he was quick to deflect and talk about wanting to "lower the burden of tolls across Sydney" and "make driving around Sydney more affordable for everyone". But now that we are in Government, doing the hard work of reforming the toll network, we are faced with a Coalition shadow roads Minister who does not think that tolls are too expensive. The shadow Minister is in a very strange position. On the one hand the Opposition supports toll reform, but on the other hand it says tolls are not too high.

If the Opposition's idea of toll reform is not about getting a better deal for drivers, then what is it about? As the shadow Minister acknowledged later in the ABC interview, the former Government took its plan for toll reform to the last election and lost. It is no wonder. If the Opposition does not think New South Wales motorists deserve a better deal, then who are they trying to get a better deal for? Is it for toll road concessionaires? Toll reform that does not achieve a more equitable and better deal for drivers is not toll reform. We are taking a vital first step. We are not saying that the bill is the silver bullet, as the member for Davidson said. We are saying that it is a vital first step. The Minns Labor Government is getting on with the job of securing a better deal for drivers, just as we said we would. The motorways bill is an important part of the reform. I note that the Opposition does not oppose the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:24): I contribute to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. I support this important legislation, which amends the Transport Administration Act to establish a government agency known as NSW Motorways and make related amendments to the Roads Act 1993. In effect, the bill will end toll mania, or at least take the next step towards ending toll mania in New South Wales. Sydney is the most tolled city in the world. Under the former Liberal-Nationals Government, the M4 was again tolled as well as parts of the M5 as WestConnex was established. And then, of course, WestConnex was privatised, leaving in place contracts that increase tolls by 4 per cent or the rate of inflation, whichever is higher, every year until 2060. Those are outrageous arrangements.

My community is one of many across Western Sydney that is bearing the brunt of toll mania. The Government has introduced a toll cap of \$60 a week, and in Merrylands and many other suburbs in my electorate almost a million dollars have been returned to motorists thanks to that cap because my community pays so much in tolls. The Government established an Independent Toll Review, which was an election commitment, with reform options to overhaul the toll network. The review was led by Professor Allan Fels and Dr David Cousins

and considered the consistency, fairness, equitability and simplicity of toll road pricing while ensuring that the road network remains efficient.

The Independent Toll Review released an interim report in March 2024 followed by a final report in July. The Government is acting on the recommendation in the final report to establish a State-owned entity to take back control of tolls, make them easier for motorists to understand; deliver consumer and administrative reforms; and promote more competition and better regulation in the public interest. In effect, the Government is ensuring far better control of the tolls paid in New South Wales. There is, essentially, a single private toll road operator for almost all toll roads in Sydney. As motorists, we have a choice between paying through the nose for tolls or being stuck for hours in awful traffic. Many people choose awful traffic, which makes traffic worse.

Members opposite pretend to be concerned about motorists and pretend to care, but their track record is telling. They raise concerns about the possibility that two-way tolling could be introduced on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, yet on Channel 9 on 26 July 2018 former Premier and former transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian said that two-way tolls were unavoidable. She wanted two-way tolls in order to pay for the Western Harbour Tunnel and Beaches Link. The former Government also released two public documents assuming two-way tolling would occur on the Harbour Bridge and the Harbour Tunnel. The two-way tolling plan was included in the Western Harbour Tunnel environmental impact statement in 2020, which was approved in January 2021, and it was referenced again in November 2021 when Transport for NSW released its report in response to community submissions on the Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection.

Former Premier Dominic Perrottet admitted that two-way tolling was on the table in question time on 11 November 2021—and I can go on. Coalition members have considered extending the toll regime on the Harbour Bridge even though they said that they would not. They said they would consider that change multiple times when they were in government. However, shadow roads Minister Natalie Ward would not admit that tolls in Sydney were too expensive, despite being asked about it four times by Hamish Macdonald on ABC radio last Tuesday. That would be news to anyone who lives in Western Sydney. We think tolls are far too expensive.

In that interview with Hamish Macdonald, Ms Ward was asked, "Do you think Sydneysiders pay too much to drive on our roads?" The first time she was asked the question, she refused to answer. Instead, she talked about the huge opportunity for toll reform. The second time she was asked the question, again, she would not answer. Instead, she tried to pivot to the opportunity to reform the network. The third time she was asked the question, she would not acknowledge that prices were too high or that Sydney drivers are suffering under the weight of their toll bills. The fourth time she was asked the question, we got a bit closer to the former roads Minister's real views on tolling. She said that for world-class motorways "you have to pay the price" and "it doesn't come for free".

That is the view of the former roads Minister—a former roads Minister who was very happy to take on board and keep in place toll mania, and a former roads Minister who was very much a part of a Government that privatised WestConnex and made sure that we would pay through the nose for tolls until 2060. It is essential that we reform tolls in this city. Our toll network is far too expensive and incredibly inequitable, particularly for people who live in my electorate and elsewhere in Western Sydney. We can make the system fairer. We can negotiate a better outcome with toll-road operators. The establishment of NSW Motorways will allow that to happen. This is very important legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:31): I am delighted to make a brief contribution to debate on the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. I am surprised that Opposition members are not very happy because yet again we see a Minister and a Government doing what they said they would do. While in government, the Coalition did not say to the people of New South Wales that it would use their roads to profit the private sector by privatising those roads and making Sydney the most tolled city in the world. No-one knows that better than us in west and south-west Sydney, because we foot the bill more than anyone. People in west and south-west Sydney pay more than four times the amount that people in other areas of Sydney pay for tolls.

I will not play border wars, but it is an economic fact that the decisions of those opposite imposed a cost on the people and road users of west and south-west Sydney, and that financial burden continues. Before the election, Chris Minns, the shadow ministry and the Labor Party said we would take action. That is why this bill is before the House. Commentary was made about former Coalition Premiers, who were very intent on the northern beaches tunnel and other upgrades on the northern side of the bridge. Let me be clear: I take nothing away from the good people of North Sydney, the North Shore or any other part of Sydney. But this is a matter of equality. It was neither equal nor fair for the people of west and south-west Sydney to foot the bill for infrastructure that they did not receive.

I draw the attention of the House to the example of the delay of the M12, which was not funded, although they reaped the benefits of the tolls. We know the amendments and policies of the former Government were about

profiting the private sector. That is simply inescapable. Those are the facts of the matter. I break it down even further. Since coming to power, the Government has promised to fix the toll-road network and provide relief to customers from the high price of getting around Sydney because they are paying the price during this cost-of-living crisis.

I draw the attention of the House also to a good small businessman in Smeaton Grange in the electorate of my colleague the member for Camden. I know him because he operates in and around the Macarthur, moving containers. His name is Jason Clenton and he owns Clenton's Transport. Jason is a good, hardworking fellow and small business owner. He is a local—I am not sure if he still lives in Camden or if he has come to his senses and moved to Campbelltown. But he is one example of the small business owners across west and south-west Sydney who are paying the price for the former Government's bad decisions. This bill puts in place a small step to help commuters and allows the Government to fulfil its promise.

This Government means what it says and says what it means. When Labor comes to government, that is exactly what it does. Labor is doing what it said it would do before the election. That must be remarkable, shocking and hard to swallow for the New South Wales Liberal Party because it does the total and absolute opposite. The Government committed to establishing an expert review on the tolling system in the State. It commissioned an independent toll review to create a pathway for reforming the toll system to improve efficiency and fairness, and Professor Allan Fels and Dr David Cousins delivered their final report in July this year.

The review found that tolls are too high and the tolling system is flawed and lacks transparency and flexibility. It found that one private concessionaire, Transurban, has dominated the tollway market. I refer to comments made by the member for Davidson in his contribution to debate. Of the \$195 million toll burden, 48 per cent of that was installed by the previous Government under WestConnex. Again, that is another fact that I add to the debate. That irreversible reality is thanks to the poor economic and financial management of the former Liberal-Nationals Government, which had no regard for people sitting on congested toll roads. But members on this side of the House knew all about the daily reality for those in west and south-west Sydney under the former Government.

When we woke up in the morning, we got to look forward to sitting on a congested toll road or waiting to catch a late, non-air-conditioned train at a train station with no commuter car park to park our cars. We have more work to do because there is so much more to be done, and there is so much more to be done because the carnage left by those opposite is absolutely astronomical. People who live in west and south-west Sydney know that, and they know that because they live it every single solitary day. The Government has not been sitting idle since that final report was handed down. The Government got straight to work on how to implement those changes for motorists. Before I go into what is being delivered next for toll reform, it is important to look first at what has been delivered to ease cost-of-living pressures for motorists.

I note the Government committed to instituting a toll cap of \$60 per week and providing refunds for those who pay more. That is helping hundreds of thousands of people every day, including as I speak. On 31 October this year we reached a key milestone when motorists in the Western Sydney suburbs of Blacktown and Baulkham Hills collectively claimed more than \$1 million in toll relief thanks to the Minns Labor Government's \$60 toll cap. More than 224,000 claims have been made, with \$60.5 million already returned to motorists, and that number increases with every day that passes. The average rebate is \$284. That is money back in the pockets of the hardworking, good people of New South Wales, and specifically the people of west and south-west Sydney, including in my electorate of Campbelltown and the broader Macarthur. Not only that, but more than 11,000 motorists have received quarterly toll relief rebates of more than \$1,000 since the program started. The Premier stated:

The \$60 toll cap is one of the most important cost-of-living measures the NSW Government is providing, and it is heartening to see that the relief is getting to where it is needed most—Western Sydney.

That includes south-western Sydney. The Premier is exactly right, displaying that he understands the people of south-western and Western Sydney. He knows the challenges that those local families, road users and small businesses are confronting.

Today is the chance for us to turn our attention to what is next for toll reform. As outlined in the Independent Toll Review, there are many opportunities for change. We acknowledge there is much more work to do. At the heart of toll reform lies improvements to efficiency, transparency, simplicity and a fairer system for motorists, which toll setting should be guided by. To achieve these outcomes, the Government is taking a significant step forward with this bill to establish NSW Motorways, establish an independent tollway ombudsman and provide a role for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to monitor the price of toll roads. The previous Government enhanced and, in many cases, installed those toll roads. In this year's budget we committed to establishing the NSW Motorways entity, and the introduction of this bill further solidifies that commitment. As

a public competitor to privately operated toll roads, NSW Motorways will model how a strong customer focus can deliver better outcomes for motorists. Support for customers will be available from the new industry ombudsman proposed by the bill. That is exactly what a constructive first step is.

I acknowledge the contribution of my colleague the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport to the bill before the House and the hard work she does in cooperation with the Minister for Transport and the Minister's team. When they are doing that hard work, they are not thinking about the profits of the private sector. They are thinking about public road users and how we can get a better deal for them. Good governments govern for all and put people first. The bill is a great example of the Minns Government putting public road users first, with the advantage of providing some financial relief to those families and small businesses across south-western and Western Sydney. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:41): I support the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for her good work in her second reading speech and for bringing the bill to the House. I thank the Minister, John Graham, who has put an enormous amount of work into trying to fix the mess of tolling left by those opposite. The bill will amend the Transport Administration Act to provide for the establishment of NSW Motorways and also makes provision for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to monitor toll prices. The bill seeks to establish an independent tolling customer ombudsman to deal with disputes and complaints between customers and operators of toll roads in New South Wales. With the introduction of the bill, we are taking another major step to reform the toll mania we inherited from the former Government, a tangled web of privatisation that has become a cost-of-living nightmare not only for motorists in Sydney but also for commuters and businesses across the State.

As the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, I am aware of the narrative around toll relief from members opposite, particularly those in the National Party. It is interesting. They say that toll relief is just for Sydney people and that the tolling system is just about Sydney. However, the reality is that every single good we import from or export overseas must go through a port, particularly to or from regional New South Wales. That includes those goods from our agricultural industry, which is worth billions and billions of dollars. If it goes through the containerised port or some other port, then it needs to get through the system in Sydney. Much of that freight is carried on roads at high costs to the producers in regional New South Wales. The interesting part for me is to see that no National Party members have decided to pick up their notes and have a bit of a chat about this bill, which they will oppose because they have no interest in doing that.

Ms Kellie Sloane: We are supporting it.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The member for Vacluse says that those opposite are supporting it. That is great. I thank the member for that clarification. I note that Nationals members are not in the Chamber during this debate to give their support to the regional producers and companies that will benefit from this bill. Toll reform is not just about easing the burden on motorists. It is also about trying to fix an inefficient, overly complex, overpriced motorway network that is a handbrake on productivity for business and investment not only for our city but also for our State. The changes that this bill will bring about will make the system fairer, not only helping to ease cost-of-living pressures on mums and dads and individuals using the toll roads but also providing better and fairer platforms for those who are trying to transport goods and services through our State.

Some of our road users are struggling with the costs being imposed by tollways. If we look at how suboptimal it is now, we can imagine how big the congestion costs will be when some of those last concessions end in 2060. Some of our tollways will increase by 1 per cent every quarter, 4 per cent a year, or by the consumer price index, whichever is greater. Data from Transport for NSW reveals that, even at current prices, businesses are spending up to \$7.35 million in tolls—and that is only from our own E-Toll system, which does not include Transurban's Linkt customers. Extrapolating from that, we can see that a company paying \$7.35 million now could expect to pay a toll bill in excess of \$25 million by 2060.

Those costs get passed on to customers. Toll bills will directly impact business decisions. They will impact where people decide to set up shop, where their workers live and what business ideas are worth pursuing given the cost base. They exacerbate the tyranny of distance experienced by many small business owners who are coming from regional areas to do business in the city. Many people from the Hunter are struggling with tolls. Even if they are living in the Hunter region or Wollongong or further out in the regions, they are coming to Sydney, and it is impacting on the bottom line of their businesses.

It is good to hear so many speakers in this debate calling out the Opposition for its record on tolling, particularly on two-way tolling. I will not repeat those comments. One thing we have never heard is any member on the other side of the House rule out tolling some of the big infrastructure projects. Those opposite never ruled out putting on a toll on the Great Western Highway and the tunnel they had proposed—without the funding to

continue it—if they did actually build it. I am pleased to hear that the Opposition is supporting the bill, but we should never let it get away with the toll mania it introduced into this State. Toll mania has been an absolute brake on productivity for many businesses, small businesses in particular, and has raised the cost of living for families, not just those using the toll systems but also those who rely on our roads to get their goods to market or to purchase them. I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (16:48): I support the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. Since this Government came to power, we have promised to fix our toll road network and provide relief to customers from the high price of getting around Sydney. We committed to establishing an expert review of the tolling system in this State. The Government commissioned the Independent Toll Review to create a pathway for reforming the tolling system to improve efficiency and fairness, and Professor Allan Fels and Dr David Cousins delivered their final report in July this year.

The review found that tolls are too high and the tolling system is flawed and lacks transparency and flexibility. It found that one private concessionaire, Transurban, dominates the tollway market. The Government has not sat idle since the final report was handed down. We got straight to work to implement changes for motorists. Before I go into what is being delivered next for toll reform, I will explain what we have already delivered to ease the cost-of-living pressures for motorists. We committed to instituting a toll cap of \$60 per week and providing refunds to those who pay more. That is helping hundreds of thousands of people as we speak. On 31 October we reached a key milestone, with motorists in the Western Sydney suburbs of Blacktown and Baulkham Hills collectively claiming more than \$1 million in toll relief under the Minns Labor Government's \$60 per week toll cap.

More than 224,000 claims have been made, with \$60.5 million already returned to motorists. With every day that passes, that number increases. The average rebate is \$284, which is money back in the pockets of the people of New South Wales. More than 11,000 motorists have received quarterly toll relief rebates of more than \$1,000 since the program started. Five suburbs in the Camden electorate have collectively received half a million dollars in rebates since the program started. As the Premier stated, "The \$60 toll cap is one of the most important cost-of-living measures the NSW Government is providing, and it is heartening to see that the relief is getting to where it is needed most—Western Sydney." That is being played out in other electorates as well as Camden, including Campbelltown, Blacktown, Riverstone, Londonderry and Penrith.

Today is the chance for us to turn our attention to what is next for toll reform. Many opportunities for change are available, as outlined in the Independent Toll Review. At the heart of toll reform lies improvements to efficiency, transparency and simplicity and a fairer system for motorists, which toll setting should be guided by. To achieve those outcomes the Government is taking a significant step forward. The bill establishes NSW Motorways and an independent tollway ombudsman, and provides a role for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to monitor the price of toll roads.

In this year's budget, the Government committed to establishing a New South Wales motorways entity and the introduction of this bill solidifies that commitment. As a public competitor to privately operated toll roads, NSW Motorways will model how a strong customer focus can deliver better outcomes for motorists. Support for customers will be available from the new industry ombudsman proposed by the bill. At the moment, disputes are either escalated to the NSW Ombudsman for publicly operated tollways or to the Tolling Customer Ombudsman for privately operated tollways. As toll road users, motorists should not have to figure out where to go to resolve an issue. In addition, motorists should feel that their disputes are being handled fairly by an independent arbiter. Although the Tolling Customer Ombudsman is independent, it is funded by the private toll operators and lacks the oversight necessary to ensure its independence.

The bill proposes an independent tollway ombudsman that will be approved by the Minister to deal with disputes and complaints industry-wide within New South Wales. Customers will be able to choose whether they wish to be bound by their determinations. All toll operators in the State, both private and public—including the NSW Motorways entity—will be members of the scheme and, as members, they will be bound by it. Members will pay a contribution to fund the scheme's management and administration, as well as to ensure compliance with the scheme. The tollway ombudsman will provide the one-stop shop for dispute resolution and give motorists confidence that their issues are being considered fairly.

Finally, the bill establishes the mechanisms to drive price reform, and addresses the high prices and price inconsistency resulting from piecemeal contractual arrangements entered into by earlier governments and the private toll providers. The bill demonstrates that this Government understands the real issues facing people today. It has listened to expert advice and acted to make the necessary long-term changes to reform the tolling system. The introduction of this bill is the first step in the implementation stage of toll reform and delivers several of the key recommendations of the Independent Toll Review.

But we are not taking our foot off the accelerator—pardon the pun. We are committed to continue to work through the recommendations from the review. This is not the last time the public will hear from us about key deliverables for toll reform in response to the review. We are not about making motherhood statements to respond to the Independent Toll Review; we are about showing real progress. The introduction of the bill is proof of the Government's commitment to reform tolling in this State. The work does not stop here as we pave the way for a better and fairer experience for motorists. We will continue to take into account the insights provided by the expert review and provide updates to the people of New South Wales about how we are delivering before the next election. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:55): I speak in support of the Transport Administration Amendment (NSW Motorways) Bill 2024. My parliamentary colleagues who know me well know that on Wednesdays I usually catch the train to Parliament, but today I did what many commuters from Western Sydney and Parramatta do on a daily basis—I got in my car. I opened Google Maps this morning to check which was going to be the fastest way to get to work. It showed that if I took the free option and travelled down Victoria Road, it was going to take more than an hour. If I took WestConnex, it was going to take me 45 minutes and cost \$9.97. The fastest option was via the M2, which would take 30-odd minutes and cost \$13.94. That is the situation we are in today.

The dear member for Davidson, who is no longer present in the Chamber, took great joy in referring to comments made by the Premier about two-way tolling when he was in previous roles. However, as Opposition members are prone to do, he was very selective with the historical extracts that he drew upon in debate. To help him, I will provide the missing pieces. The Opposition has a very strong record of support—or questions—around whether they would introduce two-way tolls on the Sydney Harbour. In 2018, Gladys Berejiklian said two-way tolls were unavoidable. "To pay for the Northern Beaches and Western Harbour Tunnels the Government has confirmed it will toll the new motorway in both directions. If the existing harbour crossing remains free northbound, the Government is concerned drivers will avoid the new roads."

It was interesting to listen to the contribution of the member for Davidson. He suggested that the Government was going to toll the Sydney Harbour both ways, which would never be considered by the Opposition. But we have more than one comment from the former Government confirming that they were always considering two-way tolling. I am pleased that the Opposition has seen the light today. Whilst Opposition members have raised points to oppose the bill, they are actually supporting it. I commend them for that decision. The bill amends the Transport Administration Act 1988 to provide for the establishment of NSW Motorways. The bill also makes provision for the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to monitor toll prices. It seeks to establish an independent tolling customer ombudsman to deal with disputes and complaints between customers and operators of toll roads in New South Wales.

With the introduction of the NSW Motorways bill, we are taking another major step to reform the toll mania that we inherited from the former Government. The tangled web of privatisation has become a cost-of-living nightmare for Sydney motorists, particularly for those of us in the west. Have members driven on the M4 recently and seen the constant traffic chaos of drivers queuing to get off the Church Street exit into Parramatta? Why do those drivers queue to get off at the Church Street exit? They do it because they are desperate to miss that toll. People are in a cost-of-living crisis, and they want to save as much money as they possibly can. They will take that option to take the Church Street exit rather than to continue on that road, and it is dangerous at that exit. It is poor planning and poor governance from members opposite, but it is a reality for Western Sydney drivers, 365 days a year.

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

Public Interest Debate

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (17:01): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Condemns the industrial terrorism of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU].
- (2) Condemns the incompetence and cowardice of the Government in handling the rail dispute.

We are now facing the worst rail dispute in living memory. It is not just this weekend; it is every weekend at least until Christmas. This is an extraordinary crisis, and it is the product of industrial terrorism by the union and sheer government incompetence and cowardice. We have a weak government beholden to the unions. The unions can smell blood. They know a weak Premier when they see one, and they are seizing on that weakness to push

extraordinary wage demands. What we are seeing now is industrial chaos in New South Wales, the product of union terrorism and government incompetence and cowardice.

[Interruption]

How cynical are those Government members sitting opposite? They gasp and laugh at what is happening to everyday citizens and everyday businesses in New South Wales. These are businesses in the CBD that want workers back in the city. They are looking to trade successfully to Christmas. What do members opposite do? They laugh and guffaw. Those commuters include children who want to go to school, people who want to go to hospital, and workers who want to go to work. What do Government members opposite do? They smirk and guffaw. That is who they are. What are the consequences for the union? It is protected industrial action, so they do not have to pay a brass razoo. These union terrorists are holding businesses and everyday citizens to ransom while they do not suffer any financial consequence.

Yet, on the other hand, we have a transport Minister who is clearly incompetent and out of her depth. A 15-minute videoconference yesterday is apparently enough to negotiate with the unions. This is a Minister who announced that the unions are causing a Thursday shutdown, yet the unions tell us that their industrial action does not start until Friday. This is a befuddled Minister. Worst of all, we have a government that is immersed in cowardice. Why is that? That is because it is beholden to its union masters. It is beholden to the people who control its preselections, who staff the booths on polling day, who campaign for it ahead of elections and who make donations. This is the union that has donated over \$400,000 to this Labor Government and controls the policy on the floor of the conference.

No wonder this Government is beholden to the RTBU. No wonder the Premier is missing in action. Does he condemn this? No. He refused in question time today to condemn this industrial terrorism. Where is he? He does not even meet with the unions, not at all, until he is shamed into meeting by media pressure today. The Minister has form, and the Premier has form in this. We have seen billions and billions of dollars of important infrastructure and housing being held up in New South Wales, and the Premier will not intervene. He will not intervene with the Electrical Trades Union. He will not meet them. He will not take it to the Fair Work Commission when he has the power to stop it.

When there is bad news, it is left to the public servants or the Ministers to make announcements. We have a Premier who is missing in action. He will not condemn the industrial terrorism. He will not—until he is shamed by the media—meet the union. He will not even take it to the Fair Work Commission. We do not have a level playing field at the moment. Businesses are crippled and people cannot go about their daily business, but what happens to the union? They have protected industrial action. It does not cost them a single cent. The Premier, transport Minister and industrial relations Minister should be taking the union to the Fair Work Commission and make sure that these rail unions, these industrial terrorists, are paying for the consequences of what they are doing. But he will not do that.

The Premier even said in question time, "We're not confident of an imminent breakthrough." There is no solution on the horizon, but what does the Premier do? He cannot offer a solution, but he will not go to the Fair Work Commission to get an order that these terrorists go back to work. This is a Premier and a government beholden to the unions. All those opposite are members of unions. It is the unions that control their preselections. It is the unions that staff their booths on polling day. It is the unions that make donations. It is the unions that control the puppet strings and control their policy. They are all union puppets. They will not stand up against the unions.

So what do we have in New South Wales? We have a public sector free-for-all. We have a Premier who promised that public sector wage increases will be funded by productivity gains. Instead, he rips money out of hospitals. He rips money out of schools. He rips money out of police. He cuts infrastructure. It is cut, cut, cut. We are seeing school infrastructure being cut by 41 per cent in the next few years, and health and transport by 34 per cent to 36 per cent—all to pay for the broken promises of this Premier. This is a government that puts its union masters ahead of the people of New South Wales. This is a government that will not stand up to industrial terrorism. This is a government that will not even go to the Fair Work Commission to get an order to stop this industrial action. It is also a government—and a Premier—that tells us that there is no imminent prospect of a breakthrough.

Do you know what "NSW" stands for now, Mr Assistant Speaker? Now Strikes Weekly. That is what "NSW" stands for in this State. The industrial nirvana that was promised by Chris Minns is nothing at all. Instead, it is continued chaos, ongoing strikes and disruptions. The people of New South Wales have been hoodwinked by this Government. This is a government and this is a Premier too weak to lead, too afraid to make decisions and too paralysed to act.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I expect this to be a robust debate. Calls to order do not expire like demerit points, so I will do a review of the call sheet. The member for Wahroonga is on two calls to order. The member for Cronulla is on three calls to order. The member for Terrigal and the member for Dubbo were removed from the Chamber. The member for Upper Hunter is on three calls to order. The member for Hawkesbury and the member for Coffs Harbour are on two calls to order. The member for Keira is on one call to order. My approach to conduct in such debates is to let things ride, as it makes proceedings more interesting. However, I remind members that I will not tolerate overly disrespectful behaviour.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (17:09): When Ben Fordham said to the member for Cronulla and Leader of the Opposition, "Become more interesting," I do not think he meant this. The member for Cronulla really could have picked a better subject. On this side of the House, we know—and no-one knows better than the people of New South Wales—that the member for Cronulla, Opposition members and indeed the broader New South Wales Liberal Party have no knowledge of industrial terrorism even though they terrorised the industrial movement and the workers of this State by capping their wages for a decade. The reality is that a government is again trying to mop up the mess of a previous government. We are playing catch-up and clean-up. We have a mop, and we are cleaning up the mess left by those opposite.

Paragraph (2) of the motion moved by the member for Cronulla refers to "incompetence and cowardice". Those opposite know all about that because look at the rail network they left us with. Fair dinkum, the rail network in Stalingrad on 2 July 1943 was more operational than the one they left us. It was an absolute outrage. I will look more locally and reflect on my friends across west and south-west Sydney who were heavily impacted by the draconian choices and policies of the conservatives opposite. When Minister Constance was the transport Minister, there were these trains called S sets that were not air-conditioned. They were spread throughout the network.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Opposition members will come to order. I cannot hear the member for Campbelltown.

Mr GREG WARREN: What did they do? They moved them all out to Campbelltown and Blacktown. Not one of them went elsewhere. Commuters were cooking in the hottest suburbs of Sydney. If we need any indication of what the New South Wales Liberal Party thinks about rail commuters in west and south-west Sydney, that is just one example. Even worse, we had a direct line from Campbelltown to Parramatta, which was a great service. But they cut it.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: The member's remarks are clearly irrelevant. People are being affected right now. This is not an ancient history lesson.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Cronulla will resume his seat.

Mr GREG WARREN: Look at the T3 line. Those opposite basically cancelled the stops at Berala and Regents Park and cut the express trains from Auburn around Granville and Lidcombe. It was an absolute disgrace. We must reflect more broadly when we consider the strike action being taken at the moment. We cannot sugar-coat it: It is not good. But we have to look at the reasons we are in this situation. We were put in this situation by a draconian government and the rhetorical decisions made by conservatives. That is you. You are the ones who put us here so we need to clean up the mess again. When you look at—

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129, relevance. This is about the Rail, Tram and Bus Union.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The member for Campbelltown has been—

Ms Kellie Sloane: This is about the rail union holding this State to ransom, and the member for Campbelltown is looking backwards.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I do not uphold the point of order. The member for Vacluse will resume her seat.

Mr GREG WARREN: There was a five-year backlog. This is directly relevant to the situation we find ourselves in now because workers are feeling overworked and underpaid. That is why they are striking, and it is directly because of the position adopted by the previous Coalition Government and its policies for the transport network in New South Wales. When we came to government, there was a five-year maintenance backlog. Since then, 2,116 high-priority defects have been fixed; 144 of the 195 electrical inspections have taken place; 44 track circuits have been repaired; 1,171 train stop ramps have been replaced; 195 train restrictions have been removed; and we have done 1,000 kilometres of track grinding. We do not sugar-coat the reality that this is a disaster, but we are putting the commuters of Sydney first and fighting for them. That is why this Government is working hard.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Opposition members will come to order. I cannot hear the member for Campbelltown.

Mr GREG WARREN: Opposition members do not care about commuters. That is why we are in this mess. It is not good, but we are working through it. We are in this position because of the draconian decisions of the previous Government.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (17:14): I contribute to debate on the Leader of the Opposition's motion about the forthcoming industrial chaos that is set to impact thousands of commuters this Friday, Saturday and Sunday. I am pleased to make a contribution to this important debate. Residents travelling to and from the Central Coast, the Blue Mountains, the Southern Highlands and the Illawarra have already put up with enough. I am talking about the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, the housing crisis and cost-of-living pressures, and now they are faced with a government too weak to face or fix the impending industrial action. What is the Premier's solution—or will he skulk in the background and let his Ministers take the hard hits? Where is the Premier? I cannot see him in the Chamber.

The Sydney train network is critical infrastructure for residents, with more than 720,000 passenger journeys occurring daily according to government figures. Members of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] have advocated on their issues for over a year. The Government has had plenty of time; why has it not found a solution? It is disappointing that under a Labor government that claims it wants to keep the public informed there is a grand total of 48 hours notice of the industrial action. The presumption that a strike of this magnitude will not impact workers is insulting, and our communities deserve much better. Given that residents of New South Wales were directed to move away from working-from-home arrangements in August, it is incredibly confusing. It is a see-saw operation in New South Wales, with the Minns Labor Government operating the ride. It wants workers to return to the office but turns a blind eye when the major mode of transport becomes non-operational.

On weekdays or weekends, New South Wales workers have a right to get to their workplaces safely, in a timely manner and without the stress the Government is imposing on them. The impending industrial action impacts not just workers but also many who have purchased tickets for music and other events that aim to boost culture and night-time entertainment. Pearl Jam concertgoers are in luck because the Government has managed to delay the railway strike until tomorrow—but for attendees on Saturday, not so much. Between 30,000 and 70,000 people will be scrambling to find alternative modes of transport. Events at the International Convention Centre, Allianz Stadium and Carriageworks and the hundreds of stores expecting attendees for Black Friday sales will also see thousands if not millions of people stranded. Even organisers and staff are being failed by a government that is too proud to step up and listen to the voices of the RTBU. The term "Black Friday" takes on a whole new meaning.

Premier Minns is indebted to the unions and, due to his incompetence in addressing the wage dispute and union demands, New South Wales residents are expected to pay the price. The Government just ended the ban on the sale of full-strength beers in Western Sydney stadiums, but a rail strike will force commuters to locate alternative modes of transport—most likely personal vehicles. That is impeccable timing. Shame on the Government. Here's to Black Friday, which now has a whole new meaning.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:18): Don't worry, Mark, you are safe after that speech.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Opposition members will cease interjecting. The member for Auburn will be heard in silence.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: The motion before us today condemns the industrial terrorism of the RTBU. I was under the impression that the Leader of the Opposition was a former Attorney General and at least a solicitor or a barrister. So for his benefit, advocating, protesting, dissenting or taking industrial action are not terrorist acts. I will say it again: Advocating, protesting, dissenting or taking industrial action are not terrorist acts. If he is a bit unsure, he can have a look at the Federal Attorney-General's departmental webpage to clear it up. Those opposite complain about a cost-of-living crisis that they largely created with their wage cap in New South Wales. Under those on that side of the House the teacher shortage was created because of what they did to teachers' wages, which saw vacancies rise to 3,311 in 2012. Teacher resignations outstripped retirements in 2022.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: This is clearly a public interest debate about rail union action and the Government's response to it. It is not a debate about teachers.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I do not uphold the point of order. The debate is broadly framed about industrial chaos.

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: That is the problem with those on the other side of the House: They raise issues in the debate and when they get a response, they want to get up and stop the debate. They are not interested in debate,

as they have never been interested in negotiating any industrial relations. In fact, at least our Minister did not go to bed, as their Minister did, during the last train strike. I tell you what TAFE teachers and the TAFE union said about Alister Henskens and TAFE industrial relations. NSW Teachers Federation president Angelo Gavrielatos said that Alister Henskens was the TAFE Minister in hiding over the teacher shortage. That is what happened under their industrial relations—they hid.

Members on this side of the House actually talk to the people who do the jobs. As the Premier has already pointed out in question time today, nobody wants to see anybody disrupted in their day-to-day lives. The number of hours lost to industrial action was 47 times higher under the Government of members on the other side. In the 18 months prior to the March 2023 election, 907,000 work hours—nearly one million—were lost in the public sector due to industrial action. In the same time on this side, only 19,000 were lost. So, 907,000 on that side and 19,000 on this side. That is the reality. The reality is that industrial hours are not lost under our side because we actually talk to people. Nearly one million hours of industrial action were taken under their Government in 2023 compared with only 19,000 under this Government because we actually talk to people and try to get agreement. What we do not do is treat our teachers, our nurses, our paramedics and our police officers as if they do not deserve a decent wage. They deserve wages that are commensurate with the rest of the country. That is what this Labor Government is delivering. What those opposite delivered were suppressed wages, a public service that was left in chaos and schools with no teachers that had merged classes. Ten thousand a year, those on that side— [*Time expired.*]

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:23): Well, here we are again—another week in New South Wales and another strike. What a surprise! This is something we face every single week in New South Wales. It was interesting to hear the member for Auburn talk about how Government members are listening. Well, there were about 8,000 nurses standing outside this building last week who are convinced that they are not listening. This is just gobsmacking. What we saw today is a government in crisis, as pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition. They are completely incapable of any form of negotiation. I have to say, David Elliott achieved more being asleep than this Minister for Transport can do when she is awake. That is the staggering part about this. Here we have a Minister who has literally no control of the transport network.

