

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 11 February 2025

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge our guests in the gallery today and welcome them to Australia's mother Parliament, Australia's first Parliament. We are very proud of this place and it is wonderful that they can join us today. I extend a warm welcome to a guest of the member for Sydney, Lachlan Barker-Kennedy, who is his new electorate officer. I also welcome to the Chamber a guest of the member for Wagga Wagga, Luci Gow, who is interning with the member. Finally, I welcome guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I will not name them individually, but they are all guests of the Avondale and broader Cooranbong community. It was wonderful to meet with them earlier and I welcome them to the gallery.

Members

MEMBER FOR MONARO

MEMBER FOR MAITLAND

MEMBER FOR PARRAMATTA

MEMBER FOR CASTLE HILL

MEMBER FOR DUBBO

The SPEAKER: Some of our colleagues have had birthdays during the break, one of which is very contemporary. The member for Monaro is celebrating his birthday today. I congratulate the member for Monaro. He is 61 today, although he was 62 last year. Happy birthday to the member for Maitland. I hope she is feeling really relaxed and happy; that is how we love to see her. I wish her a wonderful birthday. The member for Parramatta also had a birthday. I give a special shout-out to the member for Castle Hill, who also had a birthday, and I think the member for Dubbo also might have had a birthday.

Announcements

CLERK-ASSISTANT HOUSE AND PROCEDURE

The SPEAKER (12:04): I advise the House that John Young, who sits at the table to my left, has been permanently appointed as a Clerk-Assistant House and Procedure. I congratulate John.

Members

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from Her Excellency the Governor convening a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in the Legislative Council Chamber on Thursday 13 February 2025 at 2.00 p.m., for the purpose of the election of a person to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. Samuel Faraway, and accordingly requiring members to attend the sitting.

Bills

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS AND DOMAIN TRUST AMENDMENT BILL 2024

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

**STATE INSURANCE AND CARE GOVERNANCE AMENDMENT (GOVERNANCE
ARRANGEMENTS) BILL 2024**

WITNESS PROTECTION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

REVENUE LEGISLATION FURTHER AMENDMENT BILL 2024

**ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT (STATE SIGNIFICANT
DEVELOPMENT) BILL 2024**

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

CRIMES AMENDMENT (OBSTRUCTING A RAILWAY) BILL 2024

PUBLIC HEALTH (TOBACCO) AMENDMENT BILL 2024

TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (NSW MOTORWAYS) BILL 2024

**BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AMENDMENT (BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS SCHEME) BILL
2024**

Assent

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

Announcements

**DEATH OF MR ROBERT TAPI, CLERK OF THE BOUGAINVILLE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

The SPEAKER (12:05): I regret to advise of the passing of Mr Robert Tapi, the Clerk of the Bougainville House of Representatives, on 22 December 2024. Mr Tapi was a long-serving and highly regarded Clerk, who worked tirelessly for the benefit of the people of Bougainville in that role and in previous positions that were dedicated to serving the community. Mr Tapi was instrumental in establishing and maintaining the strong relationship between our parliaments through the twinning arrangement. Together with the President, I have conveyed our condolences to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Hon. Simon Pentanu. I ask members to please stand as a mark of respect.

Members and officers of the House stood as a mark of respect.

CALIFORNIA WILDFIRES

The SPEAKER (12:06): On behalf of the members of the Legislative Assembly and the people of New South Wales, I have sent a message of condolence to the Speaker of the California State Assembly, our sister state in the United States, expressing our deepest sympathy to the families of residents who have lost their lives and to all those affected by the destructive wildfires burning across southern areas of the state. During a period last month when weather patterns in California were unpredictable and the path of the fires uncertain, it was fitting to convey our concern for those whose safety and wellbeing were at risk, including the tens of thousands of Californians still facing possible evacuation.

As we know, Australia is no stranger to the devastation wrought by bushfire and its often lasting effects. We recognise and commend the resilience of the people of California in their resolve to rebuild their communities and recover from those terrible events. Alongside the member for Monaro, I also recognise the sacrifice of Ian McBeth, Paul Hudson, and Rick DeMorgan Junior. They travelled to Australia from the United States of America to fight the bushfires and died while on duty when their fire tanker crashed near Cooma on 23 January 2020. I ask members to please stand as a mark of respect.

Members and officers of the House stood as a mark of respect.

*Members***ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF PORT MACQUARIE****Vacant Seat**

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that on Friday 31 January 2025 I received a letter from Leslie Gladys Williams resigning her seat as member for the electoral district of Port Macquarie. I inform the House that I have issued a media release advising of my intention to issue a writ for a by-election to be held on 15 March 2025.

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

That in accordance with section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017 the seat of the member for Port Macquarie be declared vacant by reason of the resignation of Leslie Gladys Williams.

Motion agreed to.

*Members***MINISTRY**

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House that:

- (1) On 6 February 2025, Her Excellency the Governor accepted the resignation of the Hon. Ms Joanna Elizabeth Haylen, MP, as a member of the Executive Council and as Minister for Transport.
- (2) On 6 February 2025, Her Excellency the Governor appointed the Hon. John Graham, MLC, as Minister for Transport.
- (3) The Minister for Regional Transport and Roads will represent the Special Minister of State, Minister for Transport, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism.

*Motions***INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

Mr RON HOENIG: I move:

- (1) That business before the House this day be interrupted at the conclusion of the public interest debate to permit the member for Pittwater, and then the member for Hornsby, to give their inaugural speeches.
- (2) That business before the House on Wednesday 12 February 2025 be interrupted at the conclusion of the public interest debate to permit the member for Epping to give her inaugural speech.

Motion agreed to.

*Ministerial Statements***ANTISEMITISM**

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:11): Over summer we have witnessed scenes of depravity and hatred most of us thought we would never see in New South Wales: a holy synagogue defiled by a hateful swastika; a childcare centre deliberately set on fire; Nazi slogans, copied from the darkest pages of history, spray-painted across Jewish cars and Jewish property. To a one, these have been cowardly acts conducted under the cover of darkness and designed to bully, intimidate and threaten the Jewish people of our great State. We are here today as a Parliament—as representatives of this open and tolerant State—to say in an unambiguous way that this campaign of hatred will fail. It will fail because the Jewish community is strong. It will fail because our Jewish friends have an entire State behind them with the laws and resources and the solidarity needed to destroy the poison of antisemitism wherever it takes root.

The Jewish people of New South Wales are proud, but they are understandably exhausted. As one parent told the media earlier this month, "I'm just tired. I want it to stop. I'm sick of waking up to find out something else has happened." Some of the stories we are hearing will break your heart: of schoolkids who are now afraid to wear their uniforms in public as they walk down the street to their local school and of parents who have started to drive their kids everywhere, so they do not risk a trip on the bus or the train. We will not be a State where someone feels like they have to remove their yarmulke just to walk down the street, or where people are made to hide their heritage because of the ignorance, bigotry or racism of other people—people they have never met. That has never been New South Wales.

Today, and in coming sessions of Parliament, we will introduce new and stronger laws that target this kind of antisemitism and racial hatred. These laws, we hope, will send the clearest possible message. These are serious crimes. If you are going to commit these acts, if you are thinking about spreading racial hatred on our streets, you will face these full penalties. These changes include a new offence targeting the display of Nazi symbols on or near a synagogue, an Act to create an aggravated offence for graffiti on a place of worship, and laws designed to

stop people from harassing or intimidating other people from recognising their religion and worshipping at religious buildings. We are backing these laws in with more funding for the hate crime unit in the NSW Police Force and more training and support for local councils. We believe these are strong laws that will be a genuine deterrent. We want to put resources behind them and send the message that if you are going to get involved in this kind of bastardry, the police will track you down. They will find you, and you will be punished.

One act of antisemitism is too many. A summer of rolling hatred is obviously intolerable. Operation Shelter, stood up by the NSW Police Force, has arrested 173 people with over 460 charges. Strike Force Pearl is now targeting vandalism and arson, and we have doubled the number of detectives on the case. But we recognise that no-one in this place will be judged by the laws we pass or the taskforces that are established; we will be judged by the crimes that are stopped and the feeling of safety that can return to our community as a result. I know David Ossip, President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, is here today. I acknowledge his guidance and support as well as his personal strength and leadership throughout these very difficult times.

For as long as modern Australia has existed, Jewish people have made their homes in this State. In 1788 there were eight Jews on the First Fleet. They were victims of poverty in east London. Later Jewish migrants included those fleeing pogroms in eastern Europe and those who settled here after the great evil of the Shoah. For generations of Jewish people, Australia offered a promise. That promise has been very simple. Despite centuries of horrifying violence, Australia would be different. Australia would be safe. This would be a country that accepts and celebrates these ancient people—a place where this community could live and prosper in peace. In the 1860s Rabbi Jacob Levi Saphir travelled here from Jerusalem. He was amazed at what he found. He said, "The Jews live in safety and take their share in all good things of the country. In this land, they have learnt that the Jews are good people and hatred towards them has entirely disappeared." That was in 1860. It is important we observe that the vast majority of Australians of different ethnicities, nationalities, faiths and religions celebrate and love our Jewish friends and fellow citizens. We work together. We often send our kids to the same schools. We live side by side.

In a democratic country like Australia, there will be debate about foreign policy issues—wars, conflicts, riots—and, of course, that includes the Middle East. I have found that most Australians, regardless of their race, religion or perspective, want and would argue for—indeed, many pray for—Israeli and Palestinian children to live in peace in that holy land and an end to all wars. We must, however, make it absolutely clear that nothing that happens overseas in any context can ever be used as a pretext for hate, antisemitism or division here in Australia. People have come from around the world, from different races and religions, because we are a peaceful, tolerant country that has been free of that kind of racial or religious division and ancient hatred. We cannot bend on that principle. No-one is entitled to bring their bigotry to our country, and we will not tolerate it.

In New South Wales we will never harbour the poison of antisemitism. Antisemitism is a particularly sinister and shape-shifting form of bigotry, and it is widespread. So often, what has begun as hate speech against the Jewish people has led to violence. It has led to persecution. It has led to murder, and it has led to genocide. That is the reason we are here today as a State, as a community, as a Parliament, as friends and neighbours—so that we can root out this kind of behaviour and end this shameful chapter in the history of the State.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Premier. I too wish to recognise David Ossip. Welcome, David. I am pleased you could be here for the Premier's statement on this very difficult and important issue.

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:18): I thank the Premier for his ministerial statement. The New South Wales Opposition joins in condemning the escalating spate of abhorrent antisemitic attacks in Sydney, New South Wales and Australia. These attacks are a stain on our State and a blight on our nation, and they must be unequivocally condemned in this Parliament, the heart of democracy in New South Wales. Our Jewish community has played an indelible role in shaping our cultural, economic and social fabric. Our Jewish citizens' resilience, dedication and deep-rooted values of learning, community and service are a testament to their invaluable place in our rich, multicultural society. From business and philanthropy to education, medicine, law and the arts, Jewish Australians have made an enormous contribution to our society. Here in New South Wales, institutions like Montefiore, the Shalom Institute and the Sydney Jewish Museum stand as testaments to the Jewish community's commitment to care, education and the preservation of history. The Jewish community is not just a part of New South Wales' past but is an essential pillar of its present and its future.

Australia is built on principles of respect, tolerance and unity—values that are shared by our multicultural society and must continue to be. Acts of hate directed at our Jewish community have no place in our city, our country or, indeed, anywhere in the world. There is no good that can come, either in New South Wales or in the Middle East, from graffitising a synagogue. There is no good that can come from firebombing a childcare centre. No pursuit or cause of peace is emboldened by those actions. No social good is achieved. Those attacks seek to marginalise, intimidate and persecute our Jewish community. Each incident, whether it is graffiti scrawled on buildings, places of worship firebombed, intimidation on our streets, abuse in our schools, or other acts of

violence, rips at the fabric of our shared values and the freedoms we enjoy. Each attack targets not just individuals but the essence of our multicultural society—one built on respect, faith and shared history.

Since October 2023 those attacks have steadily increased both in frequency and brazenness, from vehicles, footpaths and houses being defaced and burnt in Sydney suburbs, to an abandoned caravan packed with mining explosives in Dural. Members of our Jewish community should not have to wake up each day and wonder whether they will hear of another antisemitic attack in our suburbs. Parents should not have to worry about their children being safe at school. Community members should not be afraid to enter a place of worship. Residents should not have their cars graffitied or firebombed outside their homes. Jewish people should not be confronted continually by fences, buildings, vehicles and synagogues defaced with words of hate and antisemitic symbols. All of us must do all we reasonably can to stop those who seek to intimidate and menace the Jewish community. If the major escalation continues, those attacks could have dire consequences.

I thank the police for their relentless work to apprehend those responsible for these despicable, criminal acts. Those criminals deserve swift and harsh punishment, and we must continue to provide the resources our police officers require for a full and comprehensive response. Those attacks are a crisis of intolerance, a threat to social cohesion, and a direct challenge to the values we all hold dear. They are not just an attack or an assault on Jewish Australians; they are an assault on the very idea of a harmonious, inclusive society. If any group feels unsafe, the integrity of our social cohesion is at risk. Today it is our Jewish community under threat; tomorrow it could be another faith, another culture or another minority. When hate is left unchecked, it festers, it grows, and it seeks new targets.

There is a tendency, especially in times of crisis, to view our neighbours through the lens of geopolitical struggles. We cannot allow distant wars to divide us here at home. We cannot allow external forces to manipulate our communities and incite hatred for their own gain. As I have previously said, the issue of broader peace in the Middle East is one of the greatest geopolitical challenges of our time, and I acknowledge and thank all those who labour on the journey to deliver that goal. Every step towards antisemitism is a step backwards in our pursuit of social harmony. It deepens fear, erodes trust and creates an environment where communities can feel compelled to turn inward. This is not the Australia we want. This is not the New South Wales we know. If we truly care about peace, whether in the Middle East or in our own suburbs, our actions must reflect that commitment. Peace begins with rejecting hate in our daily lives and with building social cohesion. It begins with acknowledging our shared humanity, even amid disagreement.

Hate crimes do not just affect individuals; they affect and shape the social climate. When synagogues need heightened security, when children require a police escort into their school and when people hesitate to express their identity publicly, that is a loss for all of us. It is a signal that something in our society is broken. We cannot become a city where people fear walking the streets because of their faith. We cannot become a city where antisemitism or any form of racism or hate is allowed to take root. If we aspire to be peacemakers, we must embody those values here at home, in our workplaces and in our schools. Social harmony is not a passive state. It requires active effort, education, resources and courage. It requires political leaders, religious leaders, educators and community organisations to work together in combating hate. It requires action and leadership from all of us.

Question Time

NURSES AND MIDWIVES INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:26): My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier and his Ministers cross the Nurses and Midwives' Association picket line on Thursday?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:27): My understanding of a picket line is that it is around a workplace. Unless my MPs are on strike, I am not crossing a picket line in our place of work. But if the Leader of the Opposition is asking whether I will come to work in the New South Wales Parliament on behalf of the people of New South Wales, absolutely I will. Yes, I will be here, and I expect all of my colleagues to be here as well, working on the important issues affecting the people of New South Wales and dealing with the mess in public health that was left to us by the previous Government. I would have thought that was an unimpeachable point, with—

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —record delays in emergency departments, skyrocketing numbers of those waiting longer than recommended for elective surgery and, undeniably, a wages cap that put pressure on those who we rely on every day to do the job in our public hospitals. I still cannot quite work out what the Coalition's point of view is in relation to this wage dispute.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am all ears. In Blacktown, the member for Vacluse says, "Just give them a blank cheque." But in Vacluse she says, "Let's bring back the wages cap." We are all ears. If the argument is that we will solve this dispute by paying less, my argument is that that is not going to work.

Members opposite are the last ones to be throwing stones in relation to industrial disputes or fair pay for the people of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Members on both sides of the House will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Our argument for essential workers across New South Wales is simple. We would like to make up for a decade's worth of underpayment in a single year, but we cannot do that responsibly. We would like more time to do it. But under Labor, private and public wages are 1 per cent higher in real terms than under the Coalition.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was not about the Premier's policies and why, for example, he is ripping money out of hospitals. The question was—

The SPEAKER: The Premier was directly relevant in his first utterance.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: In any event, we will be coming to work and we will make it abundantly clear that the wages cap has gone. We have put forward a fair offer. We know that a decade's worth of underpayment for essential workers is a difficult thing for our frontline workers to grapple with, but we cannot make up for it in a single year. We are quite reasonably asking for more time.

STEEL AND ALUMINIUM EXPORTS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (12:30): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on the trade relationship between New South Wales and the United States?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:30): There was encouraging news out of Canberra this morning indicating that the Prime Minister of Australia and the American President have had discussions, and the 25 per cent across the world trade embargo on steel and aluminium as it relates to Australia is under review. I understand President Trump spoke about just that issue in the Oval Office moments ago, indicating to the assembled media that Australia is a long way away. The simple truth of the matter is that America has a trade surplus with Australia. We import far more from the United States than we export. That is a key part of American foreign policy and its decisions as they relate to tariffs and quotas going forward. What that means, in simple terms, is Australia should not have tariffs applied to its steel and aluminium.

We are prepared to compete with the world. Our steel and aluminium sector competes with everybody on a like-for-like basis. We do not put tariffs on inbound imports, and we expect other countries to do exactly the same thing. That is good for global trade. It means that, at the end of the day, we are in a stronger position to grow our economy with sustainable jobs that survive the ups and downs of global trade, whether they are commodity prices for the inputs that go into steel and aluminium, labour shortages or differences in the marketplace. Australia competes no matter what the circumstances. But a trade war in North America, as it applies to the rest of the world, is not good for anyone. We want to make it clear, as a trading nation, that Tomago Aluminium, the largest smelter in the Asia-Pacific, which is located just outside Newcastle in the electorate of the member for Port Stephens and employs 1,000 people, exports 90 per cent of what it generates to other countries—that is 90 per cent outbound with no tariffs.

BlueScope's Port Kembla Steelworks produce three million tonnes of steel per year, again, competing against other people on a like-for-like basis and not relying on tariffs to prop up the industry. They are just well-run, good businesses with decent steelworkers who have, in many cases, put their professional lives into those jobs. We want to back those industries. We want to back those jobs. As a result of these changes, our lean, mean industries, particularly located in the Illawarra and the Hunter Valley, are doing world-leading business. They are nimble. They quickly look for new and emerging opportunities in new markets. *[Extension of time]*

They look for new markets at the drop of the hat. They work around the clock to make sure that what they produce in Newcastle, Wollongong and Western Sydney is fit for the world. As I said—and I will say this repeatedly—they do not rely on tariffs to do it. Global free trade relies on nations not having tariffs preventing that kind of trade. Australia is prepared to do it on a like-for-like basis. Even if there is an exemption for Australia, if there are like-for-like or tit-for-tat tariffs crossing the world, particularly when it comes to aluminium, steel or elaborately manufactured goods, we are concerned about dumping on the Australian domestic market.

Superficially, that might seem good, particularly when we have inflation worries in the near term. But mark my words: As the cheaper goods come into our economy, our industries shut down and the jobs go overseas, the price will not stay low. We will watch it rise, incrementally, day by day, as our industries disappear. Those foreign countries and foreign companies can turn up the wick on the price paid by Australian domestic consumers.

In the past, Federal governments of different political persuasions have put in an anti-dumping commissioner. But it takes too long. It takes nine or 10 months to examine the relative effect on the Australian economy. In that time we could lose industry, jobs and good firms that would otherwise have been competing. We have to be as nimble as America, Canada and Mexico. We have to make sure that foreign goods are not dumped onto our markets. Mainly, this Parliament needs to send an unambiguous message that we back these jobs.

MINISTER FOR HOMELESSNESS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (12:34): My question is directed to the Premier. The homelessness Minister thought you could rent a two-bedroom apartment in Sydney for \$200 a week and got into a ministerial car for a boozy lunch on the Australia Day weekend after getting, in her words, "overexcited". What measures will the Premier put in place to prevent the homelessness Minister from getting overexcited again?

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Canterbury will contain her excitement and come to order. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:35): It is absolutely the case that all members of Parliament—and this is particularly the case for Cabinet Ministers in the New South Wales Government—must treat everyone we work for in our teams with respect and ensure the public have confidence that we are protecting their money as if it were our own—as if we were, in all circumstances, taking care of the taxpayer funds. The truth of the matter is that I should have changed the guidelines around ministerial drivers as soon as we got into government. Those are legacy rules that have been left to us by the previous Government.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: But we did not, and I regret that. The public must have confidence that all Ministers or anyone—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Mr Speaker, will you stop the clock?

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Dugald Saunders: My point of order is a simple one. It is taken under Standing Order 129. It was a very specific question: What measures has the Premier put in place to prevent the Minister for Homelessness getting overexcited again?

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time. That is not how to take a point of order. There is no point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I want the public to understand that, in office, these are privileges; they are not rights. I make it clear that that is certainly the position of the Labor Government in New South Wales. I have a litany of examples from the previous Government of using drivers. *The Daily Telegraph* reported that in March 2021 an unnamed Minister said to his driver, "I'm going to use every ounce of entitlement tonight, so expect a long night."

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. Members will come to order. I need to hear the point of order from the member for Dubbo.

Mr Dugald Saunders: The Premier is reflecting on things from four years ago. I asked specifically about what he is doing with a current Minister.

The SPEAKER: The member for Dubbo will resume his seat.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: One Minister dismissed eight drivers because they were not perfectionist enough—in particular, one driver for not being able to use a GPS adequately. Of course, we had Barfgate, which was regrettably the member for Miranda. This is the headline from July 2017—"Barfgate: Nationals blame Lib". Unfortunately, that was the member for Miranda.

Mr Ray Williams: She got car sick.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Okay, she got car sick. There we have it. During the past week quite a bit of information has been passed on. I might save it for another day.

TEACHER WORKFORCE

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:38): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Minns Labor Government's decision to scrap the Liberal-Nationals Government's wage cap is leading to thousands more students having a qualified teacher at the front of their classrooms?

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

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:39): I thank the member for Gosford for that very essential question. She is an experienced and wonderful educator. The member for Gosford knows very well firsthand the hard work and dedication that goes into being a teacher and into teaching the 800,000 students in our public school system. Upon coming to government, this Government's biggest priority was getting to the bottom of what happening with student outcomes through the prism of making sure we supported the teaching profession. Every single student outcome, whether that is an academic outcome or a wellbeing outcome for a child that sets them up for life, really depends on what happens in the classroom with their teacher.

A crucial part of that is making sure that there are enough teachers in classrooms to teach the children. That seems to be a pretty simple equation, but upon coming to government it was something we promised to address because, in the dying days of those opposite in government, teacher vacancies were at an all-time high of 3,000. At the same time, the then Minister continuously denied that that was even a problem: "Don't look at that. Don't worry about the fact that we can't really run the education system without the people who actually deliver the curriculum to the children." Putting that aside, we came to government on a promise to do something about that.

One of the first things this Government did, upon scrapping the wages cap, was to make sure that teachers received the pay rise they deserved to attract more and more teachers to the profession. We not only are attracting more kids who are graduating from year 12 and thinking about being teachers, but we are keeping more of the experienced and wonderful educators who were thinking about leaving. Even those who had left are now coming back, even if it is for two or three days a week. We are attacking this from both angles, both supply and retention. As a result, this year we have begun week 1, term 1, with a 40 per cent drop in vacancies compared with when we came to government. This Government is very proud of that.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was about thousands more students having qualified teachers at the front of their classroom. On the last count, there were 200 fewer teachers. The Minister needs to be addressing the number of teachers.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The Deputy Premier was answering the question directly. I call the member for Gosford.

Ms Liesl Tesch: I understand there are 40 per cent more teachers face to face. I would like to hear more about that.

The SPEAKER: Members on both sides of the House will abide by the standing orders. An additional two minutes is granted.

Ms PRUE CAR: I thank the member for Gosford for correcting that—once a teacher, always a teacher. I point out the obvious: What would happen if members opposite were back in government under "Captain Wages Cap" opposite? What would happen is we would have the wages cap again and we would start losing teachers again. Do not lecture us about teacher supply and retention, because we began this year with 850 fewer vacancies than when the Leader of the Opposition was in government.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: The question asked by the member for Gosford was about thousands of children having more teachers in front of them. When this Government came to government, we asked schools how many merged and cancelled classes they had. When members opposite were in government, that was over 10,000 and we know that now it is just under 5,000. That has been halved, so naturally there are thousands of children who have a qualified teacher in front of them. I will count that as a success any day of the week. What that says to us is that what we are doing is working. It does not say that we will declare victory. We are giving teachers a pay rise, calling up retired teachers, making more teachers permanent, doing "grow your own", particularly in regional

areas, making sure we invest in school learning and support officers to become teachers, and making sure we give more priority recruitment support to schools, and we know that is working.

As a result, we are seeing more teachers in front of our children to improve student outcomes. That is what everything in education is about. I am very proud that we have begun this year with a 40 per cent drop in vacancies. I get that it is a hard pill for the Opposition to swallow, but it is something that this Government is committed to.

SPEED ZONES ENFORCEMENT

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:44): My question is directed to the Premier. Thousands of people across my electorate have signed petitions opposing speed zone reductions. At one location his Government has reactivated a speed camera, which was previously shut down because it was deemed a revenue-raiser by the department of transport. Who is the Premier going to listen to: the thousands of voices across my community, or the inner-city bureaucratic elites who are running this Government?

The SPEAKER: The Premier has indicated that he will take the question on notice.

OPERATION SHELTER AND STRIKE FORCE PEARL

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:45): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister please update the House on how the NSW Police Force's Operation Shelter is responding to the recent escalation of troubling graffiti, racial hatred and antisemitism in the community?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:45): I thank the member for Mount Druitt for his very important question. I assure the House the police are doing everything they can to stop the disgusting hate we are seeing on our streets. Operation Shelter and Strike Force Pearl were stood up to tackle hate and antisemitism on our streets. Since Operation Shelter was established, New South Wales police have been proactively deployed over 37,000 times to particular places in our community to reassure the community, and to deter and prevent hate crimes on our streets. Let's consider that for a moment: 37,000 patrols and visits to places of worship, schools, shopping areas, cultural locations and other community gathering places.

Police crews tasked to these areas operate 24 hours a day in areas and locations that are determined by risk assessments made by the very capable New South Wales police. Last week alone there were 1,935 separate proactive deployments in our local community. Just two weeks ago, I was out visiting the Maroubra police station and I dropped by the Maroubra Synagogue. Completely unknowing, I was fortunate to run into the team of two fantastic young officers who were part of Operation Shelter. They were just around the corner from the synagogue and it was great to see them. Having high-level vigilance for potential threats is reassuring to the community and I cannot thank our police enough.

It has not just been boots on the ground. Resources from Traffic and Highway Patrol, the region enforcement squad, the Dog Unit and PolAir have all been out there and have brought together that response by the police on our streets in our local community. And we will not stop there. We established Strike Force Pearl in December 2024 to investigate hate crimes with an antisemitic focus across Sydney. The team is made up of officers attached to the Counter Terrorism and Special Tactics Command with support provided by the Central Metropolitan Region. There are 40 of our best detectives working on this strike force and we also have four analysts working with Strike Force Pearl. That is 40 of the best who are making sure we hunt down the crooks and lock them up for good because the hatred they are putting on our streets is unacceptable to everybody in this place. [*Extension of time*]

As I have just said, when a crime occurs Strike Force Pearl will hunt down those responsible. I inform the House that already 12 have been caught. They include four men, aged 31, 37, 40 and 26, who have been charged following fires at two businesses in Bondi in October 2024. Three men, aged 20, 19 and 21, were charged after 10 vehicles and buildings were allegedly deliberately damaged in Woollahra in November 2024.

A 34-year-old woman has been charged after vehicles and buildings were allegedly deliberately damaged in Woollahra in December 2024. Two men, aged 33 and 37, have been charged after the Newtown Synagogue was allegedly graffitied and an attempt was made to set it alight. A 37-year-old man has been charged after a wall at Kingsford was damaged with offensive graffiti. A 21-year-old man has been charged after the alleged intimidation of a woman at Bondi. While the police are hunting down those criminals to charge them with those vile acts, the Government is acting too. We have increased funding to support the crucial work of the NSW Police Force Engagement and Hate Crime Unit by \$525,000. That means we can boost our engagement and communications with the community, including conducting additional synagogue and school visits.

I thank those members who participate in a weekly update from the New South Wales police—the member for Maroubra, in particular; the member for Coogee; and the member for Vacluse—and the Federal members who are also involved. We are working together to remove those vile acts from our streets, and I thank them for their participation. I thank the House for its support with regard to removing antisemitism in New South Wales.

PSYCHIATRY WORKFORCE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:50): My question is directed to the Premier. Has the Premier met with the Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation or the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists regarding the public psychiatrist crisis?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:51): I have not met those two organisations. I trust the Minister for Health and the Minister for Mental Health to conduct those meetings and negotiations on behalf of the Government. The reason for that is we are a cabinet Government and I trust the Ministers to take responsibility for those complex negotiations. Ultimately—if I am truthful—I do not believe there is an easy way out of this. The royal college and the relevant union are asking for a 25 per cent increase in pay over one year. The Government has tried negotiations and different ways of approaching that number—

Ms Robyn Preston: It has taken 16 months to sort it out.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Sorry. What was that?

The SPEAKER: The member for Hawkesbury will come to order. I call the member for Wahrenoonga to order for the first time.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That is helpful advice from the member—something about 16 months. Can the Opposition write that hot tip down? There is no easy way through it. The truth of the matter is that that kind of increase cannot be borne by New South Wales taxpayers. We cannot afford it. As I said in an earlier answer, in the previous 12 years there was a 2.5 per cent wages cap on public servants. During the COVID emergency that 2.5 per cent went to zero. We opposed that; we never supported it. We said during the election campaign that we would remove the wages cap and that we would establish an independent industrial judge or umpire to make the decision. We stand by that. If in the end the judge rules in favour of the increase, we will, of course, accept the decision. However, in handing over that increase, I do not know how we would say to the rest of the public servants in New South Wales, 60 per cent of whom we have done a deal with, "Yes, your work is important, whether you are a clinical nurse—"

Mr Michael Kemp: Give it all to the train drivers.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am sorry. What was that?

Mr Michael Kemp: Give it all to the train drivers.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Unless you do not get the paper delivered, we are not doing that either. There is a basic level of knowledge. Just because the Parliament is not sitting, you have got to keep up.

The SPEAKER: The member for Oxley will be removed from the Chamber if he continues to interject.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The truth of the matter is—

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Hawkesbury rises on a point of order.

Ms Robyn Preston: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question asking whether the Premier had met with Australian Salaried Medical Officers' Federation or the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists. I did not ask for a running commentary on the rest of the pay rises in the public sector.

The SPEAKER: The member for Hawkesbury will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The Premier has been exemplary in answering the question. He has been directly relevant.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: To put the issue in perspective, on average—and this is not across the board—public psychiatrists earn between \$350,000 and \$400,000. They are highly trained and highly credentialled; I accept that.

Ms Robyn Preston: Locums are earning \$3,050 a day.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Write this down; there is some gold coming. Some real tips for our negotiations. A 25 per cent increase is about \$85,000 a year.

Mr Dugald Saunders: No. Premier, that is misleading.

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

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Dubbo left the Chamber at 12:55.]

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That is an increase for just one psychiatrist, if there is a 25 per cent pay increase. We have got to be reasonable. It is taxpayers' money. We believe that we have a reasonable pathway through the negotiations.

PSYCHIATRY WORKFORCE

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:55): My question is directed to the Premier. How much is the Government spending on locums due to its inability to reach an agreement with the psychiatrists?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:55): There is no doubt that the locum cost is significant, but a 25 per cent pay increase for psychiatrists, forever, dwarfs the money that the Government is putting into an emergency response for psychiatric care across the public hospital system. There cannot be a situation where there are not locums, experts or officials ready to go, so the Government and the health department have, quite reasonably, drawn up a plan that, in part, relies on locums and outside help, as well as clinical nurses—

[An Opposition member interjected.]

Do you want the answer or not? I am happy to provide it. Ultimately, 25 per cent forever for psychiatrists is way more than the Government's emergency response. I am slightly incredulous at the question coming from the member for Vaucluse, who said, "Labor today is going to cut a whole lot of stuff. They are going to impact your life. And it is because they are laying down to their union masters—

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Vaucluse rises on a point of order.

Ms Kellie Sloane: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was very specific. We are after a figure. How much is the Government paying locums?

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Premier has the call. The member for Vaucluse will resume her seat.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am happy to take that on notice. I do not unreasonably know that number off the top of my head, but I am happy to bring it back to the Parliament. What I am saying is surely relevant, because it is why we are in this situation. The member for Vaucluse also said, "Labor was so beholden to its union paymasters that Labor members did not have the stomach to introduce a wages cap."

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It is one thing in Vaucluse, "Bring back the wages cap," and another thing in Macquarie Street, where we are expected to believe they are on the picket lines now. Make no mistake. The Government is in dispute with some of those unions, but the situation is tolerable because Labor has removed the wages cap, and we will not reintroduce it. The psychiatrists are asking for a 25 per cent increase but the Opposition's solution to resolving the dispute is to give the psychiatrists two and a half.

ANTISEMITISM LEGISLATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:57): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General update the House on the work being done to ensure that communities across New South Wales are able to participate in their faith free from intimidation?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:57): I thank my Parliamentary Secretary for the question. Before I begin my answer in earnest, I want to say as somebody who has been in this place for a while, and in public life for a bit longer, I am genuinely shocked at the level of antisemitism and the acts that underpin it that we have seen in the last year. I thought that we had almost broken the back of it in Australia and in New South Wales. We all expect that from time to time some criminals and boofheads will commit uninformed and ridiculous acts, but I have never expected to see what are seeing now. I thank the Premier and the Leader of

the Opposition for their statements before the House today, as well as all of those who have joined together with the Jewish community and all people of good faith and conscience over the last year to condemn those Acts.

There were not just one or two. There were acts on 21 November, 6 December, 11 December, 6 January, 10 January, 11 January, 17 January, 19 January, 21 January, 30 January and 31 January, which the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition went through, including defacing and burning cars, people's houses, synagogues and a childcare centre in my electorate. They are comprehensive. We should be concerned about the State and Federal police indications that there are now organised crime entities behind this as well. The Jewish community has met with the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, the member for Coogee, the member for Heffron, Federal members in our area and me, as well as members of other political parties and Independents. In those meetings, the Jewish community told us that they are genuinely afraid of an escalation in these acts. That is something we need to listen to.

The bills that I will bring before the Parliament today are intended to not only introduce tough new laws, give police tough new powers and give the judiciary the opportunity to imprison people for longer, but also send a message to the Jewish community and all people in New South Wales who are watching and concerned about these events that we are working to keep people safe. Years ago, when I was Minister for Police, Andrew Scipione used to say to me, "Don't just have regard for and quote crime statistics. If the statistics are good but communities still feel unsafe, we the police have a role to play." In that vein, the Government, in the same way, has a role to play. *[Extension of time]*

That is why today I will introduce legislation to amend the Crimes Act 1990 to create new offences applying to persons who impede, intimidate or take certain other actions in relation to persons accessing or leaving places of worship; and to provide police new powers to issue move on directions in or near places of worship. The new offence is proposed to have a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment. I will also seek to amend the Crimes Act to introduce a new offence prohibiting the display of Nazi symbols on or near synagogues, Jewish schools and the Sydney Jewish Museum, with a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment; and to clarify that graffiti is a public act for the purpose of the new offence as well as section 93Z and 93ZA offences. I will seek to amend the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to provide that partial motivation by hatred or prejudice can be taken into account as an aggravating factor on sentence.

Finally, I will seek to amend the Graffiti Control Act 2008 to provide that graffiti on a place of worship will be considered a circumstance of aggravation that attracts a higher maximum penalty. The people who perpetrate these acts are committing them for various reasons. They are seeking to strike fear into people's hearts. They are seeking to punish people who they see as their enemies. They are seeking to bring terror to suburbs. There are some who are seeking to foment public disunity and break down the fabric of Australian society. I do not exaggerate when I say that. When the police tell us that organised crime entities are behind some of these acts, that is what their mission is. They do it successfully overseas. We will not allow them to do it here.

HEALTH SERVICES

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (13:02): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's historic investment to improve healthcare services across New South Wales?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (13:03): I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Health for his ongoing advocacy, particularly in regional and rural health, and the work he is doing around Eurobodalla hospital, a level 4 hospital getting off the ground very strongly. The Government is investing a record amount in NSW Health and health services that matter to every single community. We are investing approximately \$35 billion, up by more than \$1 billion. We are making significant investments in a number of pillars that we are trying to create and enhance to deliver better health services for the communities that we are all so lucky to represent.

We know that the pressures on our emergency departments are real. The previous budget delivered more than half a billion dollars for improvements to emergency departments and—importantly, from my perspective—improvements to alternative pathways to emergency departments. They include urgent care services in local communities and virtual care services, including virtualKIDS and virtual care for adults. That investment includes initiatives such as the rollout of expanded roles for pharmacists to deliver health care, particularly women's health care, through the pharmacy, avoiding GP appointments.

Importantly, this Government is also doing work that traditionally the Federal Government was responsible for. The previous budget committed approximately \$180 million to a GP payroll tax initiative to address an issue that has been kicked around this place since 2018. Working with the Minister for Finance, we have been able to

deliver reform that ensures that GPs who continue to bulk-bill at high levels get a payroll tax rebate. That is important for bulk-billing and for access to health care. It directly takes pressure off our emergency departments.

We are also focused on our staff. We have secured the employment of more than 1,100 nurses, including 120 nurses in south-western Sydney who were going to have their employment terminated last year. In places such as the Illawarra and the Central Coast, it was approximately 60 nurses. We are significantly increasing the rebates and incentives to up to \$20,000 for staff going to regional and rural areas, including for midwives heading to hard-to-fill regional, rural and remote areas. We have commenced the rollout of 500 paramedics for the bush, rolling out approximately 125 paramedics already. Obviously, there are more to come. [*Extension of time*]

We are determined to make sure that we are investing in our workforce. Despite the challenges we face, that is what we are focused on at the moment. Under this Premier, we will never go back to a wages cap. Faced with a global pandemic, we will never offer healthcare workers a 0 per cent wage increase. I and others are involved in some debates, challenges and discussions right now. I understand that. Working men and women have every right to argue their case. But working men and women also need to understand that the Liberal-Nationals Opposition is no friend to them. During the darkest days of COVID, the former Government offered 0 per cent. I will not forget it and they will not forget it.

We are also rolling out significant upgrades to infrastructure, including more than \$1 billion in upgrades to Western Sydney hospitals. We are upgrading and delivering new hospitals in places such as Eurobodalla, Shoalhaven and Shellharbour. We are providing key worker accommodation in places such as Wyong and Bathurst. Wherever possible, we are pulling every lever we can to make sure we improve health services. I note that over the past couple of days some people have said, "Just give the money from the Federal Government to nurses—problem solved." There is a small problem. That money covers about 4 per cent of the claim. The second problem is that it lasts one year. The third problem is that, believe it or not, while nurses and midwives play an incredibly important role, so do other professions in our healthcare system. I say to the Federal Government, "Do your job. Deliver primary care. Make sure we have GPs in our communities."

COUNCIL RATES

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (13:08): My question is directed to the Premier. Last night, North Sydney Council voted to raise rates by 87 per cent. Recently, Northern Beaches Council voted to raise rates by 39.6 per cent. What action is the Government taking to stop these ridiculous rate rises?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (13:08): We warned members opposite that the amalgamations would not work. We said it over and over again: Don't do it. Do members remember "economies of scale"? Those opposite said, "Don't worry about it; rates are going to come down"—a thing called "economies of scale". We asked, "Are you sure?" They said, "No, we've got it sorted. We will merge all those councils and they will bring down their rates." We said, "We don't know about this one, Mikey". Tooley did it too.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Look at Tooley; he was caught red-handed.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. The member for Goulburn rises on a point of order.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: My point order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is about what action the Government is taking.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Anyway, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] makes the decision. The council should not have a rate increase of that much. The new member for Pittwater has made that very clear. She said unambiguously that the costs should not be passed on and that IPART should reject those massive rate increases, but other members in this place said not to worry about it. The member for North Shore said, "I support the Government in its decision to amalgamate councils". She went on to say, "There's significant efficiencies and financial savings that we can achieve".

Ms Felicity Wilson: North Sydney wasn't amalgamated.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Why did you support the amalgamation?

The SPEAKER: I place the member for North Shore on three calls to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Manly—I hate to do it; he is a teddy bear—said that his experience with amalgamated councils differs from others and that they are "going from strength to strength". What do you say today, mister?

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: He went on to say, "Manly has been paying much less than other areas for years. Please don't shoot the messenger!"

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Premier will resume his seat. The member for Goulburn rises on a point of order.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: It is really disappointing that the Premier is not across the detail.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was what action is the Government taking.

The SPEAKER: The member for Goulburn may not like it, but I have ruled on that matter. There is no point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have to give credit to the member for Manly: He was a bit of a Nostradamus when it comes to the amalgamations. On 18 March 2021 he said, "Rates are likely to increase". He knew what we all knew all along—that the amalgamated councils would be a bloody disaster—and that is exactly what has come to fruition.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order and cease inciting the member for North Shore. I remind her that she is on three calls to order.

REGIONAL YOUTH CRIME

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:11): My question is addressed to the Minister for Youth Justice. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to address regional youth crime and create safer communities?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (13:12): I thank the member for Cessnock. As a former teacher, he has worked so much with young people. He believes in their potential and takes an active and keen interest in it. Last week I joined the Premier and the local member in Moree to provide an update on how the Minns Labor Government is working to address regional youth crime. We have been pretty up-front about the complexity of the challenge and the pace of progress. In my first parliamentary speech as the Minister for Youth Justice, I said that my mantra was that if it does not work, we have to keep trying again. Everybody in this Chamber would agree that we cannot give up on young people.

There is not one single solution; I wish there was. There is a massive amount of complexity. As Superintendent Cooper from the Moree area said last week, the solution needs to be community led, and that is a lot of the work that we are trying to do. It means bringing together the State Government, local government, non-government organisations, other community groups and law enforcement. As Minister for Youth Justice, it is my responsibility to keep the community protected and, by the same token, find ways to ensure that young people can get off a terrible path and onto a better trajectory for their lives. That is the complexity and that is the challenge. Community safety is our absolute priority. There needs to be a consequence for all types of misbehaviour, especially serious misbehaviour.

By the same token, we also have to find other ways to positively engage with young people who are disconnecting and finding themselves on a really dark path where there is no future. That is our intention. Last year the Government announced a \$26-odd million package of funding and reforms to support community safety and wellbeing across regional New South Wales, not just in one part of it. That included an initial \$13.4 million in Moree and part of that was the bail accommodation service, for which the Premier and I announced the successful tenders last week. The successful tenders represent that theme of a community-led response, working with different organisations including Miyay Birray, Pius X Aboriginal Medical Service and the SHAE Academy. Those organisations know the community and will work with the community to find a local solution. [*Extension of time*]

The bail and accommodation service gives more opportunity for a young person who otherwise might not be able to get bail to be put in a place where they have some positive mentoring and some work within the community. That approach will try to ensure that if a young person makes a mistake, we can try to stop it from continuing and escalating. It also harnesses community support and community involvement. The Government also announced a \$2 million investment in programs to keep young people not only safe but also engaged, while also working with victims of crime. We need to ensure that young people do not have time on their hands to do things that cause community disharmony and other problems.

The answers to many of these problems exist within the community, and that is why we are so keen to work together to provide that funding and support. The problems cannot be solved through only a police response, only a legal response or only a community response. All of us need to work together, whatever side of politics we are on, because we all believe in a young person's opportunity for a chance to redeem themselves.

Mr Michael Kemp: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister has not said anything at all that will tell our community how the Government will keep them safe.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I draw members' attention to the clock.

Mr JIHAD DIB: The other point is about Aboriginal youth programs. There is funding for programs to make sure young people get home safely and are not on the streets—to make sure someone engages with them and feeds them. We need to strike that balance between community safety and redemption, and I am sure every member in this Chamber would agree that young people should have a better future than the one they have currently.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (13:17): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Government is working to improve employment pathways for school students with disability?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (13:17): I thank the member for Sydney for his question. I start by acknowledging his strong advocacy in this space, which was very evident to me when we met last year to discuss those complex and important issues. I acknowledge the support he has provided to groups like the Physical Disability Council, Family Advocacy and the Council for Intellectual Disability in pushing the Government to deliver on the issues. As the member for Sydney has said in this place, everyone should have the opportunity to obtain well-remunerated and meaningful employment. All members would agree with that, and schools are such a vital part of that equation in terms of setting every child, including students and children living with disabilities, on a pathway to employment—a landing after they finish their school journey.

To be honest, our students need a more seamless pathway from school to TAFE and employment. When I speak to senior secondary teachers, a huge piece of feedback that I get is that it does not work the way it should and that it needs to be more seamless.

I acknowledge the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education, and the work that we are doing together to ensure that we can, to start with, rebuild TAFE—which is very important in this context—and focus meaningfully on pathways. A big focus of our plan for public education has been the transition points. People know that those key transition points are not just coming into kindergarten or going from year 6 to year 7. We have now made very clear to schools that the transition point from year 12 to a landing, whether that be employment or future study, is a huge part of how we measure our success in education. A landing for every student, no matter their ability, is how we should measure success. We have not really done that in the past. We are doubling down to assist with that, in addition to working with our colleagues in TAFE and training. There is a much bigger piece of work that we need to do in that space: the vacancies and the special education teachers. *[Extension of time]*

There is still a lot of work to do in that space, but we are making ground, and we will hear a lot more about that in the future. The department is also putting a huge focus on helping public school students gain work experience. When I speak to people in the community, they ask why we do not do that in a lot of places anymore. It worked for a reason. We are putting a focus back on that for all students, including students with disability, to reduce that barrier to access work experience because it is really important to set up the future employment prospects of that young person. In some cases, it means partnerships with councils, and even within government departments. I was told at one point that we have a partnership with Taronga Zoo for work experience for students with disabilities. It makes a big difference.

We are also rolling out the Educational Pathways Program in many schools. It is an excellent program that is working well, connecting students with employers and providing tailored support to make sure that our public school system is enabling those pathways for kids who want access to vocational education and training or to head straight into employment. That program now also exists in three of our SSPs, which are our schools for specific purposes: Casuarina School, Redbank School and Penrith Valley Learning Centre in my own electorate. I look forward to seeing how that goes. We are investing in professional learning opportunities for teachers in SSPs and doing everything possible to help our young people with disability have a landing in employment or further education.

ESSENTIAL WORKER HOUSING

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (13:22): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to deliver more affordable housing for our State's essential workers?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (13:23): I thank the member for South Coast for her question. She always has the back of our essential workers. The Minns Government is working hard to make sure that we deliver not only more homes for people across New South Wales but more affordable homes as well.

Mr Gareth Ward: She's got a petition against development right now.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: It is interesting that the member for Kiama should pipe up, because I know how well the member for South Coast has backed in a build-to-rent project in Bomaderry, part of which is affordable housing.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The only thing I have heard from the member for Kiama about that is complaints. He does not actually want housing for workers in his electorate, but we know we need more of it. We know we need more market houses. We need more houses for teachers, for cleaners, for firefighters and for police officers, and we are delivering it. We are delivering more choice in the type of home that our community wants to live in, and making sure there are options that people can afford. That is why we have the project on the South Coast in Bomaderry and in the Northern Rivers at Lismore, 20 per cent of which will be affordable housing. Both of those projects will be under construction soon.

Yesterday I was pleased to join with the Premier and others to announce that the former WestConnex dive site at Camperdown will be the first secured by Landcom as part of the Government's essential worker housing program. We invested \$450 million to deliver housing for essential workers in the last budget. This project is the first, but there will be more homes to come from the investment. The site is a concrete pad surrounded by amenities including a gym on one side, a couple of pubs nearby, a path just up the street and schools and hospitals nearby. It will deliver at least 500 homes overall, with a portion of those being market homes, a portion being affordable homes and at least 200 units being build-to-rent homes for essential workers. Those 200 homes will be offered to essential workers like health workers, paramedics, teachers, police officers and firefighters at a discounted market rent through a subsidy from the Government.

The site is at a great location. The project will also deliver retail and commercial space such as cafes and restaurants, pedestrian walkways through the site, and high-quality outdoor spaces, creating a vibrant and welcoming neighbourhood for future residents. It is a vision that members of Sydney YIMBY have applauded, saying, "This should be the template. Build them tall, build them well and have them be the benchmark." Similarly, the Committee for Sydney has welcomed the announcement as delivering housing where it is needed most. It ticks all the boxes for the Government's commitment to delivering more homes and building great communities. I look forward to seeing the construction commence in 2026. [*Extension of time*]

The Government's work to deliver more affordable homes across the State does not stop there. In fact, the Government has introduced a floor space and height bonus scheme for projects that deliver affordable housing. That has proven incredibly popular. We introduced that reform in December 2023, so it is just over a year old and has reinvigorated the market. It has generated construction already and it is delivering more homes and, importantly, more affordable homes. We have seen five projects already approved. Between them, there are more than a thousand new homes, of which more than 300 are affordable homes. Market homes and affordable homes are delivered together.

The SPEAKER: There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. Members will come to order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: This morning I received an update that a further 25 projects are under assessment. Members opposite do not seem to want affordable homes. They want to mumble and grumble and complain, but they do not actually want to get behind the delivery of affordable homes. There are 25 projects. Some will be coming to electorates near them and will deliver more than 6,000 homes, of which 1,800 or 30 per cent will be affordable homes. It is a demonstration of planning reform delivering sensible outcomes to the benefit of the whole community.

I am pleased that the Leader of the Opposition came to the realisation that two years of adamantly opposing all housing was the wrong approach and is now getting behind a reform program. We welcome that sudden reversal of fortune. It is a new year's resolution or Christmas miracle that has lasted the distance so far. Let us hope that it lasts the distance and blocks the Opposition's nimby faction. The Government will deliver on more of

its affordable housing programs and more of its planning reforms, because it knows that is what is going to deliver more homes for people in the future.

Documents

PARLIAMENTARY ETHICS ADVISER

Reports

The SPEAKER: I table the report of the Parliamentary Ethics Adviser for the year ended 30 June 2024. I order that the report be printed.

NSW HEALTH

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019, I table the report of NSW Health entitled *Report on the Statutory Review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019*, dated September 2024. I order that the report be printed.

INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Commission Against Corruption entitled *Investigation into the conduct of a then manager and a former contractor at Canterbury-Bankstown Council (Operation Mantis)*, dated December 2024, received on 5 December 2024. I order that the report be printed.

INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Custodial Services Act 2012, I announce receipt of the following:

- (1) Report of Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of Kirkconnell Correctional Centre*, dated November 2023, received on 26 November 2024.
- (2) Report of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of Geoffrey Pearce Correctional Centre*, dated 2022, received on 5 December 2024.
- (3) Report of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of Junee Correctional Centre 2023*, dated December 2024, received on 11 December 2024.
- (4) Report of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of Mid North Coast Correctional Centre 2023*, dated December 2024, received on 18 December 2024.
- (5) Report of the Inspector of Custodial Services entitled *Inspection of Broken Hill and Tamworth Correctional Centres*, dated December 2024, received on 18 December 2024.

I order that the reports be printed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the following:

- (1) Report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Review of the NSW Police Force's use of Advice and Guidance as a form of management action*, dated December 2024, received on 11 December 2024.
- (2) Report of the Office of the Inspector of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Controlled Operations Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2024*, dated December 2024, received on 18 December 2024.

I order that the reports be printed.

NSW OMBUDSMAN

Reports

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

- (1) Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Oversight of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022, Annual Report 2023-24*, dated 11 December 2024 and received that day.
- (2) Special Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Casebook January 2025: Investigations and complaint-handling case studies*, dated January 2025, received on 30 January 2025.

- (3) Report of the NSW Ombudsman entitled *Mandatory disease testing in NSW: monitoring the operation and administration of the Mandatory Disease Testing Act 2021: A report under s36 of the Mandatory Disease Testing Act 2021*, dated 5 February 2025 and received that day.

I order that the reports be printed.

DEPARTMENT OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Government Sector Finance Act 2018, I announce receipt of the report of the Department of the Legislative Assembly for the year ended 30 June 2024, received on 3 December 2024. I order that the report be printed.

Committees

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 1/58 of the Joint Committee on the NSW Reconstruction Authority entitled *Review of the NSW Reconstruction Authority Act 2022*, dated November 2024, received out of session on 28 November 2024 and authorised to be printed.

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 1/58 of the Committee on Children and Young People entitled *2024 Review of the annual reports and other matters of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian*, dated November 2024, received out of session on 28 November 2024 and authorised to be printed.

COMMITTEE ON THE OMBUDSMAN, THE LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION AND THE CRIME COMMISSION

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/58 of the Committee on the Ombudsman, the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission and the Crime Commission entitled *2023 review of annual and other reports of oversight agencies*, received out of session on 29 November 2024 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SERVICES

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/58 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services entitled *Equality Legislation Amendment (LGBTIQ+) Bill 2023*, received out of session on 29 November 2024 and authorised to be printed.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 2/58 of the Public Accounts Committee entitled *A Framework for Performance Reporting and Driving Wellbeing Outcomes in NSW*, dated December 2024, received out of session on 3 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 4/58 of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics entitled *Conduct of Member for Kiama on 21 July 2024*, dated December 2024, received out of session on 10 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 1 of the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales entitled *Arts and music education and training in New South Wales*, dated December 2024, received out of session on 12 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

Documents

AUDITOR-GENERAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following:

- (1) Special Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Members' Additional Entitlements 2024*, dated 12 December 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *State agencies 2024*, dated 13 December 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (3) Financial Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *State Finances 2024*, dated 18 December 2024, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.
- (4) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Bus contracts in metropolitan Sydney*, dated 29 January 2025, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 1/58 of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission entitled *Review of the Health Care Complaints Commission's 2021-22 and 2022-23 annual reports*, dated December 2024, received out of session on 16 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/58 of the Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health entitled *The implementation of recommendations relating to workforce, workplace culture and funding for remote, rural and regional health*, received out of session on 16 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON LAW AND SAFETY

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/58 of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety entitled *E-cigarette regulation and compliance in New South Wales*, received out of session on 17 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

Documents

NSW BUSHFIRE INQUIRY

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with the Rural Fires Act 1997, I announce receipt of the *NSW Bushfire Inquiry 2020 Progress Report: Implementation of the NSW Government's response to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry: Reporting Period July to September 2024*, received out of session on 17 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***MODERN SLAVERY COMMITTEE****Reports**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 3 of the Modern Slavery Committee entitled *Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 - Part 2*, dated December 2024, received out of session on 20 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT, INDUSTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Government Response**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/58 of the Committee of Investment, Industry and Regional Development entitled *Performance of the Regional Investment Activation Fund and the Regional Job Creation Fund*, received out of session on 20 December 2024 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***NSW OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

The CLERK: In accordance with the Ombudsman Act 1974, I announce receipt of the Special Report of the Ombudsman entitled *OCHRE 2024: Current status and future direction*, dated 28 January 2025, together with a Community Guide, received out of session on 28 January 2025 and authorised to be printed.

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

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 24/58*, dated 11 February 2025. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Documents***INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS OFFICER****Reports**

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: As Chair: In accordance with clause 7 of the resolution establishing the Independent Complaints Officer agreed to by the House on 29 March 2022, I table the quarterly report of the Independent Complaints Officer of the NSW Parliament to the Legislative Council Privileges Committee and Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Privileges and Ethics Committee for the period 1 September 2024 to 30 November 2024. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING****Inquiry**

Mr CLAYTON BARR: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Environment and Planning has received a referral from the Minister for Energy to conduct an inquiry into the electricity outages affecting far west New South Wales in October 2024, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

COMMITTEE ON AGEING AND DISABILITY**Chair and Deputy Chair**

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I inform the House that on 2 December 2024 the Hon. Emily Suvaal was elected chair and Mr Nathan Hagarty was elected deputy chair of the Committee on Ageing and Disability.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

Higher School Certificate Examination

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to enact reforms to the NSW Education Standards Authority to assist students prepare for the Higher Secondary Certificate examination, received from **Mr Paul Toole**.

TAFE NSW Albury Childcare Centre

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to investigate the change in services at TAFE NSW Albury Childcare centre and return its operations to local managers, educators and carers, received from **Mr Justin Clancy**.

Voting Age

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to amend the Electoral Act 2017 in order to extend the right to vote to 16- and 17-year-old citizens of New South Wales in all future State elections, received from **Ms Kobi Shetty**.

Apprehended Violence Order Breaches

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to enact legislation mandating the use of electronic ankle bracelets for individuals released on bail after breaching an apprehended violence order, received from **Ms Trish Doyle**.

Gorleston Terrace Nature Reserve

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to cease plans for the construction of a planned retaining wall for a car park at Gorleston Terrace, Cardiff, received from **Mr Greg Piper**.

The CLERK: I announce that the following ePetitions signed by 500 or more persons have been lodged for presentation:

Lawson Public School

Petition requesting that the Government to direct the Department of Education to reimburse Lawson Public School for funds expended during the school's unsuccessful legal appeal for an extension of funding for an additional teacher and a student learning and support officer, and to continue to fund those positions for as long as the need exists, received from **Ms Trish Doyle**.

Music and Drama Syllabuses

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to suspend the draft music and drama year 11 and 12 syllabuses from circulation, and commence a new review following the release of the parliamentary inquiry report on arts and music education and training, received from **Mr Kevin Anderson**.

Sydney Harbour Pollution

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to stop pollution of Sydney Harbour, received from **Ms Kobi Shetty**.

Homelessness

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to declare a state of emergency in New South Wales for people experiencing homelessness and deploy all measures to provide shelter and support, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

Castle Hill School

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to allocate funds for a new school in Castle Hill, provide a clear timeline for the project, engage in transparent community communication and ensure that the new school is adequately staffed and resourced to meet the growing community's needs, received from **Mr Mark Hodges**.

Greyhound Racing Industry

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to legislate an end to commercial greyhound racing in New South Wales, received from **Ms Kobi Shetty**.

Road Safety

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to reduce fatalities and serious injuries on New South Wales roads, received from **Mr Michael Regan**.

Bella Vista and Kellyville Transport Oriented Development

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to cease the Transport Oriented Development rezoning of Kellyville and Bella Vista, received from **Mr Ray Williams**.

Lithgow Locomotive Workshop

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to bring the Lithgow Locomotive Workshop back into active use and create jobs for Lithgow, received from **Ms Trish Doyle**.

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

South-West Rail Link Infrastructure

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to extend the South West Rail Link from Leppington Station to Badgerys Creek airport and build a minimum of three new stations with a minimum of 2,000 car parking spaces at each station in time for the airport opening in 2026, received from **Mr Nathan Hagarty**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Ryan Park—Bathurst Health Service Parking—lodged 21 November 2024 (Mr Paul Toole)

The Hon. Courtney Houssos—Hewlett Packard Enterprises and Israel—lodged 12 November 2024 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Penny Sharpe—Plastic Waste—lodged 21 November 2024 (Dr Joe McGirr)

The Hon. John Graham—Byron Bay Bluesfest—lodged 19 November 2024 (Ms Tamara Smith)

The Hon. Ryan Park—Norco Milk—lodged 19 November 2024 (Ms Janelle Saffin)

*Business of the House***BUSINESS LAPSED**

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 2019 to 2445 have lapsed.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in view of the resignation of the member for Port Macquarie, and in accordance with past practice, I have ordered the removal from the *Business Paper* of general business notices of motion (general notices) Nos 2482, 2524 and 2619.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

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

*Bills***CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS HATRED) BILL 2025****First Reading**

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

Second Reading Speech

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:32): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Racial and Religious Hatred) Bill 2025. The bill responds to the numerous recent and shameful incidents of antisemitic graffiti, including on or near synagogues and Jewish schools, and other criminal acts of antisemitism in our State. This conduct is abhorrent and not welcome in our community. Our Government is taking strong action to make sure that our laws address graffiti on places of worship, the display of Nazi symbols on or near places of importance to our Jewish community, and offences motivated by hatred with the seriousness they deserve.

Section 93ZA of the Crimes Act 1900 already makes it an offence to knowingly display, by public act and without reasonable excuse, a Nazi symbol. When the offence is committed by an individual, the offence is punishable by a fine of up to 100 penalty units or up to 12 months imprisonment, or both. The proposed amendments in the bill seek to strengthen section 93ZA of the Crimes Act by introducing an aggravated version of the offence with a higher maximum penalty. The aggravated version of the offence will apply when a Nazi symbol is displayed on or near a synagogue, a Jewish school or the Sydney Jewish Museum. This aggravated offence recognises that the display of a Nazi symbol on or near these types of premises is distinctly violent, threatening and offensive to our Jewish community. In addition, the bill will clarify that a "public act" in section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 includes graffiti, to put beyond any doubt that section 93ZA of the Crimes Act 1900 applies to any Nazi symbol graffiti. This will also make it clear that section 93Z applies to graffiti when the other elements of that offence are also made out.

The bill will introduce an amendment to section 21A (2) (h) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to ensure that when a crime is partially or wholly motivated by hate or prejudice against a group of people to which the victim belongs, that motivation is an aggravating factor to be taken into account when determining an offender's sentence. The hate-based or prejudicial motivations that may be taken into account include but are not limited to religion, racial or ethnic origin, language, gender identity, sexual orientation or age, or having particular variations of sex characteristics or a particular disability. This means that a sentencing court must consider this motivation when sentencing. Currently the legislation is unclear about whether the offence must be entirely motivated by hate or prejudice. The proposed amendment in the bill puts beyond doubt that an offence will be aggravated where it can be proved beyond reasonable doubt that hatred or prejudice is one of the offender's motivations.

The bill will also increase graffiti protections for all places of worship by amending the Graffiti Control Act 2008 to provide that when a person graffiti's on a place of worship it will be considered a circumstance of aggravation. This amendment means that a sentence of imprisonment will be available in some circumstances for offences involving graffiti on places of worship, regardless of the manner in which the graffiti is applied. I now turn to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill amends the Crimes Act 1900. Item [1] of schedule 1 clarifies that a "public act", as defined in section 93Z (5) of the Crimes Act 1900, includes graffiti. The current offence of displaying Nazi symbols in section 93ZA of the Crimes Act relies on the definition of "public act" in section 93Z (5) of the Crimes Act 1900. That is the same definition that applies to the offence of "publicly threatening or inciting violence on grounds of race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or intersex or HIV/AIDS status" in section 93Z.

Currently "public act", for the purposes of the threatening or inciting to violence offence in section 93Z and the public display of a Nazi symbol offence in section 93ZA, is defined as including any form of communication to the public, including speaking, writing, displaying notices, playing of recorded material, broadcasting and communicating through social media or other electronic methods. This amendment will put beyond doubt that graffiti is also considered a public act for the purpose of these offences. Item [2] of schedule 1 introduces a new offence at new section 93ZA (1AA) of the Crimes Act 1900 to prohibit a person from knowingly displaying, by public act and without reasonable excuse, a Nazi symbol on or near a synagogue, Jewish school or the Sydney Jewish Museum. This offence is punishable by a fine of up to 200 penalty units or two years imprisonment, or both, for an individual, and a fine of up to 1,000 penalty units for a corporation. This is a doubling of the maximum penalty already available for the existing offence of display of a Nazi symbol.

Item [3] of schedule 1 amends section 93ZA (1) of the Crimes Act 1900 to clarify that the existing, less serious, offence does not apply to displaying a Nazi symbol on or near a synagogue, a Jewish school or the Sydney Jewish Museum, ensuring the more serious offence is charged in these instances. Item [5] defines "Jewish school" to mean a Hebrew school, an independent Jewish school or a yeshiva. The offence will apply to infant, primary and high schools that are Jewish schools. Item [6] of schedule 1 provides that a statutory review of all of the amendments contained in the bill is to be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of two years from the commencement of the amendments to ensure they are operating as intended. A review period of less than two years would not allow sufficient time to properly consider how these particular amendments have been operating.

Schedule 2 to the bill amends the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999. Item [1] of schedule 2 amends the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 to put beyond doubt that the aggravating factor at section 21A (2) (h), which applies when an offence was motivated by hatred for or prejudice against a group of people to which the victim belonged, applies whether the offence was wholly or partially motivated by hatred or prejudice. This means that it does not need to be shown beyond reasonable doubt that the person's motivation was wholly driven by hate. Where that was one motivating factor, the provision will apply.

Item [2] of schedule 2 contains savings and transitional provisions. It provides that the amended section 21A (2) (h) of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 will apply in relation to an offence committed, or to proceedings commenced, before or after the amendment comes into force. Finally, schedule 3 to the bill amends the Graffiti Control Act 2008. Item [1] of schedule 3 omits section 4 (3) of the Graffiti Control Act 2008, which defines the current circumstances of aggravation for the offence at section 4 of that Act. This is an editorial change, as the bill moves the definitions to section 4 (6).

Item [2] of schedule 3 amends the Graffiti Control Act 2008 to provide a new circumstance of aggravation for the offence of intentionally marking premises or property of another person without consent and without reasonable excuse, provided for at section 4 of that Act, which will apply when the premises or property that was marked is a place of worship. The maximum penalty for an offence against section 4 of the Graffiti Control Act 2008 is a fine of up to four penalty units, or a fine of up to 20 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months if the offence is committed in a circumstance of aggravation.

Currently, there are two circumstances of aggravation: where premises or property is marked using a graffiti implement, such as spray paint, or where the premise or property is marked in such a manner that the mark is not readily removable by wiping, or water and detergent. This amendment will mean that where a person intentionally marks a place of worship, the higher maximum penalty will apply, in certain circumstances, regardless of what was used to mark the graffiti. I also note that, for serious examples of graffiti that may cause damage to a property, an offence of damaging property under section 195 (1) (a) of the Crimes Act 1900 could also apply, which carries a maximum penalty of imprisonment for five years.

Item [3] of schedule 3 contains savings and transitional provisions. It provides that the new circumstance of aggravation applies to an offence committed after the commencement of the amendment. I would like to conclude by thanking the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, as well as the various New South Wales government agencies, for considering the bill and providing valuable feedback. This bill is one part of a suite of reforms that our Government is introducing to tackle antisemitism in our State, protect places of worship, and stand against hatred and prejudice. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

CRIMES AMENDMENT (PLACES OF WORSHIP) BILL 2025

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:43): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Crimes Amendment (Places of Worship) Bill 2025. On 8 December 2024 our Government announced that we would consider law reform to address activities outside places of worship that aim to intimidate people trying to attend those places to express their faith, or that prevent people from practising their faith in New South Wales. Recently, we have seen disgraceful acts targeting synagogues in New South Wales and other Australian jurisdictions, including an arson attack on the Adass Israel Synagogue of Melbourne on 6 December 2024 and the vandalism of synagogues in Newtown and Allawah, along with an alleged attempt to set fire to Newtown Synagogue in January of this year.

Targeting places where people congregate to share and express their faith is unacceptable, and the overwhelming majority of people in New South Wales reject this type of appalling behaviour. There is a clear need to ensure that people of all faiths are able to practise their religion freely and without fear of intimidation or harassment. The Crimes Amendment (Places of Worship) Bill 2025 will amend the Crimes Act 1900 to create two new offences that capture intentional acts that seek to impede people from accessing or leaving a place of worship, as well as conduct that intimidates, harasses or threatens people who are attempting to access or leave a place of worship. Both offences will carry a maximum penalty of a fine of up to \$22,000, imprisonment for two years, or both.

The bill also amends the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 to create an exception to existing limitations on the exercise of "move on" powers by New South Wales police officers, so that such powers may be exercised in relation to demonstrations, protests, processions or assemblies outside places of worship in appropriate circumstances. I stress that this bill will not prohibit or restrict lawful, peaceful protests outside places of worship. Our Government recognises the need to introduce carefully thought out and balanced legislation, particularly when that legislation sits at the intersection of key civil and political rights under Australian law and international human rights law.

The Australian Constitution recognises the importance of freedom of political communication. Additionally, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly are protected by articles 18, 19 and 21 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, or the ICCPR, to which Australia is a party. However, these rights are not absolute. The preamble to the ICCPR recognises that civil and political freedom can only be achieved if conditions are created that allow everyone to enjoy their civil and political rights. It also recognises the duty of individuals to strive for the promotion and observance of rights recognised by the ICCPR. The ICCPR recognises that freedom of religion, freedom of expression and the right to peaceful assembly can all be limited, provided those limitations are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect matters such as public safety, order, or the rights and freedom of others.

As is frequently stated in the context of proposed reforms with the potential to impact on civil and political rights, it is necessary for such legislation to strike a balance that maximises everyone's enjoyment of civil and political freedoms, even if that balance results in the diminution of a specific freedom. While this bill may limit freedom of expression in some cases, it does so in a way that is proportionate and justified to facilitate the exercise of the right to freedom of religion or belief, and the right to manifest that freedom in a place of worship. The Government is confident that the amendments proposed by this bill strike the right balance. I take this opportunity to thank all stakeholders who provided valuable feedback to the New South Wales Government on this bill, including the NSW Faith Affairs Council, the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism, the LGBTIQ+ Advisory Council and the member for Sydney as well.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. Item [2] of schedule 1 inserts a new section 214B into the Crimes Act 1900, which creates two new offences. Pursuant to new section 214B (1) (a), a person in or near a place of worship must not, without reasonable excuse, intentionally block, impede, or hinder a person from accessing or leaving, or attempting to access or leave, the place of worship. The conduct must be intentional before the offence is made out. For example, a large lawful protest that is wholly unrelated to a place of worship, or the religion practised there may, due to its vicinity, incidentally impede people from accessing the place of worship.

This offence is not intended to apply in such circumstances.

The reasonable excuse element has been included in the offence in recognition that there may be scenarios in which a person will intentionally block access to a place of worship but does so with a valid reason. For example, a person undertaking maintenance or construction work outside or near a place of worship might intentionally block access. Events that require street closures, such as street markets or the City to Surf, may also intentionally block access to a place of worship. Pursuant to new section 214B (1) (b), a person in or near a place of worship must not harass, intimidate or threaten a person accessing or leaving, or attempting to access or leave, a place of worship. Unlike the first offence, this offence does not include a reasonable excuse element. It is never reasonable to harass, intimidate or threaten a person, especially when they are trying to practise their faith.

The offences apply when a person is "in or near" a place of worship. The proximity measure of "in or near" is consistent with section 214A of the Crimes Act, part of which prohibits remaining "on or near" a major facility and engaging in specified conduct. Section 214A is enforced and regularly prosecuted, so this is an appropriate proximity measure to use for the offences in the bill. "Place of worship" is defined as a building or other structure ordinarily used for worship, including churches, mosques, synagogues and temples. The definition of "place of worship" is not intended to capture places such as prayer rooms, multi-faith rooms and chapels within other buildings such as hospitals, airports and office blocks. It is intended to capture places that are ordinarily used by religious denominations for the purposes of worship. Some premises that are not dedicated places of worship may be used regularly for the purposes of worship. Whether or not this type of premises would be considered to be

"ordinarily" used for the purposes of worship will depend on the specific circumstances of the use of the premises, including how frequently the premises is used for the purposes of worship and how long the premises has been used for the purposes of worship.

The maximum penalty for both offences is a fine of up to \$22,000 or imprisonment for two years, or both. The new offence in relation to blocking, impeding or hindering people accessing or leaving a place of worship will not apply if the person's conduct forms part of an industrial action, dispute or campaign; the person's conduct occurs at or outside Parliament House or an office of a member of Parliament; or the person's conduct is in accordance with the consent or authority of the Commissioner of Police or the person apparently in charge of the place of worship. The proposed offences do not make it a crime simply to protest or hold a civil assembly near places of worship, and the exclusions relating to Parliament and industrial action make it abundantly clear that it is not the intention of the bill to criminalise gatherings that impede access to places of worship by their mere vicinity.

Importantly, the bill makes it clear that the offence of intentionally blocking, impeding or hindering access to a place of worship is subject to section 24 of the Summary Offences Act 1988. The Summary Offences Act 1988 creates a framework under which protest organisers can seek authorisation to hold a public assembly. While there is nothing inherently unlawful about unauthorised public assemblies, participants in an authorised public assembly are protected from prosecution for offences that involve obstructing people or vehicles in a public place, provided the public assembly is held substantially in accordance with parameters that have been provided to or agreed with the commissioner. Expressly stating in new section 214B that the offence of impeding access to a place of worship is subject to the Summary Offences Act 1988 makes it clear that protections that apply to authorised public assemblies also apply to the proposed new offence.

Item [2] of schedule 1 also inserts a review provision under the new section 214C. That provision requires the amendments made by this bill to be reviewed to determine whether the policy objectives of the amendments remain valid and whether the terms of the amendments remain appropriate for achieving those objectives. The review is to commence as soon as practicable after two years after the commencement of the amendments, with a report to be tabled in Parliament within three years after commencement. The New South Wales Government considers that requiring the review to be undertaken less than two years from commencement would not provide a sufficient period of time to review the operation of these particular amendments. The review will be able to assess things like whether the proximity measure of "in or near" assists police operationally to ensure the safety of worshippers and whether the definition of place of worship requires expansion or a different approach.

Schedule 2 to the bill amends section 200 of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act 2002 [LEPRA] to provide an exception to the limitation on the use of "move on" powers by New South Wales police officers. Section 197 of LEPRA empowers police officers to give move on directions to people in public places if they believe on reasonable grounds that, among other things, their behaviour or presence is obstructing another person or traffic, or constitutes harassment or intimidation. Failure to comply with such a direction is an offence punishable by a fine of up to \$220. Section 200 of the Act places limitations on the exercise of police powers to issue these directions. They cannot be issued at all in relation to industrial disputes and, in relation to other forms of protest or organised assembly, they can only be issued in limited circumstances. These circumstances are where a direction is necessary to address a serious risk to safety, or where the assembly is either unauthorised or not being held substantially in accordance with the authorisation and the direction is limited to resolving obstructions of traffic.

Schedule 2 will amend section 200 of LEPRA to include an additional circumstance in which move on directions can be issued in relation to a protest. Where a demonstration, protest, procession or assembly is not an authorised public assembly under the Summary Offences Act 1988, or is not being held substantially in accordance with the authorisation, a police officer will be able to issue a move on direction if the assembly is occurring in or near a place of worship. The ordinary thresholds for issuing a move on direction will continue to apply. These proposed amendments will come into force three months after the date of assent to this bill or earlier upon proclamation. This will ensure the necessary implementation work and training can be undertaken. Both freedom of religion and the right to protest are integral to a democratic society, and it is important that legislation that impacts either strikes the right balance. In the context of this bill, striking that balance is straightforward. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

STRATA SCHEMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 20 November 2024.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (14:57): I rise to lead for the Opposition on the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This bill amends the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, the Community Land Management Act 2021 and related legislation to implement, we understand, 37 recommendations from the 2021 statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015—a report gone about, I might say, in very thorough fashion during the life of the then Coalition Government. The purpose and intent, no doubt—which we broadly share, by the way, on this side of the House—of this bill is to increase owner corporation protection, uplift developer and strata managing agent professionalism, ensure owners properly maintain their building, strengthen the governance of strata committees and, overall, make community living better and easier for residents. It is the second tranche of reforms that we have seen in recent times.

There are, of course, a great many stakeholders involved in strata communities. There are over 1.2 million residents of the great State of New South Wales who live in strata.

I understand that that could indeed, as a proportion, reach half the State's residents by about 2040. It is an important area for policymakers and for reform. With all due respect, I point out that the report of the statutory review of 2021 had been on the table for some time. In so many ways, the work had been done. There had been thorough consultation. In a sense, the homework was done. This Government has taken almost two years to get to this point but here we are, and the Coalition is in broad agreement with the bill. But, as a matter of process, it need not have taken two years to get to this point.

What does the bill implement? In short, the bill implements a number of measures to strengthen developer accountability by requiring an initial maintenance schedule and initial levy estimates to the administrative fund and capital works to be certified. It increases penalties for developers who fail to meet these obligations and who fail to hold a first annual general meeting. It supports sustainability infrastructure and accessibility infrastructure uptake by prohibiting by-laws that prevent the installation of sustainability infrastructure solely on appearance. It requires owners' corporations to consider sustainability at each annual general meeting and when preparing estimates for capital works funds, making it easier for an owners' corporation to pass accessibility infrastructure resolutions.

Among other elements are lowering the voting threshold for sustainability infrastructure to make it easier for strata communities to install solar panels, battery storage and electric vehicle charging stations. It strengthens accountability for strata managers by requiring disclosure of commissions and financial benefits received from third parties, increasing transparency and reducing potential conflicts of interest. It introduces a statutory duty for strata committee members to act in the best interests of an owners' corporation, bringing governance standards closer to those in the corporate sector. It improves consumer protections by prohibiting unfair contract terms and increasing disclosure requirements in strata agreements, ensuring owners are not locked into one-sided contracts. It also enhances the role of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal in resolving strata disputes in seeking to make the process fairer for all involved.

I take a moment to recognise and express appreciation to the many stakeholders who over many years have contributed and sought to advocate for strata reform, including, perhaps most notably, the Owners Corporation Network that, on behalf of strata residents, has consistently pushed for stronger consumer protections and fairer governance for all apartment owners and indeed residents. I acknowledge the role of the Strata Community Australia in representing strata managers and wish to recognise its engagement in this process and that of many other stakeholders. It is a long list, and I will not go through them all. Those stakeholders have broadly welcomed the changes in the bill, and the Coalition in turn welcomes them.

It should be said that there is more to do. We have not yet seen a complete resolution of all the recommendations of the late 2021 statutory review. As strata keeps growing, moving and evolving, there is a need for a greater future focus and bigger and more significant reform. It is now the job of the Government to get on with strata reform to deliver for communities and residents across New South Wales. Having said that, I acknowledge the Minister and his team for their work on this bill. Whilst I have certainly expressed concern about the pace and to some degree the scope of reform, the Coalition certainly appreciates the consultation undertaken with industry and community stakeholders. I again thank the many strata residents, owners and professionals who continue to engage for improvements. The Coalition looks forward to continuing to engage in that process as we strive forward together for better strata communities across New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:03): I am delighted to make a brief contribution to debate of the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The object of the bill is to amend the Strata Management Act 2015, the Community Land Management Act 2021 and related legislation to implement 37 recommendations from the 2021 report of the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015, to increase owners' corporation protections, uplift developer and strata managing agent

professionalism, ensure owners properly maintain their building, strengthen the governance of strata committees and overall make community living better and easier for residents.

At the outset, I acknowledge the relevant Ministers, Anoulack Chanthivong and Jihad Dib, and their teams for their conscientious work in bringing the bill to the House to ensure we adopt a progressive approach with regard to strata legislation more broadly, and as the Government's second tranche of reforms from the 2021 report. The bill will implement reforms to strengthen developer accountability by requiring an initial maintenance schedule and the initial levy estimates of the administrative fund and capital works fund to be independently certified, and by increasing penalties for developers who fail to meet their new obligations and failing to hold a first annual general meeting in the required time.

Members of this House know that I commonly do not read from notes. However, this legislation is very specific. I think it is important for interpretation that, when the legislation comes before the judiciary, judges are able to refer very specifically to its provisions. Firstly, I note that the Minister was very specific in the bill's many and varied reforms because the intention of this legislation is outlined in the content of the bill. It supports the sustainability infrastructure and accessibility infrastructure uptake will be by prohibiting by-laws that prevent the installation of sustainability infrastructure solely on appearance, except where heritage listed or within a heritage conservation area, requiring owners' corporations to consider sustainability at each annual general meeting and when preparing estimates for the capital works funds to make it easier for an owners' corporation to pass accessibility infrastructure resolutions. That point is particularly relevant because it has been a flaw within the industry and in legislation for some time. The bill is an indication that this Government and the relevant Ministers, particularly Minister Chanthivong, have taken a very progressive and enthusiastic approach to fill the current legislation's voids.

The bill is important but, as the Minister said, it introduces just a tranche of the work that needs to be done to respond to the report. Government members are happy to say that we are working progressively, productively and pragmatically while recognising that there is so much more to do. The Minister and the Government have been very clear about that. The bill provides for uplift strata professional services to improve owners' confidence by prohibiting certain unfair terms in strata management agreements. It requires strata managing agents to report every six months to the owners' corporation on the functions they exercise, adding a new statutory duty for building managers to act in owners' corporations best interests, and adding a new ground to terminate strata managing agents and building manager agreements if they carry on a business in a way that is contrary to law. It will improve the governance of strata committees by imposing additional duties on strata committee members and prescribing training requirements for committees that require strata committees to provide written reasons for refusing minor renovation requests within three months of the application, and by providing deemed approval if they fail to do so.

This legislation is very much about tightening laws; it is not just about legislative reform. It is about making strata committees more accountable and about adding a fairer balance in the committees. This will put the interests of the tenants at the level of attention that they not only need but also deserve. This legislation is a positive step in that direction. The bill will require owners' corporations to maintain and repair common property by enabling NSW Fair Trading to enter into enforceable undertakings with owners' corporations, or to issue compliance notices when owners' corporations have not met their duties under the Act of maintaining the building, and by restricting the ability of an owners' corporation to defer building works if safety or amenity is affected.

The bill prescribes requirements for a 10-year capital works fund plan and requires the initial plan to consider the initial maintenance schedule. The bill also extends the two-year limit on damages claims by lot owners to six years and implements reforms to protect owners' corporations against unfair contract terms by prohibiting them in line with Australian Consumer Law. It also improves protections for owners and prospective owners around embedded networks by removing the exemption for embedded electricity supply contracts so that three-year term limits apply, clarifies the definition of "utility" to apply to a range of communication and domestic services, and adds new conveyancing disclosure requirements around embedded networks—which is an important process, particularly when it comes to interpreting the Act and the intention of the legislation. The conveyancing process clearly strikes the right balance as to what is required to ensure that all parties are aware of their obligations and requirements.

The bill assists owners in financial hardship by requiring levy notices to be accompanied by information approved by NSW Fair Trading, such as contact details for the National Debt Helpline and encouraging early action by lot owners in financial hardship. It introduces safeguards for owners who are experiencing financial hardship, such as requirements around payment plans and applying arrears payments to levies first, followed by interest and debt recovery expenses, and increasing the notice of debt recovery action from 21 days to 30 days. That is a particularly important part of the legislation because I believe many people continue to navigate their way through financial hardship brought about by the cost of living in today's economy. We need to be very

prudent. Whilst people need to pay their bills, we can amend legislation to ensure that there is fairness in times of hardship. This provision is a positive step in that direction. Finally, the bill introduces other minor changes to improve its operation.

In conclusion, considerable stakeholder consultation was undertaken in November 2022 and February 2024 on options to help inform drafting of the bill, and an additional four-week consultation from September to October 2024 informed the final bill. A number of external stakeholders provided submissions on the bill, but I particularly note the Australian Resident Accommodation Managers Association, the Financial Rights Legal Centre and the Law Society of New South Wales, amongst many others. The Minister and his team had extensive internal consultation with all members across the aisle, receiving feedback to ensure that we put good legislation in place that finds the right balance and helps those living in strata accommodation. I thank all my colleagues who were involved, particularly the relevant Ministers and their staff, for their hard work on this detailed and complex bill over an extended period. I give them credit for bringing this bill to the House. I hope the bill passes quickly so that the required improvements can be implemented for those who operate within the strata process. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (15:13): I support the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Strata is the fastest growing form of housing in the State and the laws that govern how strata communities are managed need continual review and reform. Over 80 per cent of my constituents, my husband and I and all my staff live in apartments. Living in an apartment has significant benefits. Apartments can provide supportive communities within buildings and within densely populated neighbourhoods like Potts Point, Elizabeth Bay and Pyrmont. Apartment buildings are often located close to jobs, facilities and services and can provide a low-maintenance form of living. While apartments can have less upkeep, there are many challenges that need to be addressed before they can deliver affordable and sustainable homes. The complexity of managing common property among multiple owners can create significant demands, particularly on volunteer committee boards.

Owners' corporations are experiencing a big rise in their obligations and costs, creating major burdens for committee members. Defects remain a major drain. The Building Commissioner has improved the building industry but there is still a long way to go. Strata communities continue to struggle to get builders to comply with rectification orders and are having to spend thousands on legal action to protect themselves. For older buildings, repairs and maintenance have become more complex, with the need to submit a regulated design. Where once buildings could engage remedial builders and contractors directly, they now need an engineer or architect to oversee the project and submit a regulated design. There are reports that the added oversight is both improving remedial outcomes and adding unnecessary red tape and costs. When buildings have defects or need major repairs and maintenance, a building will struggle to get affordable insurance. The massive increase in insurance premiums makes it even harder for buildings to raise enough funds to get buildings fixed whether for lawyers and experts to pursue builders and developers, or for engineers, architects, builders and contractors to undertake repairs and maintenance.

Rising strata costs are now putting large numbers of owner-occupiers at risk of homelessness, and the problem is set to get worse. Assessment by Financial Counselling Australia shows that unpaid strata levies are the greatest cause of forced bankruptcy in the State, making up 16 per cent to 20 per cent of all cases in court. It is untenable that the fastest growing form of housing can be the biggest risk of forced bankruptcy and potential homelessness. The bill takes some steps to address the problem by introducing requirements for levy notices to include approved information such as debt helplines and delegating the consideration of payment plans to the strata committee so that a general meeting does not need to be called. However, these changes are not enough. Owners may not even have the option for a payment plan and, if they do, payment plans can be unreasonably refused. Some strata managers engage in very predatory tactics with owners experiencing debt, engaging lawyers and debt collectors, and quickly adding their charges and interest to the owner's ledger.

I understand from Financial Counselling Australia, the Financial Rights Legal Centre and the Marrickville Legal Centre that forced bankruptcies are often the result of small debts that grow as a result of escalating fees. I foreshadow that I will move amendments to strengthen protections in the bill around payment plans and debt charges. The bill empowers the secretary to enter a building to investigate defects, repairs and maintenance on common property that an owners' corporation has failed to fix. Owners' corporations have an obligation to maintain common property and I acknowledge that there are circumstances when the secretary will need powers to enforce that obligation. The Owners Corporation Network has raised concerns that the powers in the bill exclude natural justice and include fines that could deplete owners' corporations of funds that could be spent on fixing the problem.

I share its view that owners' corporations should be given the opportunity to respond before the secretary enters common property and does investigative work such as demolishing walls. Where powers include entry into

a home, residents should be given the opportunity to be present with a support person and the owners' corporation should have the opportunity to be present for access to common property. Fines for not providing documents or answering questions are too high and do not recognise that technical information is not always easily accessible and that it is stored with the strata managers who, due to competing demands, may not be able to meet the secretary's request—which is something owners should not be penalised for. The reasons that owners' corporations are not doing repairs and maintenance are complex and not simply refusable. Reforms need to be sensitive to barriers like significant and rising costs, and I will monitor how the new powers are used.

I support the introduction of mandatory training for committee members. Committees make decisions on expenditure, services, works, contracts and how to deal with day-to-day and long-term problems. A competent strata manager can help them navigate the complexities but that is not always the case. Committees will function better if all members understand their roles and responsibilities and the rights of owners.

I understand that the regulations will determine the training provided. It is important that it does not become a barrier to committee membership and is free, accessible and not unnecessarily demanding. Access through electronic courses is preferable. The Government should work with the Owners Corporation Network to develop modules because it has the expertise and a large network of owners to draw feedback from. I am concerned that the laws may result in committee members being thrown off committees, causing disruption and roadblocks to decisions, just because they were unable to do the training in time. I will move amendments at another stage to ensure members are not subject to dismissal without warnings and flexibility.

Passing motions to get outcomes can be a challenge in some buildings, with competing priorities among owners. I welcome the provisions in the bill that facilitate the installation of accessibility infrastructure by lowering the approval threshold. The State urgently needs more accessible homes. People who can live independently with modest upgrades are being forced into facilities for assisted living because of barriers to making changes to their homes and the lack of available accessible homes. This bill will enable approval for accessibility infrastructure with majority support, rather than by special resolution, making approval much more likely. Much more action is needed to make more homes accessible so more people can live independently. I urge the Government to adopt the National Construction Code Silver Liveable Housing Design Standard.

To encourage the uptake of sustainability infrastructure, the bill will require owners' corporations to consider sustainability measures as part of capital works plans and prohibit bans on sustainability infrastructure based purely on the external appearance of the building. These are good reforms. However, they do not address the real barriers to adopting sustainability infrastructure. Many strata communities want to electrify their buildings. However, the process can be complex, especially in larger buildings. For example, heat pumps for hot water systems can be approved with majority support. However, additional infrastructure is needed if a building has metered hot water for each apartment. The meters measuring hot water use are owned by the individual apartment owners, and it remains unclear whether an owners' corporation can resolve to have them all replaced. If one owner objects, the whole project is doomed. We urgently need reform to ensure buildings can take the steps needed to become sustainable with government support.