The great thing is it is now their mates in the Rail, Tram, and Bus Union [RTBU] who they have no control over. This is gorgeous. Secretary Toby Warnes told the media on Wednesday that the union will continue to disrupt commuters every weekend until Christmas unless the Government accepts its wage demands—every weekend until Christmas. It gets better. He said:

Our 24-hour action has been notified indefinitely — as far as we're concerned our members stand behind that ban.

But it gets even better. He said:

We're willing to stand by it and ensure that pressure is maintained.

In a further sign of wage negotiations hitting rock bottom, Mr Warnes accused the transport Minister of lying when she said that there had been no arrangement that trains would run on Thursday. Mr Warnes argued that the union had never—I repeat, had never—had the intention of shutting down trains on Thursday and that the Minister's suggestion that a deal had been done was wrong. So the Minister is making this up as she goes along.

What we saw today during question time was a Dorothy Dixier given to the Government by the member for The Entrance, who was so concerned about his daughter getting to a Pearl Jam concert and not the thousands of people on the Central Coast from his electorate who cannot get to work on Friday. It goes to show that the priorities of this Government are so out of whack that they want to ask themselves a Dixier. The Dixier should have been, "Hey, Minister, can you explain why thousands of people on the Central Coast can't hop on the train and go to work on Friday, because you cannot negotiate a deal that has been on the table for months?"

But it gets even better. If anyone wants to pop up to the Central Coast, they can come and look at \$1 billion worth of trains sitting and getting dusty and rusty under this Government. This is a \$300 million rail facility that has now become a holding yard because this bunch have got the RTBU to keep these trains off the tracks so the people of the Central Coast could not use them. These blokes are a joke. I say to them pop up and look at the rusty and dusty trains, because they caused it. This is the same RTBU that refuses to drive those trains.

But wait, we have the best of all. We now have drivers on driverless trains under this Government. Just when we thought it could not get any crazier, we now have a metro with driverless trains. The real question needs to be: If the drivers on driverless trains go on strike, will the driverless trains be able to drive without drivers? This is where we have got to under this Government. It is ridiculous. It is insane. We now have drivers on driverless trains because the RTBU said to this Government, "You've got no authority. We are running this State. We want drivers on driverless trains." The Premier and the transport Minister, who has no spine, rolled over and said, "Okay, we'll put drivers on driverless trains. What could possibly go wrong there?"

The next great thing will be the industrial action of drivers on driverless trains. We can see it coming. Blind Freddy can see this one coming down the tracks, unlike this week's strike, which, of course, is being rolled onto everybody.

Mr Gareth Ward: Even I can see it coming.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: Even the member for Kiama saw this coming. This is what is so classic. We have a government in denial, we have a union calling the Minister a liar and we have the Premier in hiding. This State is literally coming to a standstill this week and every week up until Christmas thanks to this incompetent Government, an incompetent Minister and a weak Premier, who will not stand up for the millions of people who need to do the right thing.

They are not a majority government. They are a minority, if they would ever bother to count. But they cannot do that either. Let us be really honest. This Government will be shown the door—and it will not be a train door because they will not be running—because of the incompetence of this bunch. This is a fantastic motion. This public interest debate shows exactly how bad this Government is. I note that the member for The Entrance is in the Chamber. His daughter will not be going to Pearl Jam and neither will thousands of his constituents because that lot cannot stand up to the unions. They are going to let thousands of Central Coast commuters down yet again all the way up until Christmas. Thanks a lot for doing nothing for the Transport Workers' Union. All they are doing is not supporting the passengers.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:28): I am guilty as charged of being befuddled. I did guffaw because as a member of the Labor Party, which is typically seen to be left of the centre, I was a little shocked and surprised by the approach being taken by Mark Jong Un—distant brother of Kim.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Opposition members will come to order.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I am not quite sure about the totalitarian or authoritarian approach being taken here because we—the adults now in charge of the State—have decided to treat the public sector workforce like adults and with respect. We got rid of the wages cap because we wanted to have an adult conversation with our workforce about its pay and work conditions. We are happy to have that conversation. The communist dictatorship proposed by those opposite in the motion moved by the member for Cronulla is quite a shock. So, yes, I was befuddled and I did guffaw quite a lot.

I could not quite understand the logic at play. I would have thought that the acolytes of the free market system would have been all about the to-and-fro, the ebb and flow, to have some backwards and forwards with the workforce about what it is worth and what the Government is willing to pay. But that is not the history of members opposite, is it? They are frightened or something. They attack unions, which are only 18 per cent of the workforce these days, relentlessly in this place. Why are Opposition members so scared? It is okay. They are adults and can deal with unions in a sensible, adult manner. We need to get better at that in this State. The Government is happy to have taken the step of getting rid of the wages cap, returning to the Industrial Relations Commission and coming back to the bargaining table. For the record, more than 50 negotiations have occurred with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union.

Mr Adam Crouch: How's it going? It's not going well?

Mr CLAYTON BARR: They are not going well. To reiterate what was said by the member for Auburn—and by the Premier and the transport Minister in this House today—no-one wants industrial action this weekend. That is why we have been and continue to be at the negotiation table—even this afternoon. We want to try to prevent the industrial action. But the demand for an 8 per cent increase in wages year on year for the next four years is not possible. That is part of the negotiation. We are offering more than the 2.5 per cent that members opposite legislated.

Ms Yasmin Catley: Or zero.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Or zero, in the COVID pandemic. We are offering that 2.5 per cent. We are at the table and having that conversation. I appreciate, with the Leader of the Opposition moving the motion today, that a text message was sent out for Opposition members to come to the Chamber and half of them turned up—that is good!—and I appreciate that they are really putting their shoulder to the wheel on this. But the truth is this is a difficult and unfortunate situation that will have a massive impact on people. We have acknowledged that. We are not saying it is not, but we are working through it.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:34): The member for Cessnock just ended by saying, "We are working through it." I appreciate that the transport Minister is not having a good week. I understand that there was a picket outside her electorate office this morning as a result of the exclusion zone for people wanting to join the blockade in Newcastle, at the largest coal port, on the weekend. A Labor Government Minister would

obviously not seek to have the unions rallying and striking against them. I appreciate that it is not ideal, but we need to really look at what is going on. First, I say that union members choose to strike.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: We support their right to strike.

Ms JENNY LEONG: They should absolutely have the right to strike. Indeed, we should protect the right to strike and the right to protest, which this Minns Labor Government sadly does not; Unions NSW and other unions do. The Greens absolutely support the right to strike and protest. Having said that, I note the complete hypocrisy of those in opposition, who are here in the Chamber in large numbers. During question time they attempted to show an act of solidarity with the nurses who are taking industrial action and exercising their right to strike. In fact, some Opposition members took a selfie with the striking nurses when they were outside Parliament House.

Apparently, however, their so-called solidarity with striking workers does not extend to when that strike creates any inconvenience to the public. It appears that they do not understand—though it is not surprising—that the concept of worker solidarity actually involves showing solidarity even when it is slightly inconvenient to them. The whole point of strike action and non-violence direct action is to cause disruption. It is not about the calm ability to just ask the health Minister whether he has noticed there are nurses sitting in the gallery during question time every day; it is not just about wandering out the front of Parliament House to take a nice little selfie with the nurses—

Ms Lynda Voltz: Adjacent.

Ms JENNY LEONG: "Adjacent"—not "with"—is how Liberal-Nationals members try to join a rally. As I have offered before, I am happy to show them how to join a rally or a protest, and provide some skill sharing if that is what they require. Their act of solidarity does not tend to extend to the workers who are taking industrial action if it somehow has the impact of causing disruption.

Mr Adam Crouch: Do you support it?

Ms JENNY LEONG: I 100 per cent support the strike and the actions of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU]. I make it very clear that there is one way for us to stop this industrial action right now, and that is for the Labor Government to deliver on the demands and requests of the workers who are represented by the RTBU in this State.

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: It wasn't in their claim though.

Ms JENNY LEONG: I note the interjection from the member for Coogee, the Parliamentary Secretary for Transport, who said that 50¢ fares were not in their claim. Absolutely! But it is a bloody good tactic, is it not? It is a very good tactic because if we deliver 24-hour public transport and 50¢ fares, then the people of New South Wales who use the public transport system will enjoy it and love it. In fact, the idea of 50¢ fares is wonderful. We should be exploring fee-free public transport in a cost-of-living crisis. And 24-hour public transport in a 24-hour city is a wonderful concept. The Greens absolutely support the right of workers to strike. We hope that the Government will come to the party and deliver for the people of New South Wales.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr MATT CROSS: I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr JORDAN LANE: I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr MARK COURE: I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (17:40): In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Campbelltown, Hawkesbury, Auburn, Terrigal, Cessnock and Newtown for their contributions to this debate. I also thank the member for Kellyville, the member for Davidson, the member for Ryde and the member for Oatley for the contributions they would have made had that lot opposite not censored them. At least the member for Newtown had the courage to be quite explicit in her support of this industrial action. But those opposite prevaricated, obfuscated and avoided trying to commit to anything at all. I listened very carefully, but not once did any member opposite utter the words "Fair Work Commission". Not once did any member opposite try to justify why this Government will not take the union to the Fair Work Commission. Not once did any member

opposite justify why those who are on strike—holding us to ransom, holding businesses in Sydney and across New South Wales to ransom, holding schoolkids, workers and those who want to go to their hospitals to ransom—

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order—

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Mr Assistant Speaker, I ask that you stop the clock.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I will hear the point of order.

Ms Lynda Voltz: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): There is no point of order.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN: Not once was there any attempt by those opposite to justify why this Government has not gone to the Fair Work Commission. Apart from a passing reference in question time to the Premier, not once did anyone opposite mention Chris Minns by name. They kept him in hiding. They are too embarrassed about a Premier in hiding. They do not condemn the union or apologise. All we have from the member for Cessnock is the mealy-mouthed words that all this is "unfortunate". I have not seen more pussyfooting around since we saw Oscar the cat in Ryde.

We now have the farce of drivers on driverless trains but no drivers of this driverless Government—none at all. There is no justification for or condemnation of this industrial terrorism. There is no apology or explanation for not going to the Fair Work Commission and no explanation for why the Premier has been missing in action. Those opposite are beholden to their union masters—those who control their preselections and their destinies. The Government is too incompetent and too cowardly to stand up to those holding this State to ransom.

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

The House divided.

Ayes35

Noes50

Majority..... 15

AYES

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

NOES

Aitchison, J	Finn, J	Piper, G
Atalla, E	Greenwich, A	Quinnell, S
Bali, S	Hagarty, N (teller)	Saffin, J (teller)
Barr, C	Harris, D	Saliba, D
Butler, L	Harrison, J	Scully, P
Butler, R	Haylen, J	Shetty, K
Car, P	Hoenig, R	Smith, T
Catley, Y	Holland, M	Stuart, M
Chanthivong, A	Hornery, S	Tesch, L
Cotsis, S	Kamper, S	Vo, T
Crakanthorp, T	Kirby, W	Voltz, L
Daley, M	Leong, J	Warren, G
Dalton, H	McDermott, H	Washington, K
Davis, D	McKeown, K	Watson, A
Dib, J	Mehan, D	Whan, S

	NOES	
Donato, P	O'Neill, M	Wilkinson, K
Doyle, T	Park, R	

	PAIRS	
Anderson, K		Minns, C
Toole, P		Kaliyanda, C

Motion negatived.

Bills

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

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.

Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 19 November 2024

No. 1 GRNS No. 1 [c2024-248A]

Page 6, Schedule 1[9], proposed section 37(1), penalty, paragraph (b), line 17. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

- (b) for an individual—
 - (i) 100 penalty units for a first offence, or
 - (ii) 400 penalty units for a second or subsequent offence.

No. 2 GRNS No. 2 [c2024-248A]

Page 6, Schedule 1[9], proposed section 37(3), penalty, paragraph (b), line 30. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

- (b) for an individual—
 - (i) 100 penalty units for a first offence, or
 - (ii) 400 penalty units for a second or subsequent offence.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (17:50): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (17:51): While we supported the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024 in its initial form as it passed through this Chamber, and while we were ready to support the bill in that form in the Legislative Council, the Opposition does not support The Greens amendments. It is peculiar that the Government would be siding with The Greens to weaken its bill, which all members in this House voted in support of. One week the Government is on the side of the Coalition's tougher penalties and the next week it is siding with The Greens in the Legislative Council to weaken its bill.

It shows that Labor is not serious about law and order. Perhaps Labor looked at the footage of the ram raids and the arson attacks in Tweed Heads and Ballina over the weekend and thought, "We must go back to Parliament, weaken our laws and give those criminals the green light." These amendments mean that New South Wales once again is the weakest link. In Victoria they are proposing multimillion-dollar fines and jail time. New South Wales is now proposing a maximum penalty of \$11,000 for a first offence for someone who is found not to have a licence, which is the very purpose of the bill being brought before the House.

Upstairs in the other place The Greens said the bill is about protecting operators who may not be aware of the licensing scheme. Let us be clear, regulations are already in place to allow on-the-spot fines for people who are caught out unintentionally. They are smaller fines that can act as a deterrent but also be a little forgiving for people. Those laws are already in place. In fact those fines are imposed all the time. Let us be clear, we are talking about maximum penalties, not minimum penalties. These amendments would lower the penalties from 400 penalty units to 100 penalty units. But that is inconsequential. Those who have these penalties levied against them are the criminals who will go to court for selling illegal tobacco to our kids and communities. Regarding the premise of the bill, I refer to *Hansard* where The Greens in the other place said:

While I have more confidence in the discretion of NSW Health inspectors than I do in the discretion of police not to harm marginalised individuals, there is a risk, for example, that an employee might face these enormous penalties on behalf of the real decision-maker.

The crux of that comment is that they do not trust the lawmakers. They do not trust the police to do the right thing. That should never be the premise for a bill in this place. Undermining public confidence in the police force—our law enforcement officials—should never be the basis for making law in this place. I still cannot comprehend that comment. As I watched the live feed from the Legislative Council last night, I was bewildered to see Labor siding with The Greens to water down its bill. It has weakened the provisions in the bill that all members in this place had already agreed on.

In one House we have Labor working with the Coalition to significantly lift the penalties in one part of the bill, then in the other place it is siding with The Greens to diminish other penalties in the bill. It is flipping and flopping. I do not know what kind of signal it expected to send. The signal it has sent is that we once again have the weakest laws in New South Wales when it comes to tackling illicit tobacco. These provisions set a low bar compared to other States for individuals who flout the licensing scheme. We cannot stand for that. What these amendments do in practice is strip away a higher maximum penalty for someone who could be deliberately flouting the law. We know that retail shops selling tobacco are popping up overnight everywhere. We have seen it in our communities. Last week the member for Wagga Wagga spoke about his experience of seeing 10 or so shops suddenly appear. We can have a crook with a rap sheet for other criminal offences as long as his arm selling cigarettes from a retail shop. And that person would now only cop a fine of \$11,000 because of the Labor and The Greens amendments. It is far below the penalties in Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

This Government would not support the fit-and-proper person test, which was included in an amendment that we put forward as a safeguard to stop these criminal gangs. The Government supported our other penalties, which we are very appreciative of, that lifted penalties to about \$770,000 for criminal gangs who seek to sell tobacco illegally without proper packaging—in other words, the dodgy stuff. That was a compromise we were happy with. To then see other provisions weakened in the other place just does not make sense. This is a huge own goal by this Labor Government that is sending mixed messages to criminal gangs who are undermining our communities. We do not want to see the illegal activity we have seen in Victoria where more than 100 small tobacconists and convenience stores have been subjected to arson attacks and fire bombings. We know that behaviour has been creeping over the border into New South Wales.

We cannot make sense of this bizarre flip-flopping and the agreement that was made in the other place. We cannot agree to it. We oppose the amendments, even though we support the bill and the intentions of the Minister and the Health department to increase the penalties for those selling illegal tobacco by introducing a licensing scheme that we know stakeholders also support. But we cannot send a signal that will raise penalties on one hand and lessen them on the other. We do not support The Greens amendments as proposed in the other House. We continue to support the bill as it was when it left this House. We are dealing with two different bills now and we cannot support that. We oppose the amendments.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (17:58): I mention a few things that are important. I note the contribution from the shadow Minister and what she is trying to do. It is important to note that we are not voting on the amendments; we are voting on the bill as amended. The amendments were accepted because they are sensible amendments to protect legitimate individuals selling tobacco products—mum-and-dad small business owners—who may not have realised that after 12 years of inaction under a Liberal government we are finally catching up with the rest of the country and introducing a licensing scheme. I have some sympathy for small mum-and-dad retailers who are doing it tough and may not realise that this bill is in place. These measures are about focusing on the balance of strong enforcement, with practical support for law-abiding businesses.

Importantly, the bill incorporates the Opposition amendments. But members opposite do not understand enforcement. They clearly do not understand enforcement or they would not have taken 12 years to do nothing. This will not change our approach to organised crime. How can it? Penalties for selling illicit tobacco carry a maximum fine of \$154,000 for individuals and \$770,000 for corporations. If organised criminals attempt to apply for a licence, the secretary can rely on advice from law enforcement to refuse the licence or revoke it, as we have already outlined. I do not want this issue to be politicised, which is why I have engaged with the crossbench and the Opposition. It is why, if members remember, we supported the Opposition amendments and the amendments of the member for Wagga Wagga. We are trying to make sure that we have a licensing system in place that is strong, robust and timely. I do not want to see this licensing system held up.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:01): When the bill was introduced, I said that it was like a curate's egg in that it was good in parts. My friend the member for Wagga Wagga and I raised these issues because we were concerned about what we were seeing in regional communities. There were firebombings in Victoria and Queensland and, indeed, they came across the border into New South Wales. I smell the musty stench of desperation and a Labor-Greens deal in order to try to pass the bill through the Parliament. I call it desperation

because the Minister is so wrongly obsessed with a licensing scheme that he has forgotten about the fact that the penalty regime he is imposing will roll out the red carpet for criminals.

I know the Minister was a bit discombobulated, but it seems that he is just as concerned about organised crime as he is about disorganised crime. He was talking about mums and dads being impacted by the bill. These people are breaking the very law that Government members are proposing. Government members have snuck over to the Legislative Council and done a deal with their watermelon mates in order to water down penalties from 1,400 to 400 penalty units for these offences. That position is weak, and it is also in stark contrast to their Labor colleagues in other States. **

Premier Malinauskas in South Australia and the Victorian and Queensland Premiers have brought in tough regimes. But every step of the way we have heard excuses about why we cannot have a fit and proper person test or penalties commensurate to other States. It means bikies, the Comancheros and organised crime will target New South Wales. The Minister is more concerned about simply having a licensing scheme, no matter the consequences or penalties. In the previous debate when considering amendments to the bill, the Minister said, "The Government supports Opposition amendments Nos 1, 2, 3 and 11." They are the amendments that the Government voted for before they voted against them. The Minister continued:

... the amendments seek to amend the bill to increase penalties for existing offences for selling tobacco not in the manufacturer's packaging, without a health warning and containing prohibitive words. These penalties are higher than those proposed in the bill, with a maximum penalty of 1,400 penalty units for individuals and 7,000 penalty units for corporations. The Government recognises the importance of the issue to the community—

it did a few weeks ago, but that has obviously changed—

and the serious impact illicit tobacco has on public health.

Then, of course, enters factional player the Hon. Courtney Houssos, who clearly has more power than the health Minister on the Minister's own bill. The factional player the Hon. Courtney Houssos overturned the health Minister's position. She rolled him because he is not part of the Premier's inner circle—she is. She wanted to deal with The Greens to get the legislation through and she got her way. Minister Houssos said, "I will be brief. I thank Dr Amanda Cohn for her comments on the bill that raise important points." She continued:

These are sensible penalties—

they more than halve the number of penalty units, but apparently they are sensible—

and provide for a greater suite of enforcement options to respond to selling tobacco without a licence. The Government supports the amendments.

That means the Government chose a penalty regime that will make New South Wales the State with the lowest penalties, all because Government members believe that the licensing scheme is more important than the overall impact and effect of the bill. There is a reason why Independent members tried to improve this bill. I give all credit to the shadow spokesperson as well. This issue started with public health, consumer protection and whether we had the right agency, but now it is about community safety. It is more than just a public health issue. Sure, we should be concerned about the value of illegal tobacco and the fact that it leaves foreign shores worth \$250,000 and arrives here worth between \$7 million and \$13 million. Sure, we should be concerned about what is in it, whether it is hair, sawdust or other nefarious products that cause health issues.

The problem is that when it gets here, people run it out to regional communities, where businesses are being firebombed. People are experiencing jacked up prices for insurance premiums in other States because of concern about having a tobacconist in the building. All of that is going to come to New South Wales, along with community safety issues. I urge the Parliament to not just ram through this legislation because the Minister says that some of it is all right. We either get this right or we will need another committee inquiry and we will be back talking about this issue. This is not ideal. In fact, it is unacceptable that the bill has been watered down. I oppose this because this is a bad bill that has been made worse by The Greens amendments.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:06): I was not going to speak in this debate. I thought the bill was amended and improved by this place and had gone to the house of review so that it could be rubberstamped and passed back. But The Greens have weakened the bill, enabled by Labor. That sends the opposite signal to criminals that we as a Parliament should be sending. Where society is soft on crime, crime flourishes. I urge members of the Labor Party to restrengthen the bill, give it back its teeth and make New South Wales a safer place. The Minister spoke a bit about firebombings. I do not recall any firebombings under the Coalition Government; that is happening now under the Minister's watch.

We need strong, robust laws to help protect our communities from crime. These amendments make our communities a target for organised crime. If New South Wales has the weakest laws in the nation, criminals will concentrate their criminal activity in our communities. If the bill passes as it stands, Labor will have weakened

the original bill and weakened laws on tobacco like it did with knife crime and youth crime. Labor has a history of being incredibly soft on crime at a time when our communities—

[*A member interjected.*]

I note the interjection from The Greens, who are probably the softest on crime in the history of political parties. They roll out the welcome mat for criminals everywhere they go. We want to see criminals face justice when they break the law. Opposition members thought the bill, though not strong enough, was at a point that we could support. The Government supported our amendments until the bill went to the upper House. We do not know what deal was done in order to weaken the bill to the position it is in at the moment, but we will not support these amendments. I encourage Labor and crossbench members to not roll out the welcome mat for criminals in New South Wales.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:10): I make a short contribution to consideration of the Legislative Council amendments. I acknowledge the work the Minister has put into the bill and the speed with which he has acted to introduce this legislation. It was extraordinary, and I acknowledge his leadership in particular. I acknowledge the shadow Minister, the member for Vacluse, who worked collaboratively on the bill. I appreciate her consultation. I acknowledge also the strong advocacy of the member for Kiama. I will support the bill and I will outline my reasons. I believe the amendments are, in reality, relatively small. They may have some value for small, genuine businesses.

At the moment, businesses are doing it tough and we must stick up for them. In fact, the concerns that were brought to me came primarily from legitimate small business retailers whose livelihoods are threatened by the black market, and that is still the case right now. I see some value in the amendments. They weaken the penalties for first offences for individuals but not for corporations. Nevertheless, the bill is a substantial step forward in terms of the penalties that will be inflicted and the licensing scheme that will be introduced. In my view, the changes do not detract from the important strengths of the bill. Of course, the Act will be reviewed, and that review will be important to pick up any issues with the bill. But it is critical that we pass this bill now.

We cannot risk the Parliament pulling up stumps for the year and coming back in February without this bill passing this place now, because that will damage retailers and industries, and we do not want to risk that. If we send the bill back to the Legislative Council, who knows what will happen? We have a chance to pass the bill now. The very fact that we are considering these amendments indicates what it is like in the other place. Why would we risk doing that again? We certainly cannot wait until February. The Christmas season is happening and retailers in my electorate and throughout the State face unfair competition from organised crime. We have an opportunity to strike out that competition right now with the bill. I personally do not want to send it back to the other place. I want the bill done and dusted. I do not think we can wait. I will be supporting the bill.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:12): The lower House now gleefully sits on Fridays so there is an opportunity for the bill to return to the upper House for debate tomorrow and for us to debate it on Friday in order that it is passed before Christmas.

Dr Joe McGirr: I don't want to risk it.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: There is no risk because the upper House does not have a time limit tomorrow. Given the numbers in the upper House who support this particular bill, we know it will pass, and it has support in the lower House as well. That is a poor excuse. We are sitting on Fridays for this exact reason. Let us put the tens of thousands of dollars of taxpayer funds that go into running this place to good use. Let us do this bill once and let us do it properly. Let us not come back in February after more firebombings and after the criminals have moved in from Victoria, where the laws have been strengthened by the Victorian Labor Government. We will find ourselves in a situation in February, in three months time, in which the criminals have moved to New South Wales because they know we have a Government that is weak on crime.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (18:13): I will clarify a few things. These amendments will not change our approach to the organised crime element. Selling illicit tobacco carries a maximum penalty of \$154,000 for individuals and \$770,000 for corporations. If organised crime attempt to apply for a licence, as outlined in the bill, the secretary can rely on advice from law enforcement. Last week the bill was amended according to the amendments moved by the member for Wagga Wagga, which clarify that law enforcement includes law enforcement from other jurisdictions as well as the Australian Federal Police. I am disappointed that members do not see this as an opportunity to work collectively on this legislation to put in place a licensing regime that should have been in place a hell of a long time ago—a little bit to our shame, to be honest. But those are the facts.

Members have talked about other jurisdictions. We must acknowledge that other jurisdictions have a licensing scheme. Opposition members did not think that was important during their 12 years in government. We

will work as fast as we can. We have been able to introduce this bill in two years since coming to government. The Opposition had a decade longer and did not introduce legislation. With the greatest respect, while we have tried to work across the divide and with the crossbench on the bill, given that it is an important issue, Opposition members who have criticised the Government must acknowledge that we are trying to help legitimate, microbusiness owners. They are very small operators, including mums and dads, in our community. At the moment they are doing it tough. We all acknowledge that. The Government is trying to provide clarity for those people.

We are not talking about organised crime or criminal gangs. Let us be clear about that because we must talk frankly if we are to work collectively on bills in Parliament. We have an opportunity to introduce a licensing scheme in New South Wales that we would have liked to have in place a long time before now, from a public health perspective. But it has not been in place, and we have worked across the political divide to try to engage with the Opposition and crossbench around that.

Mr Gareth Ward: The Greens.

Mr RYAN PARK: Yes, that includes members of The Greens because they are a part of the crossbench in this place and the other place. This was a key issue for the member for Wagga Wagga and he advocated for it. The Government has worked across the political divide. We are putting in place legislation that members of Parliament should be proud of as we head to the Christmas break. A review mechanism is in place. There will be opportunities to tweak the scheme as we move through the process. But given that we do not have a scheme in New South Wales, despite the fact that other jurisdictions do, this is an important opportunity to legislate an important reform.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (18:17): I make another brief contribution. The Minister has set the record straight, but I would like to provide some context. We are not just talking about mums and dads and innocent shop owners. If that were the case, they would receive an on-the-spot fine, which is currently available. This is about maximum penalties for those who deserve harsher penalties, and that may include criminals, as is usually the case when this happens. I will outline the penalties that are applied for the same offence in other States so that we can compare apples with apples. Just as a reminder, in New South Wales the maximum penalty for a first offence is \$11,000 under this legislation. In Victoria, it is \$1 million or five years in jail; in South Australia, it is \$350,000 for a first offence; in Queensland, it is \$161,300 for a first offence; in Western Australia, it is \$50,000 for a first offence; and in the Northern Territory, it is \$92,500.

These are maximum penalties; they are not levied out to everybody. If a small business owner has innocently made a mistake or if someone else deserves a second chance, there are provisions in the regulations to give them an on-the-spot fine. There are provisions within this bill to levy a lesser penalty. This does not stop that. What this does, though, if we allow it to go through—

Mr Ryan Park: You are mixing up the legislation.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE: I let the Minister speak. If we allow this to go through, we are sending a strong message to interstate criminals coming to New South Wales that we are a soft touch. We cannot allow that to happen. We cannot allow it to happen because the Minister is in a rush. I remind the Minister that last night we were ready to support his bill until it was changed inexplicably. Why did the Government do that? I have no idea. It does not know why it did that! If the bill that passed the other place was in the same form as the bill that left this place, we would not be having this conversation.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:19): The bill will make mum and dad businesses and microbusinesses a target for shakedowns from organised criminals who know they can use typical shakedown methods. It will make businesses more susceptible to organised crime, targeting them in a way that will force them into organised crime. I cannot believe we are having this discussion in Parliament. Laws passed through this House, went to the upper House and were weakened. It will make our communities less safe and will paint a target on the same family businesses we are trying to protect.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:20): I will be crystal clear—and I say this to the crossbench. The reason it is important to keep individual fines high is their value as a deterrent. Individuals who are prohibited from working in these stores are often employed on a cash basis. If we keep the fines low, they are just a cost of doing business and people will be exploited by organised crime. That is why it is important to keep the fines high. If we lower them, it just becomes easier for syndicates to take advantage of individuals who end up working in pop-up stores like we see in Victoria. I appreciate the Minister's point, but the problem is that will be the reality. Not only do you have a weakening of the regime; you also have the potential for individuals to be taken advantage of. It is important to have high individual penalties because the syndicates will work their way around them

otherwise. That will inevitably impact on some of the most vulnerable people who are employed on a cash basis. That is what the Minister is doing.

These amendments are not helping. The Minister should be proud of introducing a licensing scheme—I acknowledge all the points he made about that—but this is bad news for communities. When the next firebombing happens in New South Wales—there have already been a few—and they start to escalate, I will come back into the Chamber and ask questions. I, along with the Opposition, will be seeking a parliamentary inquiry to ratchet up the penalties and do what other States seemingly do. New South Wales should be the first State and the toughest State, not the weakest State and the State that is open for business to organised crime, big or small.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): Before I put the question, I welcome to the advisers area Mr Darcy Warren, son of the member for Campbelltown. I encourage members to touch base with Darcy on their way out of the House to get the backstory on the member for Campbelltown.

The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes52
Noes34
Majority.....18

AYES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Butler, L
Butler, R
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Dalton, H
Davis, D
Dib, J
Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Greenwich, A
Hagarty, N (teller)

Hannan, J
Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Hornery, S
Kamper, S
Kirby, W
Leong, J
Li, J
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
O'Neill, M
Park, R

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

NOES

Ayyad, T
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Cross, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Davies, T
Di Pasqua, S
Griffin, J
Henskens, A
Hodges, M
Kemp, M

Lane, J
Layzell, D
Moylan, B
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G
Roberts, A
Scruby, J
Singh, G
Sloane, K
Speakman, M

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

PAIRS

Kaliyanda, C
Minns, C

James, T
Anderson, K

Motion agreed to.

*Community Recognition Statements***LEA DE ANGELIS**

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:30): I congratulate Lea De Angelis, who this year finishes up as principal of St Anthony of Padua Catholic College in Austral after a career spanning four decades. Lea has worked across the Parramatta and Sydney dioceses, including stints as principal of All Hallows Catholic Primary School in Five Dock and of St Luke's Catholic Primary School in Revesby. However, her eight years as the inaugural principal of St Anthony of Padua will cement her legacy in Catholic education. Opening in the 2017 school year with an initial enrolment of 42 kindergarten students, the school has experienced massive growth and success under Lea's stewardship. Earlier this year, the school completed a significant program of works that included four new learning buildings, sporting facilities and car parks. The upgrades will enable the school's capacity to grow to more than 2,000 students when its first cohort of year 12 students begin the 2026 school year. Guided by St Anthony's principles of service and welcome, Lea has ensured St Anthony's has quickly made its mark as one of the leading schools in the Leppington electorate. I wish her all the best.

BENJAMIN ACLAND AND RILEY HILL

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie) (18:31): I recognise the meritorious achievements of Benjamin Acland and Riley Hill, students at St Columba Anglican School. Both boys have excelled and earned high distinctions in the term 3 International Competitions and Assessments for Schools [ICAS] competition. ICAS academic assessments are designed by a team of educators from across the globe. The assessments combine relevant content with a commitment to high standards and rigorous processes. The competition is demanding, with students participating in the prestigious international challenge that tests higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. I sincerely congratulate Benjamin Acland, who earned a high distinction in mathematics and science; and Riley, who achieved a high distinction in science and a distinction in mathematics. They are outstanding achievements, considering only the top 1 per cent of participants in this competition will receive a high distinction. Benjamin and Riley's impressive achievements are testament to not only the boys themselves, but also the dedication of their teachers and support of their families. I applaud their magnificent achievements and encourage the boys to continue to be inspired.

BRAX AND MASON MCCRUDDEN

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:32): This evening I share a proud local member moment that I experienced during the recent Australia versus Pakistan T20 cricket match. When I tuned in to watch the Dettol T20, as always, I felt a deep sense of pride when the Australian flag was carried into the stadium. But this time, my pride grew even stronger when I saw that the flag-bearers were none other than Brax and Mason McCrudden, talented young cricketers in the under-13s team and dedicated members of the Riverstone Rangers Cricket Club. That incredible honour is a testament to their commitment to the sport they love. Carrying the Australian flag before a packed stadium was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that Brax and Mason embraced with pride. It was not just a moment of personal achievement for them, but also a celebration of the crucial role that junior cricket plays in nurturing future stars. As they continue their cricketing journeys, I look forward to seeing them return to that stadium not as flag-bearers but as players. We are all incredibly proud of Brax and Mason, and I wish them every success as they chase their dreams.

MAL NEALE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (18:33): On 5 November, after 43 years of service, Mal Neale retired from his role at Club Taree. Over the years, Mal has been a familiar face for members and has helped numerous people through his mateship, mentoring, support and encouragement. Club CEO Paul Allan remarked:

Mal's presence and tenure have made him the touch point for many of our members, an identity, a familiarity and even an icon, whilst his willingness has been a place of comfort and safety, and his welcoming smile created a homely greeting for Members of all ages.

Mal's retirement marks the end of an era and, while he will be missed, his influence and the many connections he made will continue. I wish Mal all the very best for a happy and fulfilling retirement, and I thank him for the years he dedicated to our community. Club Taree was made better just by having Mal, and his contribution will not be forgotten.

TRIBUTE TO JOSHUA PIKE

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (18:34): On 11 October the community marked one year since the tragic passing of Joshua Pike, an energetic young boy, loving brother and son who was loved by his community. That love was made clear in the wake of Joshua's passing with an outpouring of support for his family and the Appin community at large. The main street of Appin was lined with pink and purple balloons—Josh's favourite colours—and a fundraising page for the cost of the funeral reached \$50,000. Since Joshua's passing, at

the request of his community, I ensured there was a safety review and upgrade, including a bus refuge and other changes. But those things cannot replace Joshua. Recently, Joshua's friends and family came together at the site of his passing to remember him. They continue to support each other. They have raised the idea of installing a permanent bench at the site, and I understand that Wollondilly Shire Council is assisting. I thank them. Joshua will be missed by the entire community in Appin and beyond. He will never be forgotten.