Clarifications that building managers have a duty of care towards the owners' corporation are welcome. However, the provisions fail to capture the possible harm that building managers can cause if they work to benefit themselves. Building managers are responsible for large sums of money. They engage contractors and service providers and facilitate defect maintenance and repair. They can work contrary to the owners' corporation through, for example, commissions or by working with developers to prevent action on defects. [*Extension of time*]

Building managers need the same oversight and obligations as strata managers. I ask the Minister to confirm in his reply that the Government will strengthen the laws governing building managers to protect owners. Strata contracts with strata managers and building managers are usually based on industry samples, which favour managers, not builders. The Government should develop model contracts that are used as a basis for negotiations and that support a better deal for owners. I will move an amendment at a later stage to empower the secretary to issue model contracts. I share the concern of the Owners Corporation Network that people are accessing contact details for owners when they inspect documents. I understand that there have been instances when contact details have been inappropriately used to contact all owners. No-one but a strata manager, building manager or committee member should have access to an owner's contact details without their permission.

There are many other reforms in this bill that I support that will make the day-to-day running of an apartment building much easier. We need to widen the scope of strata reform to create protections for owners and residents of mixed-use buildings, which represent the future of construction and strategic planning. Over-station development is a big part of metro planning, but those properties will have additional complexities to manage. Building management committees should be made up of representatives of the residential strata and other strata to manage property common to each stratum. Disputes in building management committees go to the Supreme Court, which prolongs outcomes and significantly raises costs. The current situation is unsustainable and needs

urgent reform. I thank the Minister and his office—particularly his policy advisor, Alicia Sylvester—and the department for their hard work and commitment to strata. I look forward to working with the Government on continuing reform. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (15:24): I speak in support of the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. As our urban landscape continues to evolve, an increasing number of people are experiencing strata living in our cities, suburbs and regions. Accompanying this fast-changing housing landscape is the rise of strata. A strata scheme is a building or group of buildings that is divided into lots, such as an apartment, villa or townhouse. Those buying a lot in a strata become a member of the owners' corporation, which holds the common property of the scheme on behalf of the lot owners. Common property can include shared stairwells, driveways, gardens and roofs. Across New South Wales, there are more than 86,000 strata schemes, housing more than 1.2 million residents. The Minns Labor Government is taking action to implement the 37 recommendations of the 2021 *Report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015*. By implementing these reforms, the Government is ensuring that strata schemes continue to be an ideal living option for New South Wales residents.

Amongst the important reforms in this bill, I will focus on those that relate to the repair and maintenance of strata schemes. The reforms that I will discuss also apply to community land schemes. Investing in proper, regular maintenance of strata buildings is critical for the safety and amenity of buildings. It safeguards the value of buildings, reduces insurance premiums, helps ensure owners are not caught off guard by unexpected costs, enhances the quality of life of residents and ultimately contributes to the future sustainability of the scheme. Overseeing the maintenance of a scheme starts at the very beginning, when the original owner, who is usually the developer, hands over the scheme to the new owners' corporation.

In the Parramatta electorate, housing is big business. Right now, there are thousands of new strata homes at various stages of development, with many more thousands to come. Due to the success of the Minns Labor Government's first home buyers' scheme, right across the Parramatta electorate new home owners are choosing to buy their first home in the form of an apartment. For many, this is a positive experience, but some have had bad experiences due to poor building construction and poor strata management. I will provide a couple of examples of letters written to me by constituents in my electorate about some of the challenges they have faced. One gentleman, who wrote to me last year, said:

I am investigating all avenues before I make a decision to sell my apartment at a huge loss.

I am one of the unlucky people that bought a unit off the plan in Parramatta and later found out it has combustible cladding.

I purchased my unit off the plan at the age of 22 thinking I was doing the right thing for my future.

When the unit block was embroiled in issues I have powered through paying extra strata fees, insurance fees and legal fees to try and get the cladding issue rectified.

Now the developer has gone and owners are left to try and work this all out.

The unit is now worth less than I paid for it (I am now 32) and have now received an option of a \$100,000 cost to rectify my tiny portion of the total building.

I am already trying to pay the \$350K loan that I have.

I am now 32 and cannot hold out any longer to try and get my life back on track. The stress is unbelievable, I thought I was doing the right thing by entering the real estate market at a young age.

A second correspondence, from the chair of a strata management committee, states:

With the continued focus on increasing housing through large developments, I believe it is vital that there are significant statutory improvements made by the State government to protect strata owners from:

1. The actions of developers in locking in owners to long term service contracts and embedded service networks and;
2. in overhauling the strata management industry.

...

... no doubt you are aware of the appointed strata manager and you are aware of some of the concerns that have been raised against that firm. After discussions with the investigator I am not convinced the terms of reference for that investigation will extend to cover some of the easy fixes that could be put in place.

Our experience in what appears to be "generally accepted industry wide practice" suggests that there will be continuing challenges that owners experience and end up accepting as it requires significant investment in time and money to resolve.

They are two examples of the many letters my office has received from people who are struggling with the challenges of strata, combustible cladding and poorly built buildings across the electorate.

There are challenges with strata, as borne out in the statutory review. The Minns Labor Government is committed to addressing the concerns of those constituents and to making changes via the bill.

Currently, developers must provide the new owners' corporation with information about the obligations and costs associated with maintaining the common property. This information is in the form of an initial maintenance schedule which is prepared by the developer ahead of the first annual general meeting. The schedule is critical in estimating the initial levies for the new home owners' corporation. The bill implements several changes in relation to the initial maintenance schedule and the initial levies to ensure they are not understated. First, the bill will mandate that the schedule be in the form prescribed by the regulation and adhere to minimum requirements. Second, the original owner of a multi-storey scheme will be required to engage an independent surveyor to review the schedule and certify that it has been prepared in accordance with the prescribed form. The surveyor cannot be connected to the original owner.

An independent surveyor or other expert prescribed by the regulations must also review the estimates of the initial levies and certify that they meet the scheme's expected expenditure for the year, based on the expenses provided by the original owner. Third, the original owner must give evidence of the certification at least 14 days before the first annual general meeting. To ensure the quality and accuracy of the schedule and initial levy estimates, the new requirements will be enforced with a maximum court-imposed penalty on developers of \$55,000. Collectively, the reforms improve developer accountability and equip owners' corporations with the information they need to adequately plan for future maintenance and repairs. Once the strata scheme has been handed over to the new owners' corporation, it is the legal duty of the owners' corporation to maintain and repair common property.

Feedback to the review found that there is widespread frustration about owners' corporations failing to properly maintain and repair common property. That can lead to rising insurance costs and special levies being imposed, which could have been avoided if the owners' corporation had been proactive about the problem or carried out the necessary maintenance in the first place. Failure to repair and maintain common 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 tribunal to help resolve disputes over repairs to common property. Sometimes tribunal orders are ignored. One way that the bill encourages owners' corporations to comply with their duty is by enabling NSW Fair Trading to enter into enforceable undertakings with owners' corporations, or issue compliance notices to owners' corporations to take action to remedy a breach of duty. Penalties may apply for non-compliance.

The new enforcement powers will be complemented with associated powers to help investigate compliance, such as applying for search warrants to enter a strata lot if the owner does not consent. The consequences of not carrying out repairs and maintenance can be costly, and that is why it is important that NSW Fair Trading have the powers to help resolve disputes effectively. The powers will only be used in cases of critical need, such as where there is a risk to safety of residents or a risk to the structure of the building. Safeguards will be in place so that powers to enter strata lots or seize property will only be used where needed. *[Extension of time]*

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. Wentworth Point in the Parramatta electorate is the most densely populated suburb in New South Wales. Every single home in Wentworth Point is strataed. Every street is managed by a community association, bar two: Hill Road and Burroway Road. The issues arising from the current strata structure are significant for the people of Wentworth Point, not to mention the residents of Sydney Olympic Park, Newington and many other suburbs, and particularly the rising suburb of Melrose Park. All of my side of Wharf Road will be strataed as well.

In Wentworth Point there are two stratas. One belongs to a completed development. The other belongs to a development that has not been approved yet. There is no connection between those two lots for people who require accessibility for prams or wheelchairs. The community is understandably up in arms because they cannot work out how they can get that fixed. Those who live in other buildings do not have access to those stratas and community associations, yet they are impacted. There is nowhere for them to go to try to resolve this, so who do they go to? They obviously come to their State member, asking them to try to find a solution, which I am trying to do. But those challenges are great and they really impact people mentally. It is not just the physical challenges for people who cannot get around their suburbs; it is the mental strain on people who are volunteers working in those stratas and living in those suburbs. They do not know how to resolve issues effectively.

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. I welcome the changes. They are long overdue. I look forward to being able to assist the community with the challenges that they face. The bill demonstrates that the

Minns Labor Government is committed to implementing the recommendations of the review, as well as addressing the other issues facing strata and community land schemes in New South Wales. I congratulate Minister Chanthivong and Minister Dib and their teams on their work on the bill. I see Alicia Sylvester in the advisers area and I commend her for the work she has done. I will not mention all the different stakeholders that have been involved.

I am very passionate about the bill because it impacts so many people in my electorate. We heard from the member for Sydney earlier. He and I represent the electorates with the highest numbers of people living in apartments in New South Wales. We really feel its impact on people's everyday lives. Let us come together to support the bill and foster a future where well-maintained, safe and secure strata schemes are the standard for all New South Wales residents. Our children will be living in those buildings. Our friends are retiring to those buildings. Families are growing up in those buildings. People we know right across our cities need to have those protections in place so that they can live fulfilling lives without the stress that currently exists in strata arrangements. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (15:39): I am pleased to support the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, which responds to the statutory review commenced under the former Government. I believe strongly in any reform that will improve strata governance, financial accountability, sustainability and accessibility. I also believe in stronger compliance and enforcement mechanisms for those who do the wrong thing. I believe this bill goes some way to addressing those principles. We all saw the *Four Corners* exposé on the hidden strata fees costing Australians. The simple fact is that more people than ever before are living in strata, and more people in the future will live in strata. I live in strata, as does a rapidly growing percentage of my electorate, Ryde. This trend is also being exacerbated by Government policy.

This Government has a one-track policy when it comes to housing: more apartments. This is clearly a part, but certainly not the whole, when it comes to genuinely addressing the affordability crisis. However, it has few plans to build the framework and structure around the very apartment living it is actively seeking to promote. This would not only make the growth and liveability of those apartments sustainable but also affordable. To put it simply, people might—and that is a big "might"—be able to afford an apartment, but they certainly cannot afford the building defects that follow, nor the exorbitant commissions, hidden fees and time costs of learning their rights, studying the rules and fighting with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. This bill tinkers in some of the right places, but we need to do so much more.

I specifically want to highlight what the latest changes aim to achieve and will offer some brief commentary before addressing a few points where I believe this Government can do more. First, it strengthens developer accountability by requiring initial levies to be independently certified. This is about transparency. It stops developers offering initially low strata fees that can then incrementally grow to unaffordable levels. Second, it ensures a robust initial maintenance schedule is in place for new builds. This is about forward planning. It goes some way to addressing depleted sinking funds and the necessity for special levies to deal with crisis works which would otherwise be preventable with a more sustainable schedule of maintenance. Third, it protects owners' corporations from unfair contract terms. This is about fairness. It starts a conversation on things like embedded networks, which I will address in greater detail later.

Fourth, it helps owners' corporations in repairing and maintaining common property. This is about convenience and practicality. These dwellings are people's homes, and they have a right to quick, efficient and affordable repairs and maintenance just like anyone not living in strata. Fifth, it supports the uptake of sustainability infrastructure in strata schemes, such as solar panels, electric vehicle charging and efficient water fixtures. This is about the modern challenges of age-old problems. It reduces some impediments to new sustainability installations, but this cannot be the end. Sixth, it gives property owners more options to pay levies when facing financial stress. This is about compassion. Cost of living is the first, second and third issue impacting families, and it is right and just that we expand the options for people who are struggling to pay.

I will now address that which is not tackled in this bill. In its current form, this bill seeks to address just over 25 per cent of the recommendations from the statutory review. I note that previous legislation deals with other components of the review and that there is likely to be further legislation, but this has caused some concern about piecemeal reform and potential delays. Importantly, we lack a single source of truth for the exponentially fast-growing community of strata dwellers. This House would benefit from an overarching breakdown of which aspects of the review have been enacted, which are underway and if there are any the Government has no intention of adopting. In the case of the latter, an explanation as to why would provide much-needed clarity to this important policy debate.

I now turn to future reform. I call on the Government to take these reforms further. We have seen and heard too many cases of strata schemes that are unable to resolve long and ongoing disputes with builders over defects. While lawyers on either side make a fortune, there are residents living daily behind scaffolds with no access to

parts of their own building. This is simply not fair. There needs to be a greater focus on coupling future reforms to this legislation with build-quality reforms that give new owners and renters confidence in their new home. Earlier I alluded to the matter of contract terms. I now want to specifically call out the inequity of embedded networks. At its core this bill recognises the moral failure of embedded networks, yet it tinkers at the sides and never strikes at the heart.

We should and must free local residents from the grasp of these sinister arrangements, but the bill does everything but. It requires the disclosure of embedded networks at the point of sale but it does not stop them. It requires off-the-plan purchasers to be told, when they buy a new apartment, if it is likely to include an embedded network but it does not stop them. It prevents permanently locking in embedded networks but it will not prevent them. Why? What does this Government believe is the merit of an embedded network in a residential apartment? If embedded networks will not be abolished by this Government, there should at least be a positive onus on a residential strata scheme to opt in. Nobody should inherit one at the outset. Nobody should be deprived of choosing their own power and internet supplier, nor should a third party dictate the price of their power or internet in their home.

I recognise that there might be some relevance to these arrangements for caravan parks and other commercial precincts, but I cannot for the life of me understand how it is fair that an individual resident is deprived of the opportunity to find a better power or internet deal. It is anti-competitive, and it could cost those doing it tough more than they can afford. Earlier in the parliamentary term we passed new rental reforms which, in part, made it easier for people to own pets, particularly if they live in a house. The overlay of strata rules and regulations continues to confuse residents and undermine the purpose of the rental reforms related to pets. Many still remain unaware of their rights when it comes to pet ownership.

New South Wales is a jurisdiction with one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world but also has some of the least friendly laws. For example, can my pet use the grassed common area at the back of my apartment? Maybe, but also maybe not. As more and more people—especially young professionals and families—are moving into strata premises, there needs to be far more done not only to raise awareness of their pet ownership rights but also to crack down on the often opaque methods used by strata schemes to restrict very reasonable and legitimate efforts to keep pets at home. I have spoken about the need for a single source of truth in strata, and there are few examples that more vividly demonstrate this need. This same principle applies to whether I can hang my laundry from my apartment balcony. It turns out that it depends: on whether it is visible, on which part of the balcony, and on what it hangs. It depends if I have permission and it depends on the presence of any by-laws.

How can something so simple be so unclear? Strata laws need to enshrine what can and cannot be done. They also need to be clear about what is off limits for new by-laws. A by-law may not have legal standing if it is harsh, unconscionable or oppressive, but is the struggling new owner or tenant really going to question the authority of owners' corporations? This must change. As I discussed earlier, this bill goes some way to removing inhibitors to installing new EV and solar infrastructure. In practice, it would not be appropriate for a by-law to block these installations on the basis of physical appearance, but nowhere near enough work has been done to create equity among first movers in established apartments. An individual resident could bear the cost of thousands for the first EV installation, but subsequent residents could pay only hundreds to connect thereafter.

I urge the Government to think about ways to work with older schemes and avoid the inevitable outcome of this inequity through inaction. There are also concerns about the availability of information, particularly with respect to the schemes' financials. There is a requirement to provide a short summary at an annual general meeting but not at other times. Am I entitled to receive a copy of the full document if I ask for it? Based on anecdotal examples provided to me, it seems to depend on the strata manager. Some are forthcoming and will step through how the finances are tracking line by line, while others simply ignore requests. Some are so brazen as to question the motives of owners seeking information about their own home.

I accept that the plain English provision of financial information is ideal, but surely, out of an abundance of transparency, one has a right to more if they have an interest in knowing more? Perhaps the full financials should not be required to be provided, but they should certainly never be refused. I also believe in greater transparency around commissions, insurances and other fees which contribute to the cost of living for so many residents. These residents are relatively powerless and often ignorant to their imposition. While I understand that the Government will seek to address these matters in further tranches of reform, I am resolute about the need to waste no time at all on delivery. *[Extension of time]*

Finally, I make a general observation about the new provisions for mandatory training. If ever there was a demonstration that a law is too complicated, it is when that law is amended to require training for its own comprehension. I do not oppose that step and accept in the context of this debate that empowering people with more information is a noble cause, but it also demonstrates the complexity of a sector conceived of long before we had 60-storey skyscrapers coming out of the ground.

The strata laws of today are still, at their core, meant for a time gone by. If this Government believes that high-rise density, in particular, is the solution to our housing crisis, then surely it must concede that the framework to support and sustain that type of living must equally be focused on the future. I support the bill and the response to the recommendations it seeks to address, but I cannot be clearer in my view that strata is quickly emerging as the housing, financial, legal and social issue of communities across New South Wales, with my electorate of Ryde standing front and centre. This Parliament owes it to communities like Ryde, which do the heavy lifting on housing supply, to avoid making them a cautionary tale for those areas yet to experience the significant planning interventions the Government seeks to bestow upon them. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (15:50): I speak in support of the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. I am pleased that there is support for it and recognition of its importance from all sides of the House. Currently, tens of thousands of strata schemes house more than 1.2 million New South Wales residents. That number is expected to increase significantly under the Minns Government's plan to build more affordable and quality homes across New South Wales. That involves increasing density, which must include acknowledgement of the need for better quality strata schemes for our residents to take up.

In Liverpool, particularly in the Liverpool CBD, strata schemes have seen an even sharper uptake than in other parts of the State. First home buyers across our State are showing a preference for strata dwellings, with over 50 per cent opting for apartment or townhouse living, according to the InfoTrack property market update from the final quarter of last year. That preference for affordable options has driven the 2170 postcode to be the number one postcode in our State for first home buyers, most of whom are buying into apartment buildings in the rapidly densifying Liverpool CBD. Many young families see that as a pathway to one day owning their own home and as an accessible entry point into the housing market. With that uptick, it is so important for communities like Liverpool that we work to improve accountability and confidence in the strata sector.

I have previously spoken in this place about the significant issues that make the changes proposed in the bill so necessary. The Government is committed to enhancing trust in the strata sector to ensure that home owners have confidence in the buildings they own and live in. The bill implements 37 recommendations from the *2021 Report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015*. It is the second tranche of recommendations from that report that the Government is implementing and will bring significant changes to the strata sector in New South Wales.

The bill also includes other reforms to make it easier to install accessibility infrastructure in strata schemes, and to help owners in financial hardship to be better aware of their options and to more easily enter payment plans. Overall, the bill will protect owners' corporations from unfair contract terms, hold developers to account when estimating levies for new owners' corporations, make strata agents and building managers more accountable, improve strata committee governance, increase the uptake of sustainability and accessibility infrastructure, and help owners' corporations maintain their buildings.

I focus on several key reforms in the bill, firstly to strata managing agents and building managers. The bill responds to growing community concerns about practices in the strata professional services sector, improving accountability and confidence in strata managing agents and building managers. Over the past two years, my office has been contacted by many residents of existing strata schemes who were concerned with decisions made by building managers and strata managing agents, and I thank the Minister and his team for their attention to that matter. I have spoken with constituents who have had to undertake a steep learning curve and advocate for themselves to push back on some of those practices.

The bill will make that easier for those residents by prohibiting management agreements that limit agent liability, unless agents are covered by a professional standards scheme; requiring agents to produce six-monthly activity reports; imposing a statutory obligation for building managers to act in the best interests of the owners' corporation; and allowing contracts to be terminated by the tribunal where an agent or building manager has acted unlawfully. The Government will also consider further changes for building managers in the next tranche of reforms. The reforms complement the Strata Managing Agents Legislation Amendment Bill, which was passed in September of last year to strengthen agents' disclosure obligations, increase transparency and bolster the compliance and enforcement powers of NSW Fair Trading.

I also highlight the reforms to strata committees. The bill addresses concerns about the governance of strata committees and member capability. It does so by introducing additional duties and obligations on members, such as complying with relevant laws, acting with honesty and fairness, and completing mandatory training. I acknowledge and thank Liverpool resident Eloise, who raised those concerns with me, highlighting that her experience as a small business owner equipped her to serve competently as treasurer of her strata committee. However, her experience and capabilities are not the norm, and mandatory training will improve the quality of decision-making and committee functionality. That will improve the overall quality of strata schemes for the people who live under them.

The bill addresses the issue of committees, if they have been delegated, rejecting minor renovation requests without reasons. The bill will require that written reasons for refusal be provided to owners and that minor renovation requests be deemed approved where the owner does not receive a response within three months. That leads me to the impact of the bill on repair and maintenance. Because the repair and maintenance of common property is crucial to ensuring safety, functionality and value, the strata laws impose a statutory duty on owners' corporations to repair and maintain their common property.

The bill addresses concerns that some owners' corporations may be failing to meet that important duty by stopping owners' corporations from deferring repairs where safety, access or use of property is affected and where they have instituted proceedings for damages against an owner; by extending from two to six years the time for lot owners to claim damages for failure to maintain common property; by mandating that the 10-year capital works fund plan meet certain minimum requirements; and by enabling NSW Fair Trading to issue compliance notices, enter enforceable undertakings and investigate breaches of the statutory duty. Just a couple of weeks ago, 20 people were evacuated after the roof of a building in Cabramatta collapsed. Residents had complained to the strata and building manager about maintenance issues for over six months, to no avail. Finally, in the first weeks of this year, the roof collapsed on them. That should not be happening in 2025.

I also highlight the impact of the bill in assisting owners in financial hardship. The Government has heard from stakeholders that owners who have difficulties paying their levies may face unnecessary legal or bankruptcy proceedings. The bill assists owners in financial hardship by providing support options and preventing unnecessary legal or bankruptcy proceedings. It does so by requiring levy notices to include information approved by NSW Fair Trading with options for addressing arrears, available financial counselling and dispute resolution services; by allowing committees to enter payment plans on behalf of the scheme, with the tribunal able to intervene if a payment plan is unreasonably refused; by restricting debt recovery actions if a payment plan is in place and being followed; by specifying that repayments are to be applied first to levies, then interest and any debt recovery expenses, unless the tribunal, a court or the owner provides otherwise; and by increasing the notice of debt recovery action from 21 days to 30 days.

Those are all incredibly important, especially, as the member for Sydney highlighted, because strata schemes are one of the most significant reasons that people undertake bankruptcy proceedings.

The bill represents another major tranche of the strata reforms that the Government promised to deliver to rebuild trust and confidence in the New South Wales strata sector. The bill shows that the Government is committed to implementing the recommendations of the review report as well as to addressing the issues impacting residents in strata that have emerged since the tabling of the review report almost five years ago. The Government plans to bring further reforms to Parliament to implement the remaining legislative recommendations of the review, and it will do that in a timely manner. I highlight and thank the Minister and his staff, as well as the department, for their work on this much-needed and incredibly important bill. I note especially the work of Alicia Sylvester, who is in the advisers area today.

I also acknowledge stakeholders such as the Owners Corporation Network, the Financial Rights Legal Centre, the Marrickville Legal Centre, and the many residents who have shared their experiences with me. It is for them that I speak on this bill. Some have shared their fears for their financial future—the stress and anxiety caused by spiralling strata and insurance fees and the powerlessness of being trapped in a situation with no light at the end of the tunnel, until now. I am proud to be part of a government that is tackling the key issues facing our community and taking action, after almost a decade of inaction, to ensure the framework that impacts how so many in our State live is actually fit for purpose rather than just fit for developers. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:00): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate in support of the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill represents the third tranche of strata reforms that the Labor Government has introduced since the election in 2023. It seeks to implement 37 of the remaining 108 recommendations of the 2021 statutory review of the regulation of strata schemes. In acting on the recommendations of the 2021 review, the bill also seeks to make parallel amendments to the Community Land Management Act to ensure that the rules are harmonised. The Greens are pleased to see these reforms on the table, and I foreshadow that we will seek to move amendments in the other place to address some of the long-held views and concerns that have been raised by stakeholders.

As members have noted, the bill comes at a time when strata living is on the rise. More than 1.2 million people live in strata schemes across New South Wales. In the City of Sydney local government area, which falls partly within the Newtown electorate, nearly 150,000 people—75 per cent of residents—live in strata schemes. As more people turn to apartment or townhouse living, whether by preference or due to the prohibitively high and ever-growing costs of owning a detached home, strata is an increasingly critical policy area, where issues of equity and financial security and a place to call home all intersect and have a significant impact on people's lives. Yet, for so long, limited regulation within the strata sector has left thousands of residents at the mercy of opaque

procedures and strata managing agents and owners' corporations that have plenty of discretion to act on behalf of owners and few rules to follow.

The bill seeks to address that imbalance and make a number of amendments that will have a real impact on strata residents by promoting greater transparency and efficiency in strata living. That includes amending section 37 of the Strata Schemes Management Act 2015 to require members of a strata committee to exercise their functions with honesty and fairness, due care and diligence, and—as far as practicable—for the benefit of the owners' corporation. New section 37 would also include subsection (2) requiring each member of a strata committee to complete training as prescribed by the regulations. The Greens look forward to seeing those regulations in due course.

The bill would also insert a new section 70A requiring building managers to act in the owners' corporation's best interest unless there is a reasonable excuse. Of course, that begs the question of what constitutes a reasonable excuse. We hope the Minister can provide some clarification on the relevant parameters in his speech in reply or in the regulations. I note that the issue of training, as mentioned by the member for Ryde, highlights the complexity of this policy area. A number of constituents who live in large strata complexes in the Newtown electorate have raised the need to look at what constitutes adequate training and to offer guidelines and support for people who serve on strata committees.

Overall, the Greens are pleased to see the efforts made throughout the bill to enhance transparency for people living in strata. That includes the insertion of new section 110 (6A), which requires the owners' corporation to give written notice of a decision to an owner who has requested approval for minor renovations within three months of that request being received. If the owners' corporation refuses approval, that written notice must include reasons for the decision. New section 110 (6B) provides that approval is taken to have been given if no written refusal, with reasons, is given within three months of the request being received. That is a good thing and reduces the likelihood of requests being denied on arbitrary or non-existent grounds.

Similarly, the bill seeks to insert a new section 132C that outlines the specific considerations an owners' corporation must take into account when considering a resolution to approve accessibility infrastructure. Those considerations include cost and financing, maintenance and the likely impact that not installing the accessibility infrastructure would have on residents, including the resident or residents who requested it in the first place. Again, that kind of transparency is crucial to ensuring decisions that will directly impact residents cannot be made arbitrarily. I note that in previous meetings with me people have raised serious concerns about the challenges of balancing a potentially significant change that is essential for someone's participation in everyday life, such as the insertion of a ramp, with pushback from strata committees, which might claim that such a ramp does not fit with the amenity of the building.

Lastly, I draw attention to new section 139B, which would prevent the application of by-laws that prevent the installation of sustainability infrastructure like solar panels or rainwater tanks purely for aesthetic reasons. Under current section 132B (2) (f) of the Act, "sustainability infrastructure" also extends to infrastructure that "facilitates the use of sustainable forms of transport", which could reasonably be understood to include things like bike racks or other forms of bike storage. That is a commonsense approach that will make a practical difference for owners living in strata who want to do their bit to move us toward a greener future, whether by installing solar panels or by opting for an electric vehicle or a bike. However, more work needs to be done in this space.

New section 139B (2) provides that by-laws restricting the installation of sustainability infrastructure can still be applied to common property that is heritage listed or within a heritage conservation area. I note that in the Inner West local government area, which also falls partially in the Newtown electorate, many homes are listed on the local heritage register or are in a heritage conservation area. While heritage and the rich history of our suburbs is certainly important, conserving that must be carefully balanced against the need to do everything we can to address the climate crisis. The Greens would absolutely welcome the opportunity to work more constructively with the Government to ensure that the right balance is struck. Sadly, people within the Inner West Council area who have attempted to do the right thing by installing solar panels have been either told to remove them or have been unable to install them in the first place because of heritage considerations. We must do better at balancing heritage considerations with the need to install sustainability infrastructure.

Disappointingly, the bill fails to grapple with the regulatory loopholes that saw nearly 1,000 complaints to NSW Fair Trading about strata agents between 2018 and 2023, the majority of which related to conduct and finances. Last year, explosive reporting by *Four Corners* revealed a regulatory ecosystem in complete disarray, with some strata companies charging millions of dollars in insurance fees and accepting kickbacks from contractors, and others charging owners exorbitant fees with little justification. Even the now stood-down Strata and Property Services Commissioner John Minns acknowledged that strata has been "under-regulated for a very long time". In response to those revelations, rather than move to ban kickbacks or commissions entirely, the Labor Government introduced legislation in September last year that, in effect, legitimised them.

Now strata managing agents in New South Wales can take a commission as long as they disclose to the owners' corporation the amount of this commission, how it was calculated, and the nature of the relationship they have with the person providing the commission. In a similar vein, the bill does little to address the growing problems around embedded networks in New South Wales. While it seeks to amend section 184 of the Act to require owners' corporations to disclose if a strata scheme includes an embedded network and, if so, what services it provides, it does not limit the use of embedded networks or provide owners with an avenue for terminating a contract with an embedded network. Requiring disclosure of something that is dodgy or less than ideal is not the same as outlawing that dodgy or less than ideal thing.

It is critical that the New South Wales Government does not hide behind the overuse of the term "transparency" as the panacea to solving dodgy practices. It is not okay just to know something that is problematic is happening—and I recall here the debate or, dare I say, debacle around the rent-bidding reforms. We must ensure that the problematic thing is not happening in the first place, rather than just transparently disclosing that it is happening. I understand that my Greens colleague in the other place Cate Faehrmann will be moving amendments to give the embedded network provisions some teeth, namely by allowing contracts with embedded networks to be terminated at any time without penalty. [*Extension of time*]

My Greens colleague will also be moving amendments to protect those in financial hardship by making it unlawful for an owners' corporation to refuse an owner's request for a payment plan on unreasonable grounds, and to enhance disclosure requirements for building managers. Those are sensible and straightforward amendments, and I urge Government members to consider them closely. To that end, I note that for all the steps this bill takes in the right direction, it does nothing to expand the rights of renters, who make up a significant portion of residents in strata schemes. We are talking about the pressures put on owners within strata schemes, but at least they are sitting at the table and have a voice in these decisions.

Sadly, many renters are in those same situations but are unable to access the decision-making bodies and the information required. Whether it is a decision to ban bicycle storage in common areas, a blanket ban on balcony clotheslines, a by-law dictating what kind of welcome mats can be placed outside apartment front doors or the colour of umbrellas on balconies, renters and owner-occupiers are equally impacted by decisions made by strata committees. While owner-occupiers can have their voices heard at strata committee meetings and through membership of the committee itself, renters do not have that option. It is deeply concerning that, in apartment complexes that are mostly, if not entirely, investor-owned—as is not uncommon in the inner west—decisions about maintenance and common property can be made by a committee of people who do not even live anywhere near the building.

If we are to address that perverse situation, we need to seriously consider what further reforms we can make to ensure that renters have a voice in decision-making as we see more people living in strata, including by setting a quota for tenant representation on strata committees. The Greens would be very happy to work with the Government on reforms that we believe would achieve that goal and, indeed, look forward to seeing further legislation to address the 77 recommendations that remain unactioned from the statutory review. If we want to encourage people to shift towards higher density ways of living, we need to ensure they are not encumbered by challenges or complexities that people in detached dwellings do not have to deal with. Getting strata regulation right is a massive part of that challenge. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:13): I speak on behalf of the people of Heathcote and from across New South Wales about an important piece of legislation, the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. New South Wales is home to over 86,000 strata schemes housing more than 1.2 million residents. As our State grows and our Government continues to work towards delivering affordable and quality homes, strata living will play an increasingly vital role in our communities. Trust and transparency must form the foundation of this sector. Home owners must have confidence in the buildings they own and live in.

The bill implements 37 recommendations from the 2021 *Report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act 2015*. This is the second tranche of recommendations from the report that the Minns Labor Government has implemented as part of its commitment to enhance trust in the strata sector. Constituents of mine in the Heathcote electorate have made me aware of their concerns regarding some agents misusing their authority and the detrimental impacts it has had on their lives. An owners' corporation is a legal entity that manages the common property of a strata scheme, made up of all the owners of the individual units of the scheme. They are volunteers, and I have spoken to some of the elderly retired people who hold positions on these committees who have been made to feel fearful by their strata manager.

A strata manager, of course, is someone who is supposed to keep everything running. They are paid to keep everything in a strata scheme running smoothly and to help the owners' corporation fulfil all of its obligations. Owners' corporations are vulnerable to the use of unfair terms in contracts they enter into on behalf of their scheme. One such local corporation spoke of the individual officeholders on the committee being threatened with

legal action by their strata manager. These are home owners wanting to protect their assets against, at times, big bullyboys. They buy a unit in good faith, wanting to live a simple and carefree life. The bill will protect owners' corporations from unfair contract terms, hold developers to account when estimating levies for the new owners' corporation, make strata agents and building managers more accountable, improve strata committee governance, increase the uptake of sustainability and accessibility infrastructure, and help owners' corporations maintain their business.

I know that my constituents in strata living will welcome these much-needed changes as a respite from the negligence and malpractice that some agents have been able to get away with under the previous, inadequate legislation. Key reforms include imposing a statutory duty on owners' corporations to repair and maintain their common property to ensure safety, functionality and value; protecting owners' corporations from unfair terms in contracts they enter into on behalf of their scheme; promoting sustainability infrastructure in strata schemes by removing barriers and prioritising sustainable action during formal proceedings; and assisting owners in financial hardship by providing support options and preventing unnecessary legal or bankruptcy proceedings.

This bill demonstrates the Minns Labor Government's sustained commitment to rebuild trust and confidence in the New South Wales strata sector. With the implementation of the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024, we are ensuring that bad actors in the strata system are held accountable, and New South Wales residents in strata living can relax in their affordable and quality homes. I am proud to see these amendments being introduced to help protect vulnerable home owners from strata managers who show a pattern of exploitation and predatory behaviour. I look forward to seeing those individuals who put their own interests above the interests of those that they serve held to account, at the very least.

I thank my local residents, in particular one fellow who has been relentlessly seeking justice. I thank them for being brave, for coming forward and for speaking out about the abuse, the bullying and the fear that they have experienced. They have spoken about paying thousands of dollars into levies to a strata manager who did not pay the bills for services that needed to be delivered, such as water and garbage collection. They have felt helpless. I thank the Minister, his staff, especially Alicia Sylvester, who is in the advisers area, and the department for all their work. I look forward to a more fair and user-friendly system that is long overdue. I thank them all for listening and acting. I thank them for their commitment to help those who have been voiceless and powerless. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:18): I provide a brief contribution to debate on the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. The bill is a crucial reform for the millions of New South Wales residents who call strata communities home, including a significant portion of the electorate of Coogee. That electorate has one of the highest concentrations of strata properties in the State. From the Art Deco apartments that wash Clovelly to the 1960s and '70s walk-ups of Randwick and Coogee, to the very modern high-rises of Bondi Junction, thousands of residents—in fact, the vast majority of people in my electorate of Coogee—rely on well-managed, fair and transparent strata schemes.

The bill is directly relevant to the daily lives of people in our community. Strata living is no longer a niche issue. Nearly one in three people in New South Wales reside in apartments, townhouses and other strata schemes. Those communities should be places of security, fairness and good governance. Unfortunately, many owners face poor financial management, building defects and conflicts over decision-making. The bill takes significant steps to modernise and strengthen strata laws to ensure fairness, accountability and protections for all owners and residents.

For too long, strata owners have been at the mercy of poorly run committees and loopholes that allow unfair decision-making. The bill introduces tighter regulations on committees' conduct to ensure transparency, ethical decision-making and financial accountability. Owners will now have greater oversight over how their funds are managed and how key decisions are made. In areas like Coogee, Randwick and Clovelly, where many buildings are heritage-listed or are older-style apartment buildings, fair management is critical to ensure long-term maintenance and upkeep. The bill helps to guarantee that owners have a stronger say in how their buildings are run.

One of the most pressing concerns in strata living is the alarming number of building defects. In the eastern suburbs of Sydney, we have seen new developments go up quickly, only for owners to discover serious defects—from water damage to structural issues—costing them thousands and thousands in repairs. The bill strengthens protections against defective building practices and holds developers accountable for ensuring that builders are constructing to a high standard. That is particularly relevant in our community, where many residents have invested their life savings into apartment ownership. Those people deserve peace of mind that their homes are safe, durable and built to last.

Strata disputes can quickly escalate, leaving owners stuck in legal battles and financial hardship. This bill improves dispute resolution mechanisms by providing clearer processes for resolving conflicts between owners, committees and developers. It ensures that strata laws are easier to follow, more transparent and less burdensome for everyday people. For our eastern suburbs communities, where strata committees play a crucial role in maintaining the character and liveability of our area, better governance means less conflict, less uncertainty and a greater sense of community.

This legislation is not just about legal technicalities; it is about improving people's homes, investments and quality of life. It is about ensuring that strata communities are managed fairly, that residents are protected from financial exploitation and that developers deliver on their obligations. For the thousands of apartment dwellers in Coogee, Randwick, Clovelly and beyond, the reforms will bring more security, fairness and confidence in their homes and investments. The bill is a practical and necessary reform. It reflects the realities of modern apartment living and provides stronger protections, better governance and a fairer system for all. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (16:23): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. As we all know, the number of people living in homes governed by strata schemes is rising and will continue to do so, especially as the cost of housing in the Sydney metropolitan area continues to increase. Almost half of all homes that make up my community are governed by a strata scheme. My electorate is also home to Breakfast Point, which is one of the largest community associations in New South Wales. It is an amazing place but is not without its challenges.

I have listened to many constituents about the issues that they have experienced with strata schemes, from basic issues of financial transparency—which I understand this bill addresses—to issues of governance, sustainability and compliance. The reality is that strata schemes are complex and everyone in the industry, including owners, tenants, building managers and strata managers, must work together, with government, to improve strata scheme legislation. That is why we are here today. I stress how important it is that, as policymakers, we continue to listen to residents in strata schemes, to empower our communities to have more confidence and trust in the industry. That is particularly relevant in cases of repair and maintenance issues that arise in common property. I want to share one short story, which was shared with my office just last month. It read:

Dear Stephanie, I purchased an apartment in December 2022. I had a strata report conducted prior to this.

The purchaser said she thought she would do her own research. She continued:

After a few weeks I found water ingress from the terrace entering my living areas and water pooling due to no fall on the tiles. I had to seek legal help and an NCAT date for remediation as was I ignored by the strata. There are now building delays and a levy that I have had to pay of \$42000 but no work has commenced. I have been told that I will be unable to return to my home until mid June I am 74 and had hoped this move was to be my last. I am a pensioner and have moved 9 times with my elderly labrador. I have exhausted my financial funds and had this nightmare affect my health and causing stress and depression.

My main concern is for people in my community and across New South Wales—young people, families, pensioners, retirees—who find themselves in financial hardship or with significant stress because of the issues they are experiencing with strata.

I have heard the contributions of members before me today, saying that strata has been underregulated for a very long time and that, disappointingly, some in the industry have been dishonest and not acted in good faith. The bill will go some way to improve the many issues that are experienced by owners in strata schemes but, of course, there is always more work to be done. I look forward to working with everyone in this Chamber, including the Government and the Minister, to make laws governing strata schemes fairer, more practical and more workable in an everyday environment.

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:26): I support the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. Strata living has become an essential and growing component of the overall housing mix in New South Wales. Increasing population, housing density and demand for diverse living options, paired with declining housing affordability, are combining to drive the rapid expansion of the strata sector. In fact, many home owners now live in strata-titled homes. The quarter-acre block with one house is declining in large cities like Sydney and also in my electorate of East Hills. Most of my children are now owners and live in strata-titled properties, compared to when I first bought my single-dwelling home on the one block in East Hills back in the mid-1980s. With more and more people now involved in strata-titled properties, New South Wales needs a robust and responsive regulatory framework that can support the sector as it grows, both now and into the future. The Government's ambitious reform agenda is helping to deliver this regulatory framework, by tackling legacy issues in the sector while also keeping an eye on the future.

Reforms in the bill will ensure strata living remains an attractive housing option in the decades to come. I especially recognise three areas of reform: environmental sustainability, economic viability and accessibility.

Turning first to the need for environmental sustainability, the Government is aware that strata residents, owners and the wider community are increasingly concerned about the impacts of a changing environment on their housing. The bill helps to address those concerns by, firstly, requiring schemes to consider environmental sustainability at each annual general meeting. That includes consideration of annual energy and water consumption and expenditure of the scheme's common property.

Secondly, owners' corporations will be required to consider sustainability infrastructure and any associated upgrades needed as part of their capital works fund planning each year. Lastly, the bill addresses impediments to installing sustainability infrastructure by prohibiting by-laws that block sustainability infrastructure due to its appearance, except when common property is heritage listed or within a heritage conservation area. Collectively, these reforms will enable schemes to more easily incorporate sustainability and respond to changes in climate.

Turning to the matter of financial viability, I note that strata schemes are collectively owned and collectively funded through the levying of contributions on lot owners. This means that a scheme's financial viability may be at risk when owners do not pay their levies. At the same time, there is a need to ensure that schemes do not push owners into financial hardship when collecting their levies. To address this, the bill will require that levy notices be accompanied by NSW Fair Trading approved information, such as options to address arrears payments, financial counselling services available and dispute resolution options. The bill also empowers strata committees to agree to payment plans on behalf of their scheme rather than first requiring approval at general meetings.

Where there are disputes over refused payment plans, the tribunal may order that the owners' corporation enter into the payment plan if the tribunal finds that the owners' corporation should not have refused the plan. Owners' corporations will no longer be able to pursue debt recovery when an owner is complying with an agreed payment plan. Also, payments made under a tribunal or court order will now be applied first to levies, then to interest and debt recovery costs. Finally, the notice period for debt recovery action will be extended from 21 days to 30 days, giving owners more time to seek support and pay overdue levies without compromising schemes. Overall, these changes will make payment plans more accessible, reduce unnecessary debt recovery actions and provide better support for owners who are experiencing financial difficulties.

Turning to accessibility, I note that the bill introduces measures to make it easier to install accessibility infrastructure in schemes, thereby improving the lives of people living in strata communities who have special needs. No longer is a special resolution required to approve changes to common property for accessibility purposes; a majority vote will suffice. To ensure that schemes look at accessibility holistically, owners' corporations will be required to assess factors like cost, ownership, installation, maintenance and the use of any accessibility infrastructure before approving changes. They must also consider factors like the impact on residents with disabilities of refusing to install infrastructure and whether their building can support requested accessibility changes.

These reforms will address difficulties faced by residents who need modifications to common areas, ensuring that accessibility needs are better met as the population ages. Taken as a whole, the reforms I have outlined around environmental sustainability, financial viability and accessibility will go a long way to ensuring that the regulatory framework supports future strata schemes in years to come. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (16:32): I speak in support of the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This bill is part of the next phase of our Government's broad suite of reforms being pursued in the strata area. One of the Government's key missions is tackling the housing crisis, which is a major driver of the cost-of-living pressures being felt all over the State. It is an important issue for my electorate of Charlestown. Census data certainly shows an increase in the percentage of Charlestown electorate residents living in semidetached properties, townhouses and apartments between 2016 and 2021. There has been a 4.4 per cent increase in people living in houses, a 14.3 per cent increase in people living in semidetached residences and a 27 per cent increase in residential flat building in my electorate. I told the House when I spoke last year on the Strata Managing Agents Legislation Amendment Act 2024 that:

In my electorate of Charlestown, where a number of train stations have been ... [targeted for new builds] as part of the Government's groundbreaking transport oriented development strategy, strata living ... already a fact of life for many of my constituents ... will become more common.

The issues this legislation is designed to address are personal for many people in Charlestown, but this legislation is also forward thinking in solving problems before they occur. By implementing 37 of the review's recommendations, this bill makes strata living fairer for the 1.2 million people living in the 86,000 schemes across the State and makes it more accessible and attractive to those who might consider it in the future. On that note, I will illustrate to the House how key elements of the bill address issues that may be faced by people living in strata. Imagine a person who has been living in strata for 20 years, who cares about where they live, who cares

about the building in which they are living, who loves their community and who decides to give back by getting involved in the owners' corporation committee. This person does not have a legal education and has never done anything like it before.

It is fairly common for people on strata committees to have that type of experience. As the Minister pointed out during his second reading speech, when we talk about the people who are involved in owners' corporations, we are often talking about volunteers with limited or no experience. By amending the Fair Trading Act 1987, the bill seeks to address many issues that can arise in this area. In simple terms, owners' corporations or associations will be protected from unfair or predatory contractual practices. This reform represents a new height in the protection of owners' corporations, the people who constitute those corporations and those whom they represent. Similarly, the bill strengthens the governance of committees. While most members of strata committees are committed, engaged and take their responsibilities very seriously, it is complex work and it is worthwhile bolstering the safety net and helping committee members do their work.