DENILIQIN PASTORAL TIMES

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:35): Today I recognise a remarkable institution, the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times*, which has proudly served as the voice of the community for an extraordinary 165 years. Founded in 1859, during an era when news travelled no faster than a horse could carry it, the *Pastoral Times* became a vital thread in the fabric of Deniliquin life. It chronicled the early struggles of pastoralists, championed the Riverina's bid for recognition and documented the stories that shaped a young nation. Today the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times* is a modern beacon of community journalism, published twice a week and staying connected with its readers through an extensive online presence. Its team of dedicated journalists brings local stories to life, shining a light on the people, achievements and challenges that make our region so unique. The paper remains a stalwart defender of regional identity, giving voice to its readers and celebrating the resilience of rural Australia. I congratulate the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times* team on this momentous milestone.

ASSYRIAN DIQLAT SCHOOL

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:36): On 9 November 2024, I had the honour and privilege of attending the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Assyrian Diqlat School in the Nineveh Room at Eden Venues in Edensor Park. The remarkable occasion was dedicated to honouring the past and present students, teachers, principals and volunteers who have played a vital role in the school's success over the past five decades. It was a joyous event that brought together the community to reflect on the school's history and the incredible contributions of all those involved. The celebration also provided an opportunity to acknowledge the support from the Australian and New South Wales governments, which have been instrumental in the growth of community language schools. It was an inspiring evening filled with gratitude, celebration and a deep sense of community pride. It was wonderful to know that the work and legacy of the Assyrian Diqlat School will continue to thrive for many years to come.

JEREMY HAN AND DANIEL KIM

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:37): I congratulate Jeremy Han and Daniel Kim, two students from schools in the Ryde electorate, on their participation in the 2024 NSW Premier's Spelling Bee. Jeremy Han, a year 4 student from Ermington Public School, participated in the junior competition. Jeremy's commitment to expand his vocabulary and hone his spelling skills is highly commendable. His participation reflects a deep passion for learning and sets a wonderful example for his peers. Daniel Kim, a year 6 student from Ryde Public School, competed in the senior competition. Daniel's hard work and perseverance have not only made his school proud but also inspired many young learners in our community. His achievement highlights the importance of literacy and the joy of mastering language. The NSW Premier's Spelling Bee is a prestigious event that encourages students across New South Wales to engage with language in a meaningful way. By participating, Jeremy and Daniel have demonstrated not only their academic abilities but also their courage to challenge themselves and strive for excellence. I recognise both of these impressive students and wish them every success for the future.

UNIVERSAL ROBOTICS CHALLENGE

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:38): I congratulate the robotics teams at East Hills Boys High School and Condell Park High School on their successful and exciting trips to Japan to compete in the Universal Robotics Challenge in September this year. The exceptional students from both schools thrived in the high-pressure competition, landing them very respectful eighth, tenth and fourteenth places. They were great results, particularly considering the adverse weather conditions that the teams' robots were faced with. The teams had to use their critical thinking and problem-solving skills to adapt to new conditions. They did remarkably well, displaying their technical expertise and determination and overcoming each new challenge they faced. It is admirable to see young people pursuing their dreams and working together to overcome challenges. I also congratulate both schools' parents and teachers on enabling their young children to travel to Japan to compete in the Universal Robotics Competition. Well done to everyone.

BROADWATER PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (18:39): Today is a big day for the Broadwater community, as the first of the buildings for the new Broadwater Public School has arrived onsite. The 2022 floods were devastating. A few short months ago, we were not even looking for the site to have development consent. But today, with the determination of the Broadwater Public School, the Government and the Reconstruction Authority, the school is under construction. There will be three state-of-the-art classrooms, a new library, a new canteen and

new administration facilities. There will be a yarnning circle and an undercover play area. The school was all but devastated after the flood went about a metre into the second floor. The new campus is set to open in early 2025. I cannot wait to be there on opening day to welcome the kids to their new school.

AFRICULTURES FESTIVAL

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:40): The 2024 Africultures Festival held at Cathy Freeman Park is a testament to our vibrant African communities and the result of the tireless efforts of founder Fatma Mohamed and the Africultures committee. I thank Fatma for being a gracious host and advocate for the continual improvement and expansion of the festival. Her energy, drive and ambition to celebrate and acknowledge African culture is boundless and inspiring. Along with the member for Granville and the member for Auburn, I experienced Africultures in the company of the High Commissioner of the Republic of Uganda, Dorothy Samali Hyuha. We danced and sampled food, including amazing Ethiopian doughnuts, and took in the sounds and culture of many of the 54 African nations in a display of joy, culture and community. Africultures is always an enjoyable day out. Each year more and more members of the wider community attend to experience the flavours and sounds of Africa, minus the airfares. I thank the community leaders, organisations, stallholders and performers who make Africultures the largest African festival in Australia.

BEACON HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:41): I congratulate the Beacon Hill Public School boys soccer and touch football teams, which have triumphed at the State knockout for the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association inter-school sport competition. On 30 August the boys touch football team beat Avoca Beach Public School in an impressive 8-1 victory in the final round of the Sydney North region competition. The team then went on to compete in the State finals on 11 November, where it triumphed over Shellharbour Public School with a score of 6-3 to secure the title of State champions. On 4 November the soccer team put in a phenomenal effort against King Park Public School, losing only 4-3 in the finals. The team is now officially titled the State runners-up. It is of note that several boys participated in both the touch football and the soccer teams, which must be exhausting, especially for the parents. All the students who participated, and their parents and teachers, should be immensely proud of their remarkable success. Their hard work and passion for sport shines brightly. Bravo!

NSW SES METRO AWARDS

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (18:42): On Saturday I had the honour of attending the NSW SES Metro Awards presentation. The awards recognise the hardworking volunteers at the State Emergency Service for their work in keeping our community safe. Their dedication to training and unwavering commitment to our community in times of need is truly commendable. Whether it is responding to natural disasters, aiding in rescues or providing vital support for land searches, they are the backbone of our emergency response. I particularly acknowledge the volunteers of the Auburn SES for their work during the Auburn floods. They received the Commissioner's Certificate of Appreciation. I acknowledge Norman Lowe, Leo Liu, Jamie Newman, Alison Severs, Tara Stojanovski, Tanju Olcer, Clarissa Tosti, Daniel Barnett, Jad El Abed, Amber Hawkins, Ayse Kilinc, Robert Kirk, Alan Lam and William Leask.

WESTERN SYDNEY MIGRANT RESOURCES CENTRE

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:43): On 31 October 2024 I visited the Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre [MRC] in Liverpool, an organisation dedicated to empowering and supporting migrants, refugees and culturally diverse communities across Western Sydney. CEO Maeve Brown shared insights into the wide array of programs and services the MRC provides. I also met Fatin Al-Rawi, team leader for settlement casework and reporting, who detailed the comprehensive assistance offered to individuals and families transitioning to life in Australia. Yordanos Dagne, a specialised relationship caseworker, provided a heartfelt account of the struggles faced by families, particularly in managing relationships and overcoming barriers. The Western Sydney MRC is an essential pillar of our community, working tirelessly to promote inclusion, resilience and opportunities for culturally diverse individuals and families. I commend Maeve Brown and her dedicated team for their invaluable contribution to creating a more equitable and supportive society in Liverpool and beyond.

WHITELEY CORPORATION

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:44): Port Stephens is well known for having the best beaches in Australia, if not the world, but it is also a manufacturing powerhouse. That fact was recently recognised at the 2024 Business Awards, where one of our amazing local manufacturers took out the top gong. Huge congratulations to Whiteley Corporation for winning New South Wales Business of the Year. Not only did the Whiteley team take out the top award, they also earned the Excellence in International Business award. As a leading manufacturer of sterilants, disinfectants and healthcare cleaning products, Whiteley exports to over 35 countries, including the United States

of America and Canada. Under the leadership of Dr Greg Whiteley, this 92-year-old family business has been built on innovation and excellence. It proudly represents Port Stephens on the State, national and global stages. Whiteley Corporation is a great local employer of great locals who are dedicated to protecting lives through its world-leading infection prevention and control products. I congratulate Dr Greg Whiteley, managing director Darran Leyden and the entire Whiteley team.

WILLA HERRON

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (18:45): It takes an extraordinary level of courage to stand up, especially as a young person still in school, and address members of Parliament on such weighty issues as youth crime and community safety. Willa Herron did just that, and she did it with remarkable clarity and strength. As the only person under 18 to speak at the recent Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety inquiry hearing in Kempsey, Willa stepped into an intimidating council chamber wearing her Bellingen High School blazer with pride. Willa's words were a testament to the power of youth insight in shaping solutions for the future. She underscored the importance of early intervention and community-led support programs like YOUth Speak and ShoreTrack, bringing attention to the need for resources in regional areas to address issues like mental health and the effects of crime. Her insights provided a crucial perspective that is often missing from such discussions. In moments like these, we are reminded of the value that young voices bring to community dialogue. Willa's effort, bravery and dedication to representing her peers deserve a round of congratulations. She inspires all of us to listen to the young leaders emerging in our communities. Go get 'em, Willa.

MAUREEN CARTER

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:46): I congratulate Maureen Carter of Berrara on the release of her memoir, *Ten Pounds for Paradise*, which is a profound and inspiring story of migration, resilience and fulfilment in the natural world. Her journey through motherhood, feminism and mature-age education and her enduring connection to nature shines through every page. Maureen's migration to Australia in 1964 under the assisted passage scheme brought her to Sydney and rural New South Wales before she found her true paradise in the Shoalhaven. Now, at the age of 80, Maureen writes with candour and humour about her difficult childhood in Wales, her transformation in the turbulent 1970s, and her rewarding career as one of Australia's first mediators. A passionate bushwalker and advocate for the environment, Maureen shares her love for the natural world, describing challenging walks she and her husband have undertaken across Australia and abroad. Maureen's journey reminds us all of the resilience of the human spirit and the healing power of nature. I commend Maureen for her extraordinary life.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:47): Remembrance Day holds a significant place in our calendar. It is a time to reflect and a time to remember. Every year we pause at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month to commemorate the sacrifice made by those Australians who have served in conflict. Wollondilly electorate Remembrance Day services took place at Thirlmere Memorial Park, hosted by Wollondilly Sub-Branch RSL; Picton Memorial Park, hosted by Picton Anzac Day Committee; Taara Gardens and Agris Hutrof House in Thirlmere; Mittagong RSL, hosted by the Mittagong RSL Sub-Branch; Bowral War Memorial; and Warragamba Memorial Park. We have lots of services. I was honoured to attend the Warragamba service this year along with Wollondilly councillors Ally Dench, Trish Hill and Hilton Gibbs. I thank the Warragamba ANZAC Committee for inviting me. Remembrance Day is always special to me and so many others. It evokes so many memories for so many people. Supporting serving members, veterans and their families is important to do every day, not just on Remembrance Day. Lest we forget.

LEA DE ANGELIS

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:48): I proudly continue a community recognition statement that was started this evening by the member for Leppington to honour the incredible 35 years of service to Catholic education of Ms Lea De Angelis. Lea, as I affectionately know her, not only has the legacy of being the foundation principal for the largest Sydney Catholic K-12 co-educational school, St Anthony of Padua Catholic College in Austral, in the Leppington electorate, but she also has the legacy of being the final principal I had as my boss before I became a member of Parliament. One of the most incredible things about Lea is her capacity to include everybody in the school in her decision-making. There is nothing that Lea would ask a member of staff to do that she would not do herself. Her favourite motto comes from Andy Warhol: "The idea is not to live forever but to create something that will." For many of us, Lea has done that.

JUZZY'S TACOS

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:49): I celebrate the grand opening of Juzzy's Tacos, a recently launched pop-up restaurant on Great North Road in Five Dock. Juzzy's Tacos fuses traditional Mexican

and Indian cuisines through its delicious dishes and bold flavours. The restaurant is a true celebration of multiculturalism and, like so many in our community, I am excited to visit. Juzzy's Tacos previously operated many pop-up restaurants across the State, and we are fortunate to host such an outstanding and renowned establishment in our community. I sincerely congratulate the owner of Juzzy's Tacos, Justin Narayan, on the grand opening of the Five Dock pop-up. As the 2021 winner of *MasterChef Australia*, Justin is helping to bring more people to our area, which is a wonderful thing. The continued success of Juzzy's Tacos is a testament to Justin's talent, passion and entrepreneurial spirit. I wish Justin and his staff all the best.

RITA SANDRA CREWS AND JOHN CAMERON ACOCKS

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (18:50): Today I honour Rita Sandra Crews and John Cameron Acocks on their extraordinary milestone of 50 years of service as Justices of the Peace. For five decades Rita and John have selflessly supported our community, assisting individuals with important tasks such as witnessing documents, certifying copies and offering guidance with integrity and diligence. The contributions of Justices of the Peace like Rita and John go beyond paperwork. They provide reassurance and accessibility, often at pivotal moments in people's lives. Their enduring service exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism that binds our community together and inspires us all. Rita showed me the original nomination letter for her Justice of the Peace application, signed by Gordon Jackett, the then member for Burwood, on 18 September 1973. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Rita and John, and I congratulate them on their extraordinary service. Their commitment over 50 years is nothing short of extraordinary, and we are all enriched by their dedication.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN COLLETT

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:51): I pay tribute Mr John Collett, Wee Waa's last surviving World War II veteran, who passed away peacefully, aged 98, on 11 November. Mr Collett was part of the Citizen Military Forces from 30 June 1943 to 4 August 1943, attending training camps near Albury in New South Wales and Chidlow in Western Australia. After joining the Australian Imperial Forces on 5 August 1943, he trained for New Guinea in Queensland. John served 403 days overseas in the Aitape-Wewak campaign. When the war ended, he lived in Wee Waa. He was married to his wife for 61 years. They had three children, seven grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren. As with many servicemen of that era, John returned with the value of fairness for all, and he lived by that. Mr John Collett was well known in the Wee Waa community and is greatly missed. I offer sincere condolences to Mr Collett's family. John's contribution to his country is very much appreciated. I thank him for his service. May he now rest in peace.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (18:52): Next Friday Maitland will march as a community to raise awareness of domestic and family violence as part of the United Nations 16 Days of Activism. The event is organised annually by six Rotary clubs from across Maitland, and I will be joined at the event by local school groups, Our Circle, Hume Community Housing, We Care Connect, the Women's Healing Sanctuary, Maitland Region Community Support and the NSW Police Force. Rotary clubs not only raise awareness but also support survivors with practical assistance such as mobile phones and the personal items needed by those fleeing violent situations, often with only the clothes on their back. The march begins at Maitland Court House before proceeding through The Levee Central Maitland, finishing at the Maitland Administration Centre. We must join together to say no to domestic and family violence. I also give a shout-out to Got Your Back Sista and Carrie's Place, which do enormous work with people experiencing violence in our communities.

BRIDGET CLARK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:53): I recognise a fantastic local talent who recently made her Olympic debut, representing Australia in the women's rugby sevens team. Bridget Clark is an Oatley resident who grew up playing in competitive Oztag and touch football teams in the St George area and the Sutherland Shire. At just 21 years of age, she has transitioned from a local player to an Olympic contender. As a valued player at the Burraneer Women's Rugby Club, Bridget was selected by coach Tim Walsh to replace injured players on the national rugby sevens squad. From there, she delivered a stellar performance in her international debut against Hong Kong, which led to her selection for the Olympic team. It was incredible to witness Bridget's dream of representing Australia come true on the world stage at the Paris 2024 Olympics. Her Olympic selection was a testament to her potential, growth and unwavering dedication. Seeing young local talent achieving their dreams and representing Australia is very inspiring. Bridget's journey exemplifies her perseverance.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ARTFEST

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:54): I acknowledge the Blue Mountains Artfest and the Wentworth Falls Public School P&C committee. I had the opportunity to open this exhibition not so long ago.

The Blue Mountains Artfest has been going for 41 years. I particularly acknowledge Chris, Rachel, Megan and the organising committee; Guy Edmonds, the emcee; Nancy Wheeler, School Learning Support Officer and a Dharug Elder, for her welcome to country; and Richard Giles, the principal of that fantastic school. The Blue Mountains Artfest is an event that everyone in the Blue Mountains wants to attend. It is a community celebration of creativity and culture held in the spirit of collaboration and the name of art and education. Congratulations to the Wentworth Falls Public School P&C.

MANLY SPIN-A-THON

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:55): I highlight the second annual Manly Spin-a-thon, a community initiative to raise funds for youth mental health on the northern beaches. The event is hosted by the Proveda Foundation at Manly's ANTHEMCYCLE, and I thank the business chamber as well as all of the sponsors and participants. The funds are raised by participants on exercise bikes, and last year they pedalled to collect more than \$27,000 for a range of charities. This year they will no doubt raise even more money for five amazing local charities comprising the Waves of Wellness Foundation, Empowering Parents In Crisis, the Harrison Riedel Foundation, the Proveda Foundation and KYDS Youth Counselling. Anyone who would like to participate in this year's Manly Spin-a-thon can register on the Proveda website. It will be held on Saturday 7 December between 11.00 a.m. and 3.30 p.m. outside ANTHEMCYCLE at 29 Sydney Road, Manly. I wish the participants all the best in the Manly Spin-a-thon.

TEENS SAFE DRIVERS COURSE

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (18:56): On Tuesday 8 October I visited the TeenSafe course at Moruya motorsport complex. TeenSafe provides a comprehensive course that specialises in practical, behind-the-wheel, safe driver training in a supervised environment. This highly educational program provides 80 per cent practical driving and 20 per cent theory with trained instructors. It takes place over one day in the school holidays from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. The L- and P-plate students learn safe driving skills. They are shown a general car safety check and basic maintenance. Importantly, they learn about driver attitude and behaviour, and peer pressure, including drugs and alcohol and their effects on drivers. Students from Moruya, Canberra, Queanbeyan, Goulburn, and Braidwood attended. TeenSafe was a successful recipient of a 2023 Community Building Partnership grant of \$5,000. I congratulate the instructors, the students and their parents. Particular congratulations go to Gary Smith, who has provided this long-term community service.

KELLIE HASSAB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:57): I take this opportunity to congratulate the amazing Kellie Hassab on receiving a Long Service Award at the recent 2024 Basketball NSW Annual Awards. This remarkable achievement is a testament to Kellie's unwavering dedication and passion for our basketball community. The Basketball NSW Annual Awards celebrate the outstanding individuals and groups who shape our sport across the State, from elite athletes to associations and devoted volunteers. I was delighted to provide a letter of support for Kellie's successful nomination, recognising her invaluable contribution to basketball. Kellie's commitment has had a profound impact on our community. Her dedication inspires not only current players and officials but also the next generation, fostering a love for the game that will benefit New South Wales basketball for years to come. I congratulate Kellie and all of the 2024 award recipients. Their hard work on and off the court continues to elevate our sport, strengthen our community, and bring us all closer together through a shared passion for basketball.

HORNSBY RSL

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:58): Last week, I attended the Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch Remembrance Day ceremony, where we reflected on the lives lost during the First World War and in all the wars since. It was 106 years ago when the guns of the Western Front fell silent after more than four years of war that took a horrendous toll. It was a war that took the life of my great uncle and Anzac, Cedric Morrison, and permanently disabled his brother, Jim. Remembrance Day is an opportunity for the community to gather together and reflect on the horrors of war, on the many lives lost and on the sacrifices made by so many so that we can enjoy the freedoms and opportunities that our great country provides. It is a difficult day for a lot of people who feel grief and loss for those who made the ultimate sacrifice in war. I thank the soldiers and their families for protecting our country. I thank Brigadier Neil Turner and the Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch for always hosting a respectful ceremony. Lest we forget.

*Private Members' Statements***THE MEN'S TABLE**

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (19:00): It was International Men's Day on 19 November, and I was honoured to represent the Minister for Mental Health, the Hon. Rose Jackson, at the launch of the Men's Table report entitled *Strengthening Community with Care: Impacts and Insights 2024* in the electorate of Bega. The Men's Table has tables in Mogo, Tuross Head, Narooma, Bermagui and Bega. The Men's Table is a registered charity providing opportunities for men to meet and talk about issues in their personal lives in a non-judgemental environment. It is structured around groups of eight to 12 men, known as "tables", who meet once a month for a meal. Most tables meet in private rooms at pubs or restaurants, and the cost of meals is paid by the attendees.

The first table began in 2011. More than 200 have been launched across Australia to date involving over 2,300 men. The vision of the charity is "Healthy men, healthy masculinities, healthy communities". Its aim is to help men build meaningful male friendships and connection by creating safe places to share and to overcome the stigma that men do not talk. Men do talk, but they need the supportive environment of other men to talk about the important things, like their feelings and worries, rather than work, sport, hobbies and, occasionally, politics. The report highlights evidence showing that, when men support each other in a safe and caring environment, there are substantive benefits to their wellbeing as well as to their families and communities. International Men's Day was the perfect day to bring this report to the attention of New South Wales Parliament and the general community.

I have spoken openly in both Parliament and my community about my personal experience, and my family experience, of mental health distress. I have advocated for improved mental health services in my electorate, as all of us who serve our communities here have done. The 2020-21 National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing found that 43 per cent of males aged 16 to 85 reported having a mental disorder at some point in their lifetime. It also found that 22 per cent of men report having anxiety-related disorders and 27 per cent report having substance-use disorders. In 2023 there were 933 suspected deaths by suicide in New South Wales, and 78 per cent, or 730, of these were men. The suicide rate among Aboriginal men in New South Wales is more than twice the rate of non-Aboriginal men.

Known risk factors for suicide include a personal history of self-harm, a relationship breakdown or separation, and legal issues. I advise members to not trivialise the mid-life crisis, which may be a cry for help. As we approach the end of year silly season, we should all look after each other and watch for behavioural signs that might indicate more than is demonstrated superficially. The NSW Men's Health Framework guides New South Wales health services and policy. The framework provides guidance on how stakeholders can work together to support and achieve optimal health and wellbeing outcomes for men and boys. It highlights the key issues for men's health, including the four priority areas of mental health and wellbeing, cancer, healthy living and chronic disease, and sexually transmissible infections.

The Men's Mental Health Forum was held on 5 August this year at New South Wales Parliament House. It brought together stakeholders from the mental health and suicide prevention sectors to develop ideas and solutions that will drive down suicide rates among men. Last month, I also had the honour of representing the Minister at the South Asian Suicide Prevention Summit at Western Sydney University in Parramatta. Suicide prevention legislation, which is aimed at making all government portfolios responsible for suicide prevention in New South Wales, is in development and will be introduced to Parliament in mid-2025. In conclusion, I would like to reference how the Men's Table fits into the changing interpretation of human distress as mental illness and understanding these symptoms as a result of a social disease rather than mental illness.

As a Government, we need to look at the social determinants that lead to distressing feelings of sadness, depression and anxiety. It is Government policy and action on universal quality education, secure housing, reliable and rewarding employment, efficient transport services and affordable and accessible physical health care that will improve the mental wellbeing of the people of this State. The Men's Table is a great example of reducing isolation and loneliness and improving communication and support to relieve the distress of men in our communities. Finally, through the new Single Front Door program, it is easier for people to get advice, assessment and help by calling Healthdirect on 1800 022 222.

ST EDMUND'S COLLEGE, WAHROONGA

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:05): The core philosophy of St Edmund's College in Wahroonga focuses on meeting the individual needs of each student and helping them to develop the skills they need to take their rightful place in society. I bring to the attention of the House the inspiring work of St Edmund's College. It is a school that provides a nurturing educational environment for students with a range of abilities. St Edmund's College was established by the Christian Brothers in February 1951 to provide education for blind boys, on the invitation of Cardinal Gilroy, the then Archbishop of Sydney, and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

A two-storey home was purchased in Wahroonga for only £11,750, marking the beginning of the college's journey. The top floor of the building served as dormitory accommodation for students, rooms for the brothers and a chapel, while the lower floor was used as classrooms, dining and recreation spaces, a kitchen and a lounge. What began as a school with only nine students has grown into a thriving institution with 120 enrolled students. In its early years, students would travel from rural areas of New South Wales and as far as Brisbane and Melbourne to attend. Over the decades, the college has expanded its enrolments to include both male and female students with sensory impairments other than vision as well as those with special needs, including intellectual disabilities in the mild to moderate range and autism.

I recently had the pleasure of attending St Edmund's College for the official blessing and opening of its new school buildings. Part of the funds for these was provided by the former Coalition Government. The ceremony was led by the Very Reverend Dr David Ranson, Vicar General of the Diocese of Broken Bay, who has had a long and close relationship with the school, and also Wahroonga in general, through the parish of the Holy Name. Also in attendance were representatives from Edmund Rice Education Australia, the New South Wales Christian Brothers, the college advisory council, past principals of St Edmund's College and the architects and builders who helped design and construct the impressive new buildings.

We were treated to outstanding performances by the KWS Choir, Eddie's Drummers and Eddie's Dancers, who all showcased incredible talent and passion for performing. The choir performed beautiful renditions of the national anthem and *True Colors*. The dancers and drummers delivered an energetic performance to *Hot Hot Hot*. I was grateful to be given a tour of the new facilities by the principal, Vanessa Dillon, who is incredibly proud of the amazing school buildings that have been thoughtfully designed with the unique needs of the students in mind. The classrooms are spacious, and the new design and technology rooms provide students with opportunities to develop hands-on skills and foster creativity. The new facilities also include state-of-the-art food technology rooms where students can build their cooking skills.

One of the newer initiatives is the mini Woolworths called Eddie's Fresh Food, which allows students to practice life skills—such as grocery shopping, selecting items, and handling payments—to help them gain confidence and independence in everyday tasks. Principal Vanessa Dillon said it well:

Where one's truth is not a limitation, but a celebration of potential and promise. Where one's journey begins, and where it leads to is a culmination of many people providing courage, collaboration, care and compassion so that our students may actively engage in a fulfilling life of independence and meaning.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to the wonderful students for their amazing performances and for welcoming me so warmly into their community. I also acknowledge the outstanding teachers and teachers' aides, who work incredibly hard, supporting those wonderful students every day. The current and past parent community also give incredible support to the school. I give a shout-out to an alumnus of the school, Andrew Lindsay, who thrived at the school. I have known Andrew his whole life since he was a baby, and I can attest to the way in which the school has inspired him to develop into an amazing young man. I thank principal Vanessa Dillon for a tour of the remarkable new buildings. St Edmund's College continues to provide students with disabilities a place to learn, grow and develop the essential skills they need for life. I thank everyone, past and present, who have contributed to making the school a thriving and exceptional educational institution for very special students that it is today.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE OFFICE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:10): Tonight I issue a heartfelt expression of gratitude to the staff at my Blue Mountains electorate office. Usually at this time of the year, we all take an opportunity in Christmas felicitations to thank all of those who contribute to the work that we are able to do. In my last private member's statement of this year, I thank the very best of teams: my senior electorate officers Michelle Barlow and Jesse Miller; Flynn Erich, Ilsa Cunningham, Jane McMaster, Brenda Cunningham-Lewis and Kate McDonald; and my short-term relief staff William Grieve, Edward Bell-Smith, John Hugo and Donna Mulhearn, who have helped over the last little while. The lovely Lydia and Olivia are two work experience students who came along to my office a few years ago, and they have come back to do a day's volunteer work with me in my office every week since completing homeschooling. I also give a shout-out to my friend and former staffer, Tom HB. He is a trusted political confidant extraordinaire, and he has been my campaign manager for well over a decade.

These people are talented, intelligent and patient problem-solvers. They are the best group of people who work as a team that I have ever had. They have integrity in spades, and they are caring. This wonderful group of individuals who make up the team at the Blue Mountains electorate office are committed to working with and supporting the people of the Blue Mountains and each other. They are loyal to me, which is absolutely integral to the work that we do as members of Parliament. They are positive, helpful and beautiful characters, who have great sense of humour, and their work ethic is second to none. I am sure that I am not the only member who would speak of their electorate office staff in this way.

Because of the work that we do and our standing with our communities, people email and call us or walk into our office. They do not come into our office to tell us what a great life they are having and how everything is working well. It is quite the opposite. It calls for a particular kind of person to have the patience and care to respond and deal with people who are in distressing situations. Of course, elected members of Parliament cannot always be there to answer calls or our doors and respond to each and every individual interaction. We rely on the very best of people to do that job with us.

Not every team can work together smoothly with care for each other's mental wellbeing and have a bit of a laugh, looking out for each other. The team that I have at the moment is absolutely fantastic. At the end of what has been a big and tough year for us, it is important for me to acknowledge in my last private member's statement of this year the people who enable me to do my job to the best of my ability. I love the fact that we do it in a collegiate manner and are able to have a good laugh, as we support the people of the Blue Mountains. As I move around the community, it is great to hear from the people of the Blue Mountains how supported they feel when they reach out to my community. So cheers to the Blue Mountains electorate office team! Thank you. I am very blessed.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:15): As we wrap up the last parliamentary sitting week of 2024, I am reminded of just how swiftly time marches on. It feels like only yesterday that we were casting our votes in the 2019 election. Yet here we are, 5½ years later, reflecting on a period that has dramatically reshaped our world. In what feels like the blink of an eye, we have been confronted with events of immense magnitude that have tested our resilience and redefined our collective experience. We faced the devastating fires of 2019 and 2020, which ravaged our landscapes and communities. Before we could fully recover, a global pandemic swept across the world, altering the very fabric of our daily lives. As we grappled with lockdowns and a health crisis, floods came crashing through, adding yet another layer of hardship. Now, as we emerge from those challenges, we are met with soaring inflation and a rising cost of living—issues that weigh heavily on households across the State. Amidst these trials, we have also witnessed the strength and resilience of our communities.

Time has marched on—quicker than we would like—and many projects on the Coffs Coast have moved along quite considerably since 2019. The biggest is the Coffs Harbour bypass. In 2019 the big debate was whether we would get tunnels or cuttings. I am proud to say that I was able to advocate and secure funding for the tunnel construction on the bypass. The project moved through the preliminary stages, and recently the project moved forward in huge leaps with the blasting of some of the tunnels breaking through in the past few weeks. I thank former Ministers the member for Bathurst and the Hon. Sam Faraway, who were involved in the project over that time. I also acknowledge Minister Aitchison, who is in the Chamber today.

The bypass is on track to open to traffic at the end of 2026, with full completion of the project by 2027. With a bumper holiday season ahead and the traffic that comes with it, we cannot wait to get the congestion out of our city. Alongside the bypass, the Pacific Bay Film Studio project is continuing ahead. I have facilitated productive meetings with Transport for NSW and various Ministers in the new Government to ensure that the studios are able to proceed. Those two projects are the two biggest infrastructure projects in our city's history. Not only are they happening at the same time, but they also share a boundary. We need Transport and the State Government to commit to building a noise wall between the two projects, not only to allow the studios to continue to proceed full steam ahead but to also replicate the natural forest wall, which used to provide a noise and amenity barrier but has since been removed for the road construction.

Also in 2019, the State Government recommenced a project to revitalise the Coffs Harbour jetty precinct. A generation of people have witnessed what should be a vibrant waterfront precinct languish in weeds, dust and vast unusable areas. Collaboration and working across all levels of government is the only way to deliver outcomes that our community wants and deserves. Most people want a jetty precinct that meets the needs of residents and enhances our region's appeal to visitors. In my lifetime, I have seen the industrial sheds disappear, leaving behind an amazing opportunity to create something for the next generation.

I have called on the Minns Labor Government, which is both the landowner and rezoning authority for the revitalisation project, to prioritise tourism accommodation over other types of accommodation in the jetty precinct. That sentiment is also shared by our new council. The community will, of course, continue to have input into the project as it progresses. But our community cannot afford to kick this project down the road any longer. Just look at the decision to defer spending on the Woolgoolga and Sawtell pools. Who knows how much more time will pass before that opportunity for those communities will come around again.

A few weeks ago, I joined hundreds of others for the relaunch of Aanuka Beach House. Aanuka is one of Coffs Harbour's original resorts and has seen a great investment from the Tilley and Wills hospitality group, led by Nick Wills and Simon Tilley. Tilley and Wills bring with them a great hospitality pedigree, and the feedback

from the community is that they love it and are hungry for more. There is so much happening in our community every day, and I am grateful to live where I live and to represent my community in this Parliament. As we reflect on the past five years, there is so much to look forward to over the next five years. But just as the past five years have gone by in the blink of an eye, so too will the next five. There is so much to be done and only so much time.

MAITLAND ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (19:20): As the year draws to an end, I reflect on the Government's achievements in my community of Maitland and more generally across regional New South Wales. Our Government came to power in March 2023 with four key priorities for government: housing, getting essential workers back into our regions, getting the energy road map back on track and debt reduction. We have been making headway on all of those. Before we were elected in 2023, we had more teachers resigning than retiring and teacher shortages, and that was leading to a loss of teaching hours for students and a lot of missed classes. We had lost over 12 per cent of our nursing workforce. Record numbers of police were leaving the profession without enough recruits to fill the gaps, and regional communities like Maitland and across the Hunter felt that the hardest.

What has the Government done to arrest that change? We have doubled the incentives for health workers in the regions. Some 2,000 health workers have taken up that incentive and are now working in regional hospitals. We have had a 10 per cent increase in staffing at Maitland Hospital since the 2023 election. On top of that, we have had funding come through for the Maitland integrated community health and mental health service at the new Maitland Hospital site. The 24/7 emergency short-stay unit opened, which is really taking the pressure off our emergency department. We have had 2,000 applications for new police officers. The paid study for recruits at Goulburn has been a game changer in getting people to look at mid-career transitions. Police who have been in other jurisdictions can now transfer to New South Wales at the same level. That takes away the ceiling where they had to go down the ranks in order to move.

We have made 16,000 teachers and support staff permanent across the State, and we have seen a 24 per cent drop in cancelled classes. We really are hitting our goals. We are also investing in people through skills training, with direct support to local councils to hire new apprentices. That is 1,300 apprentices across every council in New South Wales, which is a \$252 million benefit. Even in my portfolio of Transport, 69 regional transport apprentices and trainees started in the last tranche. We have three TAFE Centres of Excellence across New South Wales. We just announced one in the Hunter region. It will be a \$60 million investment that will really help people in my community. We have 100 new preschools, with 49 in the regions. Two are in Maitland, one at Gillieston Heights and one at Tenambit, and the preschools are part of the redevelopment of those schools.

Gillieston Public School has been committed for redevelopment. There have been massive improvements since I came to Parliament in 2015. I still cannot believe it when I say that in 2015 the boys toilets at the school had a dirt floor. That was how ancient and poorly maintained the school was. The redevelopment will be fantastic for it. Huntlee preschool, primary school and high school are coming, which will relieve school loadings on Rutherford Technology High School in the west of my electorate. We are putting \$5 million into essential maintenance for schools because the backlog was really impacting schools.

We have delivered on our promises for local roads across regional New South Wales. The bridge-raising project at Melville Ford Bridge is going ahead. Maitland received \$2.5 million from the New South Wales Regional Road Fund. Funding from the Fixing Country Bridges Program and the Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package and money from council all went into the Melville Ford Bridge. Works will be completed late next year. For a bridge that used to go underwater every second year and is now a major feeder road for our community, that is really important work. We also have the duplication of the Thornton Rail Bridge and half a million dollars in funding for a shared path on Raymond Terrace Road at Thornton.

Last week, \$5 million was allocated to the Taylor Avenue and Haussman Drive intersection from the latest round of the State Voluntary Planning Agreements funding program. Widening the M1 at Raymond Terrace and Hexham Straight—the big one—is a massive multibillion-dollar project that will have significant benefits not just for my community but for the State. It will help to relieve one of the major bottlenecks for holiday traffic. I see Mr Temporary Speaker smiling; it impacts on all of us who live anywhere near the coast. I thank my electorate office staff, Peree, Jacqui, Gio, Ray, Phil, James and Judy and any others who have worked as casuals. They have helped look after my community while I am in Parliament representing them.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): I am also pleased to see the construction at Hexham.

BARWON ELECTORATE

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (19:25): It is always difficult to measure what we do in Parliament, and this time of year marks the season when we can slow down a bit and reflect on the year that has passed. People

outside Parliament do not realise that most decisions or agreements are made before anything reaches the floor of the House—that is, the work is done out of the public eye and not recorded in *Hansard*. Like many remote regions of Australia, Barwon can often feel like the frontier. When good or bad things happen out in the bush, we react differently to our mates in the city. How we overcome the bad and celebrate the good is what makes Barwon a really unique place.

This year, I cannot help but reflect on the community and what we have overcome, and I am proud that I have been able to stand beside the people of Barwon through the good and bad. Tough times do not last but tough people do. There have been a few examples of tough times and tough people in the electorate this year. Carinda is the most recent example of tough times and a community rising to the occasion, and of course the power outage in Broken Hill and the Far West is another. During those events, Ministers, their staff, departments, agencies and response teams frequently commented on the people's resilience. Their spirits remained high in the face of adversity, and the community banded together to support each other and work on solutions.

The solutions to our problems often set us apart from our city mates. Barwon covers 44.5 per cent of the landmass of New South Wales. It is 356,291.70 square kilometres. No two communities are the same, and each community has its own social structure. So coming to a solution might take more work than it would in a much smaller electorate, and quite often it will not be a one-size-fits-all approach. That sentiment led me to introduce the Regional Communities (Consultation Standards) Bill 2024, which passed through both Houses of Parliament this year and became law. The bill will establish a guide that agencies must use when consulting with a community. I am enormously proud of that. It applies not just to agencies but also to State owned corporations and consultants working on behalf of government.

When solutions roll into my communities in the form of projects, it is vital that those managing the projects understand the social structures of the communities and that the communities fully understand the projects' scope. Unfortunately, that does not always occur, and projects meant to benefit towns often end up dividing communities. We saw that this year in Wilcannia with the weir project, at the Bourke preschool and regularly with projects in renewable energy zones. DAD consulting—or "decide, advise, defend"—destroys communities. The Wilcannia Weir project is an ongoing issue that I will continue to work on, but I raised the Bourke preschool with the Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Deputy Premier and got the outcome that Bourke wanted. Getting outcomes for unique problems is much easier when a government wants to engage.

This year Barwon has seen a deluge of Ministers descend on Barwon, not just for the most recent community cabinet in Broken Hill but throughout the year. Within days of the power going out in Broken Hill and during a sitting week, the Premier made a trip west—which was not the first he had made this year. When mould became an issue at Willyama High School, the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning came to Broken Hill. The Minister for Health has been all over the Far West. We have also had visits from the Minister for Agriculture, and Minister for Western New South Wales, the Hon. Tara Moriarty; the Hon. Courtney Houssos, whom we have been working with on the opal mining review; the Hon. Rose Jackson; the Minister for Lands and Property, working on small-scale titles in White Cliffs and Lightning Ridge; and the Rainmaker—or, as she is known in this House, the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Jenny brings rain with her every time she comes, and we hope she is the solution to drought.

The Minister for Local Government headed west to bring the Central Darling Shire Council out of 10 years of administration. The Hon. Penny Sharpe visited for the Broken Hill power outage, and most recently the Minister for Emergency Services visited. He is an absolute asset in times of emergency, like when you are on the Cut Line—which is 425 kilometres of dirt road—and get two flat tyres in 48-degree heat. These Ministers visiting the electorate makes my job a lot easier. I can stand in this place and deliver speech after speech about the inequity of the health system out west, why it is so important to continue implementing the 44 recommendations of the regional health inquiry, why I have been fighting to see regular funding for Western Air Services, and why Narrabri needs to maintain its pathology services, but it makes so much more sense when people are there and immersed in the community. It is not hard to get immersed in Barwon; it just takes lots of time.

This year I attended several community-run events, including the Broken Heel Festival; the Ivanhoe Dry Times Truck, Tractor, Car and Bike Show; the Lets Dance festival in Carinda; and the St Pats race day in Broken Hill. These events and the unique communities that host them attract people to Barwon. I hope their behind-the-scenes work will encourage people to stay. I also encourage members to let me know when they want to come to the Far West. I can sort them out and organise a road tour and some car therapy.

CONDELL PARK SHOPS

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (19:30): I am pleased that the upgrades I secured for Condell Park shopping strip are finally underway, with funding provided by the New South Wales Labor Government and the City of Canterbury Bankstown council. Condell Park and its wonderful local businesses make up a vibrant

community that thrives on the hard work and dedication of those who call it home. From the corner store to the cafes, restaurants and specialty shops, Condell Park's shopping strip has long been a hub of activity, offering everything from fresh produce to quality services. That is why I am proud that my Government has delivered on its \$100,000 election promise to deliver a new vision for this community that enhances its charm, improves its functionality and fosters a stronger sense of community.

I am thrilled to announce that Condell Park shopping strip is set to undergo a significant beautification program. This project is not just about making the area look better but about creating a space that is welcoming, accessible and functional for everyone who lives and works in the area, as well as for visitors. The first key aspect of the beautification project is the creation of a brand-new community nook, an inviting, social space for residents to gather and connect. The nook will feature seating areas where people can pause and chat, share conversations or simply enjoy the atmosphere.

The second part of the beautification program involves the installation of flower beds along the shopping strip. We know that greenery and well maintained public spaces have a positive impact on wellbeing. I know that the shopkeepers are keen to ensure that these lovely new plants will be well looked after and regularly watered. By incorporating more plants, an environment is created for both locals and visitors to enjoy. These vibrant flower beds will also encourage people to slow down, relax and take in their surroundings, whether they are grabbing a coffee at a local cafe, doing the grocery shopping or meeting up with friends for lunch. In many ways, this commitment celebrates the strong sense of community in Condell Park and creates a place where people can engage with one another, build stronger bonds and support the local businesses around them.

Speaking of local businesses, Condell Park has a fantastic range of shops that make the area unique, whether people are looking for fresh produce at Condell Park Fresh Land, a warm meal from Peri at That Turkish Place or the many other great food places, including from Charlie's cake shop, which has been there for over 20 years. Then there is Mark, the very friendly local butcher who loves a chat, and all the guys who greet me with a smile from the Condell Park shoe repair shop. I am a regular at the shop, as they have fixed many heels on my shoes. There is also the much-loved post office, a chemist and quality places for both men and women to get their hair cut and coloured. There is something for everyone close to where they live.

These small businesses are the lifeblood of this community. They are run by passionate, hardworking locals who take great pride in their work. Through their efforts, Condell Park has developed its own special character. Enhancing the streetscape aims to foster an environment where people feel enthusiastic and more connected to their local community. It is a win-win for the community and the local economy. As we look ahead to these exciting changes, I encourage everyone in my electorate to continue supporting local businesses, engage with the new community spaces and take pride in this vibrant place we all love and share.

DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (19:34): In one of my last contributions in this place for the year, I take this opportunity to update the House on important infrastructure projects in the Drummoyne electorate. This year I have worked constructively with the Government to ensure that my electorate receives its fair share on upgrades to schools, hospitals and local transport. As population density in my electorate continues to increase, it is important that these changes are met with the necessary investments in infrastructure to support my growing community.

In my very first speech in the Parliament I spoke about the importance of the Concord High School upgrade. When I ran as a candidate at last year's election, I made a commitment to deliver this upgrade, so I am pleased to advise the House that last month work began on these long-overdue improvements. This project is a win for the community and it is because of the collective efforts of so many that the upgrade is going ahead. I recognise the Concord High School P&C, particularly Linda Dunkin, Natasha Mogilin and Kathryn Zerk from the former executive, whom I got to know when I served as deputy mayor and also as a councillor on City of Canada Bay Council. I also thank the many parents, students and teachers from Concord High School who advocated for this important project.

I acknowledge the efforts of successive governments and thank the current and former education Ministers for seeing the importance of upgrading Concord High School, which is the only public high school in the Drummoyne electorate. The upgrades at the school will deliver 40 new permanent classrooms, a new administration building, a new school hall—the current school hall does not accommodate the entire school—and the refurbishment of the existing library to better facilitate student learning. It will also introduce three new support classrooms at the school, which is fantastic because this means that parents of students who need those services will now have options.

Construction is expected to be completed in early to mid-2026, and I look forward to seeing it go through its stages. We know how important it is to invest in local schools so that our kids are given the very best chance of a bright future. I acknowledge the school's principal, Mr Victor Newby, who has been there from the beginning when we initially started to talk about the need for the upgrade. He has long advocated and planned for this upgrade. It is because of the vision of him and his staff that the upgrade is where it is today. I am also excited that Wentworth Point High School will open for year 7 students, beginning term 1 in 2025. The new school catchment area will include Rhodes, which is in my electorate and much more closely located than Concord High School. This will give families a choice and ease the pressure on enrolments at Concord High School. Again, I thank the current and former education Ministers for investing in high schools in and around my community.

Construction has continued at Concord Hospital to deliver a multistorey car park. This project will deliver 550 new spaces, bringing the hospital's total capacity to over 2,000 vehicles, and include accessible parking and provisions for electric vehicle charging. Also, tunnelling between Parramatta and the CBD for Sydney Metro West is almost complete. Many in my community have told me that they love going online and looking at where the tunnel boring machines are. At the moment I think they are around Pyrmont. The project will include stations at North Strathfield, Concord Oval—or Burwood North, as it will officially be named—and Five Dock, which will undoubtedly improve access to the city and mean a quicker and much more convenient commute.

However, the completion of the Sydney Metro West project has been delayed until 2032. I want to make sure that it does not get delayed any further than that. I put on record that I acknowledge the Minister for Transport, who I have worked with very productively over the past year and a bit since I have been in this place. I want to show my community that even in opposition, members can still achieve and deliver for their communities if they work constructively with the Government, which is what these infrastructure projects are all about. Mr Temporary Speaker, I wish you and everyone in my community a very merry Christmas.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): I return the member's good tidings.

HOXTON PARK TRAFFIC

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:39): I wish everyone a merry Christmas. Tonight I speak about a local issue in my neck of the woods, particularly on a little street in Hoxton Park known as Lismore Street. There are about 50 houses along Lismore Street and in surrounding cul-de-sacs. Over the past few years the residents of those houses have been subjected to what can only be described as traffic chaos. In the shadow of the recent local government election, a short-sighted knee-jerk decision was made to restrict traffic going into Lismore Street to residents of Hoxton Park only. This is the first time I have ever seen such a thing in my career, both as a councillor and an MP. Signs saying "No Right Turn", "No Left Turn" and "Hoxton Park Residents Only" have been put up. For several weeks police were stationed on Lismore Street, pulling over drivers and checking their driver licences to make sure they lived in that suburb. If they did not, they were fined. That is a pretty extraordinary set of circumstances. Police passed on their frustration with this at a recent traffic committee meeting. Given the demand for police services across south-west Sydney, they would rather be doing more important work and requested that those signs be removed.

Like any good member, I started a petition and it has received hundreds of signatures. I have doorknocked the length and breadth of Lismore Street. Recently at a mobile office I discussed with residents some of the issues and potential solutions. The Lismore Street residents tell me the issue occurs Monday to Friday between 7.30 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. Most people would recognise that as school drop-off time, which seems to be the crux of the problem. Within the vicinity of Lismore Street there are four schools—two primary schools, a high school and a K-12 college, which seem to be the source of the problem. Residents of Lismore Street and the surrounding area for the most part have said, "Why do we not have the restriction from 7.30 a.m. to 8.30 a.m. and open the street during other hours?" I have been down there at all hours of the day and there are thousands of cars, regardless of police enforcement and regardless of the road signs.

It has come to my attention in recent weeks that the council has now given parents permits to drive their kids to school, which has made matters worse. The main cause of the issue has actually been given a reprieve. The problem was caused by school traffic and the council gave parents permits to drive their kids to school. I am really not sure what is going on at Liverpool council, and I do know what is going on in households across Hoxton Park and Carnes Hill—that is befuddlement. There are multiple examples of houses on the border of Carnes Hill and Hoxton Park—they are neighbouring suburbs—where residents can choose which suburb is shown on their driver licence. For example, a husband could have as his address 20 Bloggs Road, Carnes Hill, and his wife could have as her address 20 Bloggs Road, Hoxton Park—it is the same place. The police are pulling them over and fining the husband because his address is in Carnes Hill but not fining the wife because her address is in Hoxton Park, despite the fact that they live at the same place. This is a ludicrous situation.

There are also examples of elderly grandparents who are now scared to drive through Lismore Street. They might live three suburbs away but they do the school drop-offs and pick-ups. What a nightmare situation. I am not a member who comes into this place and complains. I have offered a solution. My solution is to get the experts involved. My petition has called for a comprehensive traffic study for the entire area because when a street is blocked, the traffic does not just disappear; it goes to other places. So let us look at other streets and potentially restrict the time that other streets are open, and the timing of the traffic lights at the major intersections. Let us give the people of Hoxton Park and the surrounding suburbs what they deserve: an end to the traffic chaos caused by Liverpool City Council.

PINK UP FORSTER-TUNCURRY

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (19:44): This evening I speak about an initiative that took place in the Myall Lakes electorate during October—Pink Up Forster-Tuncurry. This month-long effort brought together local businesses, sports clubs and volunteers to raise funds for the McGrath Breast Care Nurses. Those nurses help individuals affected by breast cancer and their families by providing invaluable physical, psychological and emotional support from the time of diagnosis and throughout their treatment. Since 2005 more than 143,000 families across Australia have been cared for by the 233 free McGrath Breast Care Nurses. By participating in Pink Up, our community contributed to the McGrath Foundation's goal of funding 250 nurses by 2025, ensuring that no-one misses out on care.

The campaign began with a launch party at Wharf St. Distillery, where attendees, dressed in pink and enjoyed cocktails and delicious finger food, all whilst raising funds. We were privileged to have Tracy Bevan, the late Jane McGrath's best friend, as a special guest. She shared moving stories about the foundation's work and the impact of the Pink Up Your Town movement. It was fantastic to see the involvement from local businesses during the month. Lavish Artistry Lounge donated \$5 from the sale of every set of pink nails, raising funds and awareness in style. Tuncurry Beach Bowling Club held a Fundraising Bowls Day, contributing \$3,234. Coastal Workspace organised a pre-loved fashion pop-up, raising \$1,076. Sunrise Home Care hosted a Pink Walk across the Forster-Tuncurry bridge. Many businesses, including Lifeline Forster, First National Real Estate Forster Tuncurry and the Whitehouse Nook and Cafe decorated their windows in pink to show support.

I was proud to host a special Pink Up & Paint event alongside a local artist, Shelley from Paint with Shell. Guided by Shelley, artists created beautiful paintings of the Forster-Tuncurry bridge while enjoying the view from my office balcony. The event raised \$1,400. This fundraiser is close to Shelley's heart. Her mother, Lesley, faced breast cancer for the second time earlier this year. Lesley's breast care nurse has been a huge support during her journey, and Shelley was able to experience firsthand the importance of these services. We are fortunate to have our own McGrath specialist breast nurse, Jacinta Bryan, based in our electorate. Nurse number 83 when she started over 10 years ago, Jacinta provides care and guidance to patients navigating the challenges of breast cancer. She covers an area stretching from Hawks Nest in the Port Stephens electorate and Johns River in the Port Macquarie electorate to Gloucester in the Upper Hunter electorate, as well as covering the entire Myall Lakes electorate. Jacinta works out of the Mayo Private Hospital and the Forster Private Hospital, as well as the Manning Base Hospital. No matter where they are treated, Jacinta ensures that families receive the care they deserve.

In addition to the McGrath Foundation's efforts, Breast Friends, a Forster-based breast cancer support group, has been providing care since 2007. Founded by Heather Kelly—who, unfortunately, is no longer with us—and Janet McMahon, the group offers a safe and confidential space for those affected by breast cancer. It supplies post-surgery care packs, chemo care packs and ongoing support to over 100 people in our community every year. Breast Friends hosted a morning tea fundraiser that celebrated another year of living with or without breast cancer. On the floor was a field of pink carboard ladies and a sole blue man, symbolising the many women and men who have lost their battle with this disease.

The collective effort across the Myall Lakes electorate raised an impressive \$9,648 for the McGrath Foundation. I thank Simon and Jo Gould from Orbit Marketing for coordinating Pink Up Forster-Tuncurry. I also thank Jacinta Bryan, our Breast Friends volunteers, local businesses and everyone who participated in or donated to the cause. Together, Forster-Tuncurry went pink to make a difference in the lives of those impacted by breast cancer. I look forward to the town turning pink again next year.

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:48): It is the last sitting week of the Parliament, which means of course that Christmas and the school holidays are just around the corner. I always like to remind everyone in my electorate of the great places they can take the kids to over the school holidays. A lot of these events are free or very low in cost, and every parent loves a great deal at Christmas for the Christmas holidays. Our councils do a fantastic job. Canterbury-Bankstown council always has wonderful events. Last spring it had swimming, soccer,

basketball, acrobatics, circus skills, arts and crafts activities, Dungeons and Dragons, and a Hogwarts wizarding challenge, so everyone should keep an eye on the council's website.

Likewise, Cumberland City Council—the other large council in my electorate—runs a lot of school holiday programs, including out-of-school care all through the holidays for working mums and dads. Children can go to Sherwood Grange Out of School Hours Care or Ringrose Out of School Hours Care, which are run by Cumberland council. But parents need to book, so they should get in quickly to make sure that they can access those programs. Auburn PCYC does a particularly great job during the school holidays. It has a mix of both arts and crafts and sports, or people can book in for a full day of gymnastics. It is always happy to take kids for some basketball, as is the Auburn Basketball Centre. Interestingly, the RSPCA runs a school holiday program. Children can spend a day with the RSPCA learning about animals, positive pet care and the ways RSPCA NSW helps animals and supports people. The day includes a guided tour to meet the shelter animals as well as behind-the-scenes visits to see the inner workings of the shelter. Children can also get crafty and make enrichment goodies for their own pets or one of the lucky shelter animals.

Swimming is an essential skill that Australians need to have and swimming classes are an important part of the summer school holidays. Parents should get in early and book their young ones in for swimming lessons. Birrong, Auburn and Granville pools all have summer swimming lessons. They are some of our bigger Olympic pools with great facilities. They have been holding classes for 50 or 60 years, so parents should give them a call. Local pools are also great places to hang out at over the holidays. If people are coming into town, there are a lot of things going on in the city or they can visit the beautiful gardens. But they should not forget the State Library of New South Wales. On the ground floor at the Mitchell Library there is the Family Room, which is designed as a special place for our youngest visitors and their carers. People can drop in there to enjoy books, look at the beautiful budgies and see if they can find the secret home of the library mouse.

There is also a children's library located in the Marie Bashir Reading Room on the lower ground floor, where kids can wind their way through a maze-like space and get lost in the magic of books and stories. Mum and dad might be able to sit down and have a cup of coffee or tea, which would be a relaxing thing to do in the city. The other thing people might want to try in Sydney Harbour, which a lot of parents do not think about much, is fishing. Sydney Harbour has fabulous fishing spots. If people go to the New South Wales Government website, they will be able to find Sydney wharves, piers and parks that are good to use, with some helpful tips on what people can catch and where. Watsons Bay, Garden Island and Ballast Point have some great spots. Children do not need a fishing licence to fish, but it might be a good idea for mum and dad to get one.

The other great thing to do over the school holidays—and maybe it is just me because I did these things in the school holidays—is camping. Sydney has lots of great, cheap places in its national parks where a family can put up a tent. There is Euroka campground in the Blue Mountains, and North Era and Uloola Falls campground in the Royal National Park. They are all budget-friendly. Some do not even charge an entry fee, so people can just grab their tent and go. If people are rich and they want to visit national parks on the North Shore, they can go to Lane Cove and do some glamping—that is, of course, high end if they have a bit of money. Otherwise, the Basin campground in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park has 114 tent sites. The Government has a lot of public facilities. Let us make sure that we use them over Christmas.

MURRAY-DARLING BASIN AUTHORITY

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:53): Today I will speak about water. Australia is a country of weather extremes. As Dorothea Mackellar wrote in her famous poem, *My Country*, Australia is a sunburnt country that has both drought and flooding rains. We accept that and can live with it. In rural New South Wales we will cop anything that Mother Nature throws at us. But what we can never accept or live with is the man-made water crisis in the Murray-Darling Basin. Make no mistake, the water crisis facing rural New South Wales is completely man-made. Or perhaps we should say man and woman made. That is because the devastation is being caused by the men running the Murray-Darling Basin Authority and two women: New South Wales water Minister Rose Jackson and Federal water Minister Tanya Plibersek.

Few ministries involve life-and-death choices. But the role of water Minister is one of the few ministerial positions where, if we get it wrong, people's lives can be ruined immediately and permanently. I have never experienced such high levels of fear and anger amongst my constituents as I am right now. The people of rural New South Wales have had concerns in the past, but this is different. Where I come from too many people believe that this Government has abandoned them when it comes to water. I for one am deeply worried about where it is all going to end. Too many people in my electorate are describing what is happening as threatening their way of life. Some people cannot see a way forward for themselves or their families. I tell them that they are wrong and that there is always a way forward in life. Sometimes they believe me and other times they just go quiet.

The goodwill towards the New South Wales Government began to evaporate when it refused to block the buyback of 450 gigalitres of Murray-Darling Basin water by the Commonwealth Government. People in rural New South Wales believed it was a case of Labor looking after Labor, and Rose Jackson looking after her close friend Tanya Plibersek. I am all for friendships, but personal relationships should never come before our service to our electorates. The New South Wales Government should have opposed the buybacks just like the Victorian Government did. Instead, it has put its own party's interests before the interests of the people of New South Wales.

The second betrayal rural New South Wales endured was when the State and Commonwealth governments announced they were going to run government floods. Let me say that again: government floods. These floods are not being caused by Mother Nature; they are going to be run by government over private farms as frequently as every second year. They will wipe hundreds of millions of dollars off the value of private rural properties. Government floods will also impact communities by rendering some roads unusable, cutting off parts of rural communities from each other and, indeed, cutting off parts of farms from farmers too. Schools, businesses and hospitals may be cut off. People will be kept apart—all so the State and Federal governments can send our water to South Australia, which will then send it out to sea. Farm prices will be devastated as people realise that parts of their land will become unusable because of bi-annual government floods. It is government acquisition of property by stealth. What the hell ever happened to private property rights?

Let me be clear: The people of rural New South Wales will not put up with another year of betrayal like the one they have just endured. We need to listen to people in rural New South Wales. That is why I am demanding we hold an inquiry into the social and economic effects of the Murray-Darling Basin Plan immediately. People in rural New South Wales need to know that the New South Wales Government is going to start listening properly. The inquiry should begin as early as January. I am desperately hoping it will help people feel that all is not lost. As for water Minister Rose Jackson, I put on record that I really like her as a person. She is smart and strong. I know she is a good person. But, as I said, personal relationships should never come before our service to our electorates. Rose Jackson has a choice to make before the people of New South Wales make it for her. She needs to start standing up for the people of rural New South Wales or stand down as Minister. It is that simple.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:58): The end of the year is fast approaching and this is likely to be the last opportunity to sing the praises of my electorate of Port Stephens in this place this year, so I will run through some of the good stuff that is happening on the ground. This year has been a year of significant progress across Port Stephens on major projects from school and road upgrades to new public housing initiatives, plus projects protecting our waterways. The Minns Labor Government has a comprehensive plan to build a better New South Wales, and Port Stephens is reaping the benefits. We are focused on investing in the essential services we need to get the State back on track.

After many years of being ignored by the former Coalition Government, our Government is getting on with the job of delivering Medowie's desperately needed public high school. I cannot count how many times I have mentioned that project in this place, so I am excited to report that this year we have revealed the location of our new high school will be at 6 Abundance Road in Medowie and concept plans are now out. On Wednesday next week we will have a drop-in information session from 3.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. at Medowie Public School hall, where people can see the concept plans and speak with project leads. Do not believe the negative Nancies, this project is happening. We are finally going to deliver a public high school for Medowie courtesy of the Minns Labor Government, due for completion in 2027. After fighting for this school for almost two decades I could not be more excited, because this project will transform our town and transform children's lives.

The New South Wales Labor Government understands the life-changing power of public education. Not only will we deliver a public high school in Medowie but also we are investing in both of the high schools in Raymond Terrace. Significant upgrades are currently underway at Irrawang High School and Hunter River High School. These investments are not just about buildings and building better infrastructure for our kids, they are about providing our young people with the facilities and opportunities that they deserve. All this is in addition to the work we have done to back our teachers with better pay so we can attract and retain the workforce, significantly reducing the number of collapsed and cancelled classes, with our kids being the ultimate beneficiaries.

While we are providing our young people with the education they need to succeed, we are also investing in our region's roads. The M1 extension to Raymond Terrace is speeding ahead, with over 60 of the 827 bridge girders now erected. In partnership with the Federal Government, the New South Wales Government is delivering this critical infrastructure, providing a significant boost to local jobs as well. We have also delivered on our commitment to help fix local roads by injecting more than \$10 million into our local councils to start repairing and upgrading local roads, including Fairlands Road, Rookes Road, Tomaree Road, Swan Bay Road, Avenue of

the Allies in Tanilba Bay and many more. We acknowledge there is more to be done on that front, and we will work with Port Stephens Council to do that.

Lovers of our waterways are not missing out. I have a couple of big lovers of our waterways in the Chamber today, Greg Finn and John Alessi, amazing commercial fishers from Port Stephens. We are going ahead with the dredging of the Myall River, set to commence in March next year at three different sites. The Tea Gardens boat ramp and jetty have now been completed, courtesy of more than half a million dollars of investment from the New South Wales Government. We are also tackling another critical need in our community by making the largest investment in social housing in Port Stephens in over a decade, with 13 new homes to be built in Raymond Terrace. This project is made possible through a partnership with Hume Community Housing, the Federal Government and Port Stephens Council. It is a testament to what can be achieved when we all work together. Homelessness continues to impact many families. We are also standing up seven homes at the Stockton Centre site so local families in need have somewhere to turn.

Another place close to a lot of people's hearts at home is Tomaree Lodge. We have recently established the community engagement committee, which will help shape the future of this very special site alongside the Department of Communities and Justice, Worimi Local Aboriginal Land Council, Marine Parks, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, and Hunter Circles. I cannot wait to deliver on our longstanding commitment to turn the Tomaree Lodge into a vibrant, accessible hub for locals and visitors alike. This is just some of the work we have been doing—and there is a lot more to come. Meanwhile, I continue to be amazed by the generosity and kindness of our community, evidenced by the enormous number of volunteers involved in sports clubs, surf clubs, RSL branches, SES, RFS and so many more. I thank all our volunteers for their service in 2024. Whether a volunteer, a worker, a local business owner, a student, a community leader or a dedicated resident, they all play a role in shaping our community and helping make Port Stephens beautiful inside and out.

RYDE ELECTORATE STUDENT GRADUATES

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:03): In recent weeks in this place I have recognised a number of students on their graduation from year 12. However, there remains a number that I want to ensure are mentioned in *Hansard*. With this likely being the last sitting week of the year, I could think of no better opportunity than in this private member's statement to do so. Specifically, I ask the House to join me in congratulating the following students on their recent graduation from Holy Cross College, Ryde: James Tasiovasilis, Max Menin, Jonathon Kidd, Michael Jang, Maxwell Elias, Chris Cagica, Rhys Buenaventura, Nikolai Assadi and Christopher Abi-Saab. I also ask the House to join me in congratulating the following students on their recent graduation from Marist College Eastwood: Edwin Savazian, Austin Piestrzynski, Matthew Ou, Peter Menassa, Toby Martiniello, Nicholas Lillcrap, Sean Leister-Reid, Luke Lay, Harrison Lancett, Harrison Kerley and Isaac Biondi.

Having attended their respective graduation ceremonies in person, I witnessed the culmination of their years of dedication and hard work. Completing year 12 is an impressive achievement and they should all 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 each of them for their continued determination to succeed. Undoubtedly, their perseverance and commitment will serve them well in all of their future endeavours. For some, that will involve continued study, be it at TAFE or university. Others may head straight into work, and some might take some time to travel or regroup. No matter the journey, I am confident in the knowledge that, having graduated from a local school in Ryde, they are well prepared for whatever lies ahead. On behalf of the Ryde community and the House, I extend my best wishes to the graduates of each school and congratulate them on this exceptional achievement. May the future be bright and prosperous for them and their families.

FAIRFIELD ELECTORATE RAIL FACILITIES

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (20:05): Accessible public infrastructure is a fundamental right, not a privilege, yet it truly disappoints me that Carramar, Yennora and Villawood train stations do not have lifts and are run down. Fairfield is the centre of disadvantage in New South Wales, and the lack of train station accessibility in our community aggravates the hardship families endure. It is important to note the significant disparity in accessibility when compared with the North Shore line, where almost every train station has lifts or accessibility. In the Fairfield electorate we have only one station out of five with lifts, some 20 per cent accessibility compared with the North Shore's near 100 per cent accessibility. Fairfield has the highest concentration of residents requiring assistance with core activities in New South Wales. One would think the business case stacks up to do something. Yet despite calling out this injustice in the Chamber in my inaugural speech last year and making the case multiple times as an MP, I recently launched a petition calling on the New South Wales Labor Government to come to Fairfield's aid.

I make it clear that a disparity of lift access exists between my electorate and other electorates, and the need is greater in my electorate given the number of people with disabilities and mobility issues, including parents with prams and the elderly. This very issue cuts people in Fairfield off from the world and the ability to see family and friends, to travel to work to earn an income, and to live life to the fullest. Overall, it affects physical and mental health. Fairfield has been treated unfairly, and it is time for that to change. The previous New South Wales Liberal Government is to blame for where we are at now and I am calling on the New South Wales Labor Government to fix it. This is in the public interest and the right thing to do. If the people of New South Wales agree with me, I ask them to please sign my petition, which is available on my website at davidsaliba.com.au, and share it with their network. The petition calls on the New South Wales Labor Government to build lifts at Carramar, Yennora and Villawood stations and right a wrong that has endured for many years.

COOTAMUNDRA ELECTORATE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (20:07): During this final sitting week of 2024 we come together across the Chamber to celebrate collective achievements and the dedication, commitment and passion of those who keep our New South Wales Parliament running seamlessly. It is time to express our deep appreciation for everyone who sustains Australia's oldest Parliament, ensuring its legacy and effectiveness continue. I extend my gratitude to Speaker Piper for his role as Presiding Officer and to the Legislative Assembly team—including Hansard staff, Chamber attendants and the Clerks—for their unwavering efforts in efficiently managing the Chamber. Special thanks must go to the hardworking teams who form the very backbone of this place, from the catering staff who fuel our days, to the librarians who provide invaluable research support, the IT professionals, special constables, cleaners and researchers. Their professionalism, patience and dedication are deeply appreciated, especially during long, late nights and demanding days.

In my Cootamundra electorate we are fortunate to witness the familiar sight of harvesters rolling through paddocks as sheep and cattle graze peacefully, marking the transition into the summer holiday season. The cherry season has once again brought a burst of activity to Young, with the festive spirit glowing in the window displays of our local businesses. As we reflect on the year's end, it is evident that Cootamundra's resilient small communities have risen to every challenge, demonstrating an unyielding spirit and a sense of camaraderie that is truly inspiring. I am proud to represent an electorate of small communities, a region where we work tirelessly to grow, transport and share some of the world's finest food and fibre.

In my seventh year as the member for Cootamundra, it has been a tremendous honour to raise the voices and issues of our rural towns and villages in the heart of the city on Macquarie Street. Facilitating ministerial meetings and bringing the concerns of our residents directly to decision-makers have remained top priorities. The unique challenges faced by our communities deserve to be heard, and I am deeply committed to ensuring they are met with understanding and action. Following local government elections, I acknowledge the tireless efforts of mayors, councillors and local government staff. Their hard work and fresh ideas are crucial for the growth and wellbeing of their communities, and their dedication is inspiring.

To my Nationals and Liberal colleagues, our work in opposition has been driven by a tireless commitment to holding the Government accountable. This has benefited people across New South Wales as we continue to advocate for the priorities of our constituents. As projects initiated during our time in government come to completion, it is a source of great pride to see this past investment truly benefit our rural and regional communities. I am grateful to our Coalition leadership team, led by Opposition leader Mark Speakman, for its guidance, support and dedication to our shared mission. In my second year as shadow Minister for Water, and shadow Minister for Crown Lands, our Coalition team has worked tirelessly to highlight the very real and pressing issues in these essential portfolio areas that are impacting people, whether in the city or rural areas. By engaging meaningfully with communities and stakeholders across the State, we have championed solutions that reflect our people's diverse needs and priorities. Advocating for these issues remains at the heart of our work, driving our ongoing efforts to achieve meaningful and lasting change.

Lastly, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the dedicated staff who make my role so rewarding. Their support, whether it be through sharing a caramel latte or engaging in meaningful conversations, keeps our work grounded and impactful. The teams in Junee and Young, including Cath Sheridan, David Applegate, Kim Hill, Margaret Lee, Mark MacNamara, Clare Taylor and Marie Tame, have a dedication to serving the people of our electorate that is truly invaluable. I am so grateful for their hard work and deep care for our community. As we move into the festive season, I wish everyone a safe, joyful break surrounded by family and friends. I wish everyone a very merry Christmas. Here's to a bright, promising new year for us all.