I am sure we have all heard in our roles as local members, or in our personal lives, strata horror stories. That is what this bill is working to eradicate. So many of the impacted individuals are volunteers and this Government is working with the sector to help train them in their responsibilities. As I said, we do not want to make strata living more difficult. This reform will build in higher levels of trust and accountability. The bill tightens requirements for owners' associations to address pressing maintenance concerns by, firstly, barring those corporations from deferring works, if safety, access, or use of a lot or common property is affected; secondly, by ensuring 10-year capital works fund plans meet minimum requirements for proper maintenance, avoiding sudden expenses for owners; thirdly, by tripling 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; and, fourthly, by equipping NSW Fair Trading to enforce these requirements.

The bill also includes several reforms that will improve the accountability of, and the confidence in, strata managing agents and building managers by ensuring that an agent cannot avoid liability when acting outside their agency by prohibiting management agreements, by increasing the frequency of when managers need to provide key reports, and by allowing strata schemes to terminate agreements and contracts with managing agents and building or facilities managers when those agents or managers conduct business in contradiction of the law. The bill builds directly upon the Government's previous changes to disclosure requirements. Building managers will also have a statutory duty to act in the best interests of the strata when carrying out their works, so long as that action would be legal.

Now imagine that you are a first home buyer, who has scrimped and saved to get a deposit. You have chosen to purchase a strata lot. It is your home, you are proud of it and you are ready to make it your own. When you make an application to your owners' corporation committee to undertake minor renovations, you are turned down—and you are never told why. That was another problem identified in the review, and I am not surprised that it has the effect of generating quite a bit of tension within the owners' corporation. To help overcome this problem, the bill requires an applicant to receive written reasons for any refusal of minor renovation requests. If reasons are not provided within three months, the application for minor works is deemed to have been approved. In a similar vein, the bill will encourage the uptake of environmental sustainability infrastructure by prohibiting by-laws that block things like solar panels due to external appearance and will also increase accessibility in strata, lowering the voting thresholds required for the installation of accessibility features to common areas or individual lots.

Now imagine you are a single parent living in a strata scheme. Money is tight, but you get by. Then something unexpected happens: you lose your job, you have a serious illness or a surprise cost. You might get behind on your levies. Or perhaps there is an urgent maintenance issue in the building, which could not be reasonably foreseen and is not incorporated in the levies, and the owners' corporation needs to generate funds with an extra levy. Suddenly there is a massive, unexpected cost you need to pay. The bill assists people in that situation by requiring levy notices to be accompanied by Fair Trading approved information setting out a person's options, including payment plans, free financial counselling and dispute resolution support.

Committees will also be able to enter into payment plans directly with owners facing financial difficulties, rather than having to vote on the issue at a general meeting, as is currently the case. That will not prevent owners' corporations from making the best choices for individual circumstances faced by their scheme because a payment plan can be reasonably refused. However, in the absence of reasonable grounds, an owner will be able to challenge the decision in the tribunal. If an agreed payment plan is being complied with, owners' corporations will be limited in taking debt recovery action. The notice period for that action will increase, giving owners more time to work towards a solution. The changes will ensure that fewer strata residents end up facing legal or bankruptcy proceedings for failing to meet their levy obligations.

The bill takes several important steps to assist owners' corporations in meeting ongoing maintenance requirements and helping individual owners to understand the overall cost of their purchase of a strata lot. Currently the original owner of the strata property must prepare an initial maintenance schedule ahead of the first annual general meeting. The schedule informs decisions taken by the owners' corporation, including the capital works fund plan, the initial levies paid by new buyers, and so on. The legislative review found that the schedules vary widely in quality across schemes. The bill requires the original owner to meet certain standards set out in the regulation and to obtain independent certification of the details. The new requirements may be enforced, with a maximum penalty of \$55,000 for noncompliance on the original owner.

In summary, the bill is important for the Charlestown electorate. We need to increase housing density to meet population growth and we need to see increased apartment and townhouse-type development. To do that we need to increase the attractiveness of and reduce the barriers to living in a strata development. The Minister said in his second reading speech, "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." I could not agree more. This bill is the latest in the Government's efforts to fix the housing crisis, and it will deliver real and important reforms for my constituents, now and into the future. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:42): I contribute to debate on the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. For the community of North Shore, strata is crucial to the way we live our lives every day. Just like me, more than half of my community live in strata schemes, which is significantly higher than in most of the electorates represented in this Parliament. When narrowed down to the constituent councils and local government areas, it means that more than 70 per cent of those living in the North Sydney local government area live within strata complexes. Our lives are affected every day by the environments in which we live, so the reforms are the crucial next step to ensuring we deliver necessary improvements to the way strata schemes operate.

I live in a strata scheme as a renter, and I also have experience as an owner in a strata scheme in my community. Just like me, residents across my electorate have regular concerns that, I am sure, are consistently raised with many members of this House. There are concerns about governance, transparency and accountability, and the financial management of projects. There are concerns about rules around pets. There are concerns about the application and approval process for renovations and the management of maintenance for the complexes or for minor works. Increasingly, there are concerns about whether strata schemes are appropriately managing applications for solar and electric vehicle chargers and whether they are on common property or on lot-owner property.

The recommendations that are recognised in this legislation will go some way to address some of those concerns. However, this legislation responds to only 37 of the 139 recommendations from the statutory review into the Act. The Government has chosen to take a piecemeal approach to the way it is responding to strata reform, which some would see as a positive. Rather than waiting to address all 139 recommendations, it is addressing some as it goes. However, from my community's perspective, I would say the goal is to speed up and address all the recommendations.

Considering the amount of work that went into the review, the extent and breadth of the recommendations and how much pressure there is on owners and renters in strata schemes, the Government needs to get on and address the remainder of the recommendations. During its tenure the previous Liberal Government undertook some reforms to commence that work. The department had significantly progressed in addressing and responding to those recommendations, so I am sure there is already a lot of work for this Government to get on and deliver.

I refer to a couple of the changes in the legislation that I have heard from my community will be particularly welcomed. Firstly, there is the introduction of some improvements in governance. It is not uncommon in my community for there to be conflicts between members within strata schemes. There have been issues with proxy farming and individuals believing that those on strata committees are inappropriately exercising their roles and responsibilities. The governance improvements for strata committee members, including the mandatory training and penalties for noncompliance, will go a way to addressing that, as will ensuring that there is clarity around the responsibilities of the chairperson.

Secondly, financial transparency will be a vast improvement. There is a lot of commentary on our community's social pages about the quality of managers of different strata schemes throughout the electorate. Anecdotally, owners and renters say there is a huge disparity in the capabilities of those managers. The financial transparency improvements for financial and operational reports and activities will also be an improvement, including providing estimates for maintenance and capital works levies and ensuring that they are certified by independent surveyors.

Thirdly, people in the community of North Shore also welcome clarity around sustainability measures, including ensuring that sustainability infrastructure cannot automatically be prohibited through by-laws. There are a lot of heritage considerations in my area, but they are predominantly not within strata schemes. It is important to ensure that we reflect on the needs of local communities, particularly with the drive towards sustainability, addressing climate change and moving towards renewable energy. There is huge demand for electric vehicle chargers and solar panels at strata properties. Strata complexes in my community do not just include small or large apartment buildings but townhouses as well, and they have distinct roof spaces. We need to ensure that the owners of lots and the schemes themselves can benefit from renewable energy and lower cost energy sources. For too long they have been prohibited from accessing those.

In my community there will be an incredible increase in strata schemes in the years to come. As I said, more than 70 per cent of the dwellings in the North Sydney local government area are in strata schemes. Under the Minns Government strategy, an increasing number of low- to medium-density dwellings are being proposed for town centres across New South Wales. If the Government is capable and can successfully deliver the new housing, there will be an incredible increase in the number of strata properties in my community, with another 5,900 units in towers of up to 40 storeys across Crows Nest and St Leonards. The Government needs to get the changes right quickly, before that development starts across my community and New South Wales.

As I said at the beginning, I welcome the changes in this bill and the 37 recommendations that are being progressed. I encourage the Government to act quickly with the wise minds in the department to ensure that we address the remainder of the 139 recommendations still outstanding to ensure we are reflecting the rights, needs and future prospects of those who either own or rent in strata dwellings.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:49): I make a brief contribution in support of the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This bill is a significant step towards ensuring that strata living in New South Wales is safe, affordable and reliable. The bill enacts 37 recommendations from the *Report on the statutory review of the Strata Schemes Development Act 2015 and Strata Schemes Management Act* and incorporates additional reforms raised by stakeholders since the review. The Government remains committed to improving the lives of strata residents and protecting owners' corporations. These reforms will improve the accountability of strata management services, ensure buildings are properly maintained and make strata living more accessible and equitable.

Strata living is becoming an essential part of the New South Wales housing landscape. With more than 86,000 strata schemes in the State, projections suggest that within 15 years 50 per cent of our population will live in strata developments. Meeting our housing targets demands that we not only build more homes but also ensure strata living is an attractive option, underpinned by robust governance and public trust. The Government has already introduced landmark reforms in housing, including measures for planning, building quality and rental affordability. The Strata Legislation Amendment Act 2023 and the Strata Managing Agents Legislation Amendment Act 2023 laid the groundwork for this bill. Key reforms in the bill strengthen accountability to ensure trust in strata managing agents and building managers. The bill prohibits liability avoidance clauses in management agreements, except when they are covered by professional standards schemes.

The bill increases the reporting frequency by managers to improve transparency and enables the termination of agreements if agents or managers operate unlawfully. The bill also imposes a statutory duty on building managers to act in the best interests of the owners' corporation, reinforcing accountability and trust within the sector. Many owners' corporations are run by volunteers without legal expertise, leaving them vulnerable to unfair contracts. The bill prohibits unfair terms in standard contracts for goods, services or land sales to owners' corporations by aligning with the Fair Trading Act 1987. This change ensures that suppliers comply with fair contract standards, providing owners with stronger consumer protections.

The bill will improve the governance of committees by ensuring that strata and association committee members are tasked with acting for the benefit of owners' corporations. However, concerns about poor performance have prompted additional obligations in the bill, including acting with honesty and fairness and complying with relevant laws. Mandatory training will be rolled out to support committee members in meeting these new standards. The bill tackles noncompliance in maintaining common property by preventing the deferral of essential repairs that affect safety or access. The bill mandates that 10-year capital works plans meet minimum requirements to avoid unexpected financial burdens. It also extends the time for lot owners to claim damages from two to six years.

The bill empowers NSW Fair Trading to enforce compliance with maintenance obligations. These changes aim to protect residents from the financial and physical consequences of poor maintenance. The bill also addresses longstanding issues with initial maintenance schedules, which are often inaccurate or misleading, leading to underfunded levies. New requirements include the independent certification of schedules and levy estimates and higher penalties for developers who fail to comply. These measures will ensure a smoother transition for new

owners' corporations. For utility supply contracts, embedded networks often lock strata residents into uncompetitive contracts. The bill extends protections under section 132A of the Strata Schemes Management Act to embedded networks, enabling owners' corporations to seek better deals.

The bill introduces a balanced approach to levy non-payment and ensures that an owner in financial hardship receives support while maintaining a scheme's financial stability. Reforms include mandatory levy notices with information on payment plans and financial counselling, as well as easier access to payment plans, with protection from debt recovery while plans are active. The bill promotes environmental sustainability by prohibiting by-laws that reject sustainability infrastructure, such as solar panels or electric vehicle chargers, based on appearance alone. Annual discussions on energy and water efficiency will be mandated. The bill also lowers voting thresholds for changes to common property to accommodate residents with disabilities. Now only a simple majority will be required for accessibility-related modifications. These reforms are vital in creating inclusive communities that cater to all residents.

The Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 represents a significant step in modernising strata living in New South Wales. These reforms will uplift the governance, sustainability and accessibility of strata schemes while protecting the interests of residents. The bill is a testament to the Government's commitment to improving the lives of the people of New South Wales and ensuring that strata living remains a viable and attractive housing option. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:57): I speak in strong support of the Strata Schemes Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. There are now more than 86,000 strata schemes in New South Wales. This number will continue to grow as New South Wales builds up to meet housing demands. Behind all those schemes are ordinary owners who rely on their strata agent and building manager to help them manage their strata. In Riverstone there is an explosion of strata schemes coming into the area. Large swathes of land that were once home to cattle and market gardens have become unit towers, particularly in the suburbs of Schofields and Tallawong. We have heard many stories in the media about some strata agents not acting in the best interests of their clients or the owners' corporation. I have received some of those complaints through my office. Owners should not have to worry about whether their agent or building manager is acting in their best interests.

This bill includes reforms to increase protections for owners' corporations and improve accountability and confidence in strata managing agents and building managers. The bill adds to the reforms passed by the Government in September last year that increased agent's disclosure requirements around conflicts of interests. I will address the specific reforms contained in the bill.

I begin with a significant reform in the bill that many stakeholders have been calling for: a prohibition on unfair contract terms in standard form contracts with owners' corporations. Owners' corporations are made up of volunteers. Most of them have no legal expertise and may not understand the implications of certain contract terms until it is too late. The bill prohibits unfair terms in standard form contracts for the supply of goods or services to an owners' corporation. The bill amends the Fair Trading Act 1987 so that prohibited unfair contract terms and associated remedies under Australian Consumer Law apply.

The bill also prohibits two types of terms in strata agency agreements that the public raised as concerning. First, the bill prohibits terms requiring an owners' corporation to pay for the managing agent's professional indemnity liabilities, including insurance excesses. Second, the bill prohibits terms that limit an agent's ability to specify a monetary amount except when an agent's agreement is covered by a professional standards scheme within the meaning of the Professional Standards Act 1994. Those changes ensure agents do not avoid being held accountable for actions that go beyond the directions of the owners' corporation. Further, the bill requires strata managing agents to make a record of functions they exercise for the owners' corporation.

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

STEEL AND ALUMINIUM EXPORTS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:01): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that a trade war with increasing tariffs and quotas is in no-one's interest.
- (2) Notes that in 2023-24, New South Wales' total steel and aluminium exports to the United States were worth \$511 million, representing 16 per cent of New South Wales' total steel and aluminium exports.
- (3) Notes that Australian steel and aluminium products compete with the rest of the world with no tariffs and quotas.

- (4) Calls on all governments to act quickly on preventing foreign dumping of steel and aluminium products that could cost Aussie jobs.

I hope that the House can stand united on the importance of our various economies and industries having a free trade approach to meeting the demands of communities across the world, and the fact that our businesses are and have been competing on the global front for decades. Those that are doing and continuing to do well today have done so on their own two feet. They have created a fantastic product at a desirable price. A bunch of businesses are no longer with us today because they have not been able to make that transition to the global free trade market. On that last point, I speak about the incredible industrial hub of the Hunter, which is matched only by Western Sydney and the Illawarra. I know we will hear from the members in those areas soon, but the Hunter has been an incredible industrial community for decades.

Indeed, when I reflect on my time at Marist Brothers in Maitland, an all-boys school, about two-thirds of students left school by the end of year 10 and got trades. Most of them were in industry and manufacturing, and they became tradespeople in their own right. Many of them do it extremely well. That is the history of the Hunter Valley. A lot of those jobs and industries no longer exist, which is sad and disappointing. The most significant disappearance of one of those industries was BHP Steel. More recently in my time as the member representing that wonderful community, we lost Hydro Aluminium at Kurri Kurri. A whole bunch of global pressures in place at the time meant that Hydro Aluminium had to make a decision about its closure and departure from the market. At that particular time massive amounts of aluminium were being dumped into the global market, which basically meant that a hardworking, multi-decade business known as Hydro Aluminium, which originally started as Alcan Aluminium, could not compete in that environment. It could not get through that difficult period.

Because Hydro Aluminium could not ride out the amount of aluminium dumping on the market at that time, 500 people in the Cessnock electorate lost their jobs. Around 20 or 30 per cent of those workers would never find work again. Even the local tyre shop lost about a million dollars a year worth of business. The local bowling club lost 20 or 30 per cent of its trade and turnover. The flow-on effect of our workers losing their jobs was significant—in the coffee shops, the hairdressers, the supermarkets and the bike shops. The flow-on effect on that particular occasion, with that particular business and that particular aluminium manufacturing industry was because of the dumping of aluminium products. That is the risk that we face right now with regard to potential tariffs in different parts of the world.

I speak about another tariff imposed more recently in the Hunter, which was on our wine industry. That had a really significant effect on our ability to manufacture and export wines to different countries. Again, that was because of trade tariffs. Tariffs can be really damaging to not only the community on which they are imposed but also communities globally that have set up business models that rely on exports or imports that do not have tariffs attached to them. For example, a significant portion of the Australian steel imported into the United States, one of our wonderful trade partners, goes into US defence markets. As our defence ally, the US uses Australian steel to prop up its wonderful businesses and industry that manufacture important defence products and to create brilliant, permanent, full-time jobs in the US.

Of course, that then brings us to the concept of the AUKUS deal, which Australia and Britain and the United States have entered into together. Australia is relying on the US and Britain to manufacture the submarines that we will ultimately benefit from. I hope the House will note that tariffs can be dangerous. We need good businesses to stand on their own two feet and operate in a global market. A number of businesses are doing that. One of the risks facing Australia at the moment is that tariffs imposed may well lead to foreign dumping of steel and aluminium, which could have a significant flow-on effect to many businesses in our community.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (17:08): In support of the motion, I speak on an issue that affects Australian jobs, industry and economic stability, and the impact of trade wars and tariffs on our steel and aluminium sectors. As we know and have heard from the member for Cessnock, a trade war is a lose-lose situation. Where is Kevin Rudd? That is the question Australians are asking as Donald Trump moves forward with tariffs that could cripple steel and aluminium exports.

Those tariffs threaten an industry worth over \$511 million to New South Wales alone, representing thousands of Australian jobs in manufacturing, supply chains and exports, yet our ambassador has been missing in action. Yesterday the Prime Minister was umming and aahing during question time on this issue—no confidence whatsoever. This pressing issue threatens Australian jobs; it threatens our manufacturing sector and our global trade standing. But there has been silence from our ambassador to the United States, Kevin Rudd, in the face of new tariffs on Australian steel and aluminium.

When nations impose tariffs and quotas, they do not hurt only their trading partners; they hurt their own businesses, workers and consumers. They disrupt supply chains, as we heard before, increase costs and put hardworking Australians at risk. Let us be clear: New South Wales is a major player in the steel and aluminium

trade. In the 2023-24 financial year, New South Wales exported over \$511 million worth of steel and aluminium to the United States, making up 16 per cent of our total steel and aluminium exports. Those exports represent thousands of direct and indirect Australian jobs in steel production, transport and logistics—downstream industries that rely on a strong manufacturing sector. The real issue is fair competition. Australian steel and aluminium products are among the best in the world—high quality, high grade, reliable and produced under strong environmental work standards—yet we face an unfair playing field. While our exports are hit with tariffs and quotas, some countries flood the global market with artificially cheap steel and aluminium, often backed by government subsidies.

That is not fair trade; it is economic dumping, as we heard from the member for Cessnock. It puts our workers and our local manufacturing at a massive disadvantage. History has shown us the devastating impact of trade wars. When the United States has imposed steel and aluminium tariffs before, they have disrupted global markets and led to job losses in multiple industries in Australia and around the world. Tariffs may seem like a way to protect domestic jobs but, in reality, they often drive up costs for local businesses and weaken economies. Australia must not be caught in the crossfire of those trade conflicts. That is why this House must send a strong message, and I thank the member for Cessnock. We reject trade wars and protectionist policies that harm Australian exporters. Instead, we must push for fair and open trade agreements that protect Australian jobs, ensure competition, and allow Australian steel and aluminium to compete on merit, not on—

Ms Kate Washington: Imagine if we made trains here.

Mr MARK COURE: We will get to that too. We must take action here at home.

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

Mr MARK COURE: We call on all levels of government to defend Australian industry, to work with international partners to ensure that Australian products are not hit with unfair tariffs and quotas, and to invest in local manufacturing. The motion is necessary, but we must back it with real policy shifts. NSW Labor must be proactive, not reactive, in protecting Australian jobs. Our workers and industries deserve more than empty promises. I support the motion.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:12): Only the member for Oatley could come into this place and say what he has just said. I will give a little bit of a history lesson before I start. I remember former Premier Gladys Berejiklian standing in this place and saying, "We don't do manufacturing very well in New South Wales". She went to Germany and came back saying, "We don't do it very well in this State".

Mr Mark Coure: Not true—we built ferries and we built buses. Don't lie; just apologise.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The nice bipartisanship we had in this debate seems to have broken down.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Before I start, I put on record that Port Kembla produces the strongest steel in the world. I support the motion and assure my community in the Illawarra that the Minns Labor Government is well and truly in their corner. Should we be negatively impacted by tariffs placed on our exports, we will not stand by and say nothing. I will speak mainly about the impact of the increase in tariffs on steel, as it is highly relevant to my community in the Illawarra, but I also assure workers and their families who rely on other exports that I will always be on their side when it comes to unfair tariffs. This debate is very important to the people whom I represent in this House, as the electorate of Shellharbour is just south of Port Kembla, one of Australia's most significant locations for steel manufacturing.

Just a few months ago the Premier visited the Illawarra with our Federal colleagues to announce a centre of excellence for manufacturing. We are looking at new technologies, new jobs, new opportunities and new hope for those thousands of employees who are looking to a Labor government—and, let us face it, we are the party of the worker—to provide those opportunities and to ensure those stable, long-term prospects. Tariffs do not help that situation. Those jobs are sustainable in the long term as they are not protected by inbound tariffs on imported steel. It is only fair that our steel industry is not put at risk by tariffs on steel destined for overseas markets. New South Wales businesses such as BlueScope Steel in Port Kembla export to the most competitive markets around the globe and are extremely successful in doing so. As a strong trading region, New South Wales does not want tariffs propping up industries. Our businesses operate on their merits and are therefore highly efficient. The Government supports free trade.

The Port Kembla Steelworks is only 15 minutes from Shellharbour and Dapto, and residents and businesses in my electorate would be adversely impacted by any threat to steel exports caused by tariffs on products or material produced at Port Kembla and destined for our export markets. Significant investment is already being undertaken to ensure that steel manufacturing at Port Kembla is viable well into the future, including the relining

of blast furnace No. 6, and we must ensure that tariffs do not interfere with the viability of the export of steel from Port Kembla or anywhere else in Australia. I support Premier Minns's call for all governments to work together to ensure that our strong manufacturing industries get a fair go when it comes to export opportunities. The community knows that under the Minns Labor Government, unlike the former Government led by those opposite, New South Wales trade policy is in safe hands.

The Government and our Minister for Industry and Trade stand ready to assist the Federal Government on that important issue. A trade war is not in the interests of workers in the Illawarra and their families. Another relevant threat to our local steel industry is the risk of overseas interests dumping cheap steel into Australia as part of a trade war. I reiterate that Port Kembla produces the strongest steel in the world, and the Government does not want to see the dumping of cheap goods into Australia, which would damage our industries in the long term. That has also been raised with the Commonwealth Government and we will help as much as possible. I am honoured to represent a community that has had local steel manufacturing for nearly 100 years, and I hope that steel will continue to be manufactured in the Illawarra for another 100 years. The Government understands that tariffs hurt everyone, and I support the motion.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:18): It is a pleasure to speak on this topic, which is very important to all of Australia and particularly to the industrial powerhouse that is the Hunter Valley. What President Trump is doing in the United States is piquing our interest. Certainly a trade war is in no-one's interest, but it cannot be a surprise that President Trump is doing what he thinks is the best thing for the United States. Therefore, in some ways, the proposed tariffs on steel and aluminium cannot be a surprise.

Those materials are base products and are very energy intensive. For far too long, countries all around the world have used our coal to produce products at a much lower rate, and we are now struggling to compete in that market. President Trump is making moves to protect his market and those jobs; we should look at our country and see what is best for us.

The United States is our third largest trading partner. We export \$33 billion in goods to the United States and import \$65 billion in goods from the United States, meaning that there is a trade surplus. There could be no greater reason for President Trump to give us an exemption on those tariffs than that trade surplus. Australia is not a threat to the American economy, and that trade surplus proves it. If anything, NSW Labor is probably more of a threat to the New South Wales economy in many ways. The United States is a significant investor in Australia, with investment standing at \$1.17 trillion in 2023. The United States is also by far Australia's largest foreign investment destination, with our investment standing at \$1.2 trillion last year. That two-way investment has more than tripled since the free trade agreement came into force, and it is a really important part of our relationship.

Australia is still an important market for visitors from the United States, and the relationship between our two countries remains strong—not just in the tourist sector, but also in the defence sector. We are working together on projects of significance for both countries. When I worked on the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program at Williamstown, I noted that the Americans saw that base and the one in the Northern Territory as an important part of their own defence network. Of course, the tariffs have a huge impact on Tomago Aluminium, which has 1,000 local staff and involves many contractors and businesses. I remember visiting Tomago Aluminium as a youngster, and many of my school friends eventually went on to work there. It is a big industry that supports many businesses around the area.

Ms Kate Washington: In the Port Stephens electorate.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL: The Port Stephens electorate—that is right. It is in the Hunter. One of our great exports is the beef that comes from the Hunter. It is an important part of our relationship with the United States. The United States is currently going through a rebuild of its herd, and we are now topping our numbers. We can supply the lean beef that America needs to feed its people. They take the premium cuts and sell them around the world. We do the same, but we are an important part of their food network. That is the relationship that we want to rely on as we go forward and negotiate better deals with the United States to ensure that we can continue to trade without tariffs.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:23): I speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Cessnock and thank him for bringing forward this debate on a very important issue to New South Wales and the whole of Australia. Government members listen to the members on the other side of the Chamber, who are now in opposition, speaking about things they did when they were in government. What a joke they are! They are nothing more than economic vandals. In Western Sydney we have the largest industrial manufacturing base in the Southern Hemisphere, despite 12 years of the former Government's policies. That 12 years saw thousands of jobs shed from manufacturing throughout New South Wales and billions of dollars sent to contracts overseas. It is absolutely appalling.

Let us consider some of the examples. Who can forget the intercity rail fleet? Billions of dollars went to South Korea. The light rail went to France and Spain. Ferries went to China and Indonesia. Buses went to Germany and Malaysia. Those were all products that could be made here in New South Wales. Let us look at the intercity fleet in more detail: \$2.3 billion was sent overseas and awarded to an offshore company. In 2023 the light rail was awarded to a Spanish company, and look at how well that went. So good! There was a \$300 million investment to build rail lines from Sydney to Melbourne, Brisbane and Canberra. The project is three years late and has blown out by \$1 billion—and the trains did not fit the tracks. We had absolute incompetence from the former Government for 12 years.

The whole approach of the Minns Government is completely the opposite. We are looking at local manufacturing. We are looking at our trade partners overseas and taking that role seriously. Who can forget that in its dying days the former Government also slashed \$200 million from the trade portfolio? Opposition members have no right to sit here and smile. I am looking at the member for Oatley. He is smiling as he thinks of the thousands of jobs he destroyed as a Minister in that Government. He should apologise, resign from Parliament and go the way of the rest of them. All they were good at was destroying jobs in New South Wales, one after the other. Let us look at some of the top companies in Western Sydney. There are so many in Western Sydney, and that is where the money and the contracts should be going.

Mr Kevin Anderson: You want to talk about resigning from Parliament?

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT: The member for Tamworth is another failed Minister who will spend the rest of his career in opposition. Let us consider Precision Oxycut and Allthread Industries, with sites in Smithfield and Newcastle operating since the '70s. It is the largest steel profiling company in New South Wales, employs more than 105 people, and produces more than 150 tonnes of steel plates per day. It has grown to be a leading manufacturer across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. Hycast Metals is another outstanding Australian company that manufactures stainless steel castings. It is a world-class supplier of precision investment castings to projects like the Dubai International Airport terminal and the Central Police Station in Hong Kong—it supplied more than 8,200 aluminium bricks to that project alone.

BlueScope Steel down the coast and at Badgerys Creek produces 80,000 new steel house frames and more than 24,000 tonnes of steel per year, creating more than 300 jobs. Vulcan has been around since the '90s. It produces a whole range of steel and aluminium products that are shipped overseas. Those are the types of companies that government contracts should go to, contrary to the failed policies produced by the previous Government. The Minns Labor Government in New South Wales cares about manufacturing and tariffs. It talks to the Federal Government. The outstanding Prime Minister in Canberra is talking directly with Trump. The ambassador, who members opposite like to have a go at, is also doing the same.

We do not care about politics when it comes between us and the United States because we are trade partners and good friends. We have been friends since before World War II, and we will continue to be close friends for many years to come. This is just like the Super Bowl. Opposition members are the Chiefs and Government members are the Phillies. The Opposition is going to be treated just the same by the electorate in two years time—it will go down in a big way.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:28): I speak in support of the motion by the member for Cessnock. The people in the gallery are here to hear about free trade, of course. Welcome. The announcement today by United States President Donald Trump of a 25 per cent tariff on steel and aluminium around the world, which includes Australia, is extremely devastating. It is especially devastating for Australian jobs and for the Australian economy.

We have to do everything we can to make sure that 25 per cent comes off. It is so important. I note from the motion that New South Wales' total steel and aluminium exports to the United States [US] were worth \$511 million in the past year. That represents 16 per cent of New South Wales' total steel and aluminium exports, so it is a really important industry to the people of New South Wales and particularly to members of Parliament whose communities will be greatly impacted.

I come to this debate as a person who believes strongly in the merits of free trade. I grew up in the years of the Hawke, Keating and Howard governments, which were all about opening up the Australian economy. Free trade has led to economic growth, lower prices, increased investment, contestability, productivity and, most importantly, jobs. The decision today will certainly impact lots of jobs, which is why this motion is so important. As I said in my first speech in May 2023:

I believe in freedom of the individual; leaner, effective and efficient government; and embracing free markets and enterprise.

I am a big believer in free trade and its importance. I note that in 2023 US-Australia free trade was worth about \$100 billion. I also note that the member for Upper Hunter said that the US actually has a trade surplus. I have

had the opportunity to meet with two people who share my views on the importance of free trade. The first is former US Trade Representative Bob Zoellick, who also happens to be the boss of great northern beaches local Rich Mills. In 2004 he oversaw the free trade agreement with United States with none other than the great Nationals member Mark Vaile. At the time, I was studying in Washington, DC and working at the National Republican Congressional Committee under the presidency of George W. Bush.

When I met Zoellick he said that Australia and the US would get great mutual benefits from free trade in "a twenty-first century, state-of-the-art agreement that strengthens America's position within the modern globalised economy." So 2005 was very different from 2025. He also said:

... increasing trade between our nations – projected to rise by billions of dollars - and therefore, creating more economic opportunity in both the United States and Australia.

Fast-forward to 2018, and the second person from the US whom I had the opportunity to meet and who is a great champion of free trade was the former Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. Whilst at the Harvard Kennedy School I had a great conversation with Mr McConnell, a Kentuckian, who was very interested in Australia. He has spoken strongly on the record about tariffs, stating on 25 September 2024:

I'm not a fan of tariffs ... I'm more of a free-trade kind of Republican that remembers how many jobs are created by the exports that we engage in.

We have allies within the United States and of course we know that our ambassador will be working hard to ensure that he activates those allies. I join with the New South Wales Government and Australian Government to urge the Trump Administration to exempt Australia for the following reasons. The first is that we share the values of liberty, democracy and the rule of law. Second, we are the strongest of allies and the closest of friends, signing ironclad agreements. In particular, I call out the ANZUS treaty, signed in 1951 and invoked on 11 September 2001. Third, free trade leads to both our nations' economic prosperity. That is so important.

Finally, I note that there are many people in the gallery who are interested in free trade also, and I am glad they have come to the Parliament specifically for this debate. Welcome. We are in a cost-of-living crisis, and I believe increasing tariffs or taxes hurts our economy. We all need to make sure we do our bit. We need to ensure that we are continually embracing free markets and, importantly, free trade.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:33): In reply: I welcome the support from across the Parliament in this brief debate about the importance of free trade, the dangers of tariffs and the concerns we all have about product dumping, particularly of steel and aluminium, on the international market. Literally thousands of jobs are at risk right here in Australia—good jobs that people can build a career around to, hopefully, buy their own home, put food on their table, keep a roof over their head, pay their bills and go about building a family. I recognise the members who contributed to the bipartisan debate on the motion this afternoon. I appreciate listening to the member for Oatley. I have heard about the potential for people to operate in different dimensions while occupying the same space. He is a good guy, and really funny. I do love it when he is on his feet, but I think his criticism of our ambassador to the United States [US], Kevin Rudd, was a little unfair.

Mr Rudd was successful in making sure that our foreign affairs Minister, Penny Wong, visited the United States and attended the presidential inauguration. Defence Minister Richard Marles is meeting with the United States Secretary of Defense today, and the Prime Minister had what sounds like a successful phone call with the US President this morning. The member for Shellharbour gave us an excellent history lesson about what exactly has happened in this Chamber in recent years. I reiterate her point about Port Kembla steel being the strongest in the world.

Mr Paul Scully: Nothing better.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: There is no steel better. In the Ultimate Fighting Championship of steel, it is the world champion. The member for Upper Hunter—a neighbour of mine—pointed out that there is a positive net surplus trade position for Australia with the US. The US sends us more than it buys from us, which hopefully gives us strong leverage in the conversation. The member referred to Tomago Aluminium, which employs 1,000 people in the Hunter. The member for Prospect gave an extensive list of local businesses that export successfully from his electorate. The member for Davidson always has been and always will be a strong supporter of free trade. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

*Members***INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Pittwater, I acknowledge that we have numerous visitors joining us. I recognise you and welcome you all. I acknowledge just a few guests who are in the gallery—there are so many. I welcome Jacqui's father, John Taylor, who is in the seat of honour, dead-centre at the front of the gallery. I welcome Jacqui's parents-in-law, Cathy and Harold Scruby. I certainly know Harold. Cathy, it is nice to meet you. I welcome Jacqui's children, Sienna and Saskia—don't say anything; we will have to throw you out if you speak. And, of course, I welcome the member's husband. We cannot forget Michael, the father of the member's children. I also acknowledge the former member for Parramatta, Tanya Gadiel, whom I remember. Nobody puts Tanya in a corner. Tanya, it is lovely to see you here again today. With those introductory comments, I call the member for Pittwater.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (17:46): It is an incredible honour to have been elected to this Parliament, the oldest in Australia. I am not the first member to stand here and claim their electorate to be the best in New South Wales. But maybe those members had not visited the northern tip of Greater Sydney, my electorate of Pittwater. It is Garigal land of the Eora nation, rich with Aboriginal heritage, with rock platforms still covered in ancient engravings. I pay my respects to the Garigal people and First Nations people across New South Wales and Australia.

Nearly the entire western foreshore remains as it has been for millennia, protected within Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. It is a natural wonderland, with its sandy coves that vanish at high tide, mangrove forests, waterfalls, rock pools, gum-lined escarpments and rainforest gullies. In 1788, six weeks after landing at Sydney Cove, Governor Phillip rounded Barrenjoey Headland and sailed into Pittwater, which he called "the finest piece of water he ever saw"—high praise from a man who had navigated the world. As a peninsula we have not only Pittwater but also the beautiful Narrabeen Lagoon and stunning surf beaches, arguably Sydney's best and seemingly free of the plastic pollution that plagues beaches worldwide.

We are a unique electorate. We are home to offshore communities like Scotland Island and Mackerel Beach, where people choose nature and community over convenience. We have semi-rural properties in Terrey Hills, Duffys Forest and Ingleside. Maybe our greatest triumph is that, despite being in a major city, we are homes nestled in trees rather than trees amongst homes. When I think about what I love about Pittwater, clear themes emerge: natural beauty; a healthy, active lifestyle; and the enterprising spirit of our people, whether it is in business, volunteering or civic engagement. This is the spirit of Pittwater.

Ours is an active, community-minded electorate. Our kids surf before school—sometimes—and it is not uncommon to see an 85-year-old doing a morning sunrise swim or having a run on the beach. We are engaged and informed, with over 20 residents' groups. This engagement, whilst making my electorate office inbox a bit daunting at times, is something that I deeply respect. Whether it was forming Pittwater Council in 1993, keeping Currawong Beach in public hands, expanding conservation zones or the recent triumph against PEP11, people in Pittwater have stepped up time after time.

It is Westminster tradition to acknowledge former members for one's electorate. I respect the strong Liberal history Pittwater has, and pay tribute to its leadership. Pittwater's first member, Robert Askin, was also one of New South Wales's longest serving Premiers. His successors were Bruce Webster, Max Smith, Jim Longley, John Brogden—who recently co-chaired the NSW Drug Summit—Independent Alex McTaggart, Rob Stokes and Rory Amon. Each has shaped this electorate. I share many values and policy positions with Rob Stokes. In fact, his inaugural speech could have well been my own. Pittwater is also home to the wry Barrie Unsworth, one of New South Wales's oldest living Premiers. I thank them and local government representatives for their leadership—including the member for Wakehurst, who is present—and especially Robert Dunn, whose activism, alongside the people of Pittwater, has shaped the remarkable community that we have today.

My connection to the northern beaches spans generations. My great-grandfather co-founded Dee Why Surf Life Saving Club, competing in the same surf carnivals as Duke Kahanamoku—which is somewhat ironic, given my surfing ability, or inability, if you ask my kids. My graceful and kind grandmother, Moya Maloney, was a principal at St Ives High School and my grandfather, Jack Moloney, was a principal at Pittwater High School during the famed Binishell infrastructure revolution. Although the Pittwater High School Binishell collapsed, two still remain at Narrabeen North Public School.

I really hope to continue their legacy and advocate for public education by fighting for New South Wales public schools to get their long overdue full school resourcing standard. Knowledge, science and evidence-based reasoning were deeply instilled in me. My grandparents' home was made up of mini Jubilee Rooms. Nearly every spare dollar of their public high school teaching salaries was invested in leather-bound books, many of which are

now at home in university libraries. I can still remember, as a little girl, being made to recite Shakespeare verses—a very different upbringing to the one my children have—learning the Greek and Latin origins of words, and other premature lessons taught by my eccentric grandfather.

Today, despite the internet bringing the explosion of academic accessibility—well beyond my grandfather's wildest dreams—I think he would be horrified at the irony that we live in a world where people consume over two hours a day of dopamine-driven content that is turbocharging mental health issues in our children and driving populist politics. I support a social media ban for under 16s—again, sorry kids—but I am sure he would have been calling for a social media ban for everyone. It was he who taught me about the environmental impact of the industrial revolution, from climate change to loss of top soil, acid rain and plastic pollution. With childhood innocence I remember thinking: If we know what we know, why do we continue to do what we do? It is my hope that in this place I can somewhat shift that cognitive dissonance in my time.

I am honoured to serve Pittwater's community, one where service is engrained. We have New South Wales's highest volunteering rates, from surf lifesaving to the SES, the Rural Fire Service and numerous community organisations, some of whom I have spotted here today. The motto of one of the local schools is Happiness Through Helping, and that really captures our ethos. My mother, Cathy Taylor, and mother-in-law, Cathy Scruby, have modelled service and creativity—my mother-in-law is a wonderful artist—and I am indebted to them both because they have helped me greatly at different times in my life.

My parents divorced when I was five in a War of the Roses fashion, which seemed standard at the time and seemed to last a lifetime. My mother, ever glamorous, had creativity and resourcefulness, which meant we moved houses quite frequently as she made cosmetic changes to improve each house, each one a little better, a little bigger. She was resilient and fought to give me my education, always putting her children first. For many years she cared for both my sick sister and my ageing grandmother, keeping my grandmother independent and at home for as long as possible. My mother instilled social justice values that my Catholic education reinforced: With privilege comes a duty to serve and improve the world. I am also indebted to my grandmother, Gwen, who has been our family's rock.

Like many firstborns of divorced parents, I am a fixer. However, my brave and triumphant sister Phoebe's battle with anorexia and obsessive-compulsive disorder has taught me, somewhat slowly, that we cannot fix everything, but we can always help. I am amazed at the life, business and family she has created with her partner, Seddy, despite her challenges. We must do more to reverse the mental health crisis and address potential triggers, including social media and bullying. I also want to acknowledge my extraordinary brother and sister-in-law, Kate—both successful United States film editors—and my magnanimous brother-in-law, James.

As we all know, business is the backbone of Pittwater and we really value individual agency, hard work and efficiency, especially in our public institutions. I have always worked hard. My first job was at 13. I worked throughout school, also during a gap year overseas, and then full-time in hospitality whilst also studying medical science and law at the University of Technology Sydney. Work ethic is so ingrained in me that I struggle with what it means to relax—or, as I see it, be unproductive—so the people of Pittwater can rest assured that I will work hard for them every single day. I then practised as a planning and environment lawyer at DLA Piper before joining Energetics, advising ASX 200 companies on net zero strategy and climate risk. It was not surprising that at 28—well, it was a surprise at the time—whilst planning a wedding with my soon-to-be husband, who was starting his own business, a blood test revealed that I was not only having a beautiful baby but was also suffering from Hashimoto's, one of the most common autoimmune diseases that is on a steady rise.

Since then, I have developed two other chronic diseases: premature ovarian failure and lipodema, suffered only by women and largely unheard of, even by doctors. We have much research and education to do to overcome a history of medical gender bias and to understand the pathogenesis of chronic disease, particularly—and interestingly—the links to pollutants and chemicals in our environment. Health is everything. A well person has a thousand wishes but a sick person has only one. It may be that I get my entrepreneurial spirit and dry humour from my British father, John, who has only ever doorknocked for two political candidates: Margaret Thatcher and me. A commodity trader turned disrupter of the legal industry, as he pioneered flat rate conveyancing, he instilled fiscal discipline, requiring me to produce receipts for every purchase until my eighteenth birthday, when the card simply read, "Happy Birthday. You're on your own now."

At 85, he is now my quasi-media adviser, who inundates me with newspaper clippings, instructing me to "be informed", and competes with fellow constituents to meet with me to discuss e-bike regulation. I think the report comes out tomorrow. I would like also to acknowledge and thank my stepmum, Ali Taylor. Taking a break from corporate life to have children, I co-founded an online homewares business—overcoming industry resistance to e-commerce at the time—with my friend Zoe Dent, who is here today. We loved The Wedding Nest, but we felt every one of those thousand cuts endured as small business owners. That experience fuels my advocacy for small and medium-sized businesses, ensuring they get their fair share of concessions and subsidies. From my time

in Federal Parliament it has become clear that those benefits seem reserved only for large, often multinational companies, many of which do not even pay tax in Australia. This needs to change.

Despite my education and work, travel has been my greatest educator. Living overseas has shaped my values and exposed me to different cultures and different policies. I know much of my children's strong sense of social justice and environmental stewardship has come from when we lived overseas when they were younger, and our stint at world schooling as we made our way home. I am so incredibly proud of both Sienna and Saskia, who are wise beyond their years and abound with kindness and humour, whilst also being delightfully free from precociousness. May that last. They are the future generation that we all have a duty to. I could not have pursued this path without my husband, Michael, and his tenacity, spontaneity, and love and support—especially in the last six months—as well as his outstanding performance on the polling booths. I also want to thank my closest friends, who are here today, as well as the marvellous Ishbel Cullen, a true friend.

I have just half a term to prove that an Independent can deliver real results. I am not only the member for Pittwater but also the member for Mona Vale Road. It's true! Whilst not wanting to let this Government, nor myself, off the hook, a few days after I was elected—I was with the member for Wakehurst—a constituent stopped me and said he would send a newspaper clipping from *Pittwater News*. He did.

It was *Pittwater News*, 1966. At a time when houses in Narrabeen were £6,000, and with Liberal Pittwater MP Askin as Premier, we were promised, "The Department of Roads is acutely conscious that we are entirely dependent on road transport, and in the next two or three years Mona Vale Road will be a four-lane highway right through, and will later increase to six lanes"! It's been a 60-year wait, and I am committed to making sure this becomes a reality.

I am committed to delivering for our public schools, to getting our athletes back running on the Narrabeen track, to improving our privatised bus services and health care, including advocating for increasing pay for our nurses and our psychiatrists, and to ensuring long-promised footpaths, particularly on coast roads. We must also meet our northern beaches housing targets and support housing for essential workers who serve our community with appropriate planning where community also has a voice. But this must be done in sympathy with our beautiful natural environment, and I will fight to protect Pittwater's biodiversity and beauty.

If the colour teal—a mix of blue with a touch of green—carries any political meaning, it is this: a fusion of economic responsibility and environmental stewardship, of fiscal prudence and social progress. Despite our reputation, when it comes to policy, Pittwater is not the insular peninsula. Our community is deeply invested in New South Wales policy issues, from support for strong gambling reform and reducing pollution from plastics and forever chemicals, to supporting orderly transition to a low-carbon economy, including not approving coalmining expansions that threaten net zero targets. As fierce protectors of our own tree canopy, so too are we calling for the establishment of the long overdue Great Koala National Park and an end to native forest logging. It does not make financial sense, subsidised by the taxpayer, and it does not make environmental sense either. We care about this because we still mourn the extinction of our local koalas, reminders of which remain in signs scattered across our electorate.