LISMORE ELECTORATE INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:12): Tonight I give a shout-out to the independent media outlets across the Lismore electorate and more broadly that cover the region in which I live. We are lucky to have so

many independent media outlets, which give great coverage of many local events and news items. We often talk about disappearing media, but we are so lucky to have so many. I will share some of them. *Tweed Valley Weekly* is packed with lots of great information and showcases local people and events, always with an eye on local and State matters rather than international. Jonathon Howard is the editor of the newspaper, and he does a fantastic job alongside his team. The *Uki News* is a bimonthly publication, published by the Uki and District Residents' Association and printed by the Uki CTC. It does a fabulous job to make sure that everybody in the village and surrounds knows what is going on.

Then there is *The Nimbin Good Times*, a fantastic monthly newspaper filled with news and lots of views. It covers a broad range of issues that are very focused on local issues but also emerging and international issues regarding climate change and the environment. It is fantastic. Sue Stock and Bob Dooley are the publishers of *The Nimbin Good Times*, and they are Nimbin icons. From memory, I think the newspaper started around 2005. There is also the *Northern Rivers Talking Turkey* in Kyogle, a premier independent fortnightly newspaper. Visitors to Kyogle will pass the big turkey on their way in, which is symbolic of the area. Linda is the brilliant editor. She ensures that not only Kyogle town is covered but all the villages as well.

Dunoon and District Gazette is another local media outlet that services Dunoon and the surrounding district with a bi-monthly print service, an email newsletter and much more. Bronwen Campbell is the editor. *The Village Journal* services a whole range of communities throughout the Northern Rivers region, including Bexhill, Bangalow, Byron Bay, Clunes, Corndale, Dunoon, the Channon, Dorrroughby, Eltham, Eureka, Federal, Goonengerry, Lismore, Mullumbimby, Nimbin, Numulgi, Rosebank, Upper Coopers Creek and Whian Whian. Nearly all of those places are in my electorate, only a couple are just outside. Freedom Vivian is the editor of the 20-page journal that is absolutely packed with news and information, including a community directory. As members of Parliament, we know how handy community directories are. We all love them.

Clunes Clues is a monthly newsletter located in Lismore in the village of Clunes not too far from my place. It started in about 1979. *The Byron Shire Echo* is a weekly independent publication, published on Wednesdays in Mullumbimby. It covers a broad area in quite a bit of my electorate, and includes the Echonetdaily online platform. Hans Lovejoy is the editor at *The Echo* and it was founded by the late Nicholas Shand, along with the late co-founder David Lovejoy, Hans' father. It was founded as a civil rights watchdog and remains so today. Aslan Shand also works at the publication. There many more media outlets in my area. That is just a snapshot. I finish with the *Drake Village Voice* and I show the Chamber a copy of the publication.

Mr Gareth Ward: A prop!

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: Yes, it is beautiful. Drake is in my electorate, on the way to Tenterfield in the Tenterfield shire. The coverage of the *Drake Village Voice* is fabulous and includes Drake, Ewingar, Hogarth Range, Louisa Creek, Bonalbo, Lower Bottle Creek, Mallanganee, Old Bonalbo, Sandilands, Tabulam, Theresa Creek, Mookima Wybra, Mummulgum and Pretty Gully. I pay tribute to such fabulous independent media.

KIAMA ELECTORATE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (20:17): As 2024 gallops to a close, I reflect on a year of working hard and getting things done. When I became an Independent MP, I know many in my community were nervous about whether or not I would remain an effective MP. I will leave that up to my electorate to decide. This year the battle to stop the New South Wales Labor Government from selling the David Berry Hospital was fought and won. Whilst the Government voted against legislation to protect the site in perpetuity, it ruled out sale at this time. I will continue to hold it to account. I take this opportunity to thank the Shoalhaven community, particularly Irene Birks and the Voices of David Berry Hospital, for their advocacy and support.

This year I was delighted to officially open the renovated Hindmarsh Park upgrade. Having worked alongside Kiama council on this project, I could not have been prouder to join with hundreds of people in our community to celebrate the completion of this jewel in the township of Kiama. I enjoyed watching this project take shape over the past few months, and this is yet another example of how I have worked with local councils to get things done. Whilst talking about parks and reserves, this would be the year we would officially open the brand-new facilities at Artie Smith Oval, with a new grandstand and lighting. We finished the promised new amenities block at Albion Oval, delivered improved lighting at Terry Reserve, installed shade sails in Tullimbar and completed the netball courts at McDonald Park. We accessed grants to upgrade the greens at Gerringong Bowling and Recreation Club, provide funds to the Gerringong Bowling Club Community Garden, implement works on Gerry Emery Oval and get works underway at the Gerringong Surf Lifesaving Club.

Roads is a favourite topic of mine, and I am proud to be building on my record in that regard. Coming hot on the heels of finishing the new Shoalhaven River bridge, works on the North Collector Road are complete. However, I note that other local politicians took credit for work they had nothing to do with, which is on brand

for those members—but I am not deterred. Work has commenced on the Jervis Bay Road interchange. I am proud that that project, which was designed and funded by the former Government, is rising out of the ground. I appreciate the Minister and her team for engaging with me on some of the issues that are still a cause for concern, such as drainage, but I am confident that we can easily fix them by listening and acting.

Building school infrastructure and providing a quality learning environment remains an important focus. I am pleased that our collective community advocacy has seen some important wins. From applying pressure on the Government to rectify mould at Cambewarra Public School, to securing a commitment for a brand-new primary school for Calderwood, it has been a successful year. As a former student of Bomaderry High School, I could not have been prouder than to have fought for a major upgrade of my old high school, which is now being delivered. While I have been successful in securing investments at Bomaderry over the years, that major upgrade will mean that students walking the same path I did will have new, modern and much more accessible learning spaces. Sadly, some classrooms and staff rooms have been vacated due to rain and ageing infrastructure, but I look forward to demountables being a thing of the past once the upgrade is complete.

Having promised to upgrade Shoalhaven hospital and start works on a new Shellharbour Hospital, I am pleased that my advocacy has paid off. Work is progressing on a well-overdue upgrade of Shoalhaven hospital, and a contract has finally been awarded on the new Shellharbour Hospital. However, we still have a fight ahead of us to see a helipad and maternity services at the new Shellharbour Hospital. They are desperately needed in that growing community. This year was not without my own personal successes. I was most proud to pass the NSW Bar Examination, which has a notoriously high fail rate. I give a huge shout-out to my study group, which shared that journey. I note with a cruel sense of timing that the exam will undergo radical change next February, when the exam will be completely open book. I wish all candidates the best in the exam, though I am not sorry that future students will not suffer quite as much as I did.

As I look towards 2025, I will continue to fight for better rail services and hold the Government to account for its cuts to our rail line, including the Toolijooa Passing loop. I will continue the fight to see the State take responsibility for Jamberoo Mountain Road to ensure it is properly maintained. I will fight for our fair share of infrastructure funding, as this Government remains hell-bent on approving housing without the supporting infrastructure that communities need. I will continue to work hard to commence the Tripoli Way bypass and hold the Government to account on its promises for access ramps on the M1 at Dapto and the East Nowra Sub Arterial.

Next year will bring an array of challenges, but I look forward to continuing to work hard to get things done for my wonderful and incredible community. I look forward to playing an important role in ensuring our community has a strong voice in this place. While I firmly believe our State is not heading in the right direction, my care, passion and dedication to serving our community remains as clear and absolute as the first day I walked into this Chamber. No matter the challenges, I remain resolute, laser focused and undeterred.

MISSION OF HOPE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (20:22): I acknowledge the work of Mission of Hope, a specialist multicultural community health organisation that has been delivering support services in communities for the past 23 years. The theme at its recent conference focused on trauma and recovery for people affected by events in Palestine. It was aimed at locals who have lost loved ones and people who feel a sense of despair as a result of the ongoing situation. The strong reference to mental health support was central. The current horrors in Palestine and Lebanon present a different kind of challenge in our communities—one that deepens our collective sense of urgency and responsibility.

Every day, people all over the world witness the devastating impact of violence and displacement. Every time we think we cannot be shocked any further, a new horror strikes us. In recent times, the burning of aid for Palestinians came after the United Nations was characterised as a bad-faith actor. For many, the vision of 19-year-old Shaaban Ahmed burned alive with an IV drip attached to him will never be erased. That particular image caused us to recoil at how the world could allow such a thing to happen. It is imperative that we extend our compassion and call for an immediate ceasefire, the return of all hostages and the active fostering of dialogue and understanding to end this nightmare.

The scars left by this conflict serve as a stark reminder of our shared humanity and the need for solidarity in the pursuit of peace and justice. One of the keynote speakers at the event was Dr Yasser Abu-Jamei, a leading Palestinian psychiatrist, refugee and Director General of the Gaza Mental Health Program until he fled. He revealed some of the harrowing statistics that Palestinians face daily, and told stories of survival mixed with accounts of violence and the killing of innocent people. He created a haunting image of loss, revealing how the horrors of war transcended borders and impacted lives in indescribable ways. He spoke of the 50,000 Palestinians

who have been killed, and also made clear that many Israelis protested against the actions of the Netanyahu Government in a salute to unity for peace, justice and the goodness of humankind.

It is important to note that, at this time, Christians around the world will be preparing for the season of Advent, a four-week period of preparation before Christmas. Each week of Advent focuses on a different theme—hope, peace, joy and love. Tragically for the people of Gaza and Lebanon, there seems to be no period of hope, peace, joy or love to commemorate because their churches, homes, schools, hospitals and families have been brutally bombed. Despite the International Criminal Court of Justice warning that these attacks are crimes under international law, the devastation continues. In fact, it has escalated horrifyingly, with the death and destruction of an estimated 17,000 children. The war has continued into Lebanon, causing further untold death, injury, destruction and displacement.

Like Christmas in 2023, children in Palestine and Lebanon will not enjoy the wonderment of the holy season in 2024 as they should. Instead, those who have survived sit among rubble and ruins, or are on foot with their families, seeking safety. That is the stark reality. There is no safe place in Gaza and Lebanon—not in their homes, not in a place of worship, not in a school and not in a hospital. The fear of imminent attack is ever present. People in my electorate joined with many other Australians in welcoming the Federal Government backing a United Nations committee resolution to recognise the permanent sovereignty of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Australia voted with 158 other countries, including the United Kingdom and New Zealand, on the resolution to recognise the permanent sovereignty of Palestinians. That vote reflected the international concern for Israel's continued actions, including its ongoing settlement activity, land dispossession, demolitions and settler violence against Palestinians. To speak for Palestinians and Lebanese who are experiencing that horror is to speak for humanity and recognise the tragedy of our times. I do not believe that speaking out is an act of antisemitism or verbal violence; rather, it is a reflection of our broken hearts. It reflects the views of those who crave a world of compassion, peace, harmony, justice and fairness for all. It is true that this speech will not stop the war, but that is not a reason to give up, nor is it a reason to lose my voice.

It is important to speak for what is right because when the voices of peacemakers are drowned out, we can lose faith in the goodness within this world—and there is a lot of goodness. Every day, people look at that situation and know that the unimaginable violence they see is incredibly destructive on so many levels, and they want it to stop. I said in my inaugural speech that people may accuse me of being a dreamer, but this is not a dream. I believe in a better world. I believe we can build one collectively when we speak for those who are unable to speak during such an injustice. In the ensuing holy days, it is my hope—and it is the hope of my electorate and of millions of people around the world—that we see an immediate ceasefire, achieve a just peace, end this killing and begin to heal and rebuild the broken world of so many innocent people.

UNIONS INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (20:27): I condemn the Minns Labor Government's failure to negotiate with a number of unions, including the Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU], which will wreak havoc and disruption in an already weakened economy with the strike action it announced today. With government services already under strain and people's lives being disrupted by strike action, Chris Minns is a missing-in-action Premier. Labor has failed to negotiate outcomes that are fair for public sector workers and allow our services to flourish, adding another burden that our State should not have to face. Recently our communities bore the brunt of disruptions as union strikes hit essential services as they were carried out at hospitals and on construction sites. That included a march by CFMEU members, which the CFMEU itself declared was unauthorised. In fact, it advised its members not to attend, but hundreds of members attended anyway.

The CFMEU cannot even control its own members and the Labor Party cannot control the CFMEU. It is a complete circus, and everyone else pays the price. Now we are all experiencing union terrorism. Unions are holding businesses and customers to ransom. On 13 November 2024 a statewide, 24-hour strike by nurses and midwives led to the cancellation of at least 700 surgeries across New South Wales. Our nurses and midwives deserve fair pay for the incredible work they do for their patients, but it appears Chris Minns and his Labor colleagues must have over-promised to their union mates prior to the election. Chris Minns and Labor are now unable to honour their commitments to the nurses and midwives. We know all too well that when Labor—

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Point of order: I have given the member for Badgerys Creek 1½ minutes, but there has been no mention of her electorate thus far in this private member's statement.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): I am sure that the member for Badgerys Creek is about to refer to her electorate.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES: The member for Leppington is sensitive about the truth. We know all too well that when Labor overpromises prior to elections, the cost must be paid somewhere, including in my electorate of Badgerys Creek. Nurses and midwives who live in Badgerys Creek and elsewhere will pay the price. These are crucial government services that millions of people rely on. It is clear that the Labor Party cannot be trusted to secure fair outcomes for both the public sector and members of the public. It raises questions as to what in fact the Labor Party promised the heads of the unions prior to the last election. I have received correspondence from my community, and nurses have spoken to me at recent community events, asking me to lobby on their behalf to get a fair pay rise. I am simply representing their concerns in this place.

Countless individuals, businesses and the economy overall will suffer from the industrial terrorism of the RTBU, with its industrial action that will grind Sydney's rail network to a halt from Thursday to Sunday, and the incompetence and cowardice of the New South Wales Government in handling that rail dispute. We know from history that, even if Labor meets the union's demands, Labor will counter the expense by slashing funding to essential services and infrastructure within the same sectors and elsewhere, resulting in the workers whom the unions and Labor claim to represent having to work with fewer staff members and fewer and worse resources than they otherwise would. I know for a fact that, in my first year under the new Government, funding allocated to my electorate by the former Government was slashed by the Labor Government, including \$50 million to the Fernhill Estate—gone.

One of the first policies of the New South Wales Labor Government was to slash funding for crucial projects and services to free up money to meet the demands of the unions. A reasonable person would have thought the scandals that have plagued certain unions—particularly the CFMEU—would present an opportunity for Labor to hold stronger ground against unions such as the CFMEU, which have no regard for the workers they represent. For all of Labor's thought bubbles and supposed focus on increasing the supply and affordability of housing, it is avoiding the fact that the housing crisis has been massively fuelled by unsustainable rises in the cost of building due to the explosion in labour costs, which the CFMEU has been at the centre of. The CFMEU drives up costs by 30 per cent in Australia, making it harder for first home buyers to enter the market and presenting a simple solution to help address this housing crisis.

New South Wales deserves a strong government that can negotiate effectively and fairly with the more honest unions, keep essential services on track and put an end to the chaos of constant strikes and disruptions to essential healthcare services and vital infrastructure projects. A key infrastructure project, the completion of Mamre Road in my electorate, still has not been funded. As for unions such as the CFMEU, a more hardline approach is required. "NSW" should not stand for "now strikes weekly".

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:32 until
Thursday 21 November 2024 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

ALEX CHALLENGOR

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Alex Challenor of Caringbah South on representing the Australian Schoolboys rugby league team against France and Papua New Guinea last month. Alex made a dream start in the green and gold, scoring the opening try as Australia ran in 10 tries to one in a 56 to 6 victory over France under 19 on the Gold Coast. The prop forward then joined his teammates in travelling Port Moresby where they played out a 22-all draw with the PNG Junior Kumuls. It's a great opportunity for Alex who is a Cronulla junior and has been part of the Sharks elite pathways system since the under 14s. His school, St Aloysius College Cronulla, and his junior club De La Salle are very proud. St Aloysius says his selection for Australia is the culmination of years of hard work and training, all while completing his HSC. I congratulate Alex on representing his country and his success with for the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges team that won the Australian Secondary Schools Rugby League Championships and his impressive SG Ball representative season for the Cronulla Sharks. I look forward to watching Alex as he continues his journey in rugby league.

GRADUATION - SOPHIA NOONE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Sophia Noone on their recent graduation from Ryde Secondary College. Having attended the ceremony in person, I witnessed the culmination of Sophia's years of dedication and hard work. Completing Year 12 is an impressive achievement, and Sophia should be incredibly proud of this significant milestone. I am hopeful that they are pleased with their Higher School Certificate results, and wish them every success as they move into the next phase of life's journey. The HSC is a demanding time for all students, and I commend Sophia on their continued determination to succeed.

Undoubtedly, their perseverance and commitment will serve them well in all of their future endeavours. On behalf of the Ryde community and this House, I extend my best wishes to Sophia and congratulate them on this exceptional achievement. May the future be bright and prosperous for Sophia and their family.

GRADUATION - ELETTRA OLIVOS

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

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE – GEORGE MITTON

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—The West Wyalong TAFE NSW recently held the inaugural Outstanding Apprentice of the Year awards. This event recognises students who have completed Certificate III in Engineering relating to a trade in Fabrication. I want to extend a congratulations to George Mitton of Evolution Mining Cowal Gold Operation on recently being the recipient of the Outstanding Apprentice of the Year Award. George is the first-ever recipient of this award, initiated by CJM Welding & Fabrication, and named in memory of their late Apprentice, Ned Whiley, celebrating young talent and dedication in the engineering field. George's outstanding performance, initiative, perseverance, and passion for learning have not only earned him high praise but also set a benchmark for excellence in the mining industry, inspiring others to follow his path. I am immensely proud of George's achievements and the example he sets for others in his field. Our apprentices are not just the future, but the backbone of many of our industries, and it is wonderful to see their hard work and dedication recognised.

SMALL SCHOOL IS SHINING BRIGHT

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I am thrilled to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the students at Illabo Public School who have achieved remarkable success in the recent Small School Championships. Their dedication and hard work have not only shown what country kids are made of but also filled us with immense pride and joy. Students Elsie, George, Ed, and Parker took on the role of ambassadors for Illabo Public School in the Small Schools State Athletics Relay. Their outstanding performance earned them a well-deserved bronze medal in the 4 x 100-meter relay, bringing pride to their school community. But the celebrations didn't stop there, for Parker, George, and Elsie as Charlie joined them in the pool, where their swimming skills made waves for their competition, leading them to victory and the gold in the 4 x 50-meter relay. The baton was then passed to the students from years 2 to 6 to participate in the Small School Touch Knockout Championships. They played an outstanding three games, showcasing their resilience and toughness to the State, and came home with a smile from ear to ear, proudly wearing their gold medals. Their determination and grit are truly inspiring.

CODY WHEELER—SELECTED FOR THE NSW ATHLETICS TEAM

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Cody Wheeler is a Nangus Public School student who was chosen for the Riverina Team competing in the State Athletics Championships. He competed in the multi-class section with a T40 classification (short stature) and his results were amazing. Cody took home gold medals and broke records in every event he entered – discus, shotput, 100 m and 200 m. Cody's success at state level has now seen him selected as part of the NSW State Athletics Team to compete at the Nationals in December. For any student this is a great achievement, however for Cody, this is a mighty achievement. Cody at 10 has had more visits to Westmead Children's Hospital that he can possibly count. Cody was born with Dents disease, a rare genetic kidney disorder and has had multiple surgeries. Despite these issues Cody loves being active, loves sport and is determined to keep going. I know we all wish Cody well in the December Nationals Competition and I look forward to hearing about his athletics prowess in the future.

AIDEN FYFE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge seven-year-old Aiden Fyfe from Nabitac Public School. Aiden, who has bilateral cochlear implants, raised over \$800 with the support of his school community and friends during Loud Shirt Day, an initiative that supports children with hearing loss. Born with profound hearing loss, Aiden's journey began with a diagnosis just days after birth. Thanks to the care of NextSense and his mother Chloe, Aiden has embraced every challenge, becoming a lively and cheeky young boy

who loves sport, fishing, and maths. The funds raised by Aiden will support NextSense, the organisation that has been instrumental in his development and continues to assist families like his. I congratulate Aiden, on his amazing efforts. Through his actions, Aiden is not only supporting children with hearing loss but also inspiring those around him to make a positive difference.

OLD BAR BEACH RSL

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge the Old Bar Beach RSL Sub-Branch for their well-attended Remembrance Day service, held in the grounds of the Old Bar Tavern. The ceremony featured moving contributions from students of MidCoast Christian College, including a reflection on significant World War II battles and the recitation of In Flanders Fields. Sub-Branch President Jeffrey Early led the service with the catafalque party provided by members of the 41st Battalion, Royal NSW Regiment, and Auxiliary member Suzie Hignett leading the singing. The commemorative address, delivered by Sub-Branch member Col. Ed McCann, provided a touching account of volunteers from the Mitchells and Oxley Islands, ensuring their sacrifices were respectfully remembered. Though I was delayed by unforeseen circumstances, I commend the Sub-Branch and all participants for their efforts in organising such a meaningful occasion.

WINGHAM RSL

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise the Wingham RSL Sub-Branch for their successful organisation of the Remembrance Day service in Wingham. Around 100 attendees, including Naval and Air Force cadets, school students, retired service personnel, and residents, gathered at the Wingham Memorial Town Hall to remember those who gave their lives and served their country. The service began with a flag party of Navy Cadets and a welcome from Sub-Branch President Brian Willey. Rob Connell led the event, with Chaplain Trevor Leggott delivering the Prayer for the Fallen and Brian Winkler reciting The Ode. The Last Post was played by Chris Willey, followed by a minute's silence and the Rouse. As the wreaths were laid by local leaders and organisations, local resident Lucas Lyon played a moving rendition of Lament on the bagpipes. The service concluded with the singing of the national anthem, a Prayer of Thanksgiving, and final remarks by Rob Connell. I commend the Wingham RSL Sub-Branch for their efforts in organising this respectful and moving service.

CALARIE HALL COMMITTEE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Forbes' landmark Calarie Hall has been given a new lease on life and I wish to thank its amazing volunteer committee for restoring the historic building. I also wish to congratulate the group on taking out the prestigious NSW Government Crown Land Management Excellence Award at the 2024 Community Achievement Awards for NSW and ACT. It's an amazing honour and well deserved considering this committee's countless hours of work to manage and then restore the circa 1920s hall into a thriving community centre which is now used for weddings, parties, bingo ... the list goes on. To complete the restoration the group applied for grants and did their own fundraising to ensure the hall, which was the original Daroobalgie School, continues as a community gathering space. It had fallen into disrepair before the group rallied in 2011, recognising the space's importance as a place of connection. Led by chairperson Bill Holmes the committee in those early days included Brooke Holmes, Ange Male, Linda Merritt, Allan Pritchard, Timmy Bray, Cassie Merritt, Ann Nicholson and Michael Fischer. I thank the group for the foresight and willingness to protect and preserve a vital community asset.

ORANGE ART SOCIETY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I would like to congratulate the Orange Art Society on reaching the wonderful milestone of 60 years of promoting, fostering and nurturing creativity in the city. In typically artistic fashion, the OAS has chosen theme of 'Orange' for its November celebration which is open to all types of interpretation and styles – just like the OAS itself. The OAS welcomes all forms of creativity from all walks of life, offering classes and tutorials for its members which are accessible and inclusive, hands-on or academic. The OAS also offers innovation for its members with its monthly 'featured-artist' given custody of a wall at the gallery for a month to exhibit their work. The Society also serves the wider community by keeping its Sale Street gallery open seven days a week. It works with the Orange Show Society where it runs an art exhibit during the annual show and does a similar exhibit during Australia Day celebrations at Cook Park. It also runs life-drawing sessions occasionally. Described as 'a place for everybody', the Orange Art Society must be congratulated on providing a place for residents to express themselves for the past 60 years.

NASHDALE CWA

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—The Country Women's Association is always working behind the scenes to improve the lives of women in rural Australia and today I would like to give a shout out to the Nashdale branch for linking with a small community in remote Western Australia. A friendship was the conduit for Nashdale

CWA lending a hand to women and children in Kununurra struggling to afford the essentials. Former Orange resident Nicole, who moved to WA in 2023, contacted her friend and Nashdale CWA vice president Danielle Haase when she discovered the plight of women in Kununurra who had escaped domestic violence and substance abuse, but were left with virtually nothing. The pair put in place a plan where Orange residents can donate summer clothing to these families (temperatures regularly hit 40 degrees in that area) and others sleeping rough who usually only have the clothes they are wearing. Orange residents can now directly post clothing to Kununurra while Nashdale CWA is also taking cash donations to help this remote community. I congratulate the Nashdale CWA, under president Clair Whelan, and vice president Danielle Haase, along with Nicole Fagan, on their work to help those less fortunate.

READY TO ROLL FOR AUSTRALIA

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—When Jack Lewis first rolled a bowl at the age of 14 at the Wauchope Country Club, it was hard to predict the remarkable journey that laid ahead. Fast forward 15 years, and the former Wauchope local is set to represent Australia at the Oceania Challenge. Selected to compete in both the singles and triples events, Lewis has rapidly risen through the ranks, preparing for what could be the biggest challenge of his career. Lewis recognises that his strengths lie in team-based sports, though his individual skills in singles are undeniable. The competition at the Oceania Challenge is expected to be fierce, with New Zealand being a dominant force in the bowls community. In addition to his Oceania Challenge duties, Lewis has also been selected for the emerging team to compete in the prestigious Burnside Pairs in January 2025. As he trains and refines his skills, Lewis is eager to take on these challenges and represent his country with pride. His journey from a young bowler at the Wauchope Country Club to an international competitor is a testament to his hard work and dedication to the sport.

MCHAPPY DAY 2024

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—The sun was shining, and the vibes were high as I immersed myself in the wonderful day of McHappy Day—a day that brings our community together for a noble cause. The atmosphere was electric, filled with laughter, joy, and a sense of purpose as families and friends gathered to support Ronald McDonald House Charities. Seeing the faces of children and parents light up with face paints and activities was a heartfelt reminder of why we come together. Each dollar raised goes directly to providing crucial support for families with seriously ill children, allowing them to stay close during difficult times. It's not just about fundraising; it's about fostering hope and solidarity within our community. These are the moments that touch me most - making a small difference in the lives of vulnerable families. The feeling is like no other. I am incredibly proud of our Kempsey community for embracing this cause with open hearts. Together, we are not just raising funds; we are building a network of support that extends far beyond this day. I commend everyone who participated and made McHappy Day a resounding success!

A BRAVE VOICE FOR YOUTH CRIME

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—It takes an extraordinary level of courage to stand up, especially as a young person still in school, and address members of parliament on such weighty issues as youth crime and community safety. Willa Herron did just that, and she did it with remarkable clarity and strength. As the only person under 18 to speak at the inquiry, Willa stepped into an intimidating council chamber, wearing her Bellingen High School blazer with pride. Willa's words were a testament to the power of youth insight in shaping solutions for the future. She underscored the importance of early intervention and community-led support programs like YOUth Speak and ShoreTrack, bringing attention to the need for resources in regional areas to address issues from mental health to the effects of crime. Her insights provided a crucial perspective that is often missing from such discussions. In moments like these, we're reminded of the value young voices bring to community dialogue. Her effort, bravery, and dedication to representing her peers deserve a round of congratulations—and inspire all of us to listen to the young leaders emerging in our communities.

BANNISTER DISTRICT HALL ASSOCIATION

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise the Bannister Hall Association. The Hall was originally constructed in 1936. It was then purchased by a local in 1988 who built a residence at the back of the Hall, now seeing the residence available as a rental property. The property was then bought by Goldwind Australia in 2015 who gave it back to the community. The Hall needed significant internal and external restoration and renovations in order to regain the Hall as a community hub available to hold community events and celebrations. The committee submitted funding grant applications to resource the finances to undertake the work. The Committee members were relentless in their aspirations to put new life into the Hall for the whole community to enjoy once again. A "Renovation Celebration" took place in September, seeing local band "The Reflection Trio" put on an amazing performance. I congratulate Hall Committee President Kathy Klem, all committee

members for their tireless work in restoring the Hall that once again can serve as a community connection hub. Congratulations and longevity.

DAPHNE CORDINGLEY WINGECARRIBEE COMMUNITY CIRCLES

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Daphne Cordingley. Since its commencement in April 2023, Community Circles Wingecarribee has been a transformative initiative, assisting isolated and vulnerable individuals to foster meaningful connections that celebrate their uniqueness and enhance their lives. Daphne has been an extraordinary supporter of Wingecarribee Community Circles. Her enthusiastic contributions, particularly in providing feedback and raising awareness about the program, have been instrumental in its success. Through her efforts, more community members have learned about the variety of groups available to help them build connections and support networks. Her input has been vital, not only in shaping the program but also in enhancing its impact on those who participate. Daphne's work has had a profound and positive effect on the lives of many, fostering connections that have been truly life-changing. Thank you, Daphne, for your unwavering dedication and significant contributions to this project and our community.

NATASHA BAKER AND GERDA FOSTER WINGECARRIBEE COMMUNITY CIRCLES

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise the remarkable contributions of Natasha Baker and Gerda Foster to our community. Since its commencement in April 2023, Community Circles Wingecarribee has been a transformative initiative, assisting isolated and vulnerable individuals to build meaningful connections that enhance their lives. Natasha and Gerda have done an exceptional job facilitating a community connections group at Osborne House. This warm and inviting venue provides the perfect setting for people to come together over a cup of coffee or tea and enjoy meaningful conversations. The group offers a vital space for individuals who might otherwise feel isolated, fostering connections that profoundly benefit their well-being. These interactions contribute to both physical and mental health, making a real difference in people's lives. I take this opportunity to commend Natasha and Gerda for their commitment and thank them for their significant contributions to strengthening our community.

GRADUATION - MARKO PEJOSKI

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

PROBUS CLUB OF SHORTLAND INC.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—The Probus Club of Shortland celebrated its 40th anniversary on 15 November 2024. On 7th November, this milestone was recognised by a tree planting. Probus members and took part in the planting on the margin of Brambles Pond at the Hunter Wetlands Centre. The \$550 melaleuca tree was a donation by the Probus Club to the Hunter Wetlands Centre. Twenty-five volunteers signed on for the hot and humid day, weeding north of the education centre, watering some wattle trees, running cans to the recycling centre, testing water quality, mulching and watering the special Probus Club tree-planting area. It was wonderful to see a good crowd turn out to watch the ceremonial event. We all hope that the tree grows into a beautiful red flowering specimen, as it will be visible, with its red flowers, from the Visitor Centre café. It was well worth the time it took to locate an ideal spot for such an advanced tree, digging the giant hole and arranging a rock stand for the plaque. Congratulations on forty years of fine work.

PARLI-FLICKS WINNERS – ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL LAMBTON

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—On Wednesday 13 November in the Jubilee Room of NSW Parliament House, a short, imaginative film created by Belle Dover-Ong and Leela Serafin from St John's Primary School Lambton was chosen as the Best Primary School submission in the Parli-Flicks Short Film Awards for 2024. The competition was open to Years five to twelve students. This was the first year that the competition was open to primary schools and they accounted for around 50% of the submissions. The challenge was to respond to this question: "If you were a Member of Parliament, what is the one law that you would want to pass?" Students created one-minute films which expressed what they would do, and how they would do it. Australia's democratic society makes decisions for the majority of people. Elected representatives to Parliament report our views, make

decisions on our behalf and make laws for the whole community to make our society work better. All finalists received a medal and a certificate. Congratulations, Belle and Leela. I hope to see your names on a big cinema screen one day!

STEPHEN PHILLIPS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Executive Director at Margaret Jurd College in Shortland, Stephen Phillips, was a Finalist in the 2024 3YS Owls Governance Top 100, showing outstanding contribution to leadership, governance and professional standards across various sectors. Stephen has served in senior executive roles and, since joining the College, has improved reporting and communication systems. His legal background has been invaluable in helping to update the College constitution, allowing the Board to become more effective in its decision-making. Stephen has brought a wealth of experience to the College, displaying commitment to ethical leadership, humility and a genuine interest in helping others. Stephen has extensive experience guiding strategy and policy, building organisational capability, providing financial stewardship and driving business performance and growth across business enterprises, public companies, government, and statutory corporations. He has held positions as director, chair, member of various governance and advisory boards and has contributed significantly to Not-For Profit (NFP) sectors, including charitable and faith-based organisations, aged care, education, media, advocacy, health, and community services. Stephen's government experience includes public policy and administration, regulation, resources and energy, regional planning, economic development, tourism, education and training. Congratulations on your achievements, Stephen.

PENNY CLARKE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Penny Clarke of Kirrawee on being honoured with life membership of Gymea Netball Club. Penny has been recognised for what the club says is her "unwavering dedication to the netball club through 35 years of exemplary service". Penny has served the club both on and off the court, including as junior netball coordinator for the past nine years, overseeing the development and support of players aged five to nine. Penny has also volunteered in the key roles of coaching coordinator and junior registrar and has also been a coach, mentor, player, and general all-rounder for the club. She is known for always being the one to offer help with a 'get it done' attitude. Gymea Netball Club says Penny's unwavering dedication and passion have positively impacted generations of members, making her a truly deserving candidate for life membership. Penny has made a big contribution to local sport in the Shire and I echo many in recognising her as a well-deserved recipient of life membership of Gymea Netball Club.

NICOLE SHOBROOK

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I recognise Gymea's Nicole Shobrook on her service to Gymea Netball Club over an extraordinary 37 years. Nicole has almost done it all at the club, being a player, coach, manager, umpire, and executive member. After time as vice president, she stepped up to the role of president six years ago and the club says Nicole has demonstrated exceptional leadership and vision. It says she is known as a passionate advocate for fair play and team support, has consistently prioritised the well-being of all club members and their families, and that she has fostered a culture of inclusivity and collaboration. Nicole's dedication extends to the broader netball community through her contributions to the Sutherland Shire Netball Association and Sutherland Shire representative teams. Gymea Netball Club says Nicole's commitment and positive impact have left an enduring legacy, making her a truly inspiring leader and ambassador for netball. The club thanked Nicole for her service on Facebook and reactions like "best President ever" and "fantastic leader" highlight the significant contribution she has made. I join with Gymea Netball Club in recognising Nicole's dedicated service to the club and netball.