We currently face a 40 per cent rate hike on the northern beaches during a cost-of-living crisis, and residents are rightly calling for cost cuts, efficiency improvements and independent audits. I have also. However, with over 25 councils across New South Wales set to raise rates or raising rates in the past three years—many of them previously forced into amalgamations with false promises of lower rates—there is also an expectation that State and Federal governments will step up and deliver the structural reforms needed. We must not allow populist politics to erode our confidence in public institutions but instead focus on finding solutions to the complex underlying problems facing them in order to strengthen them.

People in Pittwater also advocate for preventative health reform to relieve the strain on hospitals from chronic illness and ensure our seniors have not only a long life span but a long health span. The Fletcher family, represented today by Nicky and Pat, along with my constituents and dedicated volunteers Gay and Paul Verco remind me of the profound impact a local representative can have on people's lives. While working with Zali Steggall, we successfully advocated for a groundbreaking drug to be listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme—one that significantly improves the outcome for those with Von Hippel-Lindau, a really devastating genetic illness. The drug halts the proliferation of tumours that can damage multiple organs and often become malignant, and it impacts whole families. For affected families this is, obviously, life changing. Their families' resilience and strength continue to inspire me and the broader northern beaches community.

We have reached a point where environmental sense makes economic sense. Globally, we are facing a climate emergency. Last year was the hottest on record. And as we fast approach irreversible tipping points that cannot be avoided by just deleting climate change references from websites, as seems to be happening in the United States, we must also acknowledge that it is costing us. Generally, insurance premiums are up 32 per cent

in two years, and that further fuels inflation in the cost-of-living crisis. Parts of Pittwater have even higher home insurance rises, some in the double digits. The northern beaches has been identified by the New South Wales Government as going to have the highest cost impact from extreme weather across New South Wales by 2060.

This is an area where the New South Wales Government has the ability to make reforms that mitigate risk and put downward pressure on these costs in the long term. Following the devastating fires in Los Angeles, we must remember that, in our haste to address the housing crisis, we must not allow homes to be built in flood- and bushfire-prone areas, and building codes must be updated to ensure that the homes we build today can withstand the weather of the future and deliver not only net zero emissions but close to net zero electricity costs for those families who live in them.

We also need reforms that support families and small business, not strangle them. Whether its stamp duty on already unaffordable home insurance, special variation rate hikes or payroll tax, we need to rethink revenue generation in New South Wales, including the \$60.5 million supporting fossil fuel subsidies in this State. New South Wales should look to Queensland, where coal royalties deliver \$10 billion in revenue, funding cost-of-living relief. New South Wales' reform was just not as ambitious. As families struggle, Queenslanders have enjoyed \$1,000 off energy bills, 50¢ public transport and lower rego fees.

When it comes to being inspired to drive policy reform and achieve great change, I need not look further than my father-in-law, Harold Scruby, whom many, many of you well know from working with him to deliver groundbreaking road safety reforms, including school zones. I may regularly debate him on policy issues, but I always admire his conviction for what he believes. He is a disrupter, a changemaker and has saved lives because of his advocacy.

I am honoured to stand here as Pittwater's first female MP in the New South Wales Parliament. A diverse Parliament is a strong Parliament. Although New South Wales elected its first woman in 1925, there was a 23-year hiatus from 1950. But today I join the most female-represented Parliament in the State's history. I entered politics in 2022, not as a career politician—although I did attend Youth Parliament at 15—but because I saw the need for change. I was inspired by Zali Steggall's leadership and joined a group of politically engaged women—Sophie Scamps, Anyo Geddes, Rebecca Clarke, Louise Hislop and Leonie Scarlett—listening to community and engaging them in their democracy. What we heard aligned with our values.

I ran Sophie Scamps' campaign. She won. I became her policy adviser and then later Zali Steggall's. Although I narrowly lost the 2023 New South Wales general election—I would argue a great case for mandatory preferential voting—Pittwater and I got a second chance. As we know, elections are not won by chance. It was because of the dedication of my team and hundreds of volunteers. Some dropped everything and jumped on planes to support a by-election campaign that came out of nowhere. To them, and those who helped set up my office, thank you. I will not list you all now, but I especially thank those here today who helped set up the office and helped in the office: Emma, Les, Dylan, Jack, Sharon, Matt, Trudy and my campaign manager, Max.

Around the world, people are frustrated with major parties ignoring their priorities. While we see a rise in populist strongmen, here in Australia independent movement has seen many women committed to integrity and to nuanced and evidence-based policy. That is something to be proud of. Whilst much has been said in the media about me being the first teal MP in New South Wales Parliament, I really join a crossbench full of Independents who are absolutely loved by their communities, continuing to be re-elected, term after term. Teal is really a media construct, and it oversimplifies what the grassroots movement is all about. Inspired by Cathy McGowan, having kitchen table conversations, and leading community-led politics—it is as grassroots as it comes.

Climate 200, almost always misrepresented in the media, is not one single person. It is 11,000 donors from across Australia who believe in independent, community-led politics and action on climate change. Their donations supercharged my authentic community campaign. I am a true Independent. I write my own policies based on consultation with my community, businesses and public interest groups, and I look forward to working across the political spectrum. Independents deliver. Pittwater has seen this firsthand. For years groups like Surfrider Foundation Northern Beaches, Living Ocean and Surfers for Climate led the charge against the PEP 11 permit for drilling for oil and gas off our coastline.

During the 2023 general election, realising there is nothing like an election to get parties doing good work, I approached then member of the Legislative Council Justin Field with the idea to draft a bill to ban offshore oil and gas in New South Wales waters which, to be fair, was Coalition policy but existed only in a PDF and not in statute.

What ensued was a political race to the top. Two weeks later the Liberals announced a copycat version of that bill—subsequently introduced into this place by the former member for Pittwater—which, ultimately, with the current Government bringing its own legislation, passed as historic law, the first of its kind in Australia.

We have seen examples from the member for Sydney with the decriminalising of abortion and voluntary assisted dying and, at a Federal level, from Helen Haines' work on the National Anti-Corruption Commission and Zali Steggall's climate advocacy. However, the nuance of those policies often goes unnoticed by the media. In this place I will strive to move beyond the binaries of left and right to contribute to a politics that values ideas over ideology, collaboration over confrontation and the collective good over partisan gain. My commitment to Pittwater is to serve with integrity, to champion evidence-based policy and to ensure that our voice is not just heard, but acted upon.

I have a list of people I want to thank. I seek leave to incorporate the list in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Billy Bragg	Tanya Gadiel	Susanne Weress
Tim Maguire	Justin and Roxy Grunwald	Simon Riddell
Rob Allaburton	Iona Gamble	Marita Macrae
Dick Clarke	Michelle Ball	Martin and Anne Roughley
Julia Tregaskis	Harold and Sue Todd	Min Bonwick
Eddy Stanley	Sara Camier	Graeme Jessup
Barbara Elkan	Jim Gatenby	Talat Uppal
Rob Steers	Murray MacDonald	Tim Buckley
Nigel Howard	Robert Kitchen	Jack Georgieff
Matt Haran	Sharon Leifer	Dylan Sampson
Rebecca Clarke	Nikki Fletcher	Pat Fletcher
Chloe Ferris	Alexandra Walker-Kearns	Henrietta Rowe
Tehani Legeay	Georgina Renkert	Elizabeth Renkert
Max Koslowski	Rebecca Clarke	Emma Tonkin
Chris Williams	Ben Hornbrook	Ian Millner
Michelle Millner	Charlie Kent	Les Burrows
Leonie Scarlett	Louise Hislop	Marty Jeffs
Simon Morgan	Jenny Cullen	Tina Butler
Tracy Walker	Joy Nason	Jan Proudfoot
Matthew Poole	Joel Seaton	Sebastien Hartog
Richard Proctor	Eva Meland	Ian White
Paul Boland	Robyn Selge	Bronte Forbes
Jenny and David Harris	Cara Morgan	Cheryl Nunn
Deb Rixon	Graeme and Shelley Woodrow	Gay and Paul Verco
Tessa Bell	Andrei Charrett	Ray Harding
Guy Glenny	Ron Holmes	Dianne and Stephen Perry
Karen and Simon Bond	Urs and Elizabeth Wolfensberger	Jonathan King
David and Fiona Collins	Caroline Kades	Peter Foster-Bunch

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Pittwater for her inaugural speech. In accordance with the earlier resolution of the House, the member for Hornsby will now present his inaugural speech. Before calling the member for Hornsby, I am delighted to welcome to the public gallery a number of former members of the Legislative Assembly, two of whom I served with. I welcome the former member for Hornsby, Matt Kean; the former member for Penrith, Stuart Ayres; and the former member for Ryde, Michael Photios. I welcome a number of former members of the Legislative Council, including the Hon. Don Harwin, who was President of the New South Wales Legislative Council for a number of years. I welcome the Hon. Philip Ruddock, AO, a former member of the House of Representatives and the former Mayor of Hornsby. I welcome Julian Leeser and Senator

Maria Kovacic and wish her a happy birthday. I welcome a number of members of Hornsby Shire Council, including Mayor Warren Waddell, Councillor Verity Greenwood, Councillor Sallianne McClelland and Councillor Jane Seaglove. I welcome Trent Zimmerman and Christopher Stone, State Director of the NSW Liberal Party. I welcome Andrew Jetson, the president of the Hornsby State electorate conference. I welcome all other guests.

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (18:25): I am humbled and honoured to serve as the member for Hornsby. I am committed to public service because I care deeply about the challenges facing our community and have a strong sense of obligation to do all that I can. My life is and always has been grounded by family. It seems fitting to begin by saying to Sarah, my wife and partner since we were both 20 years old, thank you for sharing your life with me. I love you more than you can imagine. Two years ago, we were blessed with Benjamin, our little boy, who has brought so much happiness, joy and noise. I was raised by two loving parents in the northern suburbs of Sydney. My sister, Chloe, and I were given every opportunity. I know that only happened because my mother and father fully committed their lives to our happiness and success. Like so many others, my parents did not invest in property, buy fancy cars or go on overseas holidays. Instead, they invested the money they earned in our education. They invested their spare time in building a better community around us.

We grew up in the Hornsby shire, the best place to raise a family. I learned the value of community from my mother, a teacher who volunteered her time at a children's community library and working with the disabled. From my father's example, I learned the value of hard work. Playing sport each weekend on grounds from Berowra Oval to Somerville Park, I learned about team work. Sitting with my dad in the grandstands at Parramatta stadium, I learned about loyalty, and the excitement and often disappointment of caring deeply for a cause beyond your control.

My mother's side of the family moved to the Hornsby shire around 1906. That was the year the shire was founded. It was home to only 5,000 people. Hornsby began as a community of fruit growers, oyster farmers, timber millers, sandstone quarriers, railway workers, tradespeople and professionals. They lived in small villages amongst the bushland, close to the railway stations that opened in the late part of the nineteenth century. From its earliest days, local volunteers propelled the Hornsby district forward and established a community that, whilst dependent on Sydney, was and still is in so many ways independent of it.

Artist George Collingridge established the district's first newspapers. Charles Somerville, the son of a local farmer and one of 500 Hornsby shire men to serve in the Great War, returned to Hornsby to found and lead many community organisations, including the Northern District Cricket Club and the Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch. Jimmy Bancks, the son of a railway cleaner, captured the spirit of the area in his Ginger Meggs cartoons, basing the title character on his childhood friend Somerville. Philanthropist Thomas Rofe led the community campaign to build a local hospital on Palmerston Road. The community built Hornsby hospital. In the middle of a depression, small fundraising initiatives set up in each suburb raised the majority of the funds. Councillor Edith Parrish, who served as a nurse in World War II, returned to Hornsby to establish baby health centres and local kindergartens.

In response to dangerous bushfires of the 1940s and 1950s, the community formed rural fire brigades, starting with what is now Galston Rural Fire Service and a truck loaned by the Waddell family. Those volunteers served to protect their family and their neighbours. Today, there are nineteen local brigades in Hornsby, made up of 1,300 volunteers. My father's side of the family moved to the Hornsby shire in the 1960s. In that decade, the community would grow with the opening of new public schools and establishment of sports clubs, scout groups, girl guides and the PCYC—all to support a booming population of local children. To the west of Pennant Hills was still orchards and farmland, which in the years to come would be replaced by new housing, and with it the community of Cherrybrook, a place for the next generation to start their own families.

The people of Hornsby are as proud of this history as they are of the tens of thousands of years of culture, custodianship and connection that the Dharug and Guringai people have for the land, and the rich multiculturalism which our area enjoys today. We inherit a strong community built by all those who came before us. Community gives us identity and a sense of belonging, but it is more than that. Strong communities make us more trusting and have a greater sense of responsibility to each other. Strong communities make for a stronger democracy. In a strong community, we can use our social connections to find work and seek business opportunities, and we can teach our children to develop the values and life skills that are good for them and the whole society: compassion, resilience, teamwork, respect and responsibility. In measurable ways, strong communities improve our health, wealth, happiness and even the performance of our elected representatives.

While the Hornsby of today is blessed by so many who volunteer their time, we are not alone in facing the pressures of the modern world, which adversely affects our ability to build local connections. By reducing travel time to and from our offices, and by seizing the flexibility that technology provides, we can have more time for family and connecting. We should design our suburbs to encourage social interaction, insisting that new developments and redevelopments have parks, town squares and shared spaces. We should truly open up all public

buildings and grounds for community use. Government should partner with the community to solve social problems and, when the community comes to government with an idea, government should start by saying yes. All in all, strong communities must be empowered by government and an investment in the structures that build connections.

I am proud to be part of a new generation of Liberals within our State's Parliament. We represent young people and young parents trying to live full and rich lives at work, at home and in the community. We want our children to receive the best chance in life through a well-rounded education, and we want for ourselves the chance to learn and grow in our own careers. We expect the government to get out of the way where markets provide us choice and opportunity. Equally, we expect the government to empower and protect us against market failures and global threats we cannot individually overcome. While we desire the security that comes with home ownership, our incomes have failed to keep up with rising house prices. Many of us cannot afford to buy a home, and those who do take on significant, life-altering debt.

As a consequence, we start families later in life and we rent for longer. We are frustrated by rising prices for everyday costs, and we are angry at State and Federal governments that overtax income and payroll—governments that, despite record revenue, still run budget deficits and, instead of addressing spending, seek to control inflation by increasing our monthly mortgage repayments. There is despair with politics because there has been too little progress when it comes to those issues, and a growing sense that a paternalistic and bureaucratic government is making things harder rather than being part of the solution. Those are the challenges facing my generation, and they are the priorities of a new generation of Liberals. We must have the courage to think anew.

It is time for us to stop accepting the outdated and impractical structure of a school day that ends at three in the afternoon—a system that creates unnecessary strain for families juggling work and home life, particularly those in the suburbs with long commutes. At too many schools, after-school care is full, and families are stuck on waiting lists. Even when spaces are available, parents still feel pressure to stop work to get their kids to other community-based activities. The way forward is to invite the broader community to be part of the solution. We must ensure that after-school care is coordinated with the many other activities that our kids are involved in: football and netball practice, music lessons, scouts, cadets and guides—the things that help children grow and learn valuable life skills.

Together, we can create a system that not only supports family logistics but also enriches the lives of our kids. Every parent knows that it takes a village to raise a child. Yet, as it stands, a bureaucratic nightmare of regulation is locking the community out. That needs to change. School grounds should be opened up for community use. Regulations on staff ratios and restrictions on centres engaging third parties will need to be relaxed. We should also take steps to reduce the costs of after-school care. That means shifting the insurance burden away from parent-run centres and back onto government, which is in a better position to manage the risk of maintaining safe school grounds. Government should stop charging rent for children to access their own school grounds after the bell rings. The school grounds are a public asset paid for by the taxes of parents. Charging rent on top is effectively a double tax on families.

Housing affordability is an issue that demands a whole-of-government response. I support ambitious targets for the construction of new homes but, more important than construction targets, the State Government should set and track a target for the cost of housing compared with average household income—a metric which has nearly tripled in a generation in Sydney. To rebalance incomes and home prices, we must re-examine our tax settings, simplify planning laws, remove government and union-imposed costs to build, and fund the enabling and community infrastructure that growth requires—an investment which can be recovered by a smart tax system. And it almost goes without saying that we should give buyers the choice as to whether to pay an up-front stamp duty or a land tax—a choice which young people overwhelmingly want and choose when given the chance.

For those families renting, we should normalise and incentivise long-term, five-year lease agreements, so they can have the certainty of the same home as their children move through school. To help people grow professionally and raise their incomes, and to deal with a more disrupted economy, we should develop flexible models of course delivery for skill and trade qualifications, including remote classes, after-hours learning and short courses with intensive periods of full-time study. Those qualifications and credentials should be more easily verifiable. Those reforms would all improve our State's productivity. Productivity is the key to increasing incomes and raising living standards. It is about encouraging growth, removing barriers to entry and letting new ideas take hold.

Productivity requires the New South Wales Government to build and enable the long-term infrastructure that drives growth—infrastructure like the metro, the Western Sydney airport, WestConnex, NorthConnex, the light-rail and renewable energy zones. That is the legacy of the former Liberal Government. But today, a coming wave of technology, artificial intelligence [AI] and automation offers the best path to supercharge our State's productivity. AI will change the way we work and the services we consume. The business community has already

made significant investments. I have witnessed that working as a technology lawyer over the past decade. If we can harness it, the wave will radically transform not just our economy but the way we deliver government services.

The administrative and repetitive processes of government will be made more efficient and can be provided at a massively reduced cost, from how we manage casework to processing of planning applications, surveying the community, transacting and collecting taxes.

Most importantly, frontline service delivery will be transformed. AI-driven command centres can manage hospital bed allocations to reduce emergency waiting times. Remote monitoring can be used to care for patients in their own homes. The innovation of virtual wards offer a non-capital solution to the projected shortfall in hospital beds to care for an ageing population, and personalised treatment plans based on genomic data can improve patient outcomes. AI also promises better preventative health care through access to AI doctors on demand and early detection technology.

In our schools, New South Wales teachers are already trialling use of AI tools to generate lesson plans. Students will benefit from access to AI tutors. Imagine a student in Hornsby learning the history of World War II by studying alongside an AI version of Churchill. We can enhance the quality of teaching by better capturing data on student progress, measuring student performance using a combination of frequent formative and summative assessments in the classroom, as well as student work in online tools, making it easier to identify and help those who fall behind and extend those who would excel. This type of data collection is the key to breaking our reliance on high-stakes final exams to determine a student's educational future, letting us focus on developing knowledgeable and curious adults rather than students trained to excel in a single test.

These technologies are all available today. What is invented next? That is something best not predicted by politicians, because the job of government is not to innovate the future; it is to remove barriers to new ideas and lay the foundations for technology adoption. Data is the foundational element of AI. That is why the Premier and Cabinet should mandate greater collection of data in a consistent manner across each department and require that systems be built so that data and functionality can be exposed to other departments and external partners. By building and maintaining a data core for citizen records, government will be able to manage access to an application layer for a wide range of technology services offered by different Australian and global companies. This will protect against any one technology provider gaining a monopoly over a critical service.

Now, other nations will apply AI in different ways, some with disastrous repercussions for the cause of human dignity and freedom. The same technology that we must use to share information and power from the state to our citizens can also be used to give more power to the state to surveil and control our lives. That is why any additional oversight and information that the government collects must be matched by citizens having greater oversight of the government itself. This concept of mutuality must be embedded in the technology. This means releasing real-time data on government performance. It also means that, if the state can monitor the progress of students in the classroom, then it is only fair for parents to be able to see that same data about their own child.

We will need to review outdated State privacy laws, which fail to recognise the digital age, the volume of data being collected or the unique circumstances in which a patient provides their health data to a hospital, a student to their school or a victim to the police. We need new rights for citizens so they have more control over how their information is used by government and shared with others. These new laws should be modelled off the best parts of the Commonwealth's Consumer Data Right, albeit with a reduced regulatory burden. It should enable individuals to access data about themselves and direct that this information be transferred by government to accredited third parties of the citizen's choice.

We should also install independent privacy auditors within government departments to report to the public on how their data is being used and shared. Transparency will ensure active public participation in discussions about AI and surveillance, which will make government decisions more democratic and reflective of shared values and priorities. To make it all work, the public service will need to embrace the change. We will always need outstanding teachers in the classroom and nurses in our hospitals. That is why the significant savings that AI promises should be shared between cuts to inefficient State taxes and pay rises for frontline workers. Most importantly, every use case for this technology should be viewed through the prism of maximising choice and citizen power.

At the heart of my liberalism is a belief in the dignity of the individual—a dignity which comes from the exercise of genuine choices, a dignity which is inextricably linked to the right to speak freely, the right to be heard in a democratic and respectful society, and the rule of law. It comes with freedom—not a freedom from responsibility or care but a freedom from control and coercion by the state and other forces. It is a freedom to pursue the opportunities of life. The role of the modern state must be to both protect that freedom and enlarge the opportunities and choices available to each person, to empower through access to quality education and health

care, and to help those suffering profound disadvantage, prejudice and addiction. For me, this is the purpose of Australian liberalism, and it is a fundamentally compassionate approach.

Advancing human dignity requires that we do more to address the harm caused by poker machines in our State. This year in New South Wales over \$8.1 billion will be lost on poker machines: \$23 million gambled away each day. The overwhelming majority of losses are experienced by a relatively small number of people who gamble every week. They lose more in each session and are more likely to gamble alone, to gamble later at night and to stay until the venue closes. We must help those seeking to escape addiction, but we also need more fulsome reforms. Technology can be used to empower people by establishing an effective exclusion register and by ensuring others are able to put a self-imposed limit on how much time they might play, when they might play and the amount they are prepared to lose. The prevalence and costs of poker machines is not a global phenomenon. It is not even an Australia-wide phenomenon. It is a New South Wales problem. And we can fix it. It is a job for the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. There is good reason to change. There is widespread support across this Chamber. I hope we take this chance.

I conclude by thanking my new colleagues, who have welcomed me into the Parliament—in particular my party's leader, Mark Speakman—and those friends who have supported me in my career. My predecessor, Matt Kean, has been one such friend. Matt is a reformer who made our State a better place. In our electorate, the community will never forget that Matt Kean saved Hornsby hospital from years of government neglect and transformed it into one of the finest modern facilities in the world. He will be remembered as a great public servant, like those of the past who propelled Hornsby forward. I am proud to be working locally with friends Julian Leaser, the Federal member for Berowra, and the Mayor of Hornsby Shire, Warren Waddell—both men of conviction and sincerity. We have much to do and I am glad I will get to do it alongside you both.

I thank the members of the Hornsby Liberal Party led by Andrew Jetson. I am extraordinarily grateful for his guidance and support. To my friends and best advocates in the Hornsby community—Penny and Ray Beccio, Martin Pluss, Selva Kidnappali, Chris George, David Nouri, Yvonne Wibowo, Dillip Varma, Matt McClelland, Kerrie Edwards, Jamie Henderson, Daniel Dummer, Mitch Dudley, Councillor Verity Greenwood, Christine Chalker, Alistair Jacques, Peter and Helen McNamee, Councillor Sallianne McClelland, Charles Mouyat, Lara Van der Wall, Tim Sowden and, of course, Anna Coote, Jeantte Farrell, Nathan Tilbury and Heidi Cameron—thank you.

I thank the young and bright leaders Francis Bolster, Abby Smith, Bella Mantakoul, Ryan Muscat and Aileen Tan, for each of whom the future holds so much. Trent Zimmerman, Michael Evangelidis, Maria Kovacic and Luke Sikora have been my strongest supporters in politics and close friends. Discussing with them, and sometimes arguing, over politics and policy has shaped much of my thinking, and I am sure will continue to do so in the years ahead. Thank you.

While Australians do not always like to admit it, the decisions of government matter. Family, work, education, our place in the community and purpose in life—these things must be protected and advanced by this Parliament. I acknowledge the responsibility given to me by the people of Hornsby. I will do all I can to serve them and our State. Thank you.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

Bills

PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (FOGO RECYCLING) BILL 2024

First Reading

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

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

Community Recognition Statements

AMITY COLLEGE

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:54): Every child deserves the opportunity for quality education, and every achievement needs to be celebrated. On 7 November I had the privilege of attending the official opening of Amity College's fourth campus in Leppington. The state-of-the-art facility is designed to inspire young minds and foster a love of learning. Choosing the right school is a significant decision for any family, and Amity College, Leppington, understands the importance of creating a nurturing and stimulating learning environment. With a commitment to empowering students academically, socially and emotionally,

Amity College continues its mission to provide quality education and pastoral care. The dedicated educators are passionate about fostering an inclusive, safe space where students can strive towards excellence in all aspects of their development. Starting as a primary school, with plans to expand to K-12, Amity College is committed to preparing the leaders of tomorrow. I look forward to watching Amity College grow in Leppington, just across the road from my office. I will continue to share in its journey towards excellence in education to shape the future leaders of tomorrow.

GABRIELA AND LOUIE TORRE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:55): I ask the House to join me in congratulating Gabriela and Louie Torre, who celebrate their thirtieth wedding anniversary in February. There is something to be said for 30 years of marriage. It is a symbol of love, loyalty and, no doubt, triumph over the inevitable adversity that one would encounter in any partnership. Throughout life's journey, they would have seen significant change. We know that communities evolve, technology develops and people come and go from within our respective orbits. To have the steady presence of a life partner—in Gabriela's case, Louie, and in Louie's case, Gabriela—is to experience that journey to its fullest. Gabriela has asked to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament:

To my dear husband Louie, taking this special opportunity to wish you much love on our 30th Wedding Anniversary! May we have many, many more happy days together living out our senior years in Melrose Park, love & hugs, your wife—Gab Torre xx.

Gabriela and Louie's example is one that we can all aspire to: a lifetime of partnership and the building of an enriching legacy. I ask the House to join me in congratulating them both on their thirtieth wedding anniversary.

EMERGENCYREDI WORKSHOP

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (18:56): Last week I had the pleasure of attending an Australian Red Cross and NRMA Insurance EmergencyRedi workshop, as part of the NRMA's Help Nation Initiative. With the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events due to climate change, the purpose of Help Nation is to improve community resilience through a statewide series of 300 workshops to educate and inform communities about how to prepare for extreme weather, such as floods and storms. The workshops are delivered in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, which continues to lead in disaster preparedness. The workshop used the RediPlan to give participants practical steps to protect their homes and families. This will be invaluable in empowering local residents to help themselves. It was expertly led by Ismail Ibrahim, Lara Beattie, Sabrina Barr and Brendan Pearce from the Red Cross. I also acknowledge the NRMA Insurance team, including Kate Brandon, Stephanie Wee, Tim Sowden and the Burwood NRMA team.

TRIBUTE TO LESLIE HUGH MCKINNON

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:57): I take this opportunity to recognise the amazing life of Leslie Hugh McKinnon, who sadly passed away on 12 December 2024. Affectively known as Les, I had the lovely opportunity of meeting him on his 100th birthday. He was a true gentleman, who led a varied and fulfilling life over his remarkable 102 years. Les started his working career as a printer and compositor in Narromine before enlisting in the army, where he earned the nickname "Gunner McKinnon" due to his exceptional marksmanship. In 1944 he transferred to the air force to train as air crew and was discharged in 1945. After marrying, starting a family and enjoying life on the land, the '60s brought some challenging times. In the end, the family farm was sold and the family moved to the coast, but Les's deep-rooted connection to the bush called him home to Narromine in 1976. Les and his wife, Pat, did many journeys around Australia, circumnavigating the country many times and making lots of friends. Aside from his deep love for his family, Les was a really popular member of the Masonic Lodge and an avid sports fan. Vale, Les McKinnon.

AUSTRALIA DAY CRAB RACING EVENT

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:58): It was a pleasure to return to the East Hills Hotel for the annual Australia Day Crab Racing event, organised by the East Hills Asphalt Divers Club. This year the club raised well over \$6,000, and all the money went to the Formal Project Inc., an inspiring charity led by Sam and Chelle Oakes, Rebecca Crompton, Liz Oddy, and Jayne Kelly. Their dedication to helping vulnerable and disadvantaged students attend school formals and other important events by providing free formal wear is a great help to young people and their families. Special congratulations goes to Vince and Mari Adams on their well-deserved victory in the crab race. After 12 years of organising this event, it is wonderful to see their years of hard work and dedication pay off. I thank the East Hills Asphalt Divers Club, all the volunteers and participants who contributed to this successful event. Their efforts not only brought joy to the community but also made a meaningful difference to many people's lives.

GREG "JOHNNO" JOHNSON

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:59): I congratulate one of Wagga Wagga's great quiet achievers, Greg "Johnno" Johnson, who was named the city's Citizen of the Year on Australia Day. An inaugural member of the Wagga Wagga Relay for Life, Greg has spent 21 years supporting the Cancer Council, including five years driving patients to appointments under the Transport to Treatment program. His many hours behind the wheel ensured patients got the treatment they needed, while at the same time providing hope and help at a challenging time. His care, support and good humour made a great difference on journeys short and long, and he found it an honour to supply the service to those in need. But Greg's service to community extends even further. He was instrumental in getting lighting installed at Anderson Park, opening up new opportunities for players to train and compete after dark, and he has a long history of volunteering for sports clubs, the Koorringal Rotary Club and the Wagga Lions club, as well as the Specialist Medical Resources Foundation. Throughout it all, he never sought the limelight but took pleasure in quietly making a real and lasting difference, and I am delighted to congratulate him on this well-deserved honour.

TRIBUTE TO KATE STEWART

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (19:00): On Friday, Queanbeyan Labor was joined by senior Federal and State MPs on the banks of the Queanbeyan River to commemorate the life of the late Kate Stewart. Kate was a force of nature working for Labor and the union movement. She was tireless in her work for Labor causes and for Country Labor in particular. Kate was our Federal candidate for Parkes at one election but was constantly working with members, branches and our conference on policy and programs. Kate was selfless; even during her treatment for cancer, she was promoting ideas for improvement for those who followed her. She was renowned for long phone conversations, which often for me started with a message suggesting a quick five-minute call. But it is clear from all who received them that they valued those calls. Kate's life was far too short but, as her long time Country Labor committee colleague and friend Matt Martin said, she didn't waste a second. My condolences to Kate's parents, Peter and Sue, and her sister, Dianne. Kate Stewart will be missed by all in the Labor Party right around New South Wales.

PENRITH PANTHERS SEASON LAUNCH

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (19:01): Recently I had the pleasure of joining Panthers Group chairman Peter Graham, the mighty Penrith Panthers players and staff, and their numerous financial and business supporters for the 2025 Panthers season launch. The event was a wonderful and fitting way to launch this year's new season for a club that has achieved so much success and brought pride and joy to our wider Western Sydney community and beyond. I recognise the amazing work of the Panthers Club in supporting young people in Western Sydney, local community organisations and the Panthers on the Prowl community development foundation. I have no doubt we will be seeing more success from the Panthers, and I wish them the very best for ultimately a momentous and victorious 2025 season.

GREGORY HOUSTON

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (19:02): I acknowledge Gregory Houston, a Stanwell Park local and Fire and Rescue NSW superintendent. Mr Houston was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal for his distinguished service as a member of Fire and Rescue NSW. His award was presented as part of the Australia Day 2025 Honours List. Mr Houston has been an outstanding and dedicated member of Fire and Rescue NSW for the entirety of his 35-year career. He is highly skilled and devoted to using those skills to protect those who are in danger from natural disasters. Mr Houston stands as a testament to the commitment, integrity and compassion of firefighters across New South Wales who routinely risk their lives to protect any community that is in need. On behalf of the Heathcote electorate, I thank Mr Houston for his unwavering service to the community as a Fire and Rescue NSW superintendent.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:03): When it comes to being simply the best, the Coffs Coast is number one. At Woolgoolga, the phrase "life's a beach" is ringing true when it was named mainland Australia's best beach. We always knew our local beaches were world class, and to have that officially confirmed by Tourism Australia was wonderful news for Woolgoolga and the entire Coffs Coast. Woolgoolga Beach is renowned for its stunning beauty and for being family friendly, and this latest accolade will help showcase all the Coffs Coast has to offer the world. It follows hot on the heels of Coffs Harbour's crowning as Australia's number one coffee destination by *Time Out* magazine, a massive achievement by our superb cafes and restaurants and their loyal customers. It is a testament to our hospitality businesses that are making a name for themselves on the national stage. Will Coffs Harbour now be known as Coffee Harbour? A name change could be brewing.

PROSPECT ELECTORATE MARONITE COMMUNITY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:04): On 25 November I was honoured to join our local Maronite community to pray for peace, with a breakfast gathering hosted by the Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania. Our local Maronite community has profoundly contributed to our nation for over a century, even establishing the first Maronite parish of St Maroun's, Redfern, in 1897. They have integrated harmoniously into modern Australia, sharing values of peace, hard work and mutual respect. Maronites have excelled across trades, professions, academia and public life, serving as a beacon for our thriving Australian community. During the service, Bishop Tarabay prayed for a peace in Lebanon and the Middle East that is alive, grounded in truth, justice, freedom and love. Premier Minns spoke of the power of prayer, and commended Bishop Tarabay for connecting local Christian leaders to help in the wake of the Bondi and Wakeley incidents. I extend my sincere thanks to Bishop Tarabay and our dedicated Maronite community for bringing our community together on the day.

TRIBUTE TO NORMA STEAD, OAM

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:05): Today the Parliament of New South Wales honours and remembers the life of local Kiama resident Norma Stead. Sadly, Mrs Stead passed away on 10 December 2024, and leaves behind a tremendous legacy of community service in tennis, Meals on Wheels and so much more. Norma was a good A-grade tennis player and won many championships for Kiama Tennis Club. She hung up her racket at 86 with the Tuesday group, which has been going for over 40 years. Her final games were played with the philosophy, "If the ball was out of reach, good luck; but if it was in reach, look out!" She was regarded as a brick wall because rarely could you get a tennis ball past her. Kiama Council purchased the family home and built seven new courts at 50 Noorinan Street, Kiama, just up from the Kiama bowling club. Norma moved from 3 Hindmarsh Park into a flat at the end of the new clubhouse on Noorinan Street. Norma is predeceased by brothers Frank and Bill Willis and sister Beryl Bramley. I also acknowledge Norma's sons, John Stead and Robert Stead. Vale, Norma Stead, 25 July 1925 to 10 December 2024. She will be sadly missed but never forgotten.

MIREILLE SMITH

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (19:06): I acknowledge Mireille Smith, a remarkable young athlete from Callala Beach who has been awarded a NSW Combined High School Sports Association Blues Award for volleyball. The prestigious accolade is the highest sporting recognition within the New South Wales public high school system, celebrating excellence, sportsmanship and contributions to school and community. The award recognises Mireille's outstanding performance in the under-19s Asian Beach Volleyball Championships and captaining the Nowra High School girls team to the State finals. Along with being the highest-ranked under-19 beach volleyballer in Australia, Mireille is also ranked twenty-sixth in The Australian Open Women's Beach Volleyball rankings and is among a group that includes current and past Olympians and Commonwealth Games athletes. I congratulate Mireille on joining an elite group of New South Wales sporting awards recipients.

YOUTH DAY OUT SUMMER SESSION

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:07): It was fantastic to attend and see such a great turnout for the recent Youth Day Out Summer Session, held in Terrigal at Banjo's Skate Park on 22 January. Events like that truly showcase the strength and vibrancy of our community, bringing people together in a fun and engaging way. I thank Regional Youth Support Services, Central Coast Council, the Youth4Youth team, Brisbane Water Police District and all the incredible individuals who helped make the event such a success. Their dedication and hard work ensured a fantastic day for all involved. Organised by Central Coast Council, the event provided young people aged six to 17 with a fantastic line-up of free activities, from street art workshops and live hip-hop music to podcasting, skateboard deck designs and beginner skating and scooter workshops. The free barbeque lunch and youth support service made the day even more special. Youth Day Out was more than just a fun event; it was an opportunity for young people to connect, learn new skills and explore their interests in an inclusive and supportive environment. I thank everyone who made the day possible.

GEORGIA ZANNINO

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (19:08): We have some extraordinary achievers in our Camden community. One such achiever is Georgia Zannino, who in 2024 competed in the School Sport Australia Swimming Championship on the Gold Coast. Georgia was one of only three local students selected to represent the NSW All Schools team. She received a bronze medal in the 100 metres freestyle, and a silver medal and bronze medal in the team relay events. Georgia is also an upstanding and involved member of the community. She has trained and competed in the Camden area all her life and is a dedicated member of the Atlantis Swim Club where she trains and mentors younger winners in the club's learn-to-swim program. She has proudly represented Camden

High School in numerous swimming competitions as well and is an asset to the community. I thank Georgia for her community spirit and congratulate her.

DR PAVAN PHANINDRA

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (19:09): Dr Phanindra, who is well known as Dr Pa by patients and the community, has cemented himself as an integral part of health care in the Bathurst and broader Central West region. Dr Pav has contributed to the medical services available to residents in the Bathurst region and beyond through his role as the director of the emergency department at the Bathurst hospital. He also operates his own medical service called WeCare Health, which is also located in Bathurst. We all know the emotional and financial pressures a medical issue can cost, especially in regional areas where travel and limited resources may further impact an individual's options. Before Dr Pav and his team, Bathurst was without GP services on a Sunday, and many specialist appointments required patients to travel out of town. Now WeCare spans across two locations and is highly regarded within the community as a trusted health service allowing locals to seek accessible care. It is a blessing and an honour to have Dr Pav as part of the Bathurst community, sharing his care and expertise with us when we need it most. His contribution to medical services and the treatment of patients is beyond compare. On behalf of the community, I thank him and his team for their service.

AREE'S THAI RESTAURANT

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (19:10): I acknowledge Mr Michael and Mrs Ketsara Jarrold for their wonderful contribution to our community through the beloved Aree's Thai Restaurant in Wyoming. Aree's Thai catered to every Thai craving possible, from its signature seafood special to my personal favourite, the beef massaman curry. The restaurant was a crowd favourite in the Wyoming area and was known for not just its incredible flavours but also the welcoming atmosphere that made every visit special. With its delicious food and warm, friendly service, Aree's Thai became more than just a restaurant. It was a cherished part of our community. However, after 21 years of service since its opening in 1989, I am saddened to share that Aree's Thai is closing its doors. Its legacy of hospitality and authentic Thai cuisine will be fondly remembered. I have no doubt that the House will join me in commending Michael and Ket for their dedication and the incredible legacy they have built with Aree's Thai.

COLLARROY PLATEAU CRICKET CLUB

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (19:11): I congratulate Collaroy Plateau Cricket Club on its 70-year anniversary. This achievement is a source of great pride for the club, as its continuity is a historic reflection of the growth of the Collaroy Plateau suburb and community itself. After being founded by key members Vic Huxley, Geoff "Chippy" Browne and Barry Harland, the club held its first match in 1955. It was not until the 1963-64 season that the club was able to develop proper playing fields at Collaroy Plateau Park. For many years, the park has been an essential space for players and the community, myself included, to congregate and share in the joy of a game of cricket under the watchful gaze of the water tower. Over the past 70 years, the Collaroy Plateau Cricket Club has been an integral part of many Collaroy Plateau family lives. I give special mention to the family members of the club's founding members who are carrying on their forebears' legacy as active members, including Col and Jocelyn Huxley, Vicki Carden, Tom Carden and the sole remaining foundational member, Frank Huxley. I congratulate the club on this remarkable milestone. Here's to another 70 years.

CHRIS SPARKS, OAM

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (19:12): Today I acknowledge Kalaru resident Chris "Sparky" Sparks, OAM. Accompanied by fellow 1988 Paralympian Richard Cordukes, Chris reached the summit of Mount Kosciuszko and raised more than \$47,000 for the Australian Paralympic team. Chris and Richard had to cover more than 19 kilometres of rugged terrain in adverse conditions of rain and sleet and achieved their goal of the summit of Australia in Magic Mobility off-road powered wheelchairs. Chris has been an elite, gold medal winning sportsman representing New South Wales and Australia in wheelchair basketball. He has provided expert advice to the Disability Council NSW and, at a local level, to the Bega Valley Shire Council Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee. Chris said that the climb to Mount Kosciuszko would not have been possible five years ago. Our communities still need improved accessibility in homes, streets, businesses, public buildings, recreational areas and beaches. I congratulate Chris and Richard.

KILLARA RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (19:13): I acknowledge the Killara Rural Fire Brigade that opened a brand-new station in East Killara on 1 February 2025. It was wonderful to join Captain Andrew Wilson and 56 members of the brigade. The brigade was established in 2017 with the strong support of Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons. In 2019 a former scout hall in East Killara was chosen as the site to build their headquarters. It is an amazing place, and I am so proud of it. I recognise and thank the local community for their support, including

Bendigo Bank in Lindfield, Ku-ring-gai Council and the Rural Fire Service. I also recognise the founder, former president and current deputy captain, Stuart Clark, AM. In the 2025 Australia Day Honours, Stuart was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal. On 1 February 2025 he received his 50-year service medal after joining on 1 January 1973. I recognise Stuart's wonderful family, and in particular his wife, Narelle. I thank Stuart for his ongoing public service. He is a role model, mentor and inspiration for all of us.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH CARUANA

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (19:14): On 3 December last year, Labor Party life member and passionate North Melbourne fan Joseph Caruana passed away. Joe eventually settled in Wollongong after migrating from Malta. After spending time in Melbourne, he moved back to Malta for a period before eventually returning to Australia. He was known for his generosity, good nature and his garden, where he produced more than his family and, later, he and Lucy needed, so he often gave much of it away. Joe was also well known within the Labor Party for his commitment to securing a fair go for everyone. He spent time supporting the election of Labor representatives at Federal, State and local levels. He joined the party in 1969, and provided an important link between its members, its elected representatives and the Maltese community. His respect within Labor circles meant that all three levels of government were represented at his requiem mass on 13 December 2024. Joe was committed to his family more than all of these things. We in the Labor Party benefited from his commitment and his time. While we will miss him, he will be missed even more by his children and grandchildren.

AUSTRALIAN WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (19:15): On the morning of 29 November 2024, I had the pleasure of helping to officially open the stunning new addition of a Tasmanian devil enclosure to the Australian Wildlife Sanctuary at Bargo. Members should make sure to visit and support this remarkable sanctuary. This incredible facility is a must-visit for locals, families and visitors to Wollondilly. It is not only an opportunity to enjoy our native wildlife up close but also a chance to appreciate the vital work being done to protect and nurture our local flora and fauna. I especially thank Tahmoor Colliery for its three-year partnership with the Australian Wildlife Sanctuary. It supports the development of both the koala sanctuary and this wonderful new Tasmanian devil enclosure. I also thank the Tahmoor Uniting Men's Shed for its craftsmanship in building the Tasmanian devil enclosure boxes and the picnic tables for the sanctuary. It is a fantastic contribution.

DARCY MOORE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:16): I acknowledge the achievement of Mr Darcy Moore, the deputy principal of Dapto High School, in being awarded the Orwell Society Peter Davison Award at an event at University College London on 24 October 2024. The Peter Davison Award is awarded in recognition of outstanding ability and contribution to the study of George Orwell's life and work. It is awarded once per year by the Orwell Society to a person who has produced and published a work of intellectual value comparable to that of Professor Davison. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate Mr Moore on this wonderful achievement.

ANDREW SCARSBROOK

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:17): I congratulate Andrew Scarsbrook, who was awarded the 2025 Hawkesbury Young Citizen of the Year Award at a recent Australia Day ceremony. Andrew has significant involvement within areas of agriculture and food production and consistently demonstrates personal qualities of selflessness and commitment for his community. Andrew contributes significantly to the rural industries of Hawkesbury through various activities. He has developed expertise in cattle judging, which he has utilised as both a champion senior cattle judge and grand champion judge. Andrew was also named the 2024 Hawkesbury Rural Ambassador at the Hawkesbury Show. These achievements are a testament to Andrew's skill and passion for agriculture, which he enjoys sharing with other young learners. I congratulate Andrew on this excellent achievement and thank him for his advocacy in promoting the benefits of rural industries. His passion for agriculture and his work in promoting the agricultural awareness are remarkable qualities for a young man to have. I am certain Andrew will continue to make a significant impact in our community.

ANNAMARIA WOOD, OAM

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (19:18): I am delighted to recognise a wonderful woman in our community whom I am lucky to call my friend, Ms Annamaria Wood, who received a Medal of the Order of Australia on Australia Day. Annamaria was the CEO of Disability Macarthur for more than 26 years and oversaw services that supported both children and adults with disability right across the region. Annamaria is a long-term Macarthur resident and a bastion of our community. She has had such a positive impact on so many people, and she continues to do so. She was originally a community nurse specialising in supporting those with disabilities

and spent almost 20 years gaining experience before starting her role at Disability Macarthur. During her time at Disability Macarthur, Annamaria oversaw major growth in the organisation to the tune of almost \$4 million. She is simply an amazing woman, and a representation of the many amazing women in Campbelltown and the Macarthur. I congratulate her and everyone else who was recognised on Australia Day.

FOOTBALL NSW

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (19:19): I acknowledge one of the larger organisations in the Winston Hills electorate, Football NSW, which is located at Valentine Sports Park in Glenwood. Over many years Football NSW has demonstrated a strong commitment to our community by hosting fantastic gala days, training programs and other events that bring people together in a spirit of healthy competition. Those sporting initiatives bring together players and families, and encourage youth across New South Wales to stay active, follow their dreams and learn valuable life skills both on and off the pitch. I commend the efforts of all the volunteers, coaches and players who dedicate their time to ensure that Football NSW's programs are welcoming, structured and enjoyable for everyone. Football NSW's partnerships with local clubs have led to many meaningful improvements in facilities across our State, which have enhanced the grassroots football experience. I recognise Football NSW's outgoing government relations lead, Daniel Ristic—whom many in the Chamber would know—for his many years of leadership and advocacy on behalf of the organisation. I wish Daniel the very best of luck in his new role.

KHALED SABSABI

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:20): In anyone's books, Khaled Sabsabi's story is extraordinary. He is an artist, former rapper and proud Liverpool resident, amongst many other things. Khaled has also just been selected to represent Australia at the sixty-first Venice Biennale, the world's oldest and most prestigious contemporary art exhibition, alongside his long-time curatorial partner and my good friend Michael D'Agostino. The pair first worked together in 1998 on Khaled's first exhibition, Arab Made, at the Casula Powerhouse in Liverpool. Khaled's selection to the Venice Biennale, known as the Olympics of the art world, is particularly fitting given the current climate. His work often explores ideas of representation, identity and breaking stereotypes, especially of Muslims and Arabs within the Australian context. His career spans more than 35 years and more than 90 solo and group exhibitions all over the world. Khaled has studied, lived and worked in Western Sydney since moving to Australia from Tripoli during the Lebanese Civil War. I congratulate Khaled and Michael. Our best wishes are with them.

BUSINESS WOMEN ALBURY WODONGA

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:21): I congratulate the following six businesses that have been selected as the Business Women Albury Wodonga 2025 grand finalists: Dying to Help end-of-life doula, Redefined Counselling, Insight Therapies Counselling and Consultancy, Style Revive personal styling, Organised with Hannah, and Johara. Each of them contribute something invaluable to our community, and I am so proud to see them recognised for the remarkable work they do. I also thank The Real Florist for sponsoring the event, themed "Embracing Resilience," held in January at 2640 Restaurant and Bar. It was an awesome way to kick off the year, surrounded by so many extraordinary and inspiring businesswomen. The connection and energy in the room were palpable, and it was truly a special experience. A huge thank you to generous sponsors Que Property Group and Starfish Marketing. Their continued support helps create opportunities for events like these. Well done to the six lucky finalists. I look forward to hearing more of each of their stories as they reveal their goals at the grant pitch tomorrow night in Albury.

DR FELICITY COLE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:22): I recognise the incredible achievements of local veterinarian Dr Felicity Cole. Despite a global shortage of intravenous [IV] fluids, Dr Cole's creative solution has ensured that animals across Australia have access to essential saline bags. Struggling to provide enough IV bags for animals at her Merewether Vet clinic, Dr Cole asked Australian Red Cross Lifeblood if expired or partially used IV bags, unsafe for human use, could be repurposed for animals in her clinic. Keen to help, Lifeblood developed a national program to safely repurpose the bags for animals, donating 5,000 IV bags to more than 100 animal clinics and zoos across Australia each month. Dr Cole's innovative solution has ensured that our four-legged friends can continue to receive life-saving treatments. I thank her for her commitment to our community.

JENNY KENA

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:23): I acknowledge the remarkable contribution of Ms Jenny Kena. Ms Kena has dedicated herself tirelessly as both the president and treasurer of Community with Technology and Creativity [CTC], a not-for-profit organisation in Robertson that supports connections through technology, creativity and community engagement. In addition to her leadership at CTC, Ms Kena has served as

the editor of the *Robertson News*, a vital local publication that keeps the community informed and connected, ensuring that important news and events are shared with those who need it most. Her unwavering commitment and exceptional service to the community were recently recognised when she was named the Wingecarribee Citizen of the Year. That well-deserved honour is a testament to her dedication and impact on the lives of many. I congratulate Ms Kena on receiving that prestigious award and express our community's collective gratitude for her extraordinary contributions.

Private Members' Statements

NEWCASTLE EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:24): I am pleased to announce that after years of lobbying the previous Government to increase emergency accommodation in Newcastle, the Minns Government has delivered on its commitment to increase emergency accommodation in Newcastle for families who need a safe place to stay. The Stockton Centre was closed as a residential care home for individuals with disabilities in 2020. The previous Government then auctioned off everything, including the kitchen sink, to the lowest bidder, before letting the space go to rack and ruin. However, this Government recognised the untapped potential of the former Stockton Centre and refused to let the site sit and decay. Minister Washington and I visited the site in mid-2023, just after Labor was elected to government. We wanted to get a true picture of its condition to be well informed about what opportunities may be available to assist people experiencing homelessness.

The centre was not in great shape. But while the previous Government had not even bothered investigating the possibility of temporary accommodation on the site with any seriousness, we identified a number of homes that could be adapted for meanwhile use. Thanks to the Government's decisive action, seven homes have been upgraded to provide much-needed short-term accommodation for larger families facing a housing crisis or emergency. The \$2.45 million upgrade to the properties has delivered one six-bedroom house, two four-bedroom houses and four five-bedroom houses. Those properties will fill a gap for our community and make sure Novocastrian families in need have a safe and welcoming place to stay.

Homes NSW is working with leading social and affordable housing provider Home In Place to make sure that people staying temporarily at the Stockton Centre receive the right support to address their housing needs and assist them to find longer term solutions. The project delivers on a promise by the Government to investigate the temporary use of government-owned building assets for short-term accommodation while longer term planning and redevelopment options are being explored. That model can and hopefully will be replicated across the State. In the long term, the Stockton Centre will play an important role in alleviating the current housing crisis, having been earmarked as a potential space to deliver new private-market, social and affordable homes as part of our Government's plan to turn State-owned land into residential housing. It is anticipated that the iconic site could support more than 500 dwellings.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics reveals women and children as the demographics facing the highest housing insecurity, homelessness and complex socio-economic barriers to secure housing. In regional cities, one in eight women reported issues of homelessness over the past five years across several demographics, including socio-economic status, age and ethnicity. Further, Hunter organisation Nova for Women and Children cites family and domestic violence as the prime reason to seek emergency housing. Data from Nova affirms that women and children continue to be disproportionately affected by the current housing crisis, with 1,677 women and children seeking emergency support at Nova last year.

Since being elected in 2023, the Minns Labor Government has passed the biggest housing reforms in over a decade. Those historic legislative packages include banning no-grounds evictions, limiting rent increases to one per year, making it easier to have pets in rentals and introducing fee-free ways to pay rent. They have removed significant barriers for New South Wales renters and people looking to enter the housing market.

Further, the Government has changed planning controls to make crisis and temporary accommodation more accessible, with 120 social housing projects currently active in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie government areas.

The transformation of the Stockton Centre is a huge win for Newcastle. It is a small but significant step towards alleviating the housing crisis in our community. I thank Minister Washington and Minister Jackson for their roles in helping to get that project off the ground. Whilst there is still a way to go, I am proud to be part of a government that is actively addressing the housing crisis and employing both short- and long-term measures to create more effective and sustainable solutions. My constituents can be sure that I will continue to advocate for more housing strategies that support the needs of all Novocastrians.

ILLICIT TOBACCO TRADE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:29): I address a significant and troubling issue that is increasingly concerning communities across New South Wales: the rise of unregulated tobacconists and the illicit tobacco trade. This matter goes beyond any single piece of legislation, encompassing a persistent, widespread problem that undermines public health, jeopardises legitimate businesses and fuels organised crime. In recent years I have observed a worrying increase in the number of tobacconists that open, operate for a brief period, and then either close or relocate just down the street. It raises questions about whether these businesses are operating under the radar of regulatory bodies, or if regulators are aware, yet lack the capacity to take proper action. Regardless of the answer, it is clear that these unregulated establishments have become hotspots for illegal tobacco sales, circumventing our health laws and evading taxation.

The unrestricted sale of tobacco—both in legal and illegal forms—seriously erodes the protections we have established to safeguard public health. In an unregulated market, products lack the oversight that ensures compliance with the quality standards and health warnings observed by legitimate businesses. This situation presents severe risks, particularly in regional and rural areas where unregulated tobacconists seem to be thriving, often with ties to organised crime networks. The dual threat cannot be overstated. These activities not only harm legitimate businesses that operate within the law but also pose a significant threat to public safety. For example, local communities such as those in Goulburn are witnessing firsthand how these illicit groups operate, flooding the market with untaxed and unregulated tobacco products that contribute to a growing black-market economy.

Our rural areas have unfortunately become prime targets for these operations, largely due to a combination of insufficient oversight and the lack of resources to reprimand wrongdoers effectively. As I mentioned in my second reading debate contribution, a recent large-scale law enforcement operation in the Hume region brought to light the extent of the problem. In collaboration with NSW Health, authorities seized nearly 1.5 million illegal cigarettes, over a dozen kilograms of loose tobacco and hundreds of vaping devices, all originating from unregulated sources. Those figures reveal the alarming scale of this underground market. Additional operations targeted two shops in Goulburn, where law enforcement confiscated over 180,000 illegal cigarettes and 3.7 kilograms of loose tobacco. Those numbers are not mere statistics; they reflect a serious issue that affects the health, safety and economy of our communities.

The victims in this scenario include not only consumers unaware of the risks but also local businesses striving to operate legally within established regulatory frameworks. Retailers who hold legitimate licences to sell tobacco products find themselves in an unfair competition with unregulated tobacconists. Those compliant businesses are essential contributors to our economy, adhering to health regulations and upholding the law, yet they face an uphill battle against illegal competitors who disregard those same regulations. Moreover, the health risks posed by products sold in unregulated outlets cannot be ignored. Illicit tobacco items are often smuggled, counterfeit or manufactured without quality control, exposing users to greater health risks that ultimately burden our health system. Many consumers may be lured into purchasing from those shops, thinking they are simply getting a better deal, completely unaware of the dangerous implications associated with such choices.

In conclusion, while legislative measures like the Public Health (Tobacco) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2024 are steps in the right direction toward regulatory compliance, our communities must remain attuned to the broader picture. We need to prioritise the health and safety of our communities, support legitimate businesses that comply with the law and take decisive action to cut off organised crime at its roots. Collaborative efforts between law enforcement, health authorities and local businesses are essential in tackling this multifaceted issue, ensuring that we protect both our public health and the integrity of legitimate commerce. Together, we can work to create a safer, healthier environment for all residents of New South Wales.

OVERNIGHT MUSICAL BAND

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:34): I am thrilled to share the story of Overnight, Australia's breakout boy band. They have not only captivated our nation; they are also making waves across the globe. Their journey is one of talent, passion and an unrelenting drive to make a mark on the world of music. Jai Ellevsen, Emerson Garcia, Kye Spindler and Tyler Wade are the extraordinary talents behind Overnight. The boys are based in the Illawarra and met when they attended Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts. Formed in 2021, Overnight's journey began with a shared dream and a passion for music. Their big break came in 2023 when they debuted nationally on *The Voice*. Their performance on the show did not just impress the judges; they captured the hearts of audiences across the country.

Overnight's first single, *All That I Like*, marked the beginning of an incredible musical journey. Since then, the band has continued to amaze fans with hit singles such as *Not Around*, *Home City Lovin'*, *Celebrity Crush* and *What You Need*. Each release showcases the boys' unique blend of upbeat pop and R&B, infused with the smooth harmonies and dynamic choreography that have become their signature style. When it comes to live performances,

Overnight truly shines. Known for their high-energy shows, they have graced some iconic stages and venues from a very young age. From the grand ICC arena in Sydney's Darling Harbour to the vibrant Oxford Art Factory, their electrifying performances combine flawless vocals, sharp dance moves and undeniable charisma. Whether performing at massive arenas or intimate clubs, Overnight creates an immersive experience that leaves audiences exhilarated and wanting more.

Last year, 2024, was nothing short of a whirlwind year for the band. It started with a bang as they played their very first headline show in their hometown of Wollongong, which was an emotional milestone that marked how far they have come. Not long after, they performed in front of a staggering 7,000 students in Sydney, which was an experience that reaffirmed their place as one of Australia's most exciting pop acts. They then took the leap across the Pacific, making their music known globally with a mini tour to the United States that saw them performing in Los Angeles and Chicago. One of the standout moments was their performance of the hit song *Celebration* at the Chicago Thanksgiving Parade, which was broadcast to millions live and on television across the United States.

That opportunity not only amplified their reach but also cemented their position as rising stars on the international stage. They also performed original singles at legendary venues such as Whisky a Go Go and Universal CityWalk. In addition to performing, the band also had the privilege of collaborating with some of the industry's biggest names in world-class recording studios in Los Angeles. That opportunity allowed them to refine their craft and gain invaluable insights from the best in the business. What sets the boys apart is their dedication and work ethic. The past year has been a testament to how hard work pays off. From collaborating with top-tier choreographers to consistently delivering unforgettable performances, the band members have demonstrated an unyielding commitment to their artistry. Through it all, they remain grounded and grateful, consistently thanking their fans and the people they have worked with along the way.

As its fan base continues to grow both in Australia and internationally, Overnight has proven that it is much more than a typical boy band. The boys are cultural trailblazers, bringing a fresh, modern sound to the pop music scene. Whether performing in front of thousands or in more intimate settings, Jai, Emerson, Tyler and Kye pour their hearts into every performance, leaving a lasting impression on everyone fortunate enough to see them live. The band's rise has been meteoric, but the journey is far from over. With their infectious energy, undeniable talent and relentless drive, they are poised to reach even greater heights in the years to come. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I wish the band all the success that it deserves. I look forward to seeing bigger and better things from Overnight.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:38): On the Coffs Coast, Australia Day on Sunday 26 January was a stunning sunny day with plenty of celebrations, sausage sizzles, lamingtons, the welcoming of new citizens, and the spending of time with family and friends. A community party at Coffs Harbour's new-look Brelsford Park included a free barbeque breakfast and family-friendly activities, while Jetty Beach was the venue for the Big Dig Treasure Hunt. People were also encouraged to explore the serene North Coast Regional Botanic Garden and the city centre walking trails using the Coffs Coast Explorer app. The more formal Australia Day proceedings included a citizenship ceremony where 40 people from around the world took the pledge to officially become Australian citizens, and a stirring rendition of *I Am Australian* was performed by talented local artist Imogen Daymond.

Australia Day also saw the announcement of the city's Australia Day Award winners. The finalists were Brian Clarke, a beloved mental health and suicide prevention advocate known for his ever-present smile and infectious energy. Brian's vibrant fluoro gear and signature photo frame make him a well-known figure across Coffs Harbour's music, volunteer and business circles. Michael Collins who, with 39 years of military service under his belt, now leads as captain of the NSW Rural Fire Service's Sandy Beach brigade. Michael's commitment extends beyond emergency services; he also brings joy to the community by volunteering as Santa during the festive season.

Tiga Cross has revitalised the Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary, transforming it into a hub for conservation and education that attracts over 50,000 visitors annually. In addition, Tiga plays a key role in promoting regional tourism through her work with local organisations like Destination Coffs Coast and the Rotary club. Nicholas Newling embodies community spirit by organising the annual Coffs Christmas Lunch 4 U, which supports the homeless and isolated. A staunch advocate for suicide awareness through Lifeline and an active participant in local events like the Saturday parkrun, Nick is also on his way to becoming a registered nurse. Lisa Nichols is a dynamic leader in the Coffs Harbour community, particularly along the northern beaches. As the publisher of *Woopi News* and the force behind local digital initiatives, Lisa also serves as an R U OK? ambassador and leads the Woo-hoo Foundation to assist those facing tough times.

The Lions Club of Coffs Harbour is instrumental in building community resilience by providing weekly meals, school support and crisis assistance through the Coffs Harbour Neighbourhood Centre. Their initiatives, including the Winter Appeal, also extend help to organisations like Pete's Place, Troy's Food Fix and Sandy Beach Public School. RISE Coffs Harbour is dedicated to empowering local youth. RISE offers a wellbeing program that combines football and life skills training on the hockey fields. That initiative creates a supportive environment that fosters inclusivity, confidence and a strong sense of community among children facing various challenges. The Community Transport Company started from humble beginnings 35 years ago. This social enterprise now employs 250 people to provide affordable transport services. With every profit reinvested into community programs, it plays a key role in promoting health, wellbeing and independence in Coffs Harbour.

Now we come to the winners. Phil McMullen was named the 2025 Citizen of the Year for his work as a football coach, youth mentor and advocate for local refugee families. After developing his passion for football at Orara High School, Phil's career took him to Sydney, where he worked for the Australian Youth Football Institute before returning to Coffs Harbour to lead RISE, a community program supporting youth from diverse and refugee backgrounds. Through RISE, Phil has helped countless young people build confidence and resilience. Phil's leadership has made a big impact on children's lives across our region, creating positive ripple effects across the entire local community.

Nathan Armstrong was presented with the 2025 Young Citizen of the Year Award for his role as a passionate on-air presenter, gifted radio mentor and all-round community advocate whose impact reaches far beyond his work with youth community radio station CHY FM. Nathan has played a key role in assisting local seniors with navigating the internet and smartphones, helping them stay connected and strengthening community bonds across Coffs Harbour. Barry Powells was named the 2025 Senior Citizen of the Year for his decades-long service to the Coffs Harbour region. Barry has contributed to the Coffs Harbour Show Society, the NSW Rural Fire Service and served as president of Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare. Under his leadership, Coffs Harbour Regional Landcare expanded its programs, with over 380 volunteers working at 41 restoration sites across the coast. Barry has made an immense contribution to conserving the natural characteristics of the Coffs Harbour local government area over the past decade, with countless hours of volunteer work.

Scott Cordwell received the Aussie Spirit Award for his selfless contributions to the Eastern Dorrigo Mountain community. Known for his generosity, Scott has organised events like the 2024 Remembrance Day service in Ulong and spearheaded the installation of a headstone for a local World War I veteran. Scott also jumped into action to support wildlife affected by the 2019-20 bushfires, has fostered working dogs in need of a new home, and has helped counter social isolation in the community by offering a free shuttle bus service as a volunteer driver. I congratulate all of our local Australia Day Award winners and finalists for their inspirational achievements, and I enjoyed sharing a special moment with them on our national day.

BOMBER 134 CRASH

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (19:44): On 23 January it was the fifth anniversary of the crash of *Bomber 134* when it was on service in the Monaro region. The water bomber crashed at Peak View in New South Wales, and the three crew members, Captain Ian McBeth, First Officer Paul Hudson and Flight Engineer Rick DeMorgan Jr, lost their lives. That crash is something the local community has felt very strongly about and has worked to commemorate. It has also worked to support the crew members' families from the United States. Fundamental in that is the knowledge that those three men, who no-one in our area had even met, were willing to come here and undertake that dangerous operation to try to protect lives and property in our region. Our community's outpouring of support for them and wish to remember them comes from the sacrifice that they made.

The five-year anniversary was marked by a memorial service on the site of the crash at Peak View. It is a beautiful location, with memorial plants on some large boulders, and the service was put on with great dignity by the Rural Fire Service, with many local volunteers and people from around the State, including the former Rural Fire Service Commissioner. I was able to attend that service not only representing the Minister but also as the local member. We have also seen memorials established at the Bredbo pub and in Cooma. Bredbo is the closest town to Peak View. The Bredbo pub now has a room dedicated to the crew of *Bomber 134*, with a memorial out the front able to be seen, including part of the propeller and tributes to the three crew members, and that has been entirely community driven. In Cooma, we have a memorial built by the Lions and Rotary clubs near the Southern Cloud Memorial, again acknowledging the service of those three men and passing on condolences to their families.

These things have all struck me as showing the way the community values the sacrifice those three men, who they have never met, made for them. James Fitzgerald is one of the people behind some of this work. He is the owner of the koala sanctuary that the water bomber was heading towards at the time to try to stop the fire. He has established a GoFundMe campaign to try to bring the families of the crew members out to see the site and

attend one of the memorials in the future. I urge anyone who is able to give support to visit the GoFundMe Bomber 134 Fundraiser page and support that.

As I said, the Bredbo pub, the Cooma Lions Club and the Cooma Rotary Club have also been involved in commemorating those three men. The Speaker of this House has also been involved. The Speaker called in at the Bredbo pub and was told about the work that the community was doing to link up and support the families and honour the service of the three crew members of the water bomber. He has since made contact with a family member of one of the crew. He stays in contact with them as well as staying in contact with the people from Bredbo who are driving this project to try to fund the family members coming to Australia.

It has been an amazing community response to the sacrifice that those men made in the 2019-20 bushfires. We know that those were incredibly serious fires right around the State. We really do rely on the efforts of our amazing volunteers in the RFS, of which we have so many in the Monaro region and whose efforts are so hugely valued by all of us, and the crews who fly in from various parts of Australia and, as we can see, from around the world. As I said, it is something we very much value. I have been struck by the fact that our community has become so committed to commemorating the sacrifice that those three men made. We thank Captain Ian McBeth, First Officer Paul Hudson and Flight Engineer Rick DeMorgan Jr for their service and the sacrifice they made for the people of our region, defending us from bushfires, just as we thank everyone who works to fight fires in those terrible fire seasons that we sometimes get in our region.

LIFEVAC

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:49): Tonight I advocate for a simple yet life-saving measure that could prevent the tragic deaths of children and vulnerable people across New South Wales. In past years, we have seen the heartbreaking loss of young lives due to choking incidents—deaths that may have been preventable with the right intervention. Among them was five-year-old Imogen Lennon, who tragically choked on a frankfurt in January 2023 at Tumbarumba. Despite her mother being a paramedic with 35 years of experience, she was unable to save her daughter. In February 2024 Zaire "ZaZa" Bwoga, a toddler from Western Australia, lost his life in a similar choking accident. Closer to home, we in the Orange community are still mourning the tragic loss of a seven-year-old boy, Decklan Hayward, who choked at Glenroi Heights Public School in July 2023. Despite immediate efforts to clear his airway and medical intervention, Decklan suffered catastrophic brain damage due to oxygen deprivation and tragically did not recover.

Those tragedies are a brutal reminder of how quickly a choking emergency can escalate into a fatal situation. Statistics show that choking is the second leading cause of preventable death in children under 14 and a significant risk for the elderly and people with disabilities. Current protocols rely on back blows, abdominal thrusts and chest compressions. Even the blind finger sweep, another common method, can push obstructions further down the airway, increasing the risk of fatality. In contrast, LifeVac, a suction-based airway clearance device, has no recorded adverse effects. LifeVac has been shown to be effective in rapidly removing airway obstructions in pre-hospital settings, improving neurological outcomes when used before emergency responders arrive. Studies conclude that LifeVac has successfully prevented deaths in hundreds of real-world cases. The device is TGA registered in Australia and is already being deployed in some care facilities. However, its availability remains inconsistent across the State.

Current first-aid guidelines instruct caregivers and educators to immediately call 000 when a choking emergency occurs. However, in regional electorates like mine, we know all too well that emergency responders can take several minutes—sometimes far longer—to arrive at the scene. Brain death can begin within four to six minutes of oxygen deprivation due to choking. In a large number of fatal choking cases, the difference between life and death is the speed and effectiveness of intervention before paramedics arrive. That is why adding LifeVac to first-aid response protocols could save lives.

The cost of equipping all schools, early childhood centres and aged-care facilities in New South Wales with LifeVac devices is minimal, compared to the immeasurable cost of losing a child or vulnerable person to choking. For less than \$250 per device, institutions could have a non-invasive, easy-to-use emergency backup option. Furthermore, integrating LifeVac training into first-aid courses would provide educators, caregivers and first-aid responders with another critical tool to combat choking incidents. This is not a replacement for existing first-aid protocols; it is a vital addition.

I urge the New South Wales Government to take immediate action by mandating an evaluation of LifeVac and other airway clearance devices for use in schools, childcare centres and aged-care facilities; funding the provision of LifeVac devices in public schools, care facilities and regional hospitals; and integrating LifeVac training into accredited first-aid qualifications for teachers, childcare workers and aged-care staff. Decklan's story is heartbreaking, as are too many others, and their families will never stop grieving. But we must do what we can to prevent more families from enduring the same pain. I acknowledge Decklan's mother, Katrina Haywood, who

I met last week at my office, and Councillor Tammy Greenhalgh, Deputy Mayor of Orange City Council, for their efforts in raising awareness in relation to this issue and advocating for these devices in our schools. Let us act now to ensure that every possible life-saving measure is available to protect our most vulnerable.

PHYSICAL INACTIVITY AND INEQUALITY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:53): There is a growing awareness of the many factors that underpin inequity in our broader community. We are also more keenly conscious of the negative impact of physical inactivity, especially in our children. Many parents in Liverpool have shared with me concerns that the cost-of-living crisis has left them unable to support children's activities. It has left them making difficult decisions about which child might access a particular activity during which season. Rising insurance costs, registration fees and the increasing disrepair of local community sporting facilities have left parents and young people struggling to incorporate adequate physical activity into their daily or weekly routine. That concern has also been highlighted by my youth advisory group. Liverpool YAG members have pointed out that the social and community safety benefits that consistent engagement in physical activity can have—especially organised physical activities—are often lost. They have also pointed out that poor transport connections and long commute times may be contributing factors.

What we see in our community on a daily basis was recently validated by research, as the Centre for Western Sydney launched its report into tackling inactivity and inequality in Western Sydney in November. The report marks a key milestone in the centre's movement for movement initiative. We know that regular activity is so important for mental, brain and musculoskeletal health. We also know how critical it is in fostering social connections, building community and improving confidence. Western Sydney boasts many beautiful green and blue spaces ranging from the world-famous Blue Mountains to the Western Sydney Parklands—Australia's largest urban park. We have access to rivers and waterways, with new initiatives such as Penrith Beach cooling people down in the extreme heat and encouraging active lifestyles. Our region is home to professional sports clubs like the Wests Tigers, the Bulldogs, GWS Giants, the Western Sydney Wanderers, Macarthur FC, South West Mounties Magic and the Sydney Kings. However, despite those amazing spaces and clubs, accessing and engaging in physical activity, sport and recreation remain a challenge for many due to structural inequities.

Inactivity already poses a significant challenge for Western Sydney, contributing to higher rates of diabetes, cardiovascular disease and obesity, and costing the region's economy some \$1.5 billion annually. Inactivity is a particular issue in Liverpool and south-west Sydney broadly. The report finds that 40.9 per cent of adults in the South Western Sydney Local Health District are inactive, with those levels rising to a very concerning 61.6 per cent when considering children aged five to 15 years. The report makes clear that there is a link between inactivity and inequity. It is not just individual barriers but systematic and spatial inequities that contribute to inactivity.

Many barriers exist to active habits in Western Sydney, including lower incomes, cost-of-living pressures, time constraints, and work and care responsibilities. Unfortunately, in the Liverpool area, years of inaction on refreshing facilities like the Michael Wenden Aquatic Leisure Centre and Whitlam Leisure Centre, both of which are heavily patronised by the community but in much need of tender loving care, have left our community high and dry. The delay in just getting on with those projects has had a flow-on impact on the many community sporting groups and clubs that use those facilities or need clarity on their future so that they can plan for growth and coordinate with the kids, parents and volunteers that are the backbone of community sport.

The situation is unfortunately compounded by lack of investment in local amenity and infrastructure that supports incidental physical activity, from outdated children's play equipment—often without shade cloths that provide protection from the harsh sun of Western Sydney—to large swathes of our suburbs in the 2168 postcode area left without park gyms. All of that contributes to putting meaningful physical activity further out of reach in Liverpool. The report provides a roadmap for addressing inactivity and inequity in the region. I hope it inspires the collective action needed to build a healthier, more equitable Western Sydney. I look forward to working with my community to address this significant issue, which has a ripple effect on so many other parts of our lives. I acknowledge and commend the authors of the report, as well as WSYD Moving and David Burns, for their effort in putting together the research and the goal of inspiring movement in our region. I also note that we have the Minister for Sport in the Chamber. We have a very strong advocate for community sport and community activity in the Minister.

COST OF LIVING

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:58): Recent cost-of-living pressures have been by far the most significant challenge facing families and individuals across the Albury electorate, alongside the rest of New South Wales. Grocery bills keep climbing, electricity prices are higher than we have ever seen them, rents and mortgage repayments continue to edge up, and fuel prices are a hip pocket burden. Everywhere we look, expenses are on

the rise and are impossible to dodge. Last month Albury Wodonga Regional FoodShare revealed that over 2,000 people flooded their service for food relief in December.

These are local families, pensioners, and individuals who are struggling to put meals on the table at a time when no-one should have to go without. Local woman Lisa was one of those who used the food agency for the first time. She revealed that unexpected illness had stopped her from working and hit hard at her household budget. Lisa shared:

I've been struggling to do activities with my kids over the school holidays, due to the soaring cost of groceries. This food aid is helping to give me some leeway.

New South Wales Mental Health Commissioner, Jennifer Black, revealed how the cost-of-living pressures are driving up feelings of isolation and loneliness. She said:

If you're under financial pressure, you might not be able to afford your mortgage or your rent ... you might not be able to afford some of the social activities that you would normally do.

Young people have admitted they are having to say no to a social catch-up with friends at local cafes, restaurants and the pub, or even going out on a date—they say they simply cannot afford it—while older people are also bunkering down, focusing on their mortgage repayments and responsibilities over a dinner out with friends. As we modify what we buy or how we spend our money, the impacts are also being felt by our partners, spouses and especially our children. In the 2024 report *Impossible Choices: Decisions NSW communities shouldn't have to make*, researchers from the University of Technology Sydney detailed how children are bearing the brunt of the growing cost-of-living pressures. Some parents tell of cutting back spending on meals, essential health care and education resources. Three in four households sacrifice spending on their children, half of all households reduced spending on health and wellbeing essentials, and one in five households delayed early childhood education. Peak social services body NCOSS commissioned the research. Cara Varian, CEO of NCOSS, said of the data:

Low-income families should not be forced to choose between paying for food or medication. The basics of life should not be considered a luxury that most low-income families cannot afford.

Economists say the current cost-of-living crisis is hitting New South Wales households twice as hard as the 1990-91 and 1982-83 recessions, and significantly more sharply than any period dating back to 1959. A significant pressure that families and individuals are facing are mortgage costs. Since May 2022, the Reserve Bank of Australia [RBA] has increased our cash rate 13 times to its highest level in 13 years. With the average mortgage now sitting at a record \$642,000, many families are acutely feeling the mounting effects of our cost-of-living pressures and are struggling. The RBA's action, to offset inflation, has marked the fastest tightening cycle in a generation. Last year, when revising up economic growth forecasts, Michelle Bullock, the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia, said that the stronger outlook was fuelled by "ongoing spending and recent announcements by Federal and State and Territory governments". She also said:

... make no mistake, inflation is still too high and the Board does remain concerned about the degree of excess demand in the economy.

That is right: Ongoing spending by government placed pressure on interest rates to remain high throughout 2024. Now, whilst the Government is spending record amounts—as evidenced in its own budget papers—the past two years have seen the winding back of support developed by the previous Liberals-Nationals Government that was designed to help some of our most vulnerable citizens. This includes axing the \$250 regional seniors travel card as well as ending the \$250 energy rebate for households and the \$150 back-to-school vouchers for families. I acknowledge the hardship and stress that many individuals and families in our community are experiencing. The people of the Albury electorate and throughout New South Wales deserve an economic plan that prioritises responsible budgeting and practical, commonsense measures to relieve cost-of-living pressures. We need to be providing opportunity, protecting jobs, and building a future where individuals and families can get ahead, not just scrape by.

COOGEE ELECTORATE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:03): The Coogee electorate is home to one of the largest Jewish communities in the State. Jews have a very long and rich history of contributing to the Coogee electorate and the entire eastern suburbs. To put some context around this, the first member for Coogee was a Jew by the name of Hyman Goldstein, and the final resting place of Esther Abrahams is Waverley cemetery. Ms Abrahams' background was that she was a Jewish convict who arrived on the First Fleet. She was married to Lieutenant George Johnston, who later became the Acting Governor-General of New South Wales.

I say this because Jews have lived peacefully and contributed to the eastern suburbs for a very long time, which is something that our community should be incredibly proud of. Jewish migration to the eastern suburbs and to New South Wales has had such a positive and beautiful impact. In recent times, really important modern-day institutions such as Our Big Kitchen, Jewish House and Abrahams Tent are community organisations

that help the most vulnerable people in our community. They are funded and run by Jewish organisations but they benefit everyone in our community, including the most vulnerable people.

I have been to Poland. I have been to Germany. I have been to the sites of pogroms and the sites of some of the most horrific acts of the Shoah, including Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz. What we are seeing here today is domestic terrorism. I think we should call it that. It fills me with so much sadness and anger that this is where our society is at. Since 7 October two years ago we have seen increased antisemitism throughout my community and throughout the rest of New South Wales. It has been one of the most difficult things to watch while being able to support my community. We know that the people who are committing these acts are committing them because they want to divide us. They want to bully and intimidate the Jewish community, and I know that they will not win.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the phenomenal work that the police are doing, particularly with regards to Operation Shelter and Strike Force Pearl. Under Operation Shelter, 173 people have been arrested and charged. I really want to acknowledge introduction of the bills that amend the Crimes Act. They are really important steps that our Government is taking. It sends a very clear message to broader society that these acts will not be tolerated and that there is no space for this level of hate and antisemitism within our communities. But I stand here today and call on the community of the eastern suburbs as well as people across New South Wales to all play a really important role in standing against this hatred and standing up against antisemitism. Every single one of us plays a role in stamping this out. It is really important that, when we see these things, people do not walk past them. Call it out.

If you have Jewish friends, call them and support them. Their lives are not easy and they are not happy at the moment. They are living in fear and they need to know that there are more people on their side who are supporting them than there are those who are against them. I take this opportunity to thank the Jewish Board of Deputies as well as all the Jewish organisations in my electorate with whom we continue to work—our sheols, the Coogee Synagogue, the Maroubra Synagogue and the Emanuel Synagogue, and our Jewish organisations such as Our Big Kitchen, Jewish House, Abrahams Tent, as well as Emanuel School and Moriah College. My electorate is home to two of the biggest Jewish schools in the State. I know that the return to school for kids has been incredibly difficult and stressful. I acknowledge the work of our Premier and the Ministers who ensured that amendments to the Crimes Act were passed.

BATHURST ELECTORATE COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (20:08): I share with the House a recap of some events that have taken place in my region over the last few weeks. During the break, I had the opportunity to travel right across the region and see some of the investments that were made by the former New South Wales Government. When I had a look in Bathurst, there has been plenty of action, with AFL sporting facilities upgraded to include lighting and a new amenities block, and a pavilion at the Bathurst Showground saved and restored.

One of my favourite visits in recent weeks was a trip to the Clubhouse, which is run by Social Futures, to see how it was going after a year in operation. The Clubhouse is targeted at young people 12 to 17 years of age and is an innovative space embracing the learning concepts of science, technology, engineering, art and maths. The space is designed for young people to embrace their interests, develop skills and use their imagination, utilising a range of technologies to tell their story.

The Clubhouse has been successful in engaging young people through the provision of activities to the community. The Clubhouse has run its program successfully while providing a safe place after school and has also delivered outreach to schools and the broader community. The activities the kids have focused on include podcasting, 3D designing, photography and music. One child showed me the rap song he had written, recorded and created a music video for, which won an international award. The creations the kids have made are truly remarkable. Sitting with them as they showed me their interests and what they have learnt, I could see their interest and passion, and their love for the space where they can come to hang out. It is a fantastic initiative and has made a profound impact on the Bathurst community, with organisers bringing in kids from the nearby shopping centres and streets who were up to no good to help them find what interests them. Now the kids are entertained, safe and off the streets.

In Blayney it is great to see investment in the roads and footpaths. A \$410,000 grant secured from the former New South Wales Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund program has funded construction of new footpaths. The footpaths complete a loop around Plumb Street and Orange Road and connect residents on Palmer Street to the Blayney network at Binstead Street. It may seem simple, but those footpaths provide access to those that do not drive or are in wheelchairs, those wanting to walk their dogs or push prams, and to families or friends wanting to exercise together. The funding has created infrastructure that is foundational to a connected

and accessible community. I am pleased that the next phase of works, which will patch up the road next to the footpaths, gets underway this week.

Oberon Children's Centre has received an investment of over \$1.6 million for an extension, which will allow more children in the Oberon area to have access to a top-quality early childhood education centre, which will set them up for life. According to Karina Evans, director of the centre, the project will secure local jobs for extra staff at the centre, plus work for local tradespeople constructing the extension. The extension will create new opportunities at the facility, and I look forward to the expanded offerings to the Oberon community. Also under construction is a brand-new, \$5 million multipurpose sports complex. The facility, built on a new parcel of land, will create a sports hub featuring two rugby league fields, three netball courts, a clubhouse, spectator seating and amenities. It is envisaged that future stages will include the construction of a synthetic hockey field.

In Lithgow I was pleased to relaunch the Secret Creek Sanctuary, which is a special place in the mountains where Trevor and his team care for endangered animals. The need for a wildlife hospital and rehabilitation centre was highlighted following the devastating 2019-20 bushfires, in which many animals were killed, or displaced and in need of care to replenish numbers in the area. The new \$1.3 million facility will include a wildlife hospital and rehabilitation centre, which will give the team the space, equipment and services needed to help animals back to good health. It will also cater for staff accommodation, meeting spaces and an information centre for visitors to learn more about our furry friends and how to protect them. A cultural arts centre will be located on the second floor of the visitor centre, in collaboration with local Indigenous group One Mob, and will have multiple uses, including a gathering space for Aboriginal cultural education groups, a learning space for wildlife and ecosystems, and a health and wellbeing community centre for the local community.

In the north-western region of my electorate are the towns of Kandos and Rylstone. Rylstone has had a new set of LED lights recently installed as part of the former New South Wales Government's \$25 million Female Friendly Community Sport Facilities and Lighting Upgrades Grant Program. The project was completed just in time for the annual Rylstone-Kandos Show to be held later this month, which I am looking forward to attending. The upgrade follows on from the previous New South Wales Government's grant of \$287,000 for the upgrade of the showground arena. Community sport is vital for our communities and it is important for little areas to also receive support and recognition from governments so that they have facilities that they can enjoy into the future.

GLEDSDOOD HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (20:13): After 12 years of delays and broken promises by the former Liberal Government, Gledswood Hills High School is finally open. Last Friday I had the pleasure of welcoming the year 7 cohort to their brand-new, temporary school site, located on the perimeter of Gregory Hills Public School, which was delivered by the Minns Labor Government last year. The temporary school consists of purpose-built portables, where students can enjoy quality education in brand-new facilities. Students also have access to shade shelters, exercise space and a portion of Gregory Hills Public School, where a library and a school psychologist's office have been set up separate from the primary school.

The facilities reflect the state-of-the-art public education the Minns Labor Government is committed to funding, building and maintaining in New South Wales. Although temporary, the expedited rollout ensures children have access to quality education before the permanent school is expected to be delivered in 2027, demonstrating the Labor Government's commitment to ensuring all public schools are accessible and incredible places to teach and learn. The project has been a long time coming. The Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills communities could not wait until 2027 for the new high school. The former Liberal-Nationals Government dismissed requests from parents in Gregory Hills and Gledswood Hills to build a school at all, as it did not believe it was needed, despite the exponential and continuing growth of young families in the area.

As a former teacher, I know how important it is for every child to have access to a great education at a local school. In 2023 I made an election promise to the people of Camden that I would deliver that necessary infrastructure and last week I fulfilled that promise. I thank Gledswood Hills High School principal, Belinda Giudice, and her dedicated new staff, all of whom have built, and are continuing to build, the school from the ground up into a model of exceptional education. Their efforts will shape the lives of hundreds, thousands, and even tens of thousands of children. I also thank the Gledswood Hills and Gregory Hills communities for their continued efforts in campaigning on the issue. They were campaigning well before I got involved and became the candidate for Camden. They have worked extremely hard, first to gain a primary school and now a high school. I thank them for letting me listen and for choosing me as their voice. When the Minns Labor Government members say that we want to ensure every student has access to a world-class education, we mean it, and that is proven right now in Camden.

WNOW SUNRISE CLUB TOOWOON BAY

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:16): On 5 February I joined John Dooley and the members of the Toowoon Bay chapter of WNOW at 6.00 a.m. for their Sunrise Club, and I share that experience with the House. WNOW stands for When No-One's Watching. It is a group aimed at men and there is no cost to participate. The name speaks for itself: How often do we act differently when no-one is watching? WNOW encourages men to be their true selves, to share their struggles and to break free from the confines of societal expectations. It is about men becoming better men, tackling loneliness and improving men's mental health.

The Sunrise Club begins with some light exercise. The Toowoon Bay chapter adds a quick game of touch football. The group then does 60 push-ups, which represent the 60 men who commit suicide every 60 minutes. We did not all do 60 push-ups; it was done in a relay, with the first person doing one, the second doing two and going on until 60 is reached. Following the push-ups there was the circle of trust, which is an opportunity for introductions to be made and a chance for people to get things off their chests and say whatever they want. Everything is said in complete confidence. We then finished with a quick swim before coffee. We finished at about 7.30 a.m. Some people left before coffee and some people stayed a bit later. I thought it was a great experience.

In many cultures men are taught from a young age to suppress their emotions, to man up and to avoid showing vulnerability. That can lead to feelings of isolation, anxiety and depression, and bad behaviour. Statistics show that men are less likely to seek help for mental health issues, often due to the fear of being perceived as weak. WNOW aims to combat that stigma by creating a supportive environment where men can openly discuss their feelings, share their experiences and learn from one another.

WNOW was established by two Irishmen who live in Australia, Tadhg Kennelly and Dave Eccles. Tadhg is a former AFL pro footballer. Some people might know his name. There are now 35 chapters across five countries, with many in New South Wales.

The group was recognised by the Mental Health Commission of New South Wales. It is a good initiative. Community-based initiatives, which are very accessible because they are free, are really great. I enjoyed my experience with the group. I thank John and the Toowoon Bay chapter for being so open and welcoming when I attended, and for inviting me. Toowoon Bay is a magic spot for the group to meet in my electorate. It is a really great place for the community to strengthen. I am registered now, and I will go back next time I am in the electorate.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:19): The Hawkesbury electorate is a vast and growing area that encases localities of urban, semi-rural and rural developments. Since its reopening in 1911, following essential renovations, Hawkesbury District Hospital has been a significant site for medical services in the Hawkesbury community. The hospital, which was transitioned from St John of God Healthcare to NSW Health in July last year, is a 125-bed facility. It is equipped with a 24-hour emergency department and maternity, neonatal, intensive and coronary care services. The hospital is a vital part of Hawkesbury's public infrastructure. It provides essential medical, surgical and diagnostic services in addition to the many departments operating within.

Residents of Hawkesbury are not strangers to the impacts of semi-rural living. They have been impacted by bushfires, floods and extreme events, particularly in recent years. Despite the strength shown by individuals and created by our tight-knit, selfless community, constituents face difficulties in tackling the setbacks, particularly relating to their mental health. Rebuilding homes, being isolated from loved ones, facing extraordinary financial hardships and putting on brave faces for the sake of children and families is a huge ask. Inevitably, members of the community have to reach out for help and support from mental health services because of their experiences. The mass resignation of specialist psychiatrists will impact the operation of mental health services in Hawkesbury hospital, particularly in the emergency department.

Patients experiencing significant mental health or behavioural episodes are presenting at the emergency departments of hospitals throughout New South Wales. Already, some patients have to wait for three days in the absence of expected adequate services. The department, including its staff and patients, are being inundated with additional turmoil as they attempt to continue operations as normal for the sake of those in need. Hawkesbury constituents and stakeholders in mental health have raised several issues with me. They often comment on the difficulty in accessing high-quality health care across the Hawkesbury and neighbouring electorates, which individuals have resorted to due to the stretched and overworked hospital systems in Hawkesbury and beyond.