LONDONDERRY BERT EVANS APPRENTICE SCHOLARSHIP

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—Londonderry Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarship I wish to acknowledge Hannah Young of St Marys and Kirsti Rogers of Oxley Park, who were awarded the Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarship for their commitments to their field of specialty. Hannah received a scholarship to do a Certificate III in Parks and Gardens and Kirsti received a scholarship to do a Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations. These scholarships are a remarkable achievement that proves that they have shown exceptional skill and commitment to learning their trade. The Bert Evans Apprentice Scholarship has provided opportunities to many apprentices across NSW over the past 10 years to partake in learning the necessary skills and commitment to vocational education and training. This year, 150 recipients have been given the opportunity to represent the future of the NSW skilled workforce and it is people like Hannah and Kirsti who are managing to break down barriers for a more inclusive and diverse industry. Congratulations, Kirsti and Hannah!

GRAHAM ELPHICK

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—I recognise North St Marys resident, Graham Elphick, for his remarkable story, "Wonderful Wife, Great Family Equals Success" featured in Seniors Stories Volume 10. Graham details his marriage to his wife, Marjorie, who he married in 1963. This 61 year marriage has produced three children and 12 grandchildren and 16 great grandchildren. Graham unfortunately had two mental breakdowns and spent a total of 12 months in a mental institution. He credits his wife for sticking by him during these hard months for getting him back on his feet. He managed to volunteer as a gardener at the local school of 25 years while living off a pension. Marjorie's love and support gave Graham the strength to engage in community work over the years, including becoming life members of the school P&C, running the school breakfast club, volunteering at the local printing museum, and becoming the 2015 Grandparents of the Year. This is a beautiful story, Graham, and the community is lucky to have you and Marjorie in it.

KALA JORDAN SPRINGS DISABILITY HOUSING

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—On November 14, the doors opened for a new development in Jordan Springs that prioritises specialist disability accommodation with 10 high physical support units and nine improved liveability apartments. Kala Jordan Springs has designed the new development to provide inclusive and accessible living that will be a lifeline for people who have a disability and need housing. A quarter of the development has been designed by the Specialist Disability Accommodation. The housing units feature durable hybrid flooring, built in structures for ceiling hoists, and provisions for automated windows, doors and blinds. This will make living for people with mobility, sensory and neurological disabilities much easier. This is a wonderful addition to Jordan Springs that will make the community more accessible and inclusive.

PELEH GREEN

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Peleh Green, from Corpus Christi High School, who has completed a 10-week SES Shellharbour Internship program. The program is designed to provide students with experience in various roles within the NSW SES, exposure to other emergency services within the local area, enhanced leadership qualities and development and the opportunity to develop skills working in a team. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Peleh on this this wonderful achievement.

ZACH GILLETT

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Zach Gillett, Year 9 student at Lake Illawarra High School, who competed in the NSW All Schools Athletic competition over the recent school holiday break. Zach received a silver in the 200m hurdles, silver in the Long Jump, bronze in the Triple Jump and personal best times in the 100m hurdles and 200m sprint. Due to this outstanding performance Zach will progress to the National Championships in Brisbane in December. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Zach on this this wonderful achievement and wish him all the best for the Nationals.

LACHLAN STRICKLAND

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Lachlan Strickland, from Corpus Christi High School, who has completed a 10-week SES Shellharbour Internship program. The program is designed to provide students with experience in various roles within the NSW SES, exposure to other emergency services within the local area, enhanced leadership qualities and development and the opportunity to develop skills working in a team. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Lachlan on this this wonderful achievement.

TERESA MICELI

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—Teresa Miceli, born in 1972 in Bankstown to Italian immigrant parents, has been a dedicated member of my community for over 37 years. She began her education at Condell Park Public School in 1978 and later moved to St Johns Park Public School in 1981, before attending St John's Park High School in 1985. During her high school years, Teresa started working part-time at Taylors Pharmacy in Cabramatta, where she has remained ever since. Over the years, Teresa has witnessed significant changes in Cabramatta, transitioning from a predominantly European community to a more Asian community. As a Pharmacy Assistant, Teresa has played a crucial role in assisting customers who speak little or no English, often translating in Italian to help them understand how to use their medication and offering health advice. She is deeply proud of her long-standing career, having worked with three wonderful bosses, and enjoys the relationships she has built

with her diverse clientele. She has learnt about different cultural backgrounds and enjoys connecting with her customers by speaking a few words in Vietnamese or Chinese. Teresa is particularly proud of her ability to work and serve her local community.

ZIA AHMAD

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—Zia Ahmad is a distinguished community leader, media professional based in Australia, serving our community including my local community. He currently serves as the Editor-in-Chief of the Australasian Muslim Times [AMUST] and is a Trustee of both the Islamic Foundation for Education and Welfare [IFEW] and the Australian MEFF Consortium, organiser of the renowned Multicultural Eid Festival and Fair [MEFF]. Over the years, Zia has garnered numerous accolades, including the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the Premier's Multicultural Communications Award 2021, as well as the Premier's Multicultural Communications Award in 2019. His contributions to interfaith dialogue, multiculturalism, and the Muslim community in Australia have been widely recognized, earning him awards such as the Interfaith Dialogue Award (2018) and the SBS Lifetime Community Service Medal Finalist recognition in 2020. Originally from Azamgarh, India, Zia migrated to Australia in 1971, where he and his family were instrumental in the establishment of key Muslim organizations, including the Sydney University Muslim Students Association and the Islamic Council of NSW. A retired biochemist with over 40 years at the University of Sydney. I commend his commitment to fostering interfaith understanding and contributing to a harmonious multicultural society.

MRS MEHAR AHMAD

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—Mrs Mehar Ahmad is a dedicated community leader and educator, currently serving as the President of Seena Incorporated, a not-for-profit organization and publisher of The Australasian Muslim Times [AMUST]. With a passion for community service, Mehar has made significant contributions to both education and social welfare. She was honoured with the Crescent Awards TLC Educator Award in 2022 for her outstanding contributions to the school community and was named the NSW Women of the Year (Cabramatta) in 2019. Mehar's community impact extends beyond education. She co-founded the Multicultural Eid Festival & Fair [MEFF] and served as President of the Islamic Foundation for Education & Welfare [IFEW]. Through Seena, she has provided exceptional leadership, creating an inclusive environment for people with disabilities, organizing events, and supporting refugees. Her dedication to education includes establishing weekend Islamic and Arabic/Urdu language schools, where she volunteered for over three decades as a teacher and principal. A prolific writer, photographer, and public speaker, Mehar has also travelled extensively, documenting her experiences in publications like AMUST. Her professional qualifications include a Bachelor of Teaching from the University of NSW and a Masters in Information Technology in Education from the University of Sydney.

SHANE CLARK – HOLBROOK HOTEL

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Shane Clark, the head chef at Holbrook Hotel, for being named the Regional Chef of the Year at the 2024 Australian Hotels Association NSW Awards for Excellence. The award celebrates Shane's exceptional talent and dedication to culinary excellence, particularly his commitment to the farm-to-table philosophy that displays the best of local produce. Shane's innovative approach not only elevates the dining experience at Holbrook Hotel but also supports farmers and promotes sustainable practices within our community. His passion for cooking and his ability to create dishes that reflect the rich flavours of the Riverina have truly set him apart as a leader in the culinary field. Well done Shane - your passion and creativity for culinary excellence is a celebration and honour of your remarkable achievement.

TUMBA TIMES WINNER

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of the Tumbarumba Times, winner in the Country Press NSW Awards, Best Front Page – Under 700 Copies category, whilst also securing a win in the Best Small Publisher. Fondly known as the Tumba Times, the publication was praised as 'punching above its weight' as it was one of the smallest newspapers to be considered in the competition. Tumba Times was also praised for the use of colour throughout its editions, which drew the eye of the judges and ultimately earning its runner up for best front page. In an industry which is facing challenges from online news and social media reporting, the Tumba Times demonstrates the importance of local news in a rapidly expanding global society. I encourage the Managing Director Hartley Higgins, and the team to keep up the outstanding work, as their hard work and passion for delivering local news is being recognised.

SKYE VANDERHOEK

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Skye Vanderhoek, a talented 15 year who has recently been selected to train professionally as a ballet dancer, under the tutelage of formerly Australian Ballet dancer Tim Podesta. This is a great honour to train at such a prestigious level, particularly for a regional

dancer, where there are limited opportunities compared to city performers. This speaks to Skye's talent, dedication, and discipline in being selected for this elite and highly competitive training. Skye has also been awarded a scholarship in the top contemporary dance school in New Zealand, and has been selected for a professional production of Echoes in London in January 2025. Not only is Skye an exceptional performer, but she also displays academic excellence at her school Trinity Anglican College, where she introduced a dance subject which will commence next year (2025). I would like to send my warmest congratulations to Skye. Best of luck Skye in all your ballet endeavours, we can only look on in awe at your achievements.

PRESTONS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the outstanding achievements of the 2024 Year 6 Leadership Team at Prestons Public School. This group of dedicated and talented students has shown exceptional leadership throughout the year, playing a vital role in enhancing the school environment and supporting their peers. It is my pleasure to acknowledge the members of the 2024 Year 6 Leadership Team: Umit Erk, Charlotte Munns, Adam Jallad, Amna Rawe, Jesse Buachoom, Prachi Nandan, Luka Mitrovic, Trinity Amery, Sami Anis, Faifua Ila, Hamzah Alshaar, Milly Berber, Brona Kareem and Shanvi Anand. Each of these students has embraced their leadership responsibilities with enthusiasm, creativity, and a strong sense of accountability. Whether through leading school initiatives, supporting younger students, or acting as positive role models, they have demonstrated remarkable qualities that have had a lasting impact on the entire school community. As they move on to new challenges, I encourage these students to continue to lead with the same integrity and dedication they have shown throughout their time as leaders. I wish the 2024 Year 6 Leadership Team all the very best as they continue their leadership journey.

GURU NANAK DEV JI

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I wish to acknowledge the celebration of Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birthday, organized by Turbans 4 Australia, and held in the Preston Stanley Room of the New South Wales Parliament on Tuesday, 19 November 2024. This meaningful event brought together the Sikh community to honour the teachings and legacy of Guru Nanak, who stood for equality, selfless service, and unity. In attendance were dedicated Turbans 4 Australia volunteers, whose commitment to supporting the community is truly commendable, along with respected Sikh community leaders who continue to play a pivotal role in fostering cultural and social harmony in our state. The celebration highlighted the enduring impact of Guru Nanak's message of compassion, humility, and inclusivity—principles that inspire people across generations and cultures. Events like these not only celebrate the rich traditions of the Sikh community but also strengthen the bonds of multiculturalism in New South Wales. I congratulate Turbans 4 Australia on organizing this successful event and thank everyone who contributed to its success. Happy Gurmurb to all who celebrated this joyous occasion.

CO.AS.IT

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge the cultural contributions of Co.As.It who recently provided major sponsorship for the Norton Street Italian Festa in Leichhardt. Co.As.It have been providing language and cultural assistance to Italian Australians since 1968. Their work includes operating the independent Italian Bilingual School, which delivers the NSW curriculum in both English and Italian. The Norton Street Italian Festa is a celebration of Italian culture, inspired by traditional Italian religious street festivals. Festa has continued to grow since the first celebration in 1986 and now brings together over 180,000 visitors from across NSW. I sincerely thank Co.As.It CEO Thomas Camporeale, President Lorenzo Fazzini, Vice President Frank Chiment, Treasurer Paul Dovico, Secretary Lou Bacchiella and Directors Maria Pirrello, Linda Restuccia, Ben Sonogo, Lina Di Donato and Romano Di Donato for their dedication to supporting Italian Australians in our community. This year's Festa celebration would not be possible without your generous contributions and I commend you for your steadfast support of the Italian community. Thank you to all the staff and volunteers that have made the Co.As.It the organisation it is today and who dedicate their time to teaching the Italian language, caring for the elderly and sharing our culture.

JUICY FRUIT

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge local small business Juicy Fruit who recently opened the doors to their store on Great North Road in Five Dock. Juicy Fruit has quickly become a local hot spot for fresh, high-quality fruit and vegetables and made-to-order salads. At the centre of their business is a dedication to providing only the freshest ingredients, ensuring our community remains healthy and thriving. I sincerely congratulate owner Andrew Kazzi on this outstanding achievement. Opening your own business is an incredible milestone and I commend him for his passion and commitment to our community. Andrew is a former international rugby league star, representing Lebanon at the 2017 World Cup and currently serves as assistant coach of the Balmain Tigers Under 19's team. His experience as a professional athlete will undoubtedly serve him well on his business journey. I extend my congratulations to Andrew and his family, and his hardworking team of

staff at Juicy Fruit who have helped bring a Fruit Shop back to Five Dock. I know this outstanding service is appreciated by our community. I wish them all the best as the business continues to grow.

WBBL SYDNEY THUNDER

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge the Women's Big Bash League Sydney Thunder who recently renewed their contract to call Drummoyne Oval their home throughout the next five seasons. This year has been an outstanding success for the Women's Sydney Thunder who are currently leading the competition. Off the field, Sydney Thunder have dedicated countless hours to growing women's cricket both locally and across the state. Their recent work has included school holiday programs and indigenous engagement workshops, ensuring that cricket remains accessible to all. I commend the recent Cricket & Culture Festival, held on 17 November at Drummoyne Oval which brought together our community for a celebration of Australian and Indian cultures. The event included Bollywood dancing lessons, Bhangra dancers and henna artworks and was well timed with the Sydney Thunder match against Sydney Sixers Women. I acknowledge the efforts of Sydney Thunder General Manager Trent Copeland, WBBL Head Coach Lisa Keightley, Captain Phoebe Litchfield and all Sydney Thunder athletes and sincerely congratulate them on an outstanding season this year. On behalf of our community, we sincerely appreciate the opportunity to host the highest calibre of women's sport locally. I wish the Sydney Thunder all the best.

ALL-INCLUSIVE BEACH ACCESS WHEELCHAIR

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—As we are heading into summer, our Illawarra beaches will begin to fill up with beach goers from all over and it is important that everyone has access to our beautiful beaches to enjoy the sun, sand, and water. I am proud to inform the house that through the Community Building Partnership [CBP] Grant program of 2023, the Woonona Surf Life Saving Club were able to secure an all-inclusive beach access wheelchair for the Club and community members. Through this the club aims to increase aquatic participation for those who have a disability or are mobility impaired and give everyone the opportunity to enjoy the beach this summer. The wheelchair has arrived, and it will be amazing to see the wheelchair in use and I hope that this will continue to promote a sense of inclusivity in our community. As the CBP Grant program is designed to fund community projects that deliver positive social outcomes on the community, the initiative by the Woonona Surf Life Saving Club does just that. With the warmer months fast approaching, just a friendly reminder how important it is to remember to stay sun safe and swim in between the flags.

LIONS CLUB OF TURRAMURRA: SUSTAINABILITY DAY

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Sunday 24 November 2024, the Lions Club of Turramurra is hosting Sustainability Day in West Lindfield that includes the Lions District 201N5 Environment and Sustainability Forum 2024. This forum brings together sustainability champions and experts to discuss energy efficiency, circular economy, waste, and water consumption. Guest speakers include District Governor Genevieve Jeny and the CEO of Earthwatch Australia, Fiona Sutton. I recognise the Lions Club of Turramurra led by President Roshan Wickremanayake and the board of directors Tamara Wickremanayake, Muruganathan Apputhurai, Kalinga Wijeyewardene, Maljini Liyanarachchi, Ranjith Gunawardene, Chinthana Jayasekara, Danushka Ranatunga and Mohan Siribaddana. Thank you for helping bring us together to discuss one of the most important issues facing our community.

WARRINGAH DRESSAGE ASSOCIATION

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Sunday 24 November 2024, I will be visiting the Warringah Dressage Association at the St Ives Showground. The Warringah Dressage Association provides an important sporting and social activity for the many horse lovers and enthusiasts in Sydney's northern suburbs and beaches. Competition is held at all levels for all riders. In 2024, I was pleased to announce the Warringah Dressage Association was successful in securing a NSW Government Community Building Partnership grant of \$8,090 to install a Real Time Scoring System. This will allow future dressage events to be scored live, making competition scoring both faster and more accurate. I recognise the Warringah Dressage Association committee, President Andrea Hails, Secretary Helen Trappel, Treasurer Susan Wright, Shonagh Kelly and Veronika Lang. I thank them for ensuring the future of dressage in our local community.

WILLIAM BILL DOBBIE, NEW ZEALAND CONSUL-GENERAL 2019 - 2024

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise in the Parliament of NSW William (Bill) Dobbie, who served as New Zealand Consul-General from 2019 to 2024. New Zealand has no better friend in the world than Australia. We have shared history, institutions and values. The service of Bill Dobbie has ensured the friendship between Australia and New Zealand remains stronger than ever. It is so much more than friendship – it is mateship – that was formed over a century ago with the establishment with Australian and New Zealand Army

Corps [ANZAC] in December 1914. The Davidson electorate is home to a large number of people that jointly call our community and New Zealand home, and I recognise the individuals of this community. Thank you, Bill for your service, and best wishes for the future

MUDGEES HIGH SCHOOL YR 12

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge the incredible compassion of the year 12 students from Mudgee High School who have spent the past year raising much needed funds for Can Assist Mudgee. Can Assist Mudgee support cancer patients who reside within Mudgee, as well as the satellite towns and areas of Bylong, Cooks Gap, Cooyal, Goolma, Gulgong, Hargraves, Hill End, Ilford, Kandos, Lue, Running Stream, Rylstone, Ulan, Windeyer and Wollar. This year's senior students went above and beyond to fundraise for such a worthy cause. They ran an Easter raffle, hosted a garage sale, put together an incredible Mother's Day raffle, cooked BBQs at school events, set up a roadside collection point for donations and some students even shaved their heads, all in the name of charity. To round out an incredible year, The Year 12 Graduation Dinner was held at Lowes on Friday evening, 15 November. Among the toasts and other traditions, 2024's Year 12 students handed over \$26,000 to Mudgee Can Assist. I am beyond proud to recognise this tremendous group of students who not only studied hard and completed their HSC this year but showed true community spirit and generosity. Well done!

DUBBO DIRT BIKE CLUB

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I would like to recognise Dubbo Dirt Bike Club and several of their members who were recently recognised as finalists at the Motorcycling NSW Awards Night on 16 November 2024. The club proudly reached the finals for the prestigious Club of the Year Award. Additionally, Ollie Cale and Jack Deveson were recognised as finalists for Junior Rider of the Year, while Aaron Rankmore was a finalist for Coach of the Year. Although they did not win the awards, being selected as finalists highlights the outstanding talent and dedication within the club. Stella Harding, an up and coming and talented rider, continues to defy the odds and prove herself as a formidable force in the sport. She was honoured with the title of Junior Female Rider of the Year – Motorcross, an impressive accolade recognising her outstanding personal qualities and consistent performance within the motorcycling community. I congratulate the club on their well-deserved recognition. It showcases the impressive achievements of the committee, riders and coaches, reflecting their hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence in the sport.

RECLAIM THE NIGHT, CASTLE HILL, 22 NOVEMBER 2024

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—The Castle Hill Reclaim the Night march against Domestic Violence will be held on Friday, 22 November 2024. The inaugural Castle Hill Reclaim the Night march was held last year on 1 December 2023. The global movement began in the United Kingdom in the 1970's and has become an important symbol of resistance against all forms of violence towards women. The march is important to continue to raise awareness that we must continue to resist all forms of violence against women. It is only by continuing our efforts to resist violence against women that we can hope to change attitudes. Violence in our society will never be acceptable. I thank Ubah Gabris from the Castle Hill Rotary Club and District 9685 for organising the Reclaim the Night March in Castle Hill. Thank you to everyone who continues to raise awareness that all forms of violence in our society will never be acceptable.

DIWALI FEST PORT MACQUARIE

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—It was a pleasure to attend Diwali Fest in Port Macquarie on 2nd November to celebrate the Indian community's biggest holiday of the year known as the Festival of Lights. Coordinated by the Mid North Coast Indian Association, Diwali Fest showcased a spectacular display of culture, cuisine and festival activities on Town Green in Port Macquarie. Diwali Fest was a marvel of lights among traditional music, dance performances, mouthwatering Indian cuisine, handcrafted stalls, colours and beautiful, religious displays. Saran Rajendran is the President of the Mid North Coast Indian Association. His committee includes, Ashok Sanaw, Vice President, Harchetan Aneja, Treasurer, Phani Prakhya, Secretary, Praveenkumar Rajuladevi, Public Officer, Committee members Haritha Gadwal, Ram Godavari, Amita Krautloher, Benhur Lingamneni, and Swathi Thota. I also commend the volunteers Munjal Gaurav, Ankush Sharma, Kalpana Sharma, Rohan and Pratik Chauhan. Special mention to Ellen Crepaz for supporting the event organisers. Diwali is celebrated over five days, with day three the major event. I thank Saran Rajendran and his gracious committee and volunteers for opening the doors to share the richness of Indian culture with our community.

STEWART DOWRICK

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I recognise the achievements of Stewart Dowrick, CEO of the Mid North Coast Local Health District [MNCLHD] and acknowledge his recent announcement of his retirement after serving more than 25 years in our public health system. Stewart's tireless efforts to close the gaps

in regional healthcare and his genuine belief that everyone, no matter their postcode, deserves the best of medical care and treatment has seen innovative and commendable changes in health care delivery. The recent announcement of \$265 million to upgrade the Emergency Department and Maternity Ward at the Port Macquarie Base Hospital is testament to Stewart's determined pursuit to improve patient care and outcomes in our local hospitals. Stewart's unwavering leadership and courage when faced with a global pandemic is applauded. No one could imagine the amount of planning and enhanced service delivery required during COVID-19 to support our local community. As CEO of 14 years, Stewart has overseen the growth of a health workforce from 2,000 to more than 5,000 and the delivery of medical and nursing education programs through Charles Sturt University and the University of NSW. Congratulations Stewart on your retirement and best wishes for the future.

PORT MACQUARIE MUSEUM

Mrs LESLIE WILLIAMS (Port Macquarie)—Today I recognise the Port Macquarie Museum Committee, who have successfully completed an extensive application to be named finalists in the 2024 NSW Tourism Awards. To be in the running for this prestigious, cultural tourism award is praiseworthy for Curator Debbie Sommers and dedicated volunteers Lillian Andrews, Bronwyn O'Brien and Betty Cleary. Compiling the submission has been a laborious, time-consuming process with the production of an expansive document describing the museum's astute business innovation, desired and achieved improvements and realised outcomes. Embracing modern technology, the Port Macquarie Museum is forging ahead with purchasing and installing equipment for the MNC Regional Digitisation Hub. The Hub digitises collections on behalf of the museums involved, thanks to the efforts of volunteers. The Hub recently reached a major milestone of having 1000 items digitised and publicly accessible on eHive. The MNC Regional Digitisation Hub is proudly funded by the NSW Government through the Creative Capital Minor Works program. The Port Macquarie Museum is an incredibly valuable resource which enables visitors and locals to step back in time, explore and learn about our area's rich colonial history and relive it through carefully curated displays. Congratulations to everyone involved.

SERENITY SISTERHOOD CELEBRATION

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—When information and resources are provided with cultural awareness and sensitivity, particularly health information, the impact can be life changing. It takes conscious effort to keep cancer screening rates high and consistent by groups like the Pacific Women's Professional & Business Network. They recently ran the Screen-Save-Thrive program to provide culturally appropriate and safe screening environments. The initiative offered group information sessions and screenings for breast and cervical cancer, with additional support for bowel screening. Since May, they have registered 175 women for screening sessions, and hosting over 500 attendees at events. The program culminated in the Serenity Sisterhood Celebration, which honoured lives lost, celebrated the remarkable resilience of survivors and recognised their collective achievements. I was honoured to attend the Serenity Sisterhood Celebration and join an environment full of joy, encouragement and empowerment – and try the various wellbeing activities on offer. The Pacific Women's Professional and Business Network has strongly advocated for Pasifika communities since its establishment in 2017. I acknowledge the PWBPN Board, speakers Dr Olataga-Olafavie Doorbinnia and Adriana Popovic from BreastScreen; and Sharda Jogia, Tele, the GW Netball girls and South Pacific Aromas for running mindfulness activities.

JEAN STEWART

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I would like to congratulate Jean Stewart of Gladesville who celebrated her 105th birthday earlier this month. Jean spent her special day alongside her Daughter, 3 Granddaughters and 3 Great Grandsons. Known as "The Peoples' Nanna" Jean has touched the lives of many. Here's to many more birthdays surrounded by her family.

KAREN FROM LANE COVE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I would like to congratulate Karen from Lane Cove Public School who has been running the school canteen for 19 years and counting. Karen, a former student of the school herself, is an institution of the school and has touched the lives of so many students and parents.

TREE OF JOY

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I would like to thank Sydney Community Services, who in conjunction with the Rotary Club of Eastwood Gladesville, will once again offer the Tree of Joy this festive season. Through the Tree of Joy members of the community are able to create a bit of joy from those who might be struggling financially, or those without a family, during the Christmas Period.

MEN'S SHED ART SHOW

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—The Waverley Men's Shed Arts Show, held on November 16, was a remarkable celebration of local talent and the transformative power of art. This event highlighted the importance of community, engagement, and well-being, showcasing the creative achievements of its members. The Men's Shed provides a space where men can grow, learn, and connect. The Arts Show reflected this mission, displaying progress in courses and enabling self-expression through woodworking, painting, sculpture, and photography. Each piece told a unique story of personal growth and introspection, reflecting the diverse experiences and journeys of the artists. I commend the Men's Shed for fostering a sense of empowerment and unity among local men. This event not only celebrated their creativity but also promoted mental and emotional well-being while addressing social isolation. Special thanks go to the participants, event organizers, mentors, facilitators, community sponsors, and volunteers who made the event a success. I also acknowledge the dedication of the Committee: President Peter Charlton, Vice President Peter Black, Secretary Graham Ely, Treasurer Charles Gerrard, and Board Members Ian Dawes, Peter Ulmer, Jeff Silberbach, William Honeyball, Brian Sutton, and Rodger Jamieson.

CLOVELLY SURF LIFE SAVING SPONSORS DAY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On November 17, Clovelly Surf Life Saving Club hosted its annual Sponsors Day, bringing together the community, volunteers, and major sponsors to celebrate the vital support that sustains the club's life-saving mission. This special event Honors the sponsors who play a critical role in keeping beachgoers safe and ensuring the club's programs and operations thrive. Sponsors Day provides an opportunity to reflect on Clovelly SLSC's year-round efforts, from beach patrols to training and community education initiatives. Thanks to the generous support of sponsors, the club can maintain state-of-the-art equipment, enhance facilities, and deliver essential community services. This year's event was a vibrant celebration of collaboration and gratitude. Sponsors and club members came together to share stories, reflect on achievements, and discuss plans for the future. Clovelly SLSC extends its heartfelt thanks to all sponsors for their unwavering commitment to safety and community connection. Special recognition goes to President Susie Peterson and Vice Presidents Mark McGuire, Matt Scott, Nicole Hansberry, Mark Hetherington, Kim Davey, Cheree D'Ornay, Kimmy Rashleigh, and Blake Briggs, Nippers President, for their outstanding leadership and dedication.

SCOUTS CLOVELLY JAMBEROO

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—Scouts Clovelly is an exceptional community organization dedicated to fostering leadership, collaboration, and personal growth among young people. For years, it has played a vital role in shaping the lives of local youth, offering activities that build character, resilience, and a strong sense of responsibility. Through outdoor adventures, skill-building, and environmental conservation, Scouts Clovelly helps nurture confident and compassionate individuals prepared to face life's challenges. Soon the Scouts Clovelly will embark on the exciting Jamberoo event, a much-anticipated opportunity for Scouts to come together, test their skills, and strengthen bonds through shared experiences. Jamberoo exemplifies the values Scouts Clovelly holds dear: teamwork, inclusivity, and a commitment to the environment. The dedication of the volunteer leaders and members ensures that events like Jamberoo continue to inspire and provide unforgettable memories for young Scouts. We wish Scouts Clovelly the best of luck for a successful and enriching Jamberoo event and commend their outstanding contributions to the community and the Scouting tradition.

CURIOUS PRACTICE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—I'd like to congratulate Newcastle architecture firm, Curious Practice, for achieving national acclaim at the Australian Institute of Architects 2024 National Architecture Awards. Held in Adelaide on November 7th, the awards recognise Australia's best new residential, community, and commercial buildings. The firm took home the National Award for Residential Architecture- Houses (Alterations and Additions) award for its innovative Aur House project in Maryville, as well as the National Award for Residential Architecture- Multiple Housing (Alterations and Additions) category for their project in Mayfield East. Earlier this year, the firm also won the Hugh and Eva Buhrich Award in the Residential Architecture- Houses category at the 2024 NSW Architecture Awards. This is an incredible achievement, and I would like to thank Curious Practice for delivering their innovative and progressive designs to our community.

MARGARET PANNELL

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—I'd like to acknowledge Margaret Pannell as she drives her iconic Christmas Bus around Newcastle for the last time. Following the death of her husband around the holidays in 1981, Margaret was inspired to spread Christmas cheer to support other Novocastrians who may be struggling over the festive seasons. Starting in 1997 as a modest affair, the Christmas Bus has grown into a Newcastle institution, taking a small team over two days to deck out the bus with extensive decorations. Due to the growing

popularity of the Christmas Bus in recent years, driving duties have been shared around the local fleet as colleagues joined the festive tradition. After 30 years of creating memories with Novocastrians, Margaret will be retiring from her role as a bus driver at the end of the year. I'd like to thank Margaret for spreading joy throughout the community and encourage locals to board the bus as it makes its final tour around Newcastle!

MATTHEW KELLY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—I'd like to offer a huge congratulations to Matthew Kelly for being awarded the highest honour in Australian journalism at the Walkley Awards for Excellence in Journalism on 19 November. Working as a Newcastle Herald journalist since 2018, Matthew took home the 'All Media: Coverage of Community & Regional Affairs' award for his 'Three Decades of the Street' series on Private Alwyn Craig. Labelled by the judges as 'moving, nuanced reporting', the series not only offered compassionate and detailed insights into Alwyn's incredible life, but also led to the reunification of Alwyn's long-lost family who were not aware that their 'Uncle Ally' was still alive. This remarkable achievement is a testament to Matthew's dedication, passion, and integrity as a journalist, and I'd like to thank him for his contributions to our community.

50 YEAR REUNION OF PARRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—A historic reunion happened in Parramatta this month. The Parramatta High School Class of '74 reunited on the 9th November to commemorate 50 years since they graduated. Former students were thrown back in time, seeing their school friends for what was, for some, the first time since high school. No matter what they've been up to for the past 50 years, they reminisced with the fun times of high school. Former students that graduated between 1969 and 1974 were invited which was quite a large number of people to track down. Heather Colcott, who graduated in 1969, did her best to find as many of her former classmates as she possibly could. I'm glad these old friends were able to get back together, exemplifying the community spirit that we have here in Parramatta. I am sure the reunion was a wonderful trip down memory lane!

RYDE POLICE AREA COMMAND AWARD RECIPIENTS

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Local police are the backbone of law enforcement in our community. I would like to congratulate the following recipients from Ryde Police Area Command for their tireless work, and their recognition in the recent PAC Awards 2024. LSC Min Bu and Constable Jessica Morris, for the Police Area Commander's Commendation. This award recognises the outstanding service of officers in supporting and protecting the community. Detective C/Inspector Mark Christie, Sergeant Brad Howell, Constables Samuel Borg, Alanna Devine, Austin Jeffers, Mackenzie Johnston-Jobson, Jessica Morris, Kristen Smuc for the Police Area Commander's Certificate of Merit. The Certificate of Merit recognises outstanding performance of duty carried out by officers. Cst Hannah Challita, Edouard Vezier-Deleuze for the 2023 Probationary Constable of the Year. Emma Scott, for Unsworn Employee of the Year Award. Sergeant David Lipman for Outstanding Achievement in Workplace Wellbeing Award. Cst Blake McGinty for Ryde PAC Police Officer of the Year Award Terry Clare, Alison O'Neill, Joan Rodd, Anne Schofield, Malcolm Short, Ron Willatt, Sue Wong for Volunteer in Policing Certificate of Appreciation. I was honoured to be present at the award ceremony to congratulate these outstanding officers on their achievements.

WASKAM - EMELDA DAVIS

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney Electorate I sincerely thank (Waskam) Emelda Davis for her leadership, determination, and the consultative representation she delivered during her time as a City of Sydney Councillor between 2021 and 2024. Emeritus Councillor Davis was the first Australian South Sea Islander (ASSI) of diverse Indigenous heritage to serve on the Lord Mayoral governing team of the City of Sydney Council in its 180-year history. Emelda was and continues to be a fierce and successful advocate for vulnerable communities, Pyrmont, those living in social and affordable housing, and first nations rights and representation. I've worked with Emelda for over a decade, supporting her work to provide recognition and action for Australian South Sea Islanders. Amongst her many achievements at the City of Sydney, Emelda secured the raising of the Australian South Sea Islander flag over Sydney Town Hall to mark Australian South Sea Islander Recognition Day. Every Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, I have been proud to march alongside Emelda, who has also worked to ensure LGBTIQ+ First Nations people get support and awareness. Thank you, Emelda, for your continued leadership, and your enduring legacy at the City of Sydney.

CELEBRATING MCHAPPY DAY AT MCDONALD'S SOUTH HURSTVILLE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I recently celebrated McHappy Day, at my local McDonald's in support of Ronald McDonald House Charities. On the day, I was happy to learn more about the charitable works of Ronald McDonald House and join in the McHappy Day festivities. It was wonderful to meet some of the crew working on the day and get in on some of the action. I also had the opportunity to meet with the manager and Hurstville Grove resident, Mr Alex Stamiris, who owns and operates several local restaurants in and around

Hurstville. It is local businessmen like Alex who help keep our community connected and drive our local economy. McDonald's South Hurstville has been operating since 1979 and has employed hundreds of local community members during this time. Its celebration of McHappy Day fostered a great sense of community and generosity – all of which went towards a meaningful cause. I would like to thank Alex and the crew at South Hurstville Maccas for their warm reception and fantastic celebration of McHappy Day. Their support of the Ronald McDonald House Charities is an invaluable contribution on behalf of our community.