The depleting system cannot continue. The community deserves better. The dispute between specialist psychiatrists and the Government has escalated. Now we have an unresolved industrial dispute that the Minns Government has ignored for 16 months in the hope that the problem will go away. Now we have a mental health

crisis. It smacks of poor Government leadership. Every day the Government is unresponsive places immense pressure on the public health system in Hawkesbury and beyond. Today, the Premier said he could not possibly afford a pay increase for psychiatrists. He went on to say that if the Industrial Relations Commission deemed it acceptable, he would find the funds. Is that because he does not want to take ownership of a pay increase for a particular sector of the public service?

Those in the medical field, particularly frontline workers in hospitals and emergency departments, are especially vulnerable. They have inadequate staff-to-patient ratios and levels of qualifications in treatment and insufficient resources. Hawkesbury hospital is part of the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District. The Nepean Triage and Assessment Centre has been inundated with those needing mental health assessments, treatment and support, with patients waiting up to four days for treatment. How can the Labor Government ignore such a crisis? It is a workforce crisis and a community crisis. As members of this place, we have a duty of care to people in New South Wales to ensure the safety and wellbeing of those experiencing mental health trauma, their loved ones and our community.

I implore the Government to listen to the voices of our psychiatrists, who have spoken out for months. It should listen also to the voices of medical staff, who are keeping the remaining pieces together as best they can, and the voices of patients and consumers, who are bearing the brunt of Labor's inaction. Our system is failing. Efforts need to be urgently made to rebuild the psychiatric workforce that our communities rely on so heavily in their darkest and most uncertain moments. It is time for not debate, but serious, immediate action by the Minns Labor Government. Premier Minns should fix this and not bankrupt the State with casual contractors who are funded by the New South Wales taxpayers at triple the daily rate that a professional psychiatrist in NSW Health costs. Society expects better. Labor needs to resolve this industrial dispute now.

CENTRAL COAST AND NEWCASTLE RAIL SERVICES

Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (20:24): An issue affecting a number of people in my community is the constant train delays plaguing the Central Coast and Newcastle train line. Over the past year, punctuality performances on the Central Coast and Newcastle line have reached historic lows. One gentleman said to me, "Liesl, as much as I love the coast, I'm going to have to leave to go work in Sydney." That is a really tough call. It is really important for me to raise the voices of my community in Parliament. The Central Coast is home to more than 44,000 locals who commute every day. More than 25 per cent of the resident workforce commute outside of the Central Coast. Our commuters deserve reliable train timetables and reliable train lines.

My office has been inundated with concerns from constituents who are fed up with constantly delayed trains and being unable to get to work. The member for The Entrance and the member for Wyong have similar concerns. I have spoken to a number of constituents over the phone. Lisa Cox wrote to me to say:

Over the past couple of months, commuter trains have been regularly removed from our timeline without explanation, in particular the 7.04 a.m. from Gosford to Central and the 4.48 p.m. from Central to Gosford.

There have been excuses for this. They just get taken off TripView, but they are part of the timetable. It is concerning that residents rely on those trains, but they are not there. The popular peak-hour trains are being removed without proper communications to travellers about why. Tessa Hoffman wrote to my office to say:

The morning train service, for example the 6.17, 6.30 and 7.30 a.m. trains are routinely late, experience delays and cause blow outs in arrival times and cause missed bus connections.

Commuters like me utilise public transport to reduce carbon emissions and avoid clogging the M1. Public transport should be a viable option to get to work but it really is not.

Our residents expect more. This month, Shaun wrote to me to say:

I commute to Sydney every day for work, and I would estimate that more than half of all trains are significantly late. I often arrive to work 20 minutes behind schedule—sometimes up to an hour late in recent weeks. Luckily my workplace is accommodating, and I thank them ... Unfortunately, this is a regular occurrence and not just limited to recent weeks. It has been like this for years.

Alex Rusten said:

The performance of NSW trains is nothing short of diabolical. Services are frequently late and cancelled, or re-routed without notice, for example, the 6:35 Blacktown via North Shore service this morning, which was re-routed via the main northern line for no apparent good reason. Trains that run to time and to their intended destinations is a very baseline performance requirement for any respectable train service. NSW Trains currently fails at this most basic hurdle!

Commute times have a genuine impact on people's lives. It means more time with family, more time at the beach and more time switching off from work. The Central Coast line carries approximately 14 million passenger journeys per year, nearly half of all the intercity network. Our commuters are often late for work. They travel on highly crowded services, sometimes with only four carriages instead of eight. They sometimes have to stand up for more than an hour and often face longer commutes than those predicted on the timetable. For example, the

morning train leaving Woy Woy to Sydney leaves at either 5.10 a.m. or 5.46 a.m. Both of those trains are very overcrowded.

I appreciate everyone who works on the rail networks across New South Wales, including the drivers, guards and staff working in maintenance, signalling, management, security, safety and administration. Their work is incredibly important. Currently, the Government is in negotiations with unions on conditions and pay. That is having an impact on train timetabling. The Government hopes to achieve a good outcome sooner rather than later. Realistically, on behalf of the people of the Central Coast, I would love to see an improvement in service.

From 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024, train punctuality in the whole intercity fleet was at 80 per cent, which is one in every five trains coming late, whereas the metropolitan lines were close to a 90 per cent punctuality rate. It is time we saw the Central Coast get our fair share. For people in my community, it is not just about the train being delayed. It leads to a flow-on effect for their next train, bus or metro service. Whilst I commend the Minns Labor Government for getting on with the job of fixing our essential services, including our public transport, and the rail repair plan has fixed over 2,000 defects, it is time to let the Parliament know that our community is struggling. I commend the Minns Government for its work so far, but it would be great to see more done to get our trains running on time on the beautiful Central Coast.

DUBBO ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (20:29): There are some truly inspiring people in the Dubbo electorate. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the community members who were recognised with Australia Day Awards this year. Every single one of them is highly deserving of recognition for their contributions to our community. In the Dubbo Regional Council local government area, Peter Lewsam was named Wellington's 2025 Citizen of the Year for his exceptional service to the community over more than three decades and across many organisations, exemplifying true dedication to the region. He has been a really successful business owner for many years, but remarkably finds time to give back through other avenues that really make a difference. Well done, Pete.

Marion Trounce has also demonstrated unwavering commitment to the community. Her support for the William Street Preschool, active involvement in the Wellington Public School P&C, and her role as the founding member of the Wellington Rostrum are just a few of the reasons why she was deservedly named Senior Citizen of the Year. Young Citizen of the Year was presented to Mason Hill for his inspiring contribution to the Wellington community as a proud young Wiradjuri man and cultural leader. Mason is only in year 12, but for someone so young, his talent and understanding is incredible. I know he will be a star of the future. Maddy O'Brien was named Young Sportsperson of the Year, Rod Pedron was recognised for his services to sport as well, and the Wellington Community Event of the Year award went to the Wellington Amateur Theatrical Society Production *The Last Noel*.

Elizabeth Hattenfels, Justin Toomey-White, Robyn Edwards, Warren Williams and Kenneth Everson also received community service awards for their significant contribution to the Wellington community. Jason Dearmer was deservedly honoured as Dubbo's 2025 Citizen of the Year for his outstanding community spirit and steadfast commitment to helping others. Jason is known for his proactive involvement in numerous organisations. He always steps up and lends a hand whenever needed. John Gibson wears many hats, each making a significant impact on the community. As a founding member of the Dubbo Men's Shed, and through his work with schools, disability support services and dementia patients, he is a deserving recipient of the 2025 Senior Citizen of the Year award. Young Citizen of the Year was awarded to Miley Shipp. Actively involved in her school community in leadership and cultural roles, Miley is well regarded by all and has an impressive list of sporting achievements. She is definitely also one to watch in the football arena. Raisa Kolesnikova was named Senior Sportsperson of the Year, Alex McGrath Young Sportsperson of the Year and Valerie Clark Cultural Person of the Year.

At Mid-Western Regional Council, Citizen of the Year was Carol Jones, who is president of the St Mary's conference at the St Vincent de Paul Society. Carol supports individuals and families in need with food and clothing, and does welfare checks ensuring they are connected to essential services. Grace Pearce was named Young Citizen of the Year for her leadership and advocacy in agriculture. The Community Event of the Year was awarded to the Mudgee Lions Club Eye Health Programme for children. Tyrolin Puxty received the Glen Johnston Memorial Award for Music and Arts. Chelsea Mottershead was recognised with the Sports Award, Lorraine Stewart the Volunteer Services Award and David Bruce Lester was recognised with the posthumous Wall of Reflections.

This year I had the pleasure of participating in the celebrations at Narromine, including its world-famous watermelon-eating competition. Viv Halbisch was recognised as Citizen of the Year for her decades of selfless service and dedication to the community. Her active participation in numerous groups, including the Narromine

Lions Club, Meals on Wheels, Narromine Show Society, Uniting Church and Narromine Golf Ladies Committee showcases just how amazing she is and her commitment and generosity. Senior Citizen of the Year was awarded to George Peters, and Sportsperson of the Year was Skye Morrissey. Childrens' Champion Award was presented to Karen Shearwood and the Community Event of the Year recognised the Narromine Aero Club Top Gun on the Tarmac event.

Michael Welch was named Trangie's Citizen of the Year. He is well known and respected in the Trangie township. Michael was honoured for his dedication, generosity and community spirit, particularly his passion for local initiatives such as the Challenge facility and the Trangie District Recreation Centre. Senior Citizen of the Year was awarded to Garry Fitzgerald. The Junior Sports Award was presented to Isabelle Dunbar, Senior Sports Award to Rhonda Betts and the Trangie Central P&C Open Garden Day received Community Event of the Year. Each and every one of these individuals has profoundly impacted the lives of others. Their passion, generosity and dedication are an inspiration to us all. Once again, I thank and congratulate them all.

SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (20:34): Our community is facing a critical shortage in housing, with skyrocketing property prices and rising rents pushing many into financial stress or homelessness. The demand for social and affordable housing far exceeds supply, and the issue continues to be one that people in my community regularly raise with me. Our inner west community prides itself on being diverse, inclusive and welcoming. But too many, from young families to essential workers and older people, are being priced out of our suburbs and communities. Everyone deserves an affordable and safe place to live. We need governments that are willing to act to deliver housing, or else we will lose the characteristics that represent our diverse and unified community.

The Minns Labor Government is focused on delivering the housing that essential workers need close to their jobs. We are doing exactly that on the former WestConnex dive site at Camperdown, where we will build at least 200 build-to-rent units, as well as an additional 300 units with a mix of private ownership and affordable rental housing, along with retail and leisure spaces, and new pedestrian links. That is exactly the type of housing that is so desperately needed across Sydney: high quality, well-located affordable homes so that essential workers like nurses, teachers and firefighters, who we all rely on, can enjoy the security of their own home near where they work.

The Minns Labor Government also understands how important quality affordable and social housing is for our communities. I recently had the pleasure of attending the opening of a St George community housing development on Addison Road in Marrickville along with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Housing and the mayor of the inner west. The quality, well-designed development includes 61 new homes, 49 social housing units and 12 affordable homes that our community absolutely needs. At the opening we met Lucie, who had just moved into a three-bedroom unit. Lucie is a single mother with two teenage kids who has spent years on the housing waiting list. Lucie had been forced to move seven times in 10 years due to rising rents, evictions and property sales.

Lucie works full-time and has multiple side jobs but was left unable to afford rent increases of over \$250 a week. Lucie and her family now have somewhere they can call home. She said, "This place has been life changing. My kids have their own rooms, and we don't live in fear of being forced out." Lucie can now enjoy stability, security and the foundation to build a better future for herself and her children. I also recently visited the new Nightingale Marrickville precinct, which is setting a new standard for sustainable, community-focused housing. That precinct has 54 apartments on Illawarra Road in Marrickville, which are space-efficient, small-footprint homes that are rented at below-market rates.

Nightingale was made possible by the work of Fresh Hope Communities, the welfare arm and public benevolent institution entity of Churches of Christ in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, showing us all that there is a role for us to come together across government, not-for-profits and community and church organisations in addressing the housing crisis. We all know that insecure housing can significantly affect people's mental health, and that those who struggle with mental health challenges often find it difficult to sustain housing. Without a stable home, accessing health care and support networks becomes harder, worsening mental health struggles.

The team behind the Habilis Project in Summer Hill is addressing this very challenge, led by Dr Olav Nielssen, who is an inspirational, dedicated psychiatrist. He kindly showed me through the project. It is a purpose-built complex of individual units that provides both physical security and access to support services.

It demonstrates what can be achieved when governments and private organisations work together to tackle homelessness for those who experience mental illness or challenges with illicit drug use by taking community-driven, housing-first approach. This is exactly the kind of initiative that should be scaled up across

the State. Our Government is also addressing challenges that renters face each and every day. We have strengthened renters' rights through ending no-grounds evictions, limiting rent increases and making it easier for renters to keep pets. Overall, these changes will deliver a more vibrant and accessible Sydney and New South Wales so that many generations can call this place home.

TRIBUTE TO JIMMY CARTER

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (20:39): Tonight I share a story about the importance of public service. It was sunset when my plane touched down in Atlanta. I hurriedly collected a hire car and drove two hours through the deep south to Plains, a town in rural Georgia. It was the home of former United States President Jimmy Carter, and the following morning he was teaching Sunday school. Arriving on that rainy and cold morning, I waited four hours to secure a seat to meet him and his wife of 77 years, Rosalynn. Why did I, a young conservative, want to meet the one-term Democratic president who paved the way for Ronald Reagan and George Bush? This is a legitimate question, but the answer is simple: I wanted to meet a president turned humanitarian.

Jimmy Carter passed away aged 100 on 29 December 2024. Recent presidents, including Carter, build a museum, write a memoir or hit the paid speaking circuit after leaving the White House. When Carter left the presidency in 1981, he further redefined the role of a former president over the next 44 years. He did this in three distinct ways that most of his successors have now adopted. Firstly, Carter got involved in charitable causes. He was often seen holding a hammer when he donated a week every year to Habitat for Humanity, an organisation that builds affordable houses. He described this work as "an exciting global effort to alleviate the curse of homelessness" which "removed the stigma of charity by substituting it with a sense of partnership".

In 2012 Hurricane Sandy killed over 200 people and destroyed over 650,000 homes in New York and New Jersey. The then 89-year-old Carter was there rebuilding and consoling those who had lost everything. Carter's charitable service has led to former presidents coming together to raise money for causes including the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004, the shattering earthquakes in Haiti in 2010 and supporting Afghan refugees in 2021. Secondly, Carter continued to promote democracy and peace. A year after leaving the presidency, he established the Carter Center with the purpose of resolving conflicts, advancing freedom and preventing diseases.

For over four decades, the centre has observed over 100 elections in 40 countries, has practically eradicated Guinea-worm disease and promoted awareness to help end the stigma surrounding mental health. His work and dedication earned him the 2002 Nobel Peace Prize, and he is the only former president to receive such an honour. His legacy has inspired George H. W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama to each establish organisations similar to the Carter Center. Thirdly, Carter used his religious faith to find purpose. He taught Sunday school at his local Baptist church almost every week, and everyone was welcome. For Carter, being accessible was linked to his faith. He said:

As I have come to know, reaching out to others in the name of God can be one of the most deeply rewarding experiences any person can enjoy.

On the day I attended his Sunday school, Carter spoke of the Middle East. He shared a story about how, as president, he had successfully brought together Israeli and Egyptian leaders by reminding them of their shared faith found in the holy books of the Bible, the Torah and the Koran. This common faith created a common ground and led to a peace agreement, the Camp David Accords. This was by far one of Carter's greatest foreign policy achievements. In 2013 I was fortunate enough to visit the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum and the Carter Center.

Mr Nathan Hagarty: Point of order: I am a big fan of America's most famous peanut farmer, but I do not understand how this relates to the member's electorate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Davidson is getting to his point.

Mr MATT CROSS: It is about public service. I even met former Georgia State Senator Jason Carter at the Carter Center. I note that in Jimmy Carter's eulogy, Jason Carter said:

Maybe this is unbelievable to you, but in my 49 years, I never perceived the difference between his public face and his private one. He was the same person, no matter who he was with or where he was, and for me that's the definition of integrity.

Carter teaches all of us public servants that there is far more to life than being a politician or the president. All of us can be leaders and humanitarians in our own communities. It is never too late to get involved in charity and the community to promote peace and use faith to find purpose in our lives. Vale, Jimmy Carter.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE STORM ASSISTANCE

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (20:44): In Port Stephens, 2025 began with a bumpy start. While we saw progress on key local projects, a massive storm set us back for a while. It is pretty big when 40,000 homes in Port Stephens

lose power and connectivity. The risks were high with the power out and phones down for days. Thankfully, the response was swift. The storm, which hit a few weeks ago, brought with it the most incredible lightshow I have ever seen. There were multiple lightning strikes in the Hunter region, and plenty could be seen from my balcony. Unfortunately for Port Stephens, the storm not only brought down trees and powerlines; the lightning also knocked out multiple major substations that feed most of our area.

Ausgrid wasted no time getting on the ground to fix the issues, while our incredible emergency services responded immediately. SES volunteers were taking calls and responding, police were managing multiple incidents despite Raymond Terrace and Nelson Bay police stations being without power, RFS volunteers were on deck, and Fire and Rescue NSW were backing them all up. Those were just the emergency services, but many of them were local volunteers. Our local emergency services volunteers stepped up, but the community rallied together as well. Volunteers supported by providing hot meals, showers, and a kind word. In Raymond Terrace, the community church opened its doors to provide a safe space, meals and advice.

In Lemon Tree Passage, the Tilligerry Lions Club set up a barbeque at the local men's shed to feed locals as fridges full of food began to spoil. Fuel stations could not pump, and the only local shopping centre was without power. In Karuah, the kind crew from New Life Church delivered food to locals. In Medowie, the local Medowie Lions Club and cricket clubs teamed up to provide sausages and support. Aunty Di at Wahrenoonga had her doors open even when the power was off. At Motto Farm, Salvation Army volunteers helped families in need. While police and SES led the emergency response in coordination with multiple agencies, the community did what it does best and looked out for one another. Neighbours checked in on each other.

Places like Harbourside Haven not only looked after their own ageing residents who were without power but also checked in on vulnerable locals. This is what makes our community so special. We have stunning beaches, waterways and beautiful bushland. While I am sorry for all the visitors who were caught in the storm, and truly hope they return soon, it is beyond our natural beauty where our community really shines. This is particularly true in times of hardship, and it is a strength that we should never take for granted. I extend my sincere thanks to all of our incredible SES volunteers from the Port Stephens and Tomaree crews, who worked tirelessly to make our homes and our community safe in horrendous conditions.

I also thank the hardworking RFS volunteers, the Raymond Terrace Community Church, Tilligerry Lions Club, New Life Church, Medowie Lions Club, Medowie Cricket Club, Aunty Di at Wahrenoonga, the Salvation Army and the Red Cross for their support. I am sure there were many more, and I thank everyone who stepped up. I also thank the teams of Ausgrid workers who worked around the clock in awful conditions to restore power as quickly as possible. I give a shout-out to the Port Stephens-Hunter Police District for leading the response and to the Port Stephens Council for its swift action, like opening facilities for hot showers following just one phone call to Mayor Leah Anderson.

The combined effort across our community ensured that those needing support got it. Sadly, the impacts endure. Our oyster farmers have been hit hard once again, not only with infrastructure losses but also with production pauses due to water contamination. I will continue to push for the support that they need. The volunteers at the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens are also undertaking a heartbreaking clean-up, and I am also working on additional ways we can support them. Local businesses were impacted, and I thank Business Port Stephens and Destination Port Stephens for their leadership during this difficult time for their members.

As soon as the storm hit, I was determined to ensure our community had the support it needed. I was relieved by the super-quick response from the Minister for Emergency Services, who worked with the Federal Government to secure a natural disaster declaration for Port Stephens and Maitland in record time.

Working with the Federal member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson, and the member for Maitland, we swiftly secured assistance and we are very grateful for it. The response has been a massive community effort. While I know there are still challenges ahead, I cannot imagine what would have happened without those who stepped up to keep us safe and provide support. In times like these, I could not be more proud to represent the people of Port Stephens in this place.

IAN AND LEA HICKS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (20:49): I thank and commend Badgerys Creek electorate locals Mr Ian and Mrs Lea Hicks for their extraordinary service to my electorate and the wider Western Sydney community and beyond through their very successful trade service company, Hix Group. Having commenced the business 33 years ago and built it up through hard work, sacrifice and persistence to become a leading multi-trade company, providing trade services throughout the Sydney metropolitan area and some regional areas of New South Wales, Ian and Lea have decided to retire and start their next chapter. Hix Group commenced in 1992 as Hix Electrical Services and has since grown to include six distinct divisions that operate both collaboratively

and separately for many of their clients, which range from local businesses, to tier 1 and tier 2 construction companies, and to government infrastructure and servicing departments, as well as a range of commercial business clients.

Ian served as director and group operations manager of Hix Group, whilst Lea served as the group general manager. Their immense benefit to the community includes providing employment opportunities for the many employees they have had over the decades. At this point the company employs more than 100 people. The economic benefits extend to a range of subcontractors and suppliers, who have more economic opportunity because of the innovation, investment and hard work of Ian and Lea. Beyond the economic benefits, many individuals, families and organisations have been fortunate to receive quality, efficient and honest services from Ian, Lea and the good people they have employed in their company. Through Ian and Lea, Hix Group has also supported a wide range of community organisations and sporting groups and has sponsored Penrith City Council events such as the Mayoral Charity Fundraiser and Australia Day celebrations.

I have no doubt that Ian and Lea's contributions to our community will continue beyond the Hix Group. They already have an exemplary record of service outside the scope of their company. For 15 years, Lea has contributed to the education and development of students through her service teaching numerous subjects at TAFE NSW, including business communications and employment. She is currently the chairperson of the Institute Advisory Council for TAFE NSW and previously served for many years as the chairperson and as a board member of the Australian Women and Children's Research Foundation. Ian serves as a board member and director of the Western Sydney Business Centre and as a board member and director of the Penrith CBD Corporation. He has served as a board member of the Penrith Panthers football club and served for over eight years as a director of the Panthers on the Prowl community development foundation. The Panthers on the Prowl work to make a positive and lasting difference to the wellbeing of young people in our local communities through localised and unique programs and initiatives.

Irrespective of the capacities in which Ian and Lea serve all the organisations and groups in which they are involved, Ian and Lea always work hard and conduct themselves with wisdom, integrity and respect. They are exactly the types of people one would want in the respective positions in which they have served. They are trusted locals with a high degree of expertise in all they do, and they continue to be such a credit to our community. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I congratulate Ian and Lea Hicks on their extraordinary achievements and thank and commend them for their continued service to our community. As this new season of retirement commences, I sincerely hope they feel that their best is still ahead. I wish them great health and purpose in the next chapter of their lives.

NATIONAL AUTISM STRATEGY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (20:53): In January the Albanese Labor Government released the National Autism Strategy for an inclusive society where autistic people are supported to thrive in all aspects of life, in line with international human rights. I welcome that landmark announcement, which I have been eagerly awaiting and for which I have always advocated. The national strategy was developed following an inquiry by the Senate Select Committee on Autism. The select committee report spelled out in no uncertain terms the enormous challenges faced by autistic people and their families in Australia. It found that life outcomes for autistic Australians are unacceptably poor. That comes at enormous personal, social and economic costs.

Just consider these key statistics from the Senate committee report. Autistic people have a life expectancy 20 to 36 years shorter than the general population, and 75 per cent of autistic people do not complete education beyond year 12. The unemployment rate for autistic people is almost eight times the rate of people without disability. Some 50 per cent to 70 per cent of autistic people experience coexisting mental health conditions, and 51 per cent of autistic people and their families feel socially isolated. Autistic people experience high levels of social exclusion, discrimination, loneliness and isolation. It does not have to be like that, it is not always like that and we can all help change it. The inquiry found that generic disability strategies have proven ineffective at improving life outcomes for autistic people. The Senate select committee report called for a National Autism Strategy, co-designed by the autism community. After much work it has been delivered.

In announcing the strategy, the Federal Minister for Social Services, Amanda Rishworth, said that addressing the barriers that autistic people face in areas like education, employment and diagnosis was long overdue. I agree. The National Autism Strategy provides a framework for improving the life outcomes for autistic people of all ages living in Australia, as well as their families and carers and the communities that support them. The Australian Government released the National Autism Strategy along with the first action plan to address areas where autistic people and their families have told the Government that change is needed. They include actions focused on reducing stigma and changing attitudes around autism, as well as improving social connections, neurodiversity-affirming services and support, safety and welfare, and employment and education. The action

plan focuses on four key reform areas: social inclusion; economic inclusion; diagnosis, services and support; and health.

The first action plan includes \$42.3 million in funding for programs, including offering a peer support program to provide lived-experience knowledge, empathy and culturally tailored advice for autistic people in groups they resonate with, which more formal systems might not be able to offer; enhancing community understanding, awareness and acceptance of autism through new awareness and education activities; improving the diagnosis process through resources to support autistic people and their families with information before and after diagnosis; boosting pathways to meaningful employment; providing a dedicated knowledge translation body, which will ensure that academic research into neurodiversity informs and improves the policies and services impacting autistic people's day-to-day lives; identifying ways to improve Australian government services, supports and information, as well as the safety and welfare of autistic people; and conducting a comprehensive epidemiological study to identify the true prevalence of autism in Australia, which will underpin future policy development.

The release of the National Autism Strategy and the first action plan means the time is right to consider an autism strategy at State and Territory levels. The national strategy cites the areas where the States deliver services, including public hospitals and community health services; schools, preschools and TAFE; police, courts and correctional centres; public transport; child protection; domestic and family violence services; and major sporting facilities. I commend the report and hope that we can get cracking on enacting its recommendations at the State level.

CASTLE HILL ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (20:58): I speak tonight to affirm the strong support for Australia Day and our flag that was on display in my electorate earlier this year. Over recent years there has been discussion by some members of society about changing our national day. It was very pleasing, however, to see that this year the majority of Australians support retaining our national day. On 24 January 2025 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, under the headline "Australia Day roars back into favour in wake of Voice referendum", reported that support for Australia Day rocketed from 47 per cent to 61 per cent over the past few years. On Australia Day we come together as one nation to remember the history of our nation and celebrate the achievements of all members of our nation. Australia Day reminds us that we are a nation of different stories. Whether our heritage has Indigenous roots or our heritage is that we arrived from other parts of the world, we celebrate our achievements.

We also must remember that when the First Fleet departed for Australia in 1787, Captain Arthur Phillip was instructed to enforce due observance of religion and take such steps as were necessary for the celebration of public worship. As the colony was established within the context of the Western legal tradition, which was steeped in Christianity, there was a symmetry between Judeo-Christian values and the law. Notwithstanding that Judeo-Christian values were the values of many of those who arrived with the First Fleet, there was no obligation for any person at the time to belong to the Christian religion or indeed to have any religious beliefs. Our first settlers respected all cultures and religious beliefs as well as those with no religious beliefs. We can only be the best country we can be when we come together as one nation to celebrate our mixed heritage, and to celebrate and respect all cultures and diverse religious beliefs and those who have no religious beliefs. On Australia Day we acknowledge and respect that we have built a strong, diverse and multicultural society.

I attended many events in my electorate, and I was able to see just how proud my own community is to recognise the importance of our national history. I attended events with the Federal member for Mitchell, the Hon. Alex Hawke; the Federal member for Berowra, Julian Leeser; the member for Kellyville; the Mayor of the Hills Shire Council, Michelle Byrne; and many councillors. At 6.00 a.m. I attended Castle Hill Cemetery for the flag planting ceremony. The ceremony was organised by the Castle Hill and District RSL Sub-Branch. At 7.00 a.m. I attended Castlebrook Memorial Park cemetery for the flag raising and flag planting ceremony. That ceremony was also organised by the Castle Hill and District RSL Sub-Branch. I acknowledge Castle Hill and District RSL Sub-Branch President Cheryl Hill, as well as branch members Mike Lee, Rees John, Jim Wilson and Chas Naylor, who were each instrumental in organising the ceremonies.

At 8.00 a.m. I attended Heritage Park for the flag raising ceremony, which was organised by the Rotary Club of Castle Hill. In particular I thank Mike Blair for organising the ceremony. At 9.30 a.m. I attended Rotary Park at Kenthurst for the flag raising ceremony. I acknowledge the members of the Rotary Club of Kenthurst, in particular Paul Rapp, who was the master of ceremonies. I also acknowledge the hard work of the Rotary president, Kathy Bray. At 10.30 a.m. I attended Annangrove Park for the flag raising ceremony as well as the Annangrove Fair. I acknowledge the Annangrove Progress Association and its president, Joe Laviano. The Annangrove Progress Association announced that residents Mike and Sandy Burrage received this year's Australia Day Good Neighbour award. I congratulate Mike and Sandy Burrage on receiving that award.

At 12.15 p.m. I attended Harvey Lowe Pavilion. The Australian Chinese Youth Elite Club celebrated Australia Day in the Hills. I acknowledge and recognise Leo Wei, who was the ceremony organiser. At 1.00 p.m., along with the Federal member for Mitchell, the Federal member for Berowra, the member for Hawkesbury, the mayor and councillors, I attended Hills Shire Council for the council citizenship ceremony. About 100 persons became citizens at the council chamber on our national day. It was wonderful to see so many smiles from new citizens. We are fortunate in the Hills shire to have a local council that understands the wishes of the community and holds citizenship ceremonies on our national day.

At 4.30 p.m. I attended Bella Vista Farm for the Hills Shire Council Australia Day Festival. The festival is the annual celebration of our national day. There was perhaps the largest number of people there this year to celebrate Australia Day at Bella Vista Farm. Throughout the Castle Hill electorate and the wider Hills shire local government area, members of the community are proud of our national day and our national flag. I add that the Hills shire has many different cultures and different religious groups within the community. The shire stands as a beacon of the multicultural success of our nation. I thank the Hills Shire Council, the Rotary clubs, the progress associations and members of the community for celebrating a wonderful Australia Day this year. Celebrating Australia Day on 26 January remains the choice of those living in the Hills shire.

TRIBUTE TO JAMES "JIM" THOMAS CARLIN BRASSIL, AM

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (21:03): I acknowledge the passing of a remarkable individual and stalwart of the labour movement, James Thomas Carlin Brassil, known to all as Jim. Jim passed away on 2 December 2024 at the age of 94, leaving behind a legacy of unwavering service and dedication. As a life member of the Australian Labor Party, Jim's life was a testament to steadfast service to the betterment of public life. He held many titles and qualifications. First and foremost, he was a proud South Sydney Rabbitohs supporter. He was a member of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal, president of the Industrial Relations Society of Australia, president of the parish council at St Patrick's, Mentone, first chairman and CEO of Worksafe Australia, recipient of the Order of Australia in 1989 and, like many notable names that have been through this place, president of NSW Young Labor.

But Jim's impact went far beyond his professional titles. He was a passionate advocate for education and spent more than 20 years teaching science, economics and mathematics across New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria. Most notably, Jim was appointed personal secretary—or, as it is more commonly known today, chief of staff—to then Deputy Prime Minister Lance Barnard in the early days of the Whitlam Government, and loyally served in that position until the Dismissal. In fact, Jim played a pivotal role in perhaps the most memorable moment of the Dismissal. On 11 November 1975, as Prime Minister Gough Whitlam stood on the steps of Old Parliament House and gave the now legendary "Well may we say" speech, it was Jim who made sure those words were heard. He was amongst the scrum of journalists, politicians, staffers and other hangers-on, ensuring the microphone was plugged in and stayed in during the proceedings.

I got to know Jim because he spent the past decade or so at the Tobruk RSL LifeCare facility in Austral in my electorate. Every Tuesday, the residents of Tobruk would catch a minibus to a local Chinese restaurant. That restaurant was in the same shopping complex as the office of Anne Stanley, the Federal member for Werriwa. I was Anne's chief of staff for about four years, and Jim would occasionally pop in on Tuesday for a chat and to compare notes on how working for a Federal MP may or may not have changed over the past five decades or so. If you knew Jim, you knew his many famous stories: the aforementioned working for Lance Barnard; his role on the steps of Old Parliament House during the Dismissal; his days as president of Young Labor; and his many achievements, including the establishment of WorkSafe and banning smoking in the workplace under the Fraser Government.

One of our shared passions was the many tragedies and triumphs of the mighty Bunnies. One of my last chats with Jim was during my preselection for Leppington. It took a few goes to get onto him, and when I did, I discovered why: he had recently moved from Tobruk to the care facility next door, as his health had taken a bad turn. He apologised that he would be unable to vote in the preselection, as he was too unwell, but did wish me all the best. He then proceeded to tell me about the many preselections he had been involved in over his many years in the Labor Party. Jim was always the storyteller.

Jim was the beloved husband of Teresa, and a father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother and uncle. I extend my deepest condolences to his family. Jim will be sorely missed. Like many of us in this place, I often get approached by young people who tell me they want to be politicians. When they do, I make it a point to tell them two things. First, being a politician is a tough gig and not everyone is cut out for it. The long hours take you away from family and friends. You lose your anonymity. Random people feel they have the right to call you all kinds of things, especially on social media. Second, there are other ways to contribute to politics and the public good besides being a politician. To boot, you usually get to keep your anonymity and those important moments with family and friends, and it can often pay better. I point to Jim as a perfect example of a person who did not go

through the usual path of becoming a politician, but who did work in politics. His legacy shows the immense impact one person can make through politics and public life over the course of many decades. Rest in peace, Jim.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:08 until
Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

ALAN ROBINSON

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I would like to acknowledge the exemplary career of Alan Robinson who has recently retired from the NSW Rural Fire Service after nearly 60 years. Alan joined the Blaxland Volunteer NSW Bush Fire Brigades in 1967. He has been involved in many campaign fires and significant fire seasons, including the 1968 Blue Mountains bushfires, 1974 to 1975 bushfire season, 1977 Blue Mountains fires, 1984 to 1985 and 1994 bushfire seasons, 2001 Black Christmas Fires, 2019 Black Summer fires and many others throughout his career. His efforts have been recognised with a host of medals and awards including the National Medal, National Medal Clasp 1, RFS Long Service Award 15 years, RFS Long Service Award 25 years and in 2006 he was awarded the prestigious 'Australian Fire Service Medal' for his dedication as a firefighter and his work in designing and constructing the RFS' first purpose built mobile communications vehicle. Alan closed out his distinguished career as a Deputy Captain at Peninsula Rural Fire Brigade. Thank you, Alan for your commitment to keeping our community safe and I wish you a wonderful and well-deserved retirement.

MAKAYLAH FENWICK

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—17-year-old Makaylah Fenwick from Awaba really has secured gold at the end of a rainbow. Makaylah is an extremely talented horse rider, and in January rode her eight-year-old gelding, Rainbow Man, to victory taking out the Off the Track Cup at the Magic Millions Showjumping and Polo event held in Queensland. She secured the top prize after jumping a brilliant double clear on Rainbow Man, a retired racehorse she singlehandedly trained to become a show jumping horse. It's the second time the dynamic team has had a win, after winning the Equimillions in October 2024 in the 90cm class. Makaylah has had back-to-back wins at the Off The Track Cup, last year she won the 120cm class on the back of her thoroughbred Grace and Glory at the EKKA. This competition is for retired thoroughbred racehorses, providing them with a second career for the remainder of their post racing lives. Makaylah is currently working at Kris Lees stables in Newcastle and given her talent, drive and ambition with horses, I'm sure it won't be long until she secures her dream of becoming a professional jockey. Congratulations Makaylah.

ANDREE LEWIS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I recognise Andree Lewis of Caringbah South for her years of volunteer service to Cronulla Public School. I was delighted to present the school's 2024 community service award to Andree, on behalf of the school, at its presentation day. The award recognises and acknowledges a member of the school's community who has made a significant contribution by giving their time and services to the school. Andree has assisted and volunteered in various capacities for many years as a reading helper, classroom helper, in the canteen and at school fundraising events such as mothers' and fathers' day stalls. The school says Andree volunteers her time freely and is dedicated to helping students, always being friendly as she quietly goes about her work. Andree voluntarily took part in the Patch Reading Program so she could best support children and then used that training to work with students. The school says this saw her forming positive connections that helped children improve their self-confidence and academic ability. Andree made a difference for Cronulla Public School teachers, students and families and I congratulate her on her significant contribution as a volunteer.

MAYAH TANKO

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I join everyone at Caringbah North Public School in celebrating the achievements of Mayah Tanko, who's the fastest 11-year-old girl in Australia. Mayah has become a sprint sensation after comfortably winning the 100 and 200 metres sprint events at the School Sport Australia Track and Field Championship held at Sydney Olympic Park in late 2024. In the 100 metres preliminaries she clocked times of 12.86 seconds, before taking out the final in 12.92. Mayah's personal best time of 26.12 in the 200 metres preliminaries was just 0.16 seconds off the Australian record before she eased home to win the final in 26.36. She rounded out a successful meet with a second place as part of the NSW 100 metres relay team. Mayah's school peers loved cheering her every step of the way and I can only imagine how exciting it must be to have a classmate who's the fastest in the country. The school says everyone there is inspired by her success and that Mayah's hard

work, talent and determination have truly paid off. I congratulate Mayah and wish her success as she chases her dreams on the track.

DARBY MAGUIRE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Darby Maguire on his epic 900 kilometres ultra marathon run from Coolangatta to Cronulla to raise money for youth mental health support services. Darby says his life changed when he discovered running last year and he fell in love with pushing himself to the limit. Last year he ran seven half marathons in seven days to raise \$5000 for the Chumpy Pullin Foundation and said afterwards "This is just the beginning". Just over eight months later on 27 December he was in Coolangatta starting out on a 15 day test of his physical endurance and mental resilience that saw him running 60 kilometres per day. On 10 January a massive crowd lined both sides of the path, high fived him and cheered through to the finish line in Cronulla's Dunningham Park. Knowing he could help others and spread awareness along the way was a huge motivator for Darby. He said he was "stoked" to be raising money for an incredible charity in Find Ya Feet, which is working hard to empower future generations. I congratulate Darby on his inspiring run and raising more than \$41,000 for mental health programs in our schools.

MR CODY JEFFREY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Mr Cody Jeffrey of Crookwell for his community spirit and his innate personal attributes of a strong work ethic. Mr Jeffrey is well known for his sponsorship of a variety of events, including sporting competitions and community initiatives across the region. Mr Jeffrey is seen as a role model through his support of local residents and a tireless advocate to drive beneficial community activities. Mr Jeffrey was recently nominated as a finalist for the 2025 Australia Day Award, Citizen of the Year in the Upper Lachlan Shire. I thank Mr Jeffrey on his enduring commitment to the community of Crookwell and congratulate him on his well-deserved nomination.

ALEXANDER SKEFFINGTON

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Alexander Skeffington. Alexander has demonstrated his remarkable passion and athleticism in running. Alexander has participated in several events including: Australian Cross Country Championships finishing 12th. NSW State Cross Country Championships finishing 3rd. Australian All Schools Cross Country finishing 25th. NSW All Schools Cross Country finishing 6th. NSW CCC Cross Country finishing 1st. Australian Track and Field Championships 3000m finishing 12th. Australian Track and Field Championships 1500m finishing 22nd. NSW All Schools Track and Field Championships 3000m finishing 8th. NSW All Schools Track and Field Championships 1500m finishing 9th. NSW CCC Track and Field Championships 1500m finishing 3rd. Trinity Catholic College Archdiocesan and NSWCCC Cross Country Age Champion 2024. Alexander was recently nominated as a finalist for the 2025 Australia Day Award, Junior Sports Person of the Year in Goulburn Mulwaree. I take this time to recognise Alexander's significant dedication to his chosen sport and his mentorship of younger students at Trinity Catholic College and the Athletics Club.

CHLOE KEMP

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Chloe Kemp for her mentorship and leadership roles in sport. Chloe has demonstrated her strong sense of commitment to supporting her teammates and other students to give their best when participating in sports. Chloe has a passion for sport and keeping fit and healthy. Chloe was also awarded the Principal Award for High Achievement in School Based for HSC, the Ampol Best All Rounder Award, Sportswoman of the Year at the Crookwell High School Presentation Day / Night Chloe was recently nominated for the 2025 Australia Day Award, Sportsperson and Young Sportsperson of the Year in the Upper Lachlan Shire. I congratulate Chloe on her well-deserved nomination and recognise her significant contribution and commitment as a role model and leadership roles that she undertakes within the sporting and school community.

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - JOY BUQUE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in wishing Joy Buque a joyous 47th birthday! Joy's partner, Glenn, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Wishing Joy Buque a very Happy Birthday this 15th day of November which also celebrates her first year in her new home of Sydney Australia!" It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Joy's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Joy!

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - SHARON TAY

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in wishing Sharon Tay a joyous 70th birthday! Sharon's son, John, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Happy 70th birthday mum. Whilst you've lived in Ryde for over 40 years, I hope you can enjoy some time away from home, travelling the world on many holidays. I appreciate the hard work you do to help us live happily and healthily. It will be hard to top the smiles you had when you received light bulbs and an induction cooktop as gifts, but we hope this birthday message can bring a bigger smile to your face. Love from all the family." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Sharon's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Sharon!

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - LUKE MOROSIN-SMITH

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in wishing Luke Morosin-Smith a joyous 21st birthday! Luke's mother, Ginetta, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Wishing you a wonderful 21st Birthday Celebration. May you continue to enjoy success and happiness in the coming year despite the challenges that may arise when you least expect them. Your determination, creative thinking and kind actions are just a few of your admirable qualities! Happy Birthday! Am so proud of you love Mum!" It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Luke's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Luke!

LANSVALE PUBLIC SCHOOL 2024 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION DAY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—It was wonderful to begin my 2024 end-of-year school visits with Lansvale Public School. Each visit is a memorable experience, with the school's warm, friendly, and welcoming atmosphere. The students' bright and respectful behaviour speaks to the school's commitment to nurturing well-rounded individuals with the values of loyalty, service, and perseverance, alongside academic excellence. I also had the privilege of presenting my Tri Vo MP Leadership Award to outstanding students from kindergarten to Year 6. This year, the Leadership Award was presented to Matilda Borei, Kaeden Metzger, Mia Hong La, Liam Nguyen, Elye Robinson, Hali Tran, Tracy Pham, Avery Nguyen, Andy Tang, Jessica Le, Chloe Nguyen, Justin Bui, Carlyle Hoang, and Anna Le. I congratulate all the award recipients and students for their wonderful accomplishments and wish them a bright future. A heartfelt thank you to Principal Mrs Laura Karam and Assistant Principal Ms Fergie Tu for the kind invitation, and to all teachers, staff, parents, and the school community for their dedication and hard work.

LANSVALE EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL 2024 END OF YEAR AWARD PRESENTATION DAY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I had a privilege of attending the end-of-year presentation of Lansvale East Public School in my Cabramatta electorate on the 17 December 2024. I am proud and grateful for the remarkable achievements of the school and the effort behind them. Lansvale East Public School is small but high achieving, with dedicated teachers and staff who work tirelessly to meet the diverse needs of our local students. The school plays an invaluable role in providing teaching programs tailored to the unique needs of this socially and culturally diverse community. I also had the privilege of presenting my Tri Vo MP Leadership Award to outstanding students from Year 1 to 6. This year, the Award went to Amar Hamze, Genesis Puroku, Truc To, Aleksej Zabrdac, Thanh Ho, Enzo Ther, Zubaida Ismail, Liam Nguyen, Sophie Nguyen, Bernard Luu, Neveah Solomona, and Joshua Phillips. I congratulate all the award recipients and students for their wonderful accomplishments and wish them a bright future. A heartfelt thank you to Principal Ms Erika Ortega for the kind invitation, and to all teachers, staff, parents, and the school community for their dedication and hard work.

MRS NOUPHANH DITTHAVONG

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I would like to recognise Mrs Noupanh Dittthavong for her contributions to my Cabramatta electorate. During the political turmoil in Laos, Mrs Dittthavong and her family arrived in Australia in the late 1970s, seeking refuge and a new beginning. Since her arrival, Mrs Dittthavong has been a dedicated advocate for protecting, promoting, and integrating Lao cultural heritage within Australia's vibrant multicultural society. Her lifelong commitment to the Lao community, alongside the contributions of her late husband, who served two terms as President of the Lao Community Advancement Co-Op NSW[LCAC] in the 1980s, has played a vital role in the establishment of a cohesive, integrated, and harmonious Lao community, enriching Australian multiculturalism. Mrs Dittthavong's tireless efforts in preserving Lao heritage and her work

in fostering community unity are deeply valued. It is with great honour that I recognise Mrs Dittavong for her exceptional contributions to the cultural diversity and harmony in my Cabramatta electorate.

AMELIA WEATHERLAKE AND DAMON HENSMAN

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Amelia Weatherlake and Damon Hensman, for being elected as Vice-Captains of Corpus Christi High School for 2025. Being elected as Vice-Captain is a tremendous honour that carries both pride and responsibility. It reflects the trust and confidence that students, teachers, and the school community have placed in the student's leadership abilities and commitment to serving others. It also involves balancing academic, extracurricular, and leadership duties, which helps develop essential skills like communication, teamwork, and decision-making. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Amelia and Damon on this this wonderful achievement and wish them all the best in this leadership role in 2025.