CELEBRATING DEEPAVALI WITH THE SRI OM FOUNDATION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to celebrate Deepavali, with the Sri Om Foundation. Deepavali, the festival of lights, is a celebration of togetherness. Good over evil and light over darkness. Whilst its origins come from South Asian faiths and tradition, I believe its meaning and significance is important for everyone to share. I would like to take a moment to recognise Sri Om Care and the great work they do for our community. Sri Om serves over 900 seniors monthly, across five centres, with over 200 seniors receiving care at home. From respite care to an innovative assisted living model, their services are all focused on culturally specific care – through familiar food, music, cultural celebrations, and language. This meaningful work encompasses the very essence of the Deepavali festival – the importance of friendship, comradery, and harmony. I must say, I had a wonderful time at the event and would like to thank Sri Om's Vice-President Mr Jay Raman, the Executive Team and event organisers for hosting a very warm reception and for all the work they do for the Seniors in our community

DARREN PARLETT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama local, Darren Parlett, a longstanding member of the Roo Theatre Company. Since joining in 1991, Darren has performed in over twenty productions, beginning with his debut as the Scarecrow in *The Wiz*. Over the years, he has become a beloved figure in the local arts scene, inspiring audiences and fellow performers alike with his talent. Darren's talent shines through in his ability to tackle diverse roles, from comedic characters to more serious portrayals. His passion for theatre extends beyond performance—he is a vocal advocate for the importance of community involvement in the arts. Darren often encourages newcomers to get involved, reminding them that theatre welcomes everyone, regardless of their background or experience. Darren has also ventured into film, appearing in television productions such as *Return to Paradise* and *NCIS: Sydney*. His enthusiasm for storytelling, whether through theatre or film, is truly inspiring. Beyond the spotlight, Darren is known for his generosity and sense of humour, endearing him to all who work alongside him. Thank you, Darren, for your work in community theatre, and we thank you for your contributions to the cultural fabric of our region!

KIAMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY – REMEMBERING ORRY KELLY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama Historical Society and the remarkable story of Orry Kerry. Born in Kiama in 1897, Orry Kelly became a three-time Oscar-winning costume designer, working with icons like Marilyn Monroe, Bette Davis, and Katharine Hepburn. His credits include *Casablanca*, *42nd Street*, and *Some Like It Hot*. Despite his incredible achievements, including Academy Awards in 1951, 1957, and 1959, many in his hometown know little about him. President of the Kiama Historical Society, Sue Eggins, recalls that when she joined in the mid-1980s, Orry Kerry's legacy was virtually unknown locally. A turning point came in 1994, with an inspiring *Vogue* article by Karin Upton Baker. Since then, Sue has given countless talks, striving to share Orry's story. In 2015, Australian director Gillian Armstrong released *Women He's Undressed*, a documentary on Orry Kerry's life, with Sue's contribution as a researcher. Kiama Icons and Artists are planning a major celebration of Orry Kerry's life and work in July 2025 at The Sebel. This event promises to honour the little boy from Kiama who became a Hollywood legend. Well done to Sue Eggins and members of the Kiama Historical Society!

ROB MASON

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Rob Mason from Minnamurra. On the 13th and 14th of October, Rob completed his 36th ultra marathon at the Hume and Hovell Ultra Marathon in Tumbarumba. Ultra marathons are races longer than the standard marathon distance of 42 km, and this event was 100 miles (160 km). Mason finished third overall with an impressive time of 21 hours and 51 minutes, marking his return to competition after a year-long hip injury. Since starting ultra marathons in 2009, he has accomplished remarkable feats, including winning the 240 km Coast to Kosciuszko race in 2022. For Mason, these races are not just physical challenges but mental ones, pushing him to achieve what once seemed impossible. In addition to his running achievements, Rob has served as a professional firefighter for 25 years with Shoalhaven Fire and Rescue, raising over \$21,000 for the Burns Unit at the Children's Hospital in Westmead. Rob's resilience and dedication inspire us all. Congratulations, Rob, on your incredible accomplishments—you are a credit to the Minnamurra community. We look forward to your next challenge!

HOOKED ON FLOWERS NSW

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Congratulations to business Hooked on Flowers NSW for being announced as the winner at the 9th Annual 2024 Wedding Industry Awards Central Coast, for the third year in a row. Moving onto the next round being recognised for the second time in Australia's top 10 for extraordinary flower arrangements and displays for special occasions and events. Owner Michelle Robertson began her florist business in 2004 in the Wyong community for over 7 years, presenting her display of flowers with local business across the Central Coast such as Vocal Events, Linton Gardens, Gosford RSL as well as Parliament State and Federal Members, Central Coast Council and Wyong Race Club. Mrs Roberts volunteered at the Royal Horticultural Society NSW, Royal Agricultural Society NSW and was the President of the Professional Florists Association of NSW. Mrs Roberts attended workshops Walking on the Wildside in Perth and travelled overseas creating floral arrangements in Belgium, Dallas and Orlando. Travelling can be an enriching experience, allowing to gain new skills, network with professionals from different cultures and creating opportunities. Mrs Roberts has created a business that delivers creative and beautiful floral solutions making any event more special.

EUNICE WERNHARD

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Eunice Wernhard from Watanobbi is the founder of Coffee and Chat and celebrates 10 years of bringing community members together to have a place to belong and create new friendships. The group originally was located at Watanobbi Hall meeting with 22 people and after the impact of COVID, 8 people now meet at Mrs Wernhard residence. Apart from the Coffee and Chat Mrs Wernhard participates in many ways with the community. Mrs Wernhard has been nominated for Wyong Women of the Year 2024 by the local community, volunteers at Central Coast Community Shed to transport people to their doctor appointments, crochet blankets for local nursing homes and hospitals, donated to Westmead Hospital, involved with Pink Ribbon charity and is a JP at Wyong and Tuggerah. Currently Mrs Wernhard is in the process of knitting angel blankets to offer comfort to mums after miscarriages and stillbirths. I would like to acknowledge Eunice Wernhard and all that she has done for our community.

FESTIVAL OF CREATIVITY

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Festival of Creativity is back again in their eighth year shining the light on several talented Central Coast artists at the Red Tree Theatre, Tuggerah. The 10-day exhibition will showcase from 15th to 24th November 2024 with more than 50 creatives including visual arts, sculpture, ceramics, glass, photography, textiles, live music, and writers as well as the theatre's production of Blithe Spirit. Winner of the 2023 Festival Artists' Challenge How to create like a child was Kimberly Ivory showing a glass work titled Desert Duck. Local artists across the Central Coast have an opportunity to meet artists as they demonstrate their individual techniques live throughout the 10 days.

HMAS SYDNEY (II) 83RD ANNIVERSARY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I recognise the 83rd Anniversary of the tragic sinking of the HMAS Sydney (II). On 19 November 1941, the HMAS Sydney II met her end when she encountered the German raider, KORMORAN, off Australia's west coast. Both ships were lost, and tragically, 645 officers and crew aboard the Sydney perished. During World War II, HMAS Sydney (II) served with great distinction in the Mediterranean and participated in the first bombardment of Bardia. She was integral to the sinking of the Italian destroyer ESPERO and the Italian cruiser BARTOLOMEO COLLEONI. I want to acknowledge the tireless dedication of Mr Brian Yeo, HMAS SYDNEY Association Master of Ceremonies, whose dedication helped ensure the commemoration's success. I also recognise the service of Lieutenant Commander James Stahlhut RAN, Captain Cameron Steil CSC RAN and Chaplain Ryan Austin-Eames RAN. I extend my thanks to the hardworking team behind the event and recognise the members of the Royal Australian Navy and those who serve on the current HMAS Sydney (V). A special thanks to the family members of HMAS Sydney (II) and those who continue to serve in the Royal Australian Navy today. Lest we forget.

2024 NUTCOTE GUMNUT FAIR

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker May Gibbs' Nutcote is a historic landmark in Kurraba Point and is deeply cherished by the North Shore community. It is fondly remembered as the former harbourside residence of May Gibbs, the beloved author and illustrator of the Snugglypot and Cuddlepup children's books.

Now a stunningly preserved museum, Nutcote was the first site in the state to receive a commemorative New South Wales Blue Plaque in recognition of its significant contribution to local heritage. One of the highlights of the year for Nutcote is the annual Gumnut Fair, which serves as the biggest fundraiser for this community-run museum. Each year, the fair presents a variety of family-friendly activities, and this year was no exception. My children loved exploring the whimsical world of May Gibbs, taking part in the prize wheel, and enjoying the Nutcote raffle. They especially loved the face painting and the homemade cakes and treats. I thank the entire team at the May Gibbs Nutcote Foundation for all their hard work in making this year's Gumnut Fair a resounding success. I am incredibly grateful to see the heritage of our community being preserved and May Gibbs' legacy brought to life.

ELLA HAVELKA'S FIRST NATIONS THEATRE AND DANCE PROGRAM

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I want to recognise the incredible achievements of Cremorne local Ella Havelka. Ella has already made history as the first Indigenous dancer to join the Australian ballet. Now, she continues to break new ground as she spearheads a trailblazing First Nations theatre and dance program set to take place next year. Ella is an acclaimed dancer and choreographer who is harnessing her talents to launch Deadly 2025, a weeklong celebration of performance designed to amplify First Nations voices. The festival will be hosted by Short+Sweet, a global festival brand that presents highly successful theatre, dance, music, and film festivals around the world. I wholeheartedly congratulate Ella, whose talent and admirable dedication have propelled her to the forefront in her field of dance and choreography. It is so exciting to see the passion that has been poured into this project, and I have no doubt the festival will be a resounding success. I congratulate Ella on this profound achievement, and I wish her every success in future.

SOPHIA MANSELL

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate 20-year-old Sophia Mansell, a passionate young woman from Nowra, who is about to embark on an exciting study tour to the Netherlands after securing a prestigious national scholarship. Originally from Sydney, Sophia moved to Nowra three years ago to pursue a career in dairy farming. Sophia enrolled at Yallah TAFE, where she developed the skills and knowledge needed to excel. Completing her traineeship with Kangaroo Valley dairy farmer Alex Good, Sophia credits NSW TAFE for providing her with the practical skills necessary for success. TAFE Agriculture teacher, Stuart Yeatman, praised her dedication calling Sophia a future leader in the industry. Sophia's hard work and dedication was recently rewarded when she was named one of just 25 national recipients of the Global Footprints Scholarship, receiving \$9,000 for overseas industry experience. Sophia says that she is thrilled to explore sustainable farming practices in the Netherlands, a global leader in dairy farming automation. Congratulations, Sophia – we are incredibly proud of you and your bright future!

ALAN CLARK, AM

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to formally recognise Shoalhaven's renowned local historian, Alan Clark AM, who recently launched the book '150 Years of Showtime' in conjunction with the Royal Agricultural Society of NSW. 150 Years of Showtime offers a captivating look at the history of the Nowra Show, highlighting the quirky, fun, and sometimes surprising moments that have defined this event. From the early days at Terara before it moved to Nowra in 1886, to the introduction of woodchopping competitions in 1911, and the enduring, and sometimes controversial, tradition of the showgirl competition. Alan is a well-established expert in Shoalhaven's history, with over 40 books to his name and contributions to many more. His commitment to preserving the region's history was recently recognised by the Nowra Show Society who honoured him with Life Membership for his invaluable contributions to the community. I would like to personally congratulate Alan for being an incredible source of local history and for his unwavering dedication to the Shoalhaven community. Alan's tireless work in preserving and sharing our local stories is truly remarkable and 150 Years of Showtime stands as a lasting testament to his passion and hard work."

LAKE TABOURIE MUSEUM

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: The Lake Tabourie Museum is one of the Shoalhaven's hidden gems, featuring a remarkable collection of over 12,500 items that offer a unique glimpse into our past. The museum features an eclectic mix of exhibits, including Victorian artefacts, geological specimens, and preserved snakes, spiders, and fish. Among its most unusual items include a scale model of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, wisdom teeth, and even an appendix. The highlight for many visitors is the telephone room, where they can plug in old phones and enjoy a fun, nostalgic experience. Founded in 1965 by Jack Nicholson, a passionate local anthropologist and avid traveller, the museum's collection was meticulously catalogued and displayed by Nicholson himself. In 1983, he generously handed the museum over to the Shoalhaven City Council, ensuring his life's work would continue for generations to come. The museum's ongoing success is driven by its dedicated team of volunteers, whose passion brings each exhibit to life by sharing the stories behind each

collection. Their efforts keep the museum thriving, preserving the history of Lake Tabourie and inspiring future generations to connect with and appreciate the past."

WOLLONDILLY ANGLICAN COLLEGE FUNDRAISER

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I was delighted to attend the Wollondilly Anglican College 16th Annual Parents & Friends Golf Day, held on Friday 1st November 2024. This fundraiser event for the College took place at the Picton Golf Club Anthill Park. The day was a success, bringing together staff, family members and community members for some fun recreation, while raising money for the school. Wollondilly Anglican deserves its exemplary reputation, with teachers, staff and parents going above and beyond to create a welcoming and supportive school community. They always have their students' best interests at the core of everything they do, and constantly work towards helping each student realise their full potential. It is uplifting to see the school community come together to enjoy a day on the golf course, for a good cause. Congratulations to all the golfers and organisers for making it such a successful and enjoyable day.

BIG BANG STREET PARTY

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I was delighted to celebrate the community launch of the Wollondilly Performing Arts Centre on Saturday in Picton. The Performing Arts Centre is the most recent addition to the Picton town centre, designed as a world class performing arts venue for music, theatre, exhibitions and civic events. The centre had been officially opened in July, and the exciting community opening planned was hinted at. With funding from the NSW Government under the Open Streets Program organised by Wollondilly Shire Council, it certainly did not disappoint with an afternoon and evening of interactive events and entertaining musical performances.

DARREN PERCIVAL

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Darren Percival's dedication to Pub Choir has been nothing short of extraordinary. For nearly two years, Darren has selflessly committed his time each month, bringing together diverse groups of people and creating a unique community experience through the power of music. His leadership and passion have transformed Pub Choir into more than just a social gathering—it has become a life-changing initiative for countless individuals. By encouraging people to sing and express themselves, Darren has helped foster an inclusive, welcoming environment where participants from all walks of life can come together. The impact of his work is evident in the heartfelt feedback from attendees. For many, Pub Choir has been a source of joy, connection, and personal growth. Darren's unwavering commitment to this initiative exemplifies the power of music to bring people together, heal, and inspire. I would like to recognise his tireless efforts in making Pub Choir such a transformative experience. His contribution has created something truly special.

HSC EXAMS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate the HSC Class of 2024 on the completion of their HSC exams, which concluded on the 8th of November 2024. These students undertook a significant chapter in their lives and I trust the results will reflect the many years of effort and hard work they have put into their studies. I commend the staff and parents for their role in the students' learning. I wish the students the very best with their ATAR results, which are scheduled to be released 18 December 2024.

WHITE RIBBON DAY AND MONTH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—White Ribbon Day, also known as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, is a global observance held on the 25th of November 2024, dedicated to raising awareness about and taking action to prevent violence against women and girls. It serves as a reminder of the importance of addressing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality. I would like to give thanks to all individuals and organisations in my electorate of Badgerys Creek who have supported this campaign within their communities with events, fundraising, conversations and educating others to actively oppose and speak out against violence directed against women and girls. I commend all who have brought awareness by wearing a white ribbon and contributed to the start of a nation-wide conversation over the whole month of November for the White Ribbon Month.

WORLD DIABETES DAY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—The 14th November 2024 marked World Diabetes Day, established in 1991 in response to growing concerns about the health and economic threat posed by diabetes. World Diabetes Day became an official UN day in 2006. This year's theme is "Breaking Barriers, Bridging Gaps," and underpins the commitment to reducing the risk of diabetes, and ensuring that all people who are diagnosed with diabetes have access to equitable, comprehensive, affordable and quality treatment and care. I thank and commend not-for-profit organisation Diabetes Australia for launching free membership for all Australians living

with diabetes and extend my thanks and commendation to all people and organisations who supported this important day and cause. I wish the very best for all people living with diabetes.

ARMIDALE SECONDARY COLLEGE STUDENTS

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Armidale Secondary College [ASC] Year 9 students on being selected to represent their school at the grand final of the Game Changer Challenge. The challenge is the Department of Education's award-winning design thinking competition for public school students across NSW, centring on discovering solutions for real world problems, by applying classroom learning. I congratulate each of the students involved who have addressed one of the most critical issues facing regional areas, dealing with the challenge problem: to make life better for all, without harming the planet. The concept put forward by the ASC students is to develop an online emergency room to reduce the impact of limited availability of doctors in rural areas. I commend each of the students on this initiative and their generosity of spirit to help others and extend congratulations to Luke Rees, Ariana Wood, Brooke Hellyar, Paige Proctor, Helene Groger, Oliver Doak and Jeanne Perrin. Thank you to the school principal Sarah Travis and staff at ARC, for supporting and enabling students to travel to Sydney for this competition and we wish them every success.

GUYRA ANGLERS CLUB

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Guyra Anglers Club on helping community members learn about all things fishing! With the beginning of trout season the club held the John Wilcox Trout Classic at Tenth Dam and Youth Fishing Clinic at the Guyra Bowling Club. They hosted a record breaking 266 people, 32 boats and numerous kayaks at Malpas Dam, for the biggest fishing day of the year – Gone Fishing Day! I congratulate those involved coordinating this event, with special thanks to committee members: Grants Roberts; Josh Britten; Tyler Britten; Tamora Jones; Amanda Jackson; and Wade Jones. The Trout Classic had a field of 47 entrants, whilst the fishing clinic had a group of 14 young attendees and their families, learning the importance of fish care, how to tie lures and cast their rods. I commend all involved in this event, who gave their time and knowledge, ensuring all could enjoy and learn. Thank you also to the volunteers and sponsors: Khammo, Guyra Bowling Club, Dasha's Home Timber and Hardware, Deanos Smoked Trout, Sissons Family Meats, Armidale Recycling Services, BCF Armidale, for their contribution to the success of this event.

ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL, MUNGINDI CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise St Joseph's Primary School, Mungindi on celebrating their 100 year anniversary. The school's history commenced in 1924 with the Sisters of Mercy, starting out as St Brigids. However, in 1930 following a new premises being built, it was renamed St Joseph's, with the namesake and Catholic values remaining today, continuing to provide an environment where each child feels safe, valued, respected and cared for. I congratulate the current and past staff, School Advisory Council and students on this impressive achievement. I thank the current Principal Vanessa Reynolds, staff and support staff for organising and staging this event, which will include a mass, school tour, barbeque lunch, along with various activities for all to enjoy. I commend all those involved with the centenary celebrations, with special thanks to the Sisters of St Joseph's, who remain part of the St Joseph's community and the Armidale Diocese, for their enduring support to the school, parish and the township of Mungindi.

PETER CROWE

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Congratulations to Peter Crowe, OAM, who is retiring as chair of the Softwoods Working Group [SWG], ending a career that has seen him support sustainable forestry practices for more than 60 years. It is fitting that as Peter prepares to retire, he can walk in a mature forest, having literally planted some of the trees. This is the living legacy of a timber champion who first joined the NSW Forestry Commission in 1959. In the years since, he has been an industry leader, and consultant and advocate who helped to lead the way in developing an industry that powers regional economies across the state. In the words of SWG Executive Officer Carlie Porteous, Peter has been pivotal in advancing sustainability in the industry, earning respect and admiration for a lifetime of knowledge, leadership and vision. Peter's achievements are too many to list here but his pioneering work in breeding better quality trees is one legacy that will live on while the thousands of jobs he helped create will hopefully continue to grow as strongly and sustainably as the forests he nurtured. Thank you, Peter, for all you have done for forestry, and best wishes for retirement.

TONY BURNS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—The fictional adventures of two children who love exploring the great outdoors while staying safe from mosquito bites will reach a massive readership, with a groundbreaking local health initiative set to go statewide. The story book, Jack & Angie – Beat the Bite, written by Murrumbidgee Local Health District Environmental Health Officer Tony Burns has been enormously successful since its local launch – so successful in fact, that it will be distributed across NSW. More than 77,000 copies have been printed

and almost 500 schools, education centres and councils have already asked to receive copies. It's a great credit to Tony and the team who created the story as a fun and engaging way of teaching children how to avoid mosquito bites and reduce the risk of serious mosquito-borne diseases. After getting amazing feedback from children across the MLHD district, statewide distribution will mean healthier, safer kids throughout NSW. Few things are more important than keeping children safe so on behalf of our community, congratulations and thank you to Tony Burns and the team, James Allwood, Ian Hardinge, Glenda Fisher, Tabitha Holliday, Circe Adams and Yvette Bortoli. What a great achievement!

MULLUMBIMBY PUBLIC SCHOOL, PREMIER'S AWARD FINALIST

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I Wish to congratulate Mullumbimby Public School on being among 12 Northern Rivers schools nominated as a Premier's Award finalist. The Premier's Awards highlight and celebrate the world-class services delivered by the NSW public sector to the people of New South Wales. By recognising excellence today, the awards hope to inspire a brighter future for New South Wales and Australia. The World-Class Education and Training Category, in which the 12 Northern Rivers schools group is nominated, is about recognising the importance of lifelong education and training opportunities with a focus on improving positive outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Their Initiatives to Support Flood Recovery nomination reads: Twelve schools in the rural northern NSW region worked together to address student wellbeing needs to provide support during natural disaster response and recovery. Specialised programs were implemented across schools to promote a strong sense of belonging and increase school attendance. Together the schools took a flexible, innovative and collaborative approach to build strong community relationships and ensure every child had access to a quality education at a time of great need. As NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery, I again offer my warm congratulations.

MULLUMBIMBY HIGH SCHOOL, PREMIER'S AWARD FINALIST

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I Wish to congratulate Mullumbimby High School on being among 12 Northern Rivers schools nominated as a Premier's Award finalist. The Premier's Awards highlight and celebrate the world-class services delivered by the NSW public sector to the people of New South Wales. By recognising excellence today, the awards hope to inspire a brighter future for New South Wales and Australia. The World-Class Education and Training Category, in which the 12 Northern Rivers schools group is nominated, is about recognising the importance of lifelong education and training opportunities with a focus on improving positive outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Their Initiatives to Support Flood Recovery nomination reads: Twelve schools in the rural northern NSW region worked together to address student wellbeing needs to provide support during natural disaster response and recovery. Specialised programs were implemented across schools to promote a strong sense of belonging and increase school attendance. Together the schools took a flexible, innovative and collaborative approach to build strong community relationships and ensure every child had access to a quality education at a time of great need. As NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery, I again offer my warm congratulations.

BLAKEBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL, PREMIER'S AWARD FINALIST

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I Wish to congratulate Blakebrook Public School on being among 12 Northern Rivers schools nominated as a Premier's Award finalist. The Premier's Awards highlight and celebrate the world-class services delivered by the NSW public sector to the people of New South Wales. By recognising excellence today, the awards hope to inspire a brighter future for New South Wales and Australia. The World-Class Education and Training Category, in which the 12 Northern Rivers schools group is nominated, is about recognising the importance of lifelong education and training opportunities with a focus on improving positive outcomes for the people of New South Wales. Their Initiatives to Support Flood Recovery nomination reads: Twelve schools in the rural northern NSW region worked together to address student wellbeing needs to provide support during natural disaster response and recovery. Specialised programs were implemented across schools to promote a strong sense of belonging and increase school attendance. Together the schools took a flexible, innovative and collaborative approach to build strong community relationships and ensure every child had access to a quality education at a time of great need. As NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery, I again offer my warm congratulations.

I98FM ILLAWARRA CONVOY

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces)—On Sunday, 17 November 2024, thousands of Illawarra residents turned out to cheer on the i98FM Illawarra Convoy, the largest truck and motorbike convoy in the Southern Hemisphere. People lined the streets along the route to catch a glimpse of the more than 1300 trucks and motorbikes as they made their way through the Illawarra in the name of charity. Celebrating its twentieth year, this event is one of the largest regional one-day fundraisers in Australia, raising more than \$2.5 million this year and having raised more than \$26 million since 2005 for children and

families impacted by life threatening medical conditions, charities that work with these people and local hospitals. Every year, local businesses compete for the coveted role of lead truck. This year, with a winning bid of \$300,020, Tiny Tins and Wollongong Crane Trucks, were successful. Congratulations to Adrian, Karlie and Orlane on your fundraising efforts. Convoy wouldn't be the success it is without the dedication of organisers, volunteers, sponsors and fundraisers and without the vision of Marty Haynes who has been behind it the whole time. Convoy is a reminder to everyone in Wollongong that we live in a great community.

GREENS NSW VOLUNTEERS PROGRAM

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I wish to acknowledge the nine passionate volunteers who committed to a ten-week Volunteers Program at the Greens NSW office in Camperdown. These volunteers generously donated their time and skills to support the Greens NSW office, campaign activities and local groups. These volunteers have made countless phone calls to our member groups, completed data entry, helped support our work in universities across the state, assisted in the organisation of our Federal Campaign Conference and so much more. This was a remarkable commitment, and every one of these volunteers has gone above and beyond to engage with the Greens and the wider community. I want to congratulate Krit Promrokul, Jordan Whalland, William Sandiford, Fraser Gray, Alex Hungerford, Yelena Bidé, Jasmine Edgington-Cheater, Ella Bullock and Subi K C on their contributions and completion of the program.

DARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)—On behalf of the Newtown Electorate, I would like to congratulate Darlington Public School and FJC Studio on their recent entry into the 2024 World Architectural Festival in Singapore, where they secured the award for 2024 World Building of the Year among over 200 other shortlisted international entries. This win is testament to what is possible when the desires of local communities are considered in the design process, and when Indigenous art and knowledge are celebrated in our public spaces. More important than the award itself is the impact that these new designs will have on the children, teachers, and school community who use these spaces every day. We anticipate that these buildings will be a source of inspiration and enrichment for children in the electorate of Newtown for generations to come. So, congratulations once again to Darlington Public School and the designers and architects at FJC Studio on this well-deserved and historic win.

AMMOS BRIGHTON

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)—I take this opportunity to congratulate Ammos Brighton for being awarded a Chef Hat rating in the 2024 Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide Awards. Ratings are based on ingredients, taste, presentation, technique, value and consistency of food, all of which granted Ammos a Chef Hat for culinary excellence. Located at the Novotel in Brighton-Le-Sands, Ammos only recently opened its doors on July 12 of this year, serving a menu of modern Greek cuisine. It truly is such an impressive achievement to have already been recognised for its high-quality dining experience. This could not have been possible without the guidance of chef and restaurateur Peter Conistis as well as the expertise of executive chef James Roberts. The Ammos team have high hopes that this award will brighten the area and bring more high-quality dining destinations for people to visit and enjoy. The hard working and dedicated team at Ammos should be very proud of themselves.

ROCKSIA HOTEL

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)—I would like to congratulate the Rocksia Hotel in Banksia on being a finalist in the Australian Hotels Association NSW best sporting entertainment venue award. The AHA's Awards for Excellence are highly recognised across the hospitality industry, and being named on the finalists list reflects the high-quality sports entertainment service the Rocksia Hotel offers. With a dedicated sports lounge, Rocksia Hotel holds events most evenings, with everything from cricket to soccer, baseball to racing. Rocksia Hotel is also well known for its entertainment and live music across a range of genres. In October the Rocksia Hotel held events featuring 80s and 90s funk, R&B, and Dance Club hits, while this month it's holding 'Rocksia Roadhouse' events featuring country music, allowing people of different ages and music tastes to enjoy live music at the hotel. On behalf of the Rockdale community, I would like to congratulate the Rocksia Hotel on their finalist position and wish the team the best of luck going forward.

TAHLIA DUNNE

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)—I wish to recognise and congratulate Miss Tahlia Dunne on her impressive achievements as an acclaimed baton twirler. Miss Dunne started the sport at just

five years old after stumbling across a Bexley Baton Twirlers training session at PCYC in Rockdale, instantly igniting her passion. Throughout the fifteen years that Tahlia has been competing, she has achieved numerous titles and championships. Miss Dunne became the Senior Advanced 2024 National Champion in four categories and the Champion of all age groups in two categories. Her talents have been recognised at competitions all over the world, having represented Australia internationally three times. Most impressively, Tahlia won gold at the 2023 IBTF Nation's Cup in Liverpool, England. She plans to represent her country again next year in Torino, Italy having just qualified for the same competition. Under the guidance of her extraordinary coaches, Lieschen Walker and Nadia French, Tahlia demonstrates the importance of devotion and dedication. Miss Dunne is currently working towards her coaching accreditation, which will allow her to pass on her skills and knowledge to the up-and-coming generation of twirlers. I wish her nothing but the very best on her future endeavours.

ACCA AGED CARE - CHATSWOOD

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to warmly congratulate the Australian Chinese Community Association [ACCA] on its fifty-year anniversary. On 1 November 2024, I had the great pleasure of attending the Association's anniversary dinner with its patron, the Governor of NSW, as guest of honour. Starting as a community service centre in 1974, the ACCA grew to offer home care packages, respite care centres, meal services, a Chinese language school and disability services. Today, the Association continues to provide community services including home care, disability care and Commonwealth Home Support Programme [CHSP] to all communities. Proud of its Chinese origins, the Association is dedicated to promoting Chinese culture through Chinese language classes as well as other cultural activities. Since its establishment, more than 11,000 people have joined the ACCA as members, including over 250 life members. While based in Surry Hills, the Association has an office in Chatswood which is an important point of contact for the large Chinese Australian community in Willoughby. I applaud the ACCA for the tremendous work it has done to help both the Chinese Australian and broader Australian community through its plethora of services and activities.

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF TIBETAN HEALING PRACTICES

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Serving to enrich the spiritual life of so many in the community of Willoughby, the Australian Institute of Tibetan Healing Practices offers courses in yoga, meditation, breath work, mindfulness training and other forms of Tibetan healing. Based in Chatswood, the Institute is supported by the Buddhist Council of NSW and draws on a rich tradition of Buddhist spirituality. Aimed at enhancing people's spiritual and mental wellbeing, the Institute offers classes that take a holistic approach to overcoming stress, anxiety and negative thinking. Amongst other things, these classes are seeker-friendly, down-to-earth, insightful and taught with humour, understanding and compassion. The fee for these classes is by donation. Together with the teaching of ethics and the performance of good works, the practices of yoga and meditation lie at the heart of the Buddhist faith. I know that these courses offered by the Institute have been a great benefit to many people dealing with the daily pressures of life and have given them great peace of mind. I thank the Institute for the contribution it has made to the spiritual nourishment of my community.

YOUR SIDE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to commend the work of Your Side, one of Sydney's leading care providers based in my community of Willoughby. With a history dating back to 1987, Your Side supports seniors, people living with a disability, and other vulnerable members of the community with day-to-day care needs enabling them to live the life they choose, independently. Based in Chatswood, Your Side offers in-home and aged care services, out of hospital care, disability support, and specialist services for people with mental health conditions, trauma-related issues, refugee status or criminal backgrounds. Guided by the values of customer focus, reliability, integrity, quality, and convenience, Your Side is dedicated to helping vulnerable people rebuild their lives and thrive in the community. As a not-for-profit, purpose-led organisation, Your Side attracts and values the people who truly care about giving quality service to those in need. I appreciate the compassionate, holistic, and personalised approach that Your Side takes to caring for those who need it most. They will always have my support.

ROSELEA PUBLIC SCHOOL TWILIGHT FAIR

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I am proud to recognise the exceptional community contribution of the Roselea Public School Twilight Fair. Roselea Public School is an important part of the local Carlingford community and both volunteers and local businesses came together to create an unforgettable evening for the residents of Carlingford and beyond. The fair showcased talent from the school with a performance from the school band, talent show performances from Roselea students and a student Lego Creation Competition alongside food stalls, market stalls and craft stalls from local vendors. The Year 6 Friendship Stall raised \$554 by selling their 100% handmade crafts, raising funds for their school, demonstrating their creativity, teamwork and community spirit. I would like to thank the Roselea Parents and Citizens and the relieving principal Mrs Belinda

Hall for the remarkable work they put into making the Twilight fair such a success. Melissa Petersen and Sara Ghirawoo deserve a special mention for their tireless dedication and leadership, which, alongside the support of the entire P&C Fair Committee, were instrumental in making this event happen. Congratulations to Roselea Public School for coordinating an event that brings great joy to the Epping community.

COOPER JENKINS

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Cooper Jenkins on securing his professional rugby league contract with the Leeds Rhinos in the English Super League. Cooper made his debut with the Maitland Pickers in round 6 of the 2019 season and quickly gained the attention of national selectors, being picked in the Australian Schoolboys team that same year. Cooper then went on to play for the Newcastle Knights development squad in the NSW Cup from 2021 to 2023 before moving to Queensland and playing for the North Devils. Cooper and his Queensland team then went on to take out the State Challenge defeating NSW Cup champions Newtown. Cooper is an all-rounder and as a junior, also excelled in athletics, basketball, motorcross, and surf lifesaving. I wish Cooper well in England with the Rhinos and in his goal to play consistently in the NRL. Congratulations Cooper and all the best for a big 2025 and beyond.

GEORGIE WINCHESTER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—2024 has been a huge year for Maitland singer-songwriter Georgie Winchester. Off the back of releasing her debut album in 2023, Georgie embarked on a 60-plus date national tour, culminating in the 'Pretty Things Fest' in Newcastle earlier this month. At the festival Georgie held an EP launch party which raised funds for Women's Legal Service, a specialist legal service providing advice and guidance to women across Maitland, and NSW. Georgie was a 2024 recipient of the Australian Independent Records Association 'Women in Music' mentorship program, and is also the current artist-in-residence at the Newcastle Lighthouse. Georgie was showcased at the 2024 International Folk Alliance in Kansas City in March. Georgie also collaborated with Joel Leggett and local DJ Just a Gent on their newly released single 'Senseless'. I congratulate Georgie on an amazing year in 2024. I look forward to continuing to follow Georgie in 2025 as she attends the International Folk Alliance in Canada early next year and release her second album around the same time.

HUNTER MEDICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE ART SERIES EXHIBITION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I recently attended the opening night of the Hunter Medical Research Institute art series exhibition. At this, now annual event, I was amazed at the variety of mediums and entries, showcasing the multitude of talented artists from Maitland and across the Hunter Valley. This year, the HMRI Art Series Exhibition was able to raise \$72,000 through an art auction and donations across two events. These funds go to supporting HMRI's mission of transforming community health and wellbeing. Over 50 local artists participated, including Artist in Residence Tyler Dan, whose piece 'The Tyranny of Sensitivity' was itself inspired by the research of the HMRI's Professor Zsolt Balogh. A big thank you to the event sponsors: Frank and Jan Bynon of HIC Services, Markey, Entire Concrete, HMRI Foundation member Vicki Woods and the Brenda Clouten Memorial Scholarship. All the works were outstanding, however one piece that in particular caught my eye was the pastel by HMRI academic Julie Byles, 'Still Life with Australian Pottery and wildflowers'. Congratulations to all the artists and HMRI on another successful Art Series exhibition.

CANTERBURY BANKSTOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNUAL GALA

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On 16 November 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce Annual Gala. It was an inspiring evening, filled with a strong sense of community, collaboration and shared vision for the future of our region. The Gala was a wonderful celebration of the hard work, dedication and achievements of our local businesses, leaders and community members. It was an opportunity to reflect on the progress we've made and to look forward to the exciting opportunities ahead for Canterbury Bankstown. Also in attendance was the Hon. Chris Minns, Premier of NSW, the Hon. Mark Speakman, Members of Parliament, local Councillors, members of the Australian Army and local police who came together to show support for our community. I would like to congratulate the Canterbury Bankstown Chamber for their ongoing work in supporting local businesses, fostering economic growth and building stronger community connections. The 2024 Annual Gala was not only a celebration but a powerful reminder of the importance of collaboration, unity and mutual support in achieving our shared goals. I look forward to continuing to work together to create a brighter future for Canterbury Bankstown.

PACIFIC ISLANDER GIRLS' BASKETBALL IN BANKSTOWN

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—The Bankstown community is proud to acknowledge and celebrate the incredible efforts of Azzie Naloku and the Pacifika Ballerz basketball team for their inspiring initiative that embraces culture, community and the transformative power of sport. Recognising the gender gap in local sports opportunities, Azzie Naloku, alongside a group of passionate parents, took matters into their own hands, forming the Pacifika Ballerz team to provide Fijian, Tongan and Samoan girls the chance to come together, embrace their cultural heritage and play basketball. Following a remarkable feat by winning the championship in their inaugural season, the Pacifika Ballerz became the first Pacific Islander team to be introduced to the Bankstown Bruins, bringing a much-needed sense of diversity and inclusion to the club and community. The role of sports can play a vital role in improving the mental health of young people. The Pacific Islander and Indigenous communities and the girls within this team have not only honed their athletic skills but built resilience, teamwork and developed their sense of pride and belonging. Congratulations to Azzie Naloku, the Pacifika Ballerz players and parents for promoting cultural pride and improving mental health through sport.

LEBANESE FLAG TO FLY FOR LEBANON'S NATIONAL DAY

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On 22 October, the City of Canterbury-Bankstown passed a motion to fly the Lebanese flag outside both its Bankstown and Campsie premises on the National Day of Lebanon on 22 November. This decision not only honours the Lebanese Australian community but also raises further awareness about the growing humanitarian crisis in Lebanon and reflecting Council's ongoing commitment to supporting communities in need and highlighting global challenges. Along with the flag-raising on 22 November, the Council will also host an interfaith prayer vigil to bring people of all faiths together in a call for peace. Over a quarter of a million Australians reported Lebanese ancestry, and with 20 per cent of the Australian Lebanese population living in the Canterbury- Bankstown LGA, this action is a meaningful show of support during a time of immense crisis. For the people of Lebanon, this is one of its most distressing times in their modern history. These families are worried, mourning or praying for their family's safety. During these difficult times in our community, it is always heartwarming to see gestures of support. We hope for a better time for the people of Lebanon.

2024 LIFELINE CLASSIC

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, last Sunday, Lifeline Northern Beaches held its annual Lifeline Classic surf competition to raise much needed funding to ensure its services remain operational and accessible for those in our community who need them most. Every year, those looking to enter are encouraged to register a team and raise as much money as they can in the lead-up to the event. On the day, all the team members will then get the opportunity to compete against one another in a tag-team style event alongside a number of pro surfers. This year, I am pleased to say that Lifeline Northern Beaches exceeded its fundraising goal, raising over \$100,000 – a phenomenal effort. I especially wish to acknowledge Cunninghams Real Estate who alone raised more than \$15,000. Congratulations to Man Anchor who took home first place in the Open Division, and were closely followed by Cunninghams in second, Code 5 Fitness in third and new kids on the block Felons Brewing Co. Manly coming in at fourth place. Thank you to everyone who came out to support Lifeline Northern Beaches and whose efforts helped to raise desperately needed funds for our local crisis support and suicide prevention services.

MANLY MARLINS 2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I recognise the Manly Rugby Football Club who recently hosted their 2024 Annual General Meeting on the 31 October. At this year's AGM, four Manly Rugby legends were surprised with life memberships to the club. I congratulate Damien Cummins, Rob Gallacher, Geoff Riddington and David Begg - all of whom have made significant contributions to the club and rugby on the beaches more broadly. I also wish to acknowledge Susan McIndoe and Alisha Reber who have both been appointed as new board members and will be overseeing the Mermaids and Welfare respectively. The Manly Marlins remain a core part of Manly's sporting history, having been officially formed in 1906 but with history dating back to as early as 1883. They are the beating heart of rugby union in Manly and I look forward to watching this historic club continue to flourish.

MIND CONNECTIONS FOUNDATION, INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY BBQ

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I would like to congratulate Dr Padmini Howpage and the Mind Connections Foundation for hosting a wonderful initiative, being 'The International Men's Day BBQ'. The theme of the day was 'Men's Health Champions' The BBQ, held on 19 November 2024, aimed to support men's health, provide the opportunity for positive connections, and to help men take a step towards a healthier future. Those

attending were able to enjoy a wonderful BBQ whilst learning simple ways to improve overall health and wellbeing. Mind Connections Foundations is a community based Foundation focused on enhancing our community's mental health and wellbeing by promoting awareness and evidence-based research. I thank Chairperson of the Mind Connections Foundation, Dr. Padmini Howpage and to all those involved in raising awareness of the importance of improving mental health and wellbeing in our community.

CASINO SES YOUTH INTERNS

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—It is with great pleasure that I offer my congratulations to the 15 students who have recently completed their SES Youth Internship in Casino. The internship is a ten-week program for 15-16 year olds to deepen their understanding of natural disasters and emergency preparedness. NSW SES volunteers teach the students skills in communication, basic first aid, leadership, and flood and storm response. These are all vital skills for the students to take out into the community with them. The final night of the program was celebrated with a special presentation event at the Casino SES Headquarters. I would like to congratulate the students that graduated from the program. From Casino High School: Leilani Courage; Kate Mison; Caitlin Surman; Ebony Pederson; Breeanna James; Maddison Keep; Emilie Patterson; Ranger Fox; Lucy Michelmores; Hezekiah Brettner-Massey; Ashton Scott; Kaitlyn McGregor. From Casino Christian School: Olivia Doherty; Dylan Markelj-Brown; Daisy Oosterbeek. I would also like to thank the SES volunteers that made a remarkable commitment to passing on such valuable skills to the students. Well done to all involved.

YAMBA DISTILLING CO – CHAMPION GIN

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Yamba Distilling Co, who received the Champion Traditional Gin award for their Duke Dry Gin at the inaugural 2024 Sydney Royal Distilled Spirits Show in September. Yamba Distilling Co owners Alison Sloley and Adam Freeman, who have been operating for four years, sent in a couple of bottles of each variety they wanted to enter. Adam Freeman along with distiller Fraser Nurse attended the awards with magnificent results. Yamba Distilling Co entered six categories and won numerous medals across all: Gold for their Dry Duke Gin; Silver for their Grappa Adormo collaboration with El Ocaso Yamba and Jilly's Wines Clunes; Silver for their Mandarella liqueur made with Palmers Island mandarins; Silver for their Dark Horse liqueur made with Botero Coffee; Silver for their Fig Gin made with figs from Brooklet; Bronze for their Mighty Clarence Cane Spirit made with Sunshine Sugar; Bronze for their Mandy Mandarin Gin made with Palmers Island mandarins. Well done to the Yamba Distilling Co team on taking advantage of local botanicals to create some great products. Congratulations on such an amazing achievement, I'm sure there will be more awards in the future.

CROWN HOTEL AHA NSW AWARDS FINALISTS

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Grafton's Crown Hotel Motel for their efforts in becoming finalists in two categories of the 2024 AHA NSW Awards for Excellence. The Crown Hotel was nominated as a finalist for the Cheap Eats category which covers meals \$20 and under, and Sylvia Duggan made the finals in the Excellence in Service category. The AHA NSW Awards for Excellence are the most prestigious awards program in the hospitality industry. The awards pay tribute to the achievement of excellence in NSW hotels with a variety of categories covering dining, accommodation, entertainment, marketing, community service and talented employees. It's great to see local businesses getting involved in industry award opportunities. Well done to all of the management and staff at the Crown Hotel for your involvement in the nominations and finals. Best of luck for many more award opportunities ahead.

VETIS PRIMARY INDUSTRIES WORLDSKILLS REGIONAL COMPETITION

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—The best primary industries students from Coffs Harbour to the Queensland border showcased their skills earlier this month at the WorldSkills Australia regional Vocational Education and Training in Schools [VETiS] Primary Industries Competition. Hosted by Tweed River High School's at the school's farm, the competition challenged the students' skills across a range of abilities such as tractor operations, animal handling and fencing. Congratulations to Tweed River High School student Taj Damme on representing his school at the competition. Primary industries is a key sector within the Tweed and it is so pleasing to see local students given the opportunity to study and excel in this important field. I must also note the excellent primary industries facilities provided at Tweed River High School which give students hands on and practical experience in this industry. Winners of the regional competition will be announced soon and they will go on to compete at nationals to be held in Brisbane in June 2025.

POTAGER

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Congratulations to the team at Potager – A Kitchen Garden at Carool in the Tweed Electorate for being named the winner of Outstanding Visitor Experience at the recent Business NSW Awards. The Business NSW Awards have been described as the Oscars of Business and are awarded to the

best of the best in business. A small, family-owned business, Potager opened in 2016 and is set on a 10 acre farm, allowing the restaurant to follow a paddock to plate philosophy. It is one of the most awarded restaurants in the Northern Rivers, having won numerous business, tourism and restaurant awards. Potager has taken home multiple awards in the last few months alone. Congratulations to Potager – A Kitchen Garden on your Business NSW Award win as you continue to reap the rewards of your hard work.

DANE HENRY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Fingal Head surfer Dane Henry has been recognised for his achievements, named a Young Athlete of the Year finalist in the NSW Sport Awards. Dane is a talented aerial surfer who was crowned World Under 18s champion at the 2024 International Surfing Association World Junior Championships held in El Salvador in May. Dane also captained Australia's junior surfing team at the championships which took home gold, the first team gold for Australia in ten years. In August Dane won the Skull Candy Pro junior event with a perfect score for one air and he also won the Australian Open Men's Championship title that same month. This year Dane also made the quarter finals in the Peel Pro Junior event, the men's Qualifying Series [QS] Gold Coast Open and Burton Automotive Pro. Dane's accomplishments in competitions have placed him 19th on the men's QS for Australasia Oceania and 5th on the Men's Junior Tour. Winners of the 2024 NSW Sports Awards will be announced at the NSW Champions of Sport Ceremony in Sydney later this month. Congratulations to Dane on being named a finalist and all the best for the Awards. The Tweed will be cheering you on.

SOFALA SES UNIT

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement acknowledges the dedication and hard work of all members of the NSW SES Sofala Unit. The Unit was awarded a NSW SES Commissioner's Certificate of Appreciation at the NSW SES Central West Command Awards Ceremony on Saturday 16 November 2024 to acknowledge member's involvement in the Covid 19 response. All members of the Sofala Unit played a crucial role supporting and protecting communities of NSW during the Covid 19- pandemic between 1 February 2020 through to 11 October 2021. NSW SES Members displayed resilience, agility and fortitude in adapting existing work models to undertake business during the Covid-19 pandemic. It takes a special kind of person to volunteer their time and put others safety before their own for the betterment of the community. Without the SES, our communities would be left unequipped to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies. Your tireless efforts, bravery, and commitment to helping communities in need are truly commendable. Thank you for your invaluable contributions, ensuring the safety and well-being of so many. Your service has made a lasting difference.

OBERON SES UNIT

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement acknowledges the dedication and hard work of all members of the NSW SES Oberon Unit. The Unit was awarded a NSW SES Commissioner's Certificate of Appreciation at the NSW SES Central West Command Awards Ceremony on Saturday 16 November 2024 to acknowledge member's involvement in the Covid 19 response. All members of the Oberon Unit played a crucial role supporting and protecting communities of NSW during the Covid 19- pandemic between 1 February 2020 through to 11 October 2021. NSW SES Members displayed resilience, agility and fortitude in adapting existing work models to undertake business during the Covid-19 pandemic. It takes a special kind of person to volunteer their time and put others safety before their own for the betterment of the community. Without the SES, our communities would be left unequipped to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies. Your tireless efforts, bravery, and commitment to helping communities in need are truly commendable. Thank you for your invaluable contributions, ensuring the safety and well-being of so many. Your service has made a lasting difference.

BLAYNEY SES UNIT

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement acknowledges the dedication and hard work of all members of the NSW SES Blayney Unit. The Unit was awarded a NSW SES Commissioner's Certificate of Appreciation at the NSW SES Central West Command Awards Ceremony on Saturday 16 November 2024 to acknowledge member's involvement in the COVID19 response. All members of the Blayney Unit played a crucial role supporting and protecting communities of NSW during the Covid 19- pandemic between 1 February 2020 through to 11 October 2021. NSW SES Members displayed resilience, agility and fortitude in adapting existing work models to undertake business during the Covid-19 pandemic. It takes a special kind of person to volunteer their time and put others safety before their own for the betterment of the community. Without the SES, our communities would be left unequipped to respond to natural disasters and other emergencies. Your tireless efforts, bravery, and commitment to helping communities in need are truly commendable. Thank you for your invaluable contributions, ensuring the safety and well-being of so many. Your service has made a lasting difference.

BROKEN HILL MUSICIAN'S CLUB

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—When a major storm cell hit an area southwest of Broken Hill and caused 7 transmission towers to crumple, damaging a section of the 220KV transmission line, the Far West of New South Wales found itself without power. Reliance on backup generators was risky and made the power unreliable for a couple of weeks. During that time, the Broken Hill Musicians Club led by Michael Boland was at the forefront of supporting other clubs and communities in the Far West. Donations from Clubs NSW and the Mounties were used for food replacement, refrigeration for medications, freight, fuel, and generators to support community organisations such as Meals on Wheels and the Wilcannia Golf Club to remain operational during the power outage. Local clubs in my electorate are often a hub for community connection and support. I thank these organisations for helping those in need during a time of crisis.

LUMUS IMAGING, ST GEORGE PRIVATE HOSPITAL

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I am incredibly proud to acknowledge and commend Lumus Imaging at St George Private Hospital for its installation of the NAEOTOM Alpha Photon Counting CT [PCCT] System, which is new state of the art technology and the first of its kind in NSW, set to transform diagnostic accuracy within hospitals and redefine critical care pathways. The PCCT system produces higher-resolution images at less radiation exposure than conventional CT scans, allowing it to unlock unseen details and structures within anatomy. This will lead to earlier and more accurate diagnoses of cardiac, respiratory, and oncological medical issues, and is truly a game changer for patient care, particularly for detecting coronary artery disease in high-risk populations. The PCCT system is the first of its kind in a NSW Hospital and one of the greatest leaps forward in CT technology since its invention in 1972. This outstanding technological breakthrough could not have been possible without the decades of dedicated research and development. I would like to offer my thanks to Siemens Healthineers, the developers of this technology, and Lumus Imaging for their contribution to the new era of heart and lung health for all Australians.

FIRESCREEK BOTANICAL WINERY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Firescreek Botanical Winery, a truly outstanding local business here on the Central Coast. Firescreek, an ECO Certified business, has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to environmental, socio-economic, and cultural sustainability, earning them a well-deserved place as a Finalist in the Winery, Brewery, and Distillery category of the prestigious NSW Tourism Awards 2024. This remarkable achievement reflects the dedication and innovation of winemaker Nadia and co-owner Francis. Firescreek is more than just a winery—it's a sanctuary of creativity and sustainability, where organic, vegan-friendly wines are crafted with care and passion. Using fruit, flowers, and native botanicals, they produce unique blends that not only delight the palate but also showcase the beauty and richness of our local environment. Their full-circle farming practices set a shining example of how sustainable tourism and exceptional visitor experiences go hand in hand. We wish you the best of luck at the upcoming Gala Event in Sydney. Congratulations to Firescreek Botanical Winery on this incredible recognition and your ongoing passion for driving our tourism industry here on the Central Coast.

ANGELA MUSCIO

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—I want to acknowledge one of the great local artists from Pittwater, Angela Muscio. She has a background in textile design and after graduating from RMIT in Melbourne several years ago, moved up to the Northern Beaches with her husband to raise their family. Recently, she has painted some stunning murals, including at Avalon Brewery. Angela says that taking on this huge project was intimidating at first, but she had a wonderful experience doing it and the community support for showcasing her work in a public setting has been phenomenal. Her next project at Bilgola Public School was just finished last week. Students, teachers and parents love the vibrant colours of the new mural brightening up their school. Angela's art has also featured as part of an exciting collaboration for Migration Ale to help support Living Ocean's Whales and Climate research program. Angela and her talents will be greatly missed around Pittwater when she and her family relocate to Queenstown in New Zealand in the coming months.

GARY LEWIS AND NEIL MCGREGOR

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—I want to acknowledge the service of two directors of the Mona Vale Golf Club who are stepping down. Firstly, Gary Lewis has served on the club board for six years and was instrumental in the redevelopment of the Mona Vale Golf Club clubhouse project. The redevelopment has been a huge undertaking to enhance one of the best golf courses on the Northern Beaches and Gary has been involved from the very beginning until its completion this year. Secondly, Neil McGregor also came onto the board fifteen months ago and assisted with the redevelopment when the first builder leading on this project unfortunately went

into liquidation. His knowledge and expertise were invaluable during this difficult period. Fortunately, the redevelopment is now done and it is a space that can be enjoyed by all in the Pittwater community.

RAINBOW LODGE 60 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I acknowledge Rainbow Lodge in Glebe, who will be celebrating 60 years of operation this month. In 1964 the Judge Rainbow Memorial Appeal Fund was formed, in tribute to Judge Alfred Earnest Rainbow and his advocacy for prison after-care. The fund established a half-way house focused on helping men back into community after a period of incarceration. Today Rainbow Lodge still offers transitional supported accommodation, with a focus on healing from trauma. Sixty years of providing this intensive support to clients is no small feat, and an incredibly important but often overlooked part of our justice system. It is my incredible privilege to support Rainbow Lodge and its important work as the Member for Balmain. I look forward to attending the anniversary celebrations at their upcoming Annual General Meeting, and hearing from retiring President Bill O'Brien, former Presidents Harvey Cooper and John Nicholson, and former resident of Rainbow Lodge Mr Lincoln Lynch, along with other distinguished guests. Congratulations on this historic occasion to Manager Claude Robinson, President Bill O'Brien, Vice Presidents Pete Townsend and Annabel Mayo, to Elders, staff and volunteers.

BALLAST POINT PARK PUBLIC MEETING

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the co-organisers of the recent public meeting about the heritage listing of Ballast Point Park in Birchgrove. I am contacted regularly by members of the Balmain electorate about how well-loved and valued Ballast Point Park is, so it was no surprise residents seized the opportunity to attend our recent public meeting about its proposed listing by the Heritage Council of NSW. The opportunity for residents to participate in decision-making about their local area is important to the democratic process, and I appreciated the opportunity to hear from a range of perspectives on the listing. I want to extend my warmest thanks to Di Ryall AM, Malcolm Garder from the Balmain Association, and Stuart King from Save our Sydney Harbour for speaking, Wayne Neich and Lyn Fowler for their work helping pull together this trusted panel. Thanks also to Nina Pollock and Annie Tennant from Placemaking NSW for answering questions from attendees, and Principal Lucy Norrish and Carly Freel from Nicholson Street Public School for providing a great venue for the event.

LEICHHARDT COMMUNITY MEN'S SHED

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—I congratulate Leichhardt Community Men's Shed on securing a new home at the former Electrician's Shed in Callan Park, which they've recently moved into. The Men's Shed provides an interactive centre for local men to engage in activities that promote health and wellbeing and giving back to our community. They are behind beloved local community projects like building hives for the Inner West Beekeepers Association, installing local street libraries, supporting the restoration of wetlands near their former shed at Blackmore Oval, and building a wind-driven electric bicycle recharging station from recycled materials. Their programs are so popular and their previous shed was so small that they've had to turn new members away. I was so happy to support them in their move to a new, larger space at Callan Park, finally ending a years-long search for a new home. Congratulations to President Chris Young, and founding members Mal Waldron and John Williams, on all of your work and on the move to the new venue. I look forward to seeing what exciting new projects your shed comes up with next.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them. These words rang true when I attended the Remembrance Day ceremony in Prince Alfred Park on the eleventh day of the eleventh month. I joined with members of the City of Parramatta RSL sub-Branch and community to commemorate those who made the ultimate sacrifice in conflicts. I was honoured to lay a wreath and observe a Minute of Silence as we acknowledged those who gave their lives in defence of our nation. My thanks to Bryan West, Secretary of the Parramatta RSL sub-Branch who kindly invited me to attend the Remembrance Day Service. I also want to acknowledge President of the sub-Branch Simon Lovell, Lieutenant Colonel Colin Shadbolt, Commander of the 1st 15th NSW Lancer Regiment, Captain Annelise Davison, who delivered an inspirational oration and Frank Hinchcliffe, a ninety-eight-year-old veteran of the Korean war who attended to pay his respects. I acknowledge all the veterans, and those currently serving in our armed forces, who were present on the day, and I thank the City of Parramatta RSL sub-Branch for the work they do to support the veterans of Parramatta.

AR BLUETT MEMORIAL AWARD

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—As a former councillor and mayor, I know how

great the team at Lake Macquarie City Council is—but it's always good when others sit up and take notice, too! On Sunday 17 November at the Local Government NSW conference in Tamworth, Lake Macquarie City Council won the metropolitan/major regional AR Bluett Memorial Award for outstanding achievement in Local Government. The council embarked on a strategy of proactively working to grow the city, attracting new and younger residents and diversifying the local economy, especially in the hospitality, health and service industries. This resulted in an average 7% growth in the economy and 22,000 new jobs. The University of Newcastle found that the council was the key driver for this change. This is the second time that Lake Macquarie City Council have won this prestigious award, previously also winning the award in 2012—back when I was still on Council. Congratulations Lake Macquarie City Council, Chief Executive Officer Morven Cameron, new mayor Adam Shultz, and the whole team of 1,300! Well deserved!

PRIMARY SCHOOL MATHEMATICS COMPETITION

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—My congratulations to the students from schools across the Charlestown electorate who took part in the 2024 Newcastle Permanent Primary School Mathematics Competition. Launched in 1981, the students needed to solve 35 questions without the use of calculators or rulers—and I am so pleased to say that first place in the Year 6 Division was jointly-bestowed to New Lambton South Public School students Wenhao Wei, Kai Tran and Rongda You. Ella Myers from New Lambton South Public took a second place, and Ben Taliana of Eleebana Public School took out a third place. Ahmed Sajjad of New Lambton South Public School received a Year 5 District Award in the Newcastle Division, while Levi Peterson of Valentine Public School and Taym Tohala of St Mary's Primary School Warners Bay received awards in the Lake Macquarie Division. Henry Bowen of Eleebana Public School and Jack Butler of Warners Bay Public School received Year 6 District Awards in the Lake Macquarie Division. Congratulations once again to all the students who got involved.

WAFIQ AYYASH

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—A year 3 student at New Lambton Public School in the Charlestown electorate has emerged as one of the thirty best spellers in New South Wales. Wafiq Ayyash, who moved to Newcastle from Bangladesh three years ago, won his junior heat after eleven rounds. His winning word? "Treachery". What makes it even more impressive is that 200,000 young spellers from across the state took part in the event. Spelling is such an important foundational skill for good literacy, but the English language doesn't make it at times—as I'm sure many of us have experienced! This makes Wafiq's achievement all the more outstanding. Congratulations to Wafiq and his teachers. This is the second year in a row a first-time competitor from Newcastle has gotten through to the finals. The finals will take place in Penrith later this month, and I wish New Lambton Public's freshly-minted spelling champion all the best.

THE 83RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE SINKING OF HMAS SYDNEY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I would like to acknowledge the 83rd anniversary of the sinking of the HMAS Sydney II, a solemn occasion in our nation's history. On November 19, 1941, HMAS Sydney II, was tragically lost after an encounter with the German raider Kormoran off the coast of western Australia. All 645 officers and crew aboard made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nations. I was honoured to represent Premier Chris Minns in honouring the courage and dedication of those who served on HMAS Sydney II. Their sacrifice reminds us of the extraordinary bravery of our officers and men, past and present. I also extend my gratitude to HMAS Sydney Association and all those involved in commemorating this significant anniversary, ensuring that the memory of the HMAS Sydney II, and its crew continues to inspire and unite Australians. Lest we forget.

RSL SUB-BRANCHES OF ST GEORGE, REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICES

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the RSL Sub-branches of St George for their exceptional Remembrance Day Services, which were held last Monday. These solemn ceremonies served as a profound tribute to all the brave individuals who fought in the World Wars, as well as to those who have served in the armed forces since, and those currently serving. Every year, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, millions of people around the world come together in a moment of silence to reflect on the sacrifices made by these courageous men and women. This year, a poignant remembrance day service took place at the Hurstville War Memorial, a location steeped in history and reverence for those who fought for our freedoms. The service was conducted by Gordon Blair, the Convenor of the Hurstville War Memorial Commemoration Group, and featured the Catafalque Party Guard, which was composed of members from the Riverwood Hornets Squadron of the Australian Cadet Corps. Together, these elements

combined to create a deeply moving remembrance that highlighted the importance of acknowledging our shared history and honouring those who have served.

RICHARD GLOVER

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—It truly is the end of an era for ABC Radio Sydney as Richard Glover completes a long and storied career in broadcasting. After 26 years steering listeners across Sydney home with the Drive program, Richard recently announced that he would be hanging up his headphones for good. Richard joined ABC Radio Sydney in 1996, before taking the reins of the daily Drive program in 1998. Drive has grown to be an eclectic mix of humour, news, pop culture, politics, and anything else Richard dreams up. On the handful of occasions that I have joined him for the Monday Political Briefing, discussions have spanned from thoughtful and poignant to hilarious – all in under half an hour! Richard's legacy also includes his popular Thank God It's Friday! round up of the work week (which once travelled to Liverpool!) and his weekly humourous in the Sydney Morning Herald for three decades. Richard's work has netted him 3 Walkley nominations. I know that his highly engaging yarns will be deeply missed by listeners and the community alike, and I wish Richard all the best as he enters a new, equally fulfilling chapter.

GANDANGARA 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool)—This year marks 40 years since the creation of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council. Since their establishment following the passage of the historic Aboriginal Land Rights Act of 1983 (NSW), Gandangara has operated across six Local Government Areas: Liverpool, Fairfield, Canterbury-Bankstown, Parramatta, Cumberland, and the Sutherland Shire. Gandangara's central objective is to improve, protect and foster the interests of Aboriginal people in South-West Sydney. Day in and day out, I have seen the team at Gandangara do this across various areas of importance to our First Peoples and to our broader community. Gandangara has built a reputation for working to improve and incorporate Aboriginal wisdom into land management, cultural preservation, health services, transport services, and ecology practices. I am particularly proud to be sponsoring the Elders Table at the Gandangara 40th Anniversary Ball later this month. I congratulate the team at Gandangara led by CEO and Bundjalung woman Dr Melissa Williams, and the Board led by Tony Scholes – on a successful 40 years of service, and I look forward to seeing their presence thrive on the land of the Cabrogal clan of the Darug Nation for many years to come.

ANTARA CHILDCARE AND PRESCHOOL BEXLEY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to take a moment to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Antara Childcare and Preschool Bexley for their remarkable achievement in winning the Outstanding Early Childhood Centre Award at the Bayside Local Business Awards, which took place earlier this week on November 12th. This annual event is dedicated to recognising and celebrating the exceptional businesses within our local community, and Antara's success is a testament to their unwavering commitment to providing high-quality care and education for children. This award is not only a recognition of their hard work but also highlights the centre's unique approach to early childhood education. Antara Childcare and Preschool distinguishes itself through its holistic framework that embraces each child's individual learning journey. The dedicated team believes in nurturing every aspect of a child's development, fostering not just academic growth but emotional and social skills as well, all within a nurturing environment that promotes connection and respect. Having been finalists in 2023 for this award, their hard work and passion have truly shone through, having such a positive impact on the lives of families in the Bexley area. Congratulations once again to the entire team at Antara Childcare and Preschool!

DAVID LOVEJOY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the contribution to the Byron Shire community made by David Lovejoy, editor, author, community keystone, spiritual seeker and chess whiz, and pay my respects to his family following his recent passing. A long-term resident of the Shire, and one who helped mould its identity, David was best known for his role in founding local independent newspaper The Echo in 1986 and sustaining it as manager, editor and journalist for more than 20 years until his retirement. A Londoner by birth, David took the overland hippie trail and arrived in Australia in the early 70s, where he pursued his passion for Eastern mysticism, meditation and self-discovery. He was highly educated, extremely well-read and demonstrated a keen eye and irreverence for all forms of hypocrisy and vested interest. This winning formula has sustained The Echo to the present day, a paper committed to fearless political reporting and free speech. David's legacy lives on and he will be sorely missed by everyone who knew and loved him.

PHILIP SHINE

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I pay my respects to Byron Bay man Philip Shine and extend my deepest sympathies to his family following his recent passing. I celebrate Philip's contribution to the culture

and wellbeing of Byron Shire. A much-loved father, partner and community member, Philip brought considerable life experience and a history of successful community radio management to Byron Shire when he arrived in 2011. Philip knew what he liked and the best way to realise his vision after he revolutionised Sydney's Eastside Radio, giving the station a jazz focus, and brought 2SER FM into the digital age. As the first station manager of Byron's BayFM, he demonstrated skilled leadership and a gift for inclusiveness and community engagement. Philip guided BayFM through natural disasters and the pandemic, and helped develop the station's Community Newsroom, which won the Award for Excellence in News & Current Affairs Programming at the 2022 Community Radio Awards. BayFM also won the Tony Staley Award for excellence in upholding the values of democracy, diversity, access and independence, and Philip's decades of service to community radio were recognised with the prestigious Michael Law Award. His wisdom, humour and care will be sorely missed.

CRAFT MARKET GREYSTANES

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Saturday 16th November, I was delighted to attend the annual Craft Market Greystanes at Our Lady Queen of Peace Camilleri Hall, Greystanes. Now in its 16th year, Craft Market Greystanes is organised by volunteers from OLQP and features over 40 arts and crafts stalls, including quality Christmas decorations and gifts, baby wear, homewares, jewellery and plants. It was great to see the amazing creativity and talent on display from craftspeople based across our local Prospect Electorate community. This year, Craft Market Greystanes raised \$4,900 for the Melita Eagles Sports Club, in a wonderful gesture of community spirit. The Melita Eagles team have run the Craft Market BBQ in recent years, supporting a noble cause and celebrating historic connections with our local Maltese community. Melita Eagles United Soccer Football Club was formed in 1956 after the amalgamation of two Maltese clubs, Malta Eagles and Melita Soccer Football Club. They remain one of Western Sydney's most iconic football clubs, having competed at the top tier of Australian football. My warmest congratulations go out to Julie-Ann Mifsud and all the Craft Market Greystanes team on another fantastic event and a superb fixture in the Prospect Electorate community calendar.

ST ANTHONY'S MERCY DAY AWARDS – YEAR 5

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to Ashton D'Souza and Chizara Okoye on receiving a 2024 Mercy Award on 27th September 2024, at St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween. An exceptional student in the 5G Class at St Anthony's, Ashton received the Mercy Award for Service, recognising his integrity and courteous interactions with others. Assisting others without being asked, Ashton is a living example of the St Anthony's motto, 'in word and deed. Chizara, or Zara as her friends know her, is an outstanding member of the 5W class, who was awarded the Mercy Award for Courage. With a tenacious spirit, Zara demonstrates perseverance and bravery. Standing up for what she believes in and never shying away from though-provoking conversations, Zara's bold advocacy is an example of St Anthony of Padua's legacy. Mercy Awards recognise students who embody the Mercy values of hospitality, justice, compassion, respect, service and courage. Ashton and Zara were selected as the Year 5 winners of this important award. Congratulations again Ashton and Zara. You are commended for the example you set to your peers. Thank you to Principal Patricia Reilly, and the dedicated teachers and staff for supporting our students through their Catholic faith.

ST ANTHONY'S MERCY DAY AWARDS – YEAR 4

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to Kiki Komiri and Empress Aragon on receiving a 2024 Mercy Award on 27th September 2024, at St Anthony's Primary School, Girraween. An exceptional student in the 4G Class at St Anthony's Primary School, Kiki received the Mercy Award for Service. A kind and helpful classmate, Kiki is always ready to assist her teachers and peers. With a bright smile and generous spirit, Kiki is truly embodying St Anthony's legacy of service. Empress is an outstanding member of the 4W class at St Anthony's Primary School, who was awarded the Mercy Award for Compassion. A quiet achiever, Empress listens to understand and appreciate others' perspectives. Following in the footsteps of the Mercy Sisters, Empress' empathy and patience help to welcome and support her classmates. Mercy Awards recognise students who embody the Mercy values of hospitality, justice, compassion, respect, service and courage. Kiki and Empress were selected as the Year 4 winners of this important award. Congratulations once again Kiki and Empress. You are commended for the example you set to your peers. Thank you Patricia Reilly, Principal, and the dedicated teaching and support staff for guiding our students through their Catholic faith.

JOCELYN BAWDEN HEATH, 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I extend my best wishes to Jocelyn Bawden Heath who will celebrate her 100th birthday early in January. Jocelyn was born to Harcourt and Joyce Englert and was one of six children. Her formative years were spent in West Wyalong, where she completed her early education before attending high school in Hay. After completing high school, Jocelyn trained as a stenographer in Sydney. During World War II, Jocelyn served with distinction in the Women's Royal Australian Navy until her discharge in 1946. Following the war, Jocelyn worked alongside her father in his law practice, during which she met her future

husband, Guy. Jocelyn and Guy married and settled in Mount Colah in 1957, raising three children, Jacquie, Guy Jr., and John. Known for her warmth and kindness, Jocelyn became a cherished community figure, often welcoming neighbourhood children with biscuits and milk. She now resides in Castle Hill, where she enjoys a life filled with diverse joys and memories of horse racing, family tennis matches, and annual holidays in Yamba. Today, Jocelyn's legacy extends to six grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Congratulations, Jocelyn, on your remarkable milestone. May your 100th birthday be filled with love and celebration.