MACLEAY KESBY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Macleay Kesby, for being elected as School Captain of Corpus Christi High School for 2025. Being elected as school captain is a tremendous honour that carries both pride and responsibility. It reflects the trust and confidence that students, teachers, and the school community have placed in their leadership abilities and commitment to serving others. It also involves balancing academic, extracurricular, and leadership duties, which helps develop essential skills like communication, teamwork, and decision-making. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Macleay on this this wonderful achievement.

GRACE MULLIET

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Grace Mulliet, for being elected as School Captain of Corpus Christi High School for 2025. Being elected as school captain is a tremendous honour that carries both pride and responsibility. It reflects the trust and confidence that students, teachers, and the school community have placed in their leadership abilities and commitment to serving others. It also involves balancing academic, extracurricular, and leadership duties, which helps develop essential skills like communication, teamwork, and decision-making. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Grace on this this wonderful achievement.

GLEN INNES COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Glen Innes community for banding together to help others in need, following a large storm hitting the town in January. This wonderful group of people worked tirelessly moving debris, rubbish and offering minor repair work, especially to the elderly, vulnerable and those simply unable to do so. I congratulate Richard Gallagher and Bianca Hill, on being the driving force behind this initiative and for having a can-do attitude to organise the clean-up. Other members of the group helping their community included: Lindsay Hill, Imogen Armstrong, Oliver Armstrong, Suzi Lake, Trey Griffiths, Braedon Griffiths, Keinan Griffiths, Jayden Nugent, Cammo Wood, Anne Vosper and Glen Innes' Mayor Cr Margot Davis. Special thanks also to The Local Glen Innes, on kindly donating coffees for each of the volunteers. I commend and thank all involved in this wonderful neighbour-to-neighbour effort, for their hard work, generosity of time, trucks, trailers and strength, providing relief to others. The community spirit in Glen Innes is most definitely alive and well!

RECOGNITION OF MARTIN MURRAY

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Inverell local Martin Murray, on representing young farmers at the Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, in Germany recently. Martin took the views of young farmers to the world stage, where the meeting included 63 Agriculture Ministers, along with 14 high level representatives from international organisations. I congratulate Martin on taking up this opportunity and to be part of an event which brings tougher experts, politicians and interest groups, to develop solutions for our future food security. Aside from this accomplishment, Martin is an Agronomist, the Chair of the of NSW Young Farmers and a member of the Young Farmer Council, as such representing the interest and concerns of young people entering the agricultural industry. I commend Murray on his accomplished career, actively shaping the future of agriculture and advocating and improving the lives of young farmers across NSW.

WARIALDA WATER SECURE

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Wialda Shire Council, on their excellence in handling the recent water contamination issue experienced by the township of Wialda. Their methodical approach to isolating any source of PFAS in the town water, whilst keeping the local community well informed, putting a future plan in place and providing access to alternative drinking water, went a long way in

alleviating community member concerns. I congratulate all involved in ensuring the safety of the community, including Gwydir Shire Mayor Tiff Galvin and Gwydir Shire Council board members, General Manager Max Eastcott, along with council staff and community members, for pulling together in a time of need, in an efficient and expert manner. I commend all involved in assisting in the effort to restore safe drinking water for the town of Warialda. On behalf of constituents of Warialda and surrounds, we say thank you.

NSW SES ASSETS PUT TO TEST AT NATIONAL FLOOD RESCUE SYMPOSIUM

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—Recently, emergency personnel from across the country came to Penrith to test their flood rescue skills in a mass-casualty exercise as part of the National Flood Rescue Symposium. Over 200 personnel from 17 agencies attended the Symposium, led by the NSW State Emergency Service [SES], which showcased innovative flood rescue assets currently being trialled. Over the three days, we seen representatives from NSW Police, NSW Ambulance, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Rural Fire Service, VRA Rescue NSW, Surf Life Saving NSW, and Marine Rescue NSW working together. From the devastation of the 2019/20 bushfires to the torrential rainfall which has since inundated Penrith on numerous occasions, our emergency services have been challenged to stay on top of our changing weather and protect our communities. The drones, amphibious vehicles, e-bikes and trail bikes on display at the event will help to improve response times to remote locations while enhancing the safety of our personnel. It was a pleasure to host emergency experts from across Australia and New Zealand at Penrith's very own Whitewater Stadium and see first-hand the collaboration between our emergency service personnel as they showcased their skills.

PENRITH CITIZENSHIP

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—It is with great pleasure that I congratulate all those new Australians who became citizens in Penrith on 26 January 2025, morning ceremony. The Penrith community are richer for the diversity of culture you all bring to our city: Avinash Khagi, Roxanne Laus, Priscilla Mottram, Pearl Macgillivray, Elisha Maestro, Eufrocila Olesco, Lyanne Olesco, Dominador Olesco, Ramandeep Pamdher, Pavneet Kaur, Alexander Jr Peralta, Ilisapeti Powell, Tishey Rakshita, Hamza Siddique, Saminah Zafar, Naveen Sinha, Smit Sinha, Narada Srisungnoen, Gianluca Calvarese, Mahaletchumy Zieschang, Mohamad Al Dirani, Samitha Bandaranayake Mudiyanselage, Umbreen Cheema, Santhosh Darapu, Joyce Del Mundo, Golnar Ebrahimpoor Boroujeni, Majid Shahikarijani, Craig Garden, James Katene-Moana, Maluloto Matangi, Kinnear Penman, Md Mahfuzur Rahman, and Helene Reydet. I wish them all the best for their futures as Penrith locals.

PENRITH CITIZENSHIP

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—It is with great pleasure that I congratulate all those new Australians who became citizens in Penrith on 26 January 2025, morning ceremony. The Penrith community are richer for the diversity of culture you all bring to our city: Elliot Abdehtabar, Achol Angok, Parul Akhouri, Mahyar Banafsheh, Yasamin Giahi, Bilal Bashir, Ronald Busa, Karen Busa, Sophia Busa, Matthias Busa, Suntaree Clifford, Ryan Door, Constantin Cojocaru, Shontay Connolly, Jamie Connolly, Wonderful Fahnbulleh, Karl Florentino, Princess Florentino, Kylie Florentino, Karlie Florentino, Nimalraj Francis, Hewafonseke Fonseca, Dennis Fortich, Kaelyn Fortich, Kaela Fortich, Supriya Golem, Shital Gohil, Ghanshyam Parmar, Yogisha Parmar, Raj Haria, Maria Higham, and Uli Ioane Tuliatu. I wish them all the best for their futures as Penrith locals.

2025 JOSS YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARD FINALISTS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the following 14 young athletes who have been selected as finalists for the 2025 Joss Young Achiever Award. These outstanding individuals, representing a variety of sports, have demonstrated remarkable talent and achievement in our region. Finalists and their sport: Xylavene Beale – Athletics, Jade Crook – Basketball, Lyla Ferrari – Show Jumping, Joshua Gould – Water Polo, Mia Lavis – Netball, Montanna Mathews – Soccer, Archie McDonald – Motorcycle Racing, Hamish Morrison – Hockey, Charlie Murphy – Water Polo, Nate Palubiski – Clay Target Shooting, Isabelle Rae – Swimming, Ethan Semple- Touch Football, Blake Tracey – Motor Racing, Angus Weal – Softball. Congratulations to all the finalists for their outstanding achievements! As we celebrate the spirit of sportsmanship and the remarkable talent of these young athletes, who represent the future of Albury Wodonga's sporting excellence.

VALE ROSEMARY DREWE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the passing of Rosemary Drewe, a dedicated ballet dance teacher from Albury, whose life was devoted to both artistry and advocacy. Rosemary, 81, passed away on January 14, leaving an incredible mark on the Border dance community. Her passion for dance began at the age of eight. Mrs Drewe devoted herself to the art of dance, inspiring generations of dancers well into her 80's, travelling 150km twice a week until she fell ill. She had an ability to instil in her students not only technical excellence but also a deep connection to music and self-expression. Beyond her remarkable career as a

ballet teacher, Rosemary was a mother to four. A tireless advocate for people with disabilities, motivated by her son Nicholas, who had Down syndrome, and her foster son Robin, who had autism. She fought for inclusion and fairness for all. I have had the privilege of knowing Rosemary and being taught by Rosemary's late husband John. Rosemary's legacy will live on through the countless lives she has touched – both in dance and community advocacy. Rest in peace, Rosemary Drewe.

VALE ANDY DUNN

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the life and legacy of Andrew "Andy" Dunn, member of the Albury and Bungowannah communities, who passed away this January 2025. Mr Dunn was involved in various local organisations like the Albury West Rotary, the Bungowannah Hall Trust, and the Albury Club. He was a life member of the Albury Show Society, where he played a significant role on the Cattle Committee. His passion for sports and community engagement was evident in his memberships with the Bungowannah Tennis Club, and Melbourne Cricket Club [MCC] Member. Mr Dunn was an excellent farmer, known for his dedication to agriculture, and a treasured member of the Bungowannah community. Most importantly he was a devoted and proud father to Michael and Clare, a grandfather to three - Quincy, Alice and Edwina. Mr Dunn's service and contributions will continue to be honoured in our community. He will be remembered as a true gentleman, known for his humour and selflessness. My deepest condolences to Andy's family. Vale Andy Dunn.

LISMORE CITY COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD WINNERS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I WARMLY congratulate Neville Graham on being named Lismore Citizen of the Year for 2025. This is well deserved recognition for Neville who has selflessly kept the community safe as a first responder during a distinguished policing career and as a State Emergency Service volunteer. South Lismore Post Office owner Tracy Ward took out the Services in the Community (Individual) Award for her one-woman campaign to raise the heart of Lismore post-floods. The Group Award went to Lismore CWA, which was established on 2 December 1924 and has served the community for more than 100 years. 'Mr Basketball' Len Ward is Volunteer of the Year for 2025, having been a steadfast and invaluable presence in Lismore Basketball since the 1960s. Junior Female Sportsperson is Lismore High student and outstanding hockey player Caitlyn Halliday; Junior Male Sportsperson is Alex Sipple, 16, a world and Australian record holder in power lifting; and Sports Team, Group or Organisation is Lismore Rowing Club, an institution for well over a century. The Arts and Culture Award went to Victoria Collington, whose business The Artisans Table is a safe place for social connection and for practising art as therapy.

TENTERFIELD SHIRE AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD WINNERS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I WISH to warmly congratulate Dr Brian Pilgrim on being named Tenterfield Shire's Citizen of the Year for 2025. This award was in recognition of the Tenterfield medico's longstanding and unwavering dedication to the health and well-being of the local community and his exceptional life-saving contributions in the field of general practice. The Community Event of the Year Award went to the Westpac Helicopter Tenterfield Volunteer Support Group Charity Golf Day and Charity Auction. The group, which has raised an incredible \$700,000 since 2015, was represented by President Robert Elks The Emergency Services Volunteer Award or Group Award went to Container of Dreams, represented by CEO Clare Urquhart. Container of Dreams is a humanitarian charity that extends a helping hand to those in the aftermath of disasters, offering innovative micro-housing to individuals facing displacement. Based at Drake, Container of Dreams' volunteer members continue to construct tiny houses for fire and flood victims, fostering resilience. Lara Condrick, 16, is the shire's Sports Person of the Year for 2025. Lara has been a national competitor in Physical Culture since the age of eight, placing in the top 15 last year, representing the Tenterfield Physical Culture Club.

TWEED SHIRE COUNCIL AUSTRALIA DAY AWARD WINNERS 2025

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)—I WISH to warmly congratulate Tyalgum's Mic Julien on being named Tweed Shire's Citizen of the Year for his dedication to making his community safer and better. Mic manages local Crown lands, has secured grants to enhance community infrastructure, and volunteers with the Rural Fire Service and Tyalgum Scratchers gardening group. Community Event of the Year went to Murwillumbah Action Group for its successful Murbah Youth Fest. Senior Ambassador was Phil Eizenberg, known for teaching karate in Stokers Siding, starting an old-time music group in Murwillumbah, and volunteering with the Rescue Association during disasters. Murwillumbah swimmer Isabela Millar, 16, was the only female athlete to represent the Solomon Islands at the 2024 Paris Olympics, making her a joint winner of the Sporting Achievement of the Year with Fingal-born surfer Dane Henry. Volunteer of the Year Individual went to Gary Setchell, who for 14 years has helped disadvantaged people in Murwillumbah access basic needs. The Group award went to Tyalgum Scratchers for creating and maintaining the iconic Coolman Street gardens. Other notable

winners were the Under-16 Boys' Tweed Valley Basketball team and Australian representative breakdancer and motivational speaker Jeff Dunne, 16, of Casuarina.

JOY VOST

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and remember Joy Vost: for the joy of helping people make history. A fifth-generation Shoalhaven local, Joy's life was as vibrant as the family histories she uncovered and the stories she helped preserve. Joy dedicated her time to connecting people with their past, offering them a sense of belonging and identity. Joy's love for history led her to serve as secretary of the Shoalhaven History Fair Committee and the Family History Society, as well as treasurer of the Bolong Community Heritage Complex. Joy's passion was not just in research but in bringing history to life, whether by saving the Bolong Church or spending nearly 30 years tracing her own family tree. Joy believed that knowing one's heritage provided grounding, and she worked tirelessly to give others that same gift. Beyond her historical work, Joy embraced life with adventure—racing cars, riding motorcycles, and always challenging expectations. Joy's legacy will live on in the stories she preserved and the lives she touched. Vale, Joy Vos, you made history come alive.

MILTON ULLADULLA VIEW CLUB

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the members of the Milton Ulladulla VIEW Club for their outstanding dedication to supporting disadvantaged students through The Smith Family's Learning for Life program. The club's commitment to education remained unwavering in 2024. Through fundraising, volunteering, and advocacy, they successfully sponsored three students, providing vital support for their learning journey. The students' heartfelt messages of gratitude—whether about their dreams of becoming a nurse, their love for soccer, or their growing confidence in school, highlight the real impact of this generosity. Parents, too, expressed their deep appreciation, knowing that this support is helping shape their children's futures. It is a testament to the club's hard work that they have raised enough funds to continue supporting these students in 2025. Additionally, their contribution to the Digital Learning program will ensure young learners have the tools they need to thrive. Congratulations to the committee, and thank you to the Milton Ulladulla VIEW Club members for making a difference in young lives.

DAVID VADRE-JONES

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: On behalf of the South Coast electorate, I would like to congratulate David Vadre-Jones, who, on Australia Day, was announced the Shoalhaven Citizen Award for his tireless volunteer work and fundraising. For more than four decades, David has been a pillar of the Sussex Inlet community, dedicating himself to countless organisations and initiatives that enrich the lives of others. His journey in Sussex Inlet began with a warm embrace from neighbours who lent a hand as he built his home—a moment that perfectly captures the spirit of this remarkable town. From his early involvement with Marine Rescue Sussex Inlet to his contributions with Lions, Neighbourhood Watch, and the Sussex Inlet Community Technology Centre, David has consistently led with generosity and passion. His long-term commitment to Inasmuch has seen him cooking weekly barbecues, running men's groups, and nurturing a community garden. Now, his focus is on creating a dementia-friendly town, ensuring those in need have the support they deserve. David's legacy is one of service, kindness, and an unwavering desire to make a difference. Congratulations, David!

EMMA WALSH

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Emma Walsh for her incredible creation, Emma's Warriors. After being diagnosed with leukemia in 2022, Emma experienced firsthand the challenges of prolonged hospital stays. Driven by her own journey, she founded Emma's Warriors to ease the experience for other young people facing serious health crises. Emma's goal is simple yet profound: to make life a little easier for children and young adults battling cancer. Emma's Warriors provides Care Kits filled with essential and comforting items such as sheets, towels, moisturiser, backpacks, batteries, and white noise machines. These kits not only meet basic needs but also offer small comforts to make hospital stays more bearable. In addition to the Care Kits, Emma has expanded her efforts to include iPads, portable Wi-Fi, and financial support for families who must travel interstate for treatment. Emma, your compassion, empathy and unwavering commitment to others is truly inspiring. You are making a profound difference in the lives of those navigating one of the toughest journeys imaginable. Thank you for all you do – your kindness is a beacon of hope for so many.

AMANDA HAKOPA

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Amanda Hakopa for receiving the prestigious Bert Evans Scholarship. Named in honour of the late Bert Evans AO, a lifelong advocate for vocational education, the scholarship

embodies his legacy of supporting apprenticeships and promoting vocational pathways as a foundation for success. Since its inception in 2014, the program has continued to empower apprentices by removing financial barriers and providing them with the opportunity to reach their full potential. This year, the scholarship was awarded to Amanda to support her as she completes her Certificate III in Engineering. Amanda's dedication to her training, her exceptional skill development and unwavering commitment to her chosen trade have made her a standout in the field. Amanda's success not only reflects her personal determination but also serves as an inspiration to others looking to pursue vocational pathways. Congratulations, Amanda, you are more than deserving of this honour and a credit to this community.

MATTHEW WILLIAMSON

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Matthew Williamson for receiving the prestigious Bert Evans Scholarship. Named in honour of the late Bert Evans AO, a lifelong advocate for vocational education, the scholarship embodies his legacy of supporting apprenticeships and promoting vocational pathways as a foundation for success. Since its inception in 2014, the program has continued to empower apprentices by removing financial barriers and providing them with the opportunity to reach their full potential. This year, the scholarship was awarded to Matthew to support him as he completes his Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician. Matthew's dedication to his training, his exceptional skill development and unwavering commitment to his chosen trade have made him a standout in the field. Matthew's success not only reflects his personal determination but also serves as an inspiration to others looking to pursue vocational pathways. Congratulations, Matthew, you are more than deserving of this honour and a credit to this community.

HOLY SPIRIT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I was delighted to visit Holy Spirit Primary School last year and present students Zoe and Annabelle each with an award for winning the Badgerys Creek Christmas Card Competition 2024 in their respective Years 3-6 and K-2 categories. Their artistic skills are outstanding and they brightened the day of my Christmas Card recipients. I was personally chuffed when both young ladies gave me a hug after receiving their award. They truly warmed my heart.

NEPEAN HOSPITAL CHILDREN'S WARD

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—In December my son Harry and I visited the children's ward at Nepean Hospital to deliver "Harry Potter" themed Christmas presents to the children. Harry handed out most of the bags to the children and wished them a healthy and happy Christmas. The children may have wondered why we had "Harry Potter" presents. Well, Harry requested a "Harry Potter" themed 8th birthday party. After making all the sets, games, clothing and activities I had extra cloaks, ties, hats, monster books, bookmarks and the showpiece item - pool noodle 'broom sticks'. So we bundled them up into Christmas gift bags and shared them with the children at the hospital. It was a joy to see the delight on their faces as they received their gifts from Harry.

ST CLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOL 2024 PRESENTATION DAY CEREMONY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—It was a pleasure to join the St Clair Public School community for the 2024 Presentation Day Ceremony. Congratulations to all St Clair Public School students who were recognised for their achievements at the Presentation Day Ceremony, including Chang Kong, the recipient of my Badgerys Creek Excellence Award. Chang received the 2024 award in recognition for excelling in his leadership position through his kindness and encouraging manner, being a hardworking and proactive learner who strives to achieve his best at all times, his participation in all school events and his support and encouragement of his peers. I congratulate Chang, his peers and all staff and parents at St Clair Public School on a successful 2024 and wish them continued success in the years ahead.

BURROWS PARK MAKEOVER

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On behalf of the Coogee electorate I would like to acknowledge the great work of the people involved in the upgrade of Burrows Park. After a unanimous vote by Randwick council, as well as online community consultations, Burrows Park in Clovelly has been approved for an upgrade that includes a new amenities block as well as a small expansion of the current playing field. Over the last 3 years, Randwick council, Friends of Burrow Park and The Clovelly Crocodiles Rugby League Football Club have been working to ensure that an upgrade to the park would serve all members of the local community. Due to these discussions, the council has made sure to protect the much loved and frequently used green spaces and ensuring that the park space is accessible to non-sports players. I would like to commend everyone involved for working to ensure that the park continues to serve the local community through preserving its green spaces as well as accommodating sporting facilities for local sports clubs.

FOREVER JOHNNO

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On behalf of the Coogee electorate, I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work of Mal Ward and his charity Forever Johnno. The charity provides the patients of children's hospitals around Sydney with Christmas gifts. Mal established the charity in 2008 after his son sadly passed away from liver disease as a way to keep his son's memory alive through a yearly Christmas present drive for children in hospital. Since its establishment in 2008, Forever Johnno has hosted an annual 'wrapathon' taking place in December, with years taking place at the Clovelly Hotel and volunteers wrapping a record 2,252 presents. Mal also established a mid-year fundraiser in 2000 to help the patients at the specialist transplant unit at Westmead's Children's Hospital. I would like to commend Mal for his dedication to creating a legacy for his son and to helping the patients of children's hospitals around Sydney by ensuring that they are able to celebrate Christmas as well as support.

CLASS OF 2024 HSC STUDENTS ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and commend all graduating HSC students from the Class of 2024 studying visual arts. The Hazelhurst Arts Centre in Gympie hosted their annual celebration of exceptional works by HSC visual arts students, featuring artworks by twenty-one recent graduates. This includes fourteen from the local community! This year, students were inspired by numerous genres including friendship, the environment and personal identity through drawing, painting, photography and mixed media. I send my congratulations to Marist College Kogarah student James Ryan for his achievement in receiving the Friends of Hazelhurst Award for Creative Excellence for the drawing 'What Do You See In Me?'. His abstract piece explores the creativity of an artist's developing mind. Another notable artwork is Georges River Oatley Senior Campus student Charlotte Moran whose charcoal painting, 'Figlia Mia', explores personal identity and the female experience through drawing. My praise and congratulations goes to all graduates who have studied visual arts and whose artworks are featured at the Hazelhurst Arts Centre.

BAYSIDE COUNCIL YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – PRINCESS DELANY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I commend and acknowledge Ms Princess Delany who was awarded Bayside Council's Young Citizen of the Year for her community work with the Salvation Army and her participation in the NSW Youth Parliament Program. Her volunteering with the Salvation Army involved numerous community initiatives involving school holiday programs and the Olympic-themed activity days for children. On top of this, Princess represented the Kogarah electorate in Youth Parliament. The Youth Parliament initiative offers high school students in years 10 to 12 a platform to voice their concerns and propose solutions on issues affecting their local communities. In her role as Youth Premier, she championed the voices of young people, additionally raising awareness of the inextricable connection between land and First Nations students, as well as the importance of their wellbeing. Princess is an inspirational leader, fighting to make a positive difference in our local community, demonstrating an unwavering commitment and passion to inclusivity and representation. I wish Princess all the best for the future and have no doubt she will continue to represent the best interests of our local community.

YEAR OF THE SNAKE ART COMPETITION

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—This year, I had the privilege to judge artworks submitted for the Year of the Snake artwork competition. This competition encourages students from Kindergarten to Year 12 within the Kogarah electorate to create an artwork celebrating the Year of the Snake. I would like to take a moment to commend the efforts placed into every art piece. It is magnificent to see the competition's growing popularity with this year's five-hundred submissions from primary and high school students. I also wish to congratulate this year's winners Sophie Liang and Alvin Liang from Brushlover's Art Studio, who are brother and sister! Sophie's winning artwork depicts a cheerful red snake, a symbol of the prosperity and vitality of the Year of the Snake, centre-stage on a mahjong table. Alvin based his art piece on the simple act of wishing Grandma a happy new year, evoking joy and putting a smile on our faces. Once again, I would like to praise the beautiful submissions placed by our five-hundred school students as it promotes the importance of sharing and passing down art and languages within such a multicultural and diverse community.

BENEATH THE BAY

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—Mr Speaker, congratulations to "Beneath the Bay" on being awarded Best New Tourism Business at the NSW Tourism Awards in November 2024. This family run scuba diving business is operated by Tammy and Mick Bellette out of the beautiful Batemans Bay estuary. The business provides a scuba diving charter boat and offers scuba diving experiences as well as open water scuba diver training courses. Apart from scuba diving training and experiences, Tammy and Mick provide snorkelling tours and seasonal whale watching. Their clients will witness the pristine waters and abundant marine life of the beautiful

Eurobodalla nature coast at sites like the Tollgate Islands Nature Reserve, Black Rock, and Burrewarra Lighthouse Reef. The business is a PADI certified diving instructor and dive master. They are also emergency first response and primary and secondary care certified. It is great to see this family achieve success and open the wonderful world of our marine environment to locals and visitors.

RODNEY BOOTH

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—Mr Speaker, congratulations to Rodney Booth, Catalina Club Director of golf who, on 19th November 2024, was awarded the Australian PGA Club Golf Professional of the Year at the annual PGA awards at Brisbane town hall. In a double honour, Rodney had been awarded the NSW/ACT Club Professional of the Year the previous week. Rodney is acknowledged for his dedication and professionalism. He is director of golf at one of the premier golf clubs in New South Wales. The 27 hole championship golf course had recently hosted the NSW open regional qualifier south coast open in September 2024. The club is nestled on the banks of the Batemans Bay estuary and is the gateway to the beautiful golf course of the Eurobodalla and Sapphire Coast. Rodney is renowned for his fostering of the talent of cadets, juniors, and ladies members as well as his support of social and competitive golf in the Eurobodalla. Congratulations Rodney and the Catalina Golf and Country Club.

ELIZABETH FLEMING

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega)—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the retirement of Elizabeth Fleming after 30 years of full-time legal practice in the Eurobodalla. Elizabeth qualified in law in Melbourne and was admitted by the Supreme Court of Victoria 50 years ago in 1975. After establishing Elizabeth Fleming & Associates in Moruya, Elizabeth's practice has expanded to become Fleming Law with offices in Moruya, Batemans Bay, and Sydney. Her son, Andrew, continues the family tradition as the owner of the firm. In addition to her legal practice, Elizabeth has been integrally involved in community affairs in the Eurobodalla. She was a founding steering committee member and inaugural board member for St Peter's Anglican College, Broulee. Until recently, Elizabeth was a long serving board member of Banksia Lodge Residential Aged Care, Broulee. Over 50 years, Elizabeth and her late husband, Geoffrey, established another local family business, South East Quarries and Landscaping. Congratulations Elizabeth. Thank you for your social and professional contribution to the Eurobodalla community. Enjoy your retirement.

RUBEN JUNKER

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—I'd like to recognise Hunter School of the Performing Arts student Ruben Junker, who has shown incredible strength after being diagnosed with leukemia while sitting his HSC exams last year. Facing an unimaginable challenge, Ruben has shown remarkable determination and resilience throughout his recovery. Unfortunately, Ruben had to defer his university studies until 2026 to focus on his recovery. Despite this setback, he remains determined and has plans to become a doctor one day. Ruben's journey has touched many, and his courage reminds us of all the power of perseverance. His positive attitude in such tough times is a true testament to his character. We all wish Ruben nothing but the best as he continues to overcome challenges and move forward with his life.

ALEX MCKINNON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—A huge congratulations to Alex McKinnon, former Newcastle Knights player, on graduating from the University of Newcastle with a Bachelor of Psychological Science. Following a life-changing spinal injury in 2014, Alex's determination to build a meaningful off-field career has been extraordinary. His work in player recruitment inspired a passion for psychology, leading him to undertake formal studies. While raising a young family and navigating the challenges of life after professional sport, Alex has shown unwavering resilience and commitment. Alex's journey is a shining example of courage, adaptability, and the power of education, and I look forward to seeing the incredible impact he will continue to make in his next chapter.

TRIBUTE TO JOSEPH 'JOE' CARUANA

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—I wish to pay tribute to the life and contributions of Mr Joseph Caruana, a life member of the Australian Labor Party who sadly passed away on 3 December 2024. Joe was a proud member of the Balgownie Branch, a proud catholic and a proud member of the Wollongong Community. Joe was an integral part of the Maltese Community in the Illawarra, serving as the Secretary of the George Cross Falcons Club in the 1980's, helping build connections between the Maltese Community and the Labor Party in the Illawarra, a connection that still continues strong to this day. Joe also served as a delegate to the Maltese Community Conference for a number of years, advocating for his community through this avenue. Joe was always willing to lend a hand to assist Labor with elections, branch discussions and policy formation. He became a life member in

2017, something he was always very proud of. Joe survived his beloved late wife Lucy and was a dearly loved Father, Father in Law and Grandfather. He will be sadly missed.

GREG 'JOHNNO' JOHNSON

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Congratulations to one of Wagga Wagga's great quiet achievers, Greg "Johnno" Johnson, who was named the city's Citizen of the Year on Australia Day. An inaugural member of the Wagga Wagga Relay for Life, Greg has spent 21 years supporting the Cancer Council, including five years driving patients to appointments under the Transport to Treatment program. His many hours behind the wheel ensured patients got the treatment they needed, at the same time providing hope and help at a challenging time. His care, support and good humour made a great difference on journeys short and long, and he found it an honour to supply the service to those in need. But Greg's service to community extends even further. He was instrumental in getting lighting installed at Anderson Park, opening new opportunities for players to train and compete after dark, and he has a long history of volunteering for sports clubs, the Koorinal Rotary Club and the Wagga Lions Club as well as the Specialist Medical Research Foundation. Throughout it all, he never sought the limelight but took pleasure in quietly making a real and lasting difference, and I am delighted to congratulate him for this well-deserved honour.

SINULOG

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Last month I was honoured to support a new event that is set to become a major date on Wagga Wagga's rich and varied multicultural calendar – the inaugural Riverina Sinulog Festival. Sinulog celebrates the Holy Child Jesus in reflection of Filipinos' dedication to the Catholic faith and means "water current" in relation to a graceful dance. This is a wonderful metaphor for the beautiful Riverina where the water currents of our rivers and streams are at the heart of our economy, lifestyle and love of community. In another first, the Riverina's Sinulog has been coupled with a new Philippine Barrio Festival which celebrates Filipino culture, heritage and hospitality. All members of the community were invited to take part in the event, which will be held annually, and is expected to be a major drawcard for visitors from far and wide. Several thousand strong, Wagga's Filipino community is a multicultural success story and I'm looking forward to seeing the new festival going from strength to strength. Congratulations and thank you to those who made it possible – committee chair Marina O'Donnell, co-chair Jeremias Ibarreta, Jennie Hodges, Karissa Subedi and the members of the Wagga Wagga Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

TOURISM AWARDS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Congratulations to the amazing local businesses that shone in the 2024 NSW Tourism Awards. Among them is Wagga Wagga's Bundyi Cultural Tours, led by Mark Saddler, which takes visitors on a remarkable journey through Wiradjuri culture. Mark's tours are a celebration of an ancient, living culture in the spectacular lands of the Wiradjuri people – and are a worthy winner of gold in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tourism Experience category. Congratulations also to Gemma and Chris Russell of Tom's Outdoors in Tumut, the winners of a Tourism Star (Judge's Choice Award) for their fly fishing and kayaking tours of the Snowy Valleys. The award recognises the business's innovation, passion and growth and is a great showcase of everything that's wonderful about the great outdoors in the stunning Snowy Valleys. The Riverina's extraordinary food offerings were also recognised with a silver award for excellence in food tourism to one of Wagga Wagga's finest food and wine experiences, Food I Am. The celebrated cooking school and events centre is a great credit to the team, Tania Sibrey, Nerida Babich, Hannah Holt and Jamie Shepley. Well done to all the winners. Our community is proud of you!

KALEIDOSCOPE FESTIVAL MITTAGONG

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—On Saturday 16th November Mittagong held its first ever Kaleidoscope Festival, a street party to unite the community in the joy of music, food and art. Organised by the Wingecarribee Shire Council, this event was made possible by funding from the NSW Government's Open Streets Program led by Transport for NSW. It featured music, family focused activities, food stalls and performances. Several streets were closed and taken over by festival goers, who were treated to a full day of vibrant performances, craft stalls, art displays, acrobatics, and face-painting. The multicultural elements of the highlands were showcased, with Chinese and Vietnamese Lion and Dragon Dance, Southern Highland Irish Dance, Spanish Flamenco Dancing and Samba Ninjas. Congratulations to the Wingecarribee Shire Council Team for your efforts in making this festival happen, it was a great success.

SAY NO2DV BREAKFAST 2024

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—It was heartening to see so many people at the Say No2DV Breakfast on 27 November 2024 at Gledswood Homestead. The theme was "My Story Does Not Define Me", which sends a powerful message that victims of domestic violence are not defined by their abuse. The Say No2DV

Camden/Wollondilly Domestic Violence Committee hosted this event, which saw so many people show their support for such a critical issue. The strong turnout at that breakfast gives me hope that there is a better future for many in our community. Together with domestic violence support and prevention sector leaders, amazing leaders in our region, people like Tanya Whitehouse from the Macarthur Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, are here to educate the community about what is and isn't acceptable in our society. A heartfelt thank you to guest speaker Tanya for sharing her deeply personal story of enduring harrowing domestic violence, a story that impacted three generations and touched countless friends and family. Her courage helps us understand the far-reaching effects of domestic violence and inspires action. Together, we can say no to domestic violence and work towards a future where everyone feels safe, valued, and supported.

ILLAWARRA ACADEMY OF SPORT SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTATION

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Congratulations to the 18 scholarship recipients at the Illawarra Academy of Sport Scholarship presentation on 28 November 2024. Representing a diverse range of sports—hockey, cycling, mountain biking, athletics, triathlon, and netball—the dedication and talent of the athletes are truly inspiring. It was wonderful to share the occasion with Wingecarribee Mayor Jesse Fitzpatrick, Wingecarribee Councillors Sara Moylan and James Farrell, and IAS representatives President Sharon Wingate and CEO Salv Carmusciano. A special thank-you to Pixie Hanson for delivering such an inspiring and humorous Athlete's Address—it set a wonderful tone for the event. I look forward to catching up with all the athletes in 12 months to hear about their sporting journeys. Best wishes to the Academy for the year ahead—may it be filled with incredible experiences and achievements!

ROTARY CLUB OF NARROMINE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—I would like to acknowledge the Rotary Club of Narromine for their outstanding service to the community for over 60 years. At the conclusion of 2024, the club retired, and whilst not an easy decision for the committee, the small but mighty club can take pride in their remarkable contributions and achievements. A regular at many community events with their trusty van, they could always be relied on to deliver exceptional service to the community. Their dedication often meant long hours, working tirelessly from sunrise to sunset. One such event that was never missed was the Narromine Races. In a heartfelt gesture of appreciation, at the race meeting on 24 November 2024 the first race was dedicated to the club. Community members were not only fortunate enough to enjoy delicious food provided by the club, but also benefited from the generous donations made to local groups. These contributions were the result of countless volunteer working hours. A huge thank you to all the Narromine Rotarians for your dedication, commitment, and service to the Narromine community. Your team of friendly faces will certainly be missed – along with those delicious steak sandwiches! Your impact has been truly appreciated!

DANIELLE FISTR

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Danielle Bentick Fistr on her outstanding efforts to spread Christmas cheer in December 2024 in memory of her late loving grandparents Mack and Betty Bentick. Christmas is a joyous season for many, but for some in aged care, it can be a lonely and challenging time. Dani's initiative, Gifts for Grandfriends, aims to bring happiness and connection to aged care residents in Dubbo during the holiday season, ensuring no one feels forgotten or alone. With the generosity of the community donating gifts and her dedicated team of elves assisting with sorting, wrapping, and delivering them, residents of aged care facilities in Dubbo were treated to special deliveries of Christmas spirit, bringing joy and connection to many. Congratulations Dani on the incredible success of your initiative, Gifts for Grandfriends. Your kindness, passion and dedication are truly inspiring, reminding us of all of the true spirit of the Christmas season – spreading joy, compassion and love. I am sure Mack and Betty are extremely proud.

DOUG MOORBY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Doug Moorby from Narromine Council on being recognised as a Legend of Water! The prestigious, Legends of Water Award, was presented to Doug by the NSW Water Directorate at the Australian Water Directorate Dinner on 3 December 2024. Having been employed by Narromine Shire Council for eleven years, Doug is an enthusiastic advocate for the water industry. As the Manager of Utilities, he has played a pivotal role in implementing numerous technological advancements and developments in the Shire's water and sewerage systems. He is currently leading the design of a new water treatment plant for Narromine. Doug's passion for water and loss prevention management extends beyond his role at Council. He also serves as the Chairperson of the Orana Water Utilities Alliance and as a Board Member of the Water Directorate (NSW). This recognition is well deserved. It is testament to his work in the water industry and his passion for sustainable growth and innovation. Congratulations Doug!

ROY MAHAJAN, AUTHOR OF 'NO WORRIES, JASON WILL BE THERE'

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I commend and recognise an inspiring and talented young author, Roy Mahajan. Roy was nine years of age when he authored his first book, 'No Worries, Jason will be There.' The book was published by his parents for Roy's tenth birthday. I have had the opportunity to meet Roy and I am able to say that Roy has a passion for writing short stories, poems, and songs. Roy's first book, 'No Worries, Jason Will Be There' is a story about a fictional character named Jason who is nine years of age. Jason has a special skill for problem solving and throughout the book Roy tells the story of Jason's action-packed investigations and problem-solving adventures. Roy has donated profits from his book to Ocean Clean Up Charities. Roy has also more recently published his second book titled, 'Shallow Yet Deep, A Collection of Poems.' There is no doubt that Roy is a talented, dedicated, and passionate young author. I congratulate Roy for his contribution to literacy and for donating the proceeds to his chosen charity. I am sure that Roy will have a bright and successful future as a published author.

CASTLE HILL GYMNASTICS, COACH OF THE YEAR, JEFF CROCKETT

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I recognise and commend Jeff Crockett who recently received the Coach of the Year Award at the Castle Hill Gymnastics Awards Presentation held on 29 January 2025. Jeff was awarded the Coach of the Year to recognise his contribution to the gymnastics program. Jeff's knowledge and commitment both in leadership and coaching has enabled the Men's program to flourish and grown under his leadership. The citation for the Coach of the Year Award records: "He has provided the opportunity for our Men's program to flourish with the immense experience he has brought to our club, both in leadership and coaching. He is an excellent mentor for both the athletes and coaches alike, and through his kindness and commitment provides the opportunity for us to not only grow our program, but also our coaching team in the short 18-month period since he has joined us." I congratulate Jeff on receiving the Coach of the Year Award. I look forward to Castle Hill Gymnastics continued success in the future.

CASTLE HILL GYMNASTICS, CLUB SPIRIT AWARD, JAYDON WHELAN

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I recognise and commend Jaydon Whelan who recently received the Club Spirit Award at the Castle Hill Gymnastics Awards Presentation held on 29 January 2025. Jaydon was awarded the Club Spirit Award to recognise his contribution as a role model to athletes and coaches. The citation for the Club Spirit Award states: "Jaydon transitioned from a competitive athlete to coach at the age of 14 and has been a vital part of our staff since. He has been a role model to not only our Men's athletes but also to many of our coaches, always setting an example of work ethic and showing support and commitment to both athletes and the club. He has always been the first to offer to set up equipment and assist with guiding athletes and their families." The citation further states: "He is a true example of what Club Spirit means at Castle Hill Gymnastics. We are truly grateful for all you do." I congratulate Jaydon on receiving the Club Spirit Award.

CHRISTMAS BY THE CEDARS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Last year, I joined our community at St Charbel's Monastery in Punchbowl to celebrate their first "Christmas by the Cedars" night markets and share in their faith, heritage, and spirit with the community. I had a lovely time, accompanied by my dear friend Fr Anthony Azzi, to share in the beautiful community spirit. Thousands of families enjoyed various activities, including choristers, food, gifts and an incredible light display, all while celebrating the joy and generosity of the Christmas spirit. St Charbel's Monastery also unveiled one of Australia's largest pixel Christmas trees, standing at an impressive 8 meters tall. The celebrations are particularly meaningful as the parish marks its 50th jubilee, celebrating five decades of faith, fellowship, and service since the first Mass was held at St Charbel's Church in 1974. Whether the attraction was the lights, the music, or the food, the markets at St. Charbel's were a heartwarming celebration of faith and community. I look forward to this year's Christmas by the Cedars Markets, and I encourage everyone in our community to visit Punchbowl and enjoy a night out with their family. Well done to St Charbel's Monastery for organising this event.

BANKSTOWN GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL - SYDNEY REAL TALK PROGRAM

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the students in Year 9 and 10 from Bankstown Girls High School [BGHS] who spent 6 weeks in a literacy Real Talk program to develop their writing potential. As a result of this, three amazing students, Jamilla El-Omar, Rachelle Pham & Salma Alsuleiman, represented BGHS as finalists in the Sydney Real Talk program where they competed against 28 young poets from across Sydney. I would like to also offer a huge congratulations to Jamilla El-Omar for winning first place. Real Talk is a high school program that uses spoken word poetry to facilitate meaningful

dialogue and empower young people to find their voices. Over six weeks, mentor poets conduct writing workshop classes with students, culminating with an inter-school poetry slam which provides students with the opportunity to showcase their talents widely to an audience, including classmates, families and community members. I commend all students who participated in this program for their dedication and creativity throughout the program. This program has not only nurtured writing skills but also helped these students to build self-confidence and an appreciation for the arts.

IVAN WONG

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to acknowledge and honour the incredible contributions of Ivan Wong, General Manager of Strategic Support at CASS Care, as he transitions into retirement. Ivan's dedication, leadership and vision have played a central role in shaping CASS Care into the respected and impactful organisation it is today. CASS Care is a dynamic and community-focused organisation that provides a wide range of social and welfare services aimed at supporting individuals and families at every stage of life. Focusing on addressing the needs of elderly individuals, people with disabilities and families in need of social and community support, CASS Care is dedicated to ensuring that the services they provide are inclusive and client centered. While Ivan is retiring from his current role, he will remain actively involved as a member of the Board of Directors, continuing his dedication to the CASS mission. His ongoing dedication to the organisation ensures that CASS Care will continue to thrive and deliver high-quality services to those who need them most. We wish Ivan all the best in this new chapter of his life and look forward to his continued involvement in advancing CASS Care's mission for years to come.

FROM LOCAL GREENS TO INTERNATIONAL GOLD

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Jack Lewis grew up on the greens of the Wauchope Country Club, picking up a set of bowls at 14 years old. From humble beginnings at his local club, he has now reached a milestone of the sport, ticking off a dream campaign by taking home gold in both the men's singles and triples at the Oceania Bowls Challenge. The singles victory was especially sweet for Lewis, as it gave him a chance to redeem himself against New Zealand's national champion, who had defeated him in straight sets during an earlier round. In the singles final, he delivered a clutch triple to snatch the set 8-7. Riding high on confidence, in his second set, Lewis secured an 11-6 win and claimed his first international singles gold medal. But his golden run didn't end there. He played a key role in helping his team through a tough competition, earning another gold in the triples event. Congratulations Jack on this incredible achievement. From the small-town greens of Wauchope to standing atop the international podium, your passion and resilience for the game is inspiring.

MARINE RESCUE TRIAL BAY MEMBERS RECEIVE COMMISSIONER'S CITATION

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Marine Rescue Trial Bay volunteers have been honoured with the prestigious Commissioner's Citation for their heroic efforts during a lifesaving rescue mission in August 2020. Marine Rescue NSW Commissioner Alex Barrell commended the swift and coordinated actions of Watch Officer Jennifer Edser and the dedicated crew aboard Trial Bay 30, Coxswain Peter Holyfield, Ronald Young, Robert Hose, and David Meani, who saved the lives of two stranded fishermen. The incident unfolded about six nautical miles off Nambucca Heads when the fishermen's runabout hull split and sank, leaving them adrift in the open ocean. Responding to the emergency distress call, the Trial Bay crew was dispatched as part of a multi-agency search operation. Thanks to their rapid response and skilful navigation, the volunteers successfully located the men and safely retrieved them from the water. Commissioner Barrell praised the professionalism, teamwork, and decisive action of both the radio room watch officer and the rescue crew. This award reflects the bravery and dedication of Trial Bay Marine Rescue volunteers. Congratulations to the entire team on this well-earned recognition for their outstanding service.

NAMBUCCA MARINE RESCUE MEMBERS RECEIVE NATIONAL HONOURS

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Five Nambucca Marine Rescue volunteers have been awarded the National Emergency Medal for their support of the Rural Fire Service [RFS] during the 2020 bushfires. The awarding of this medal is how the nation acknowledges and thanks those people who have amidst the devastation caused by natural disasters, risen to the challenge of helping those affected, often putting themselves in harm's way for the good of their community. During the award ceremony, attendees heard inspiring accounts of how five selfless men maneuvered watercraft into challenging and dangerous positions to provide crucial assistance to the RFS. Their efforts were instrumental in the fight to protect lives and properties during one of the most catastrophic fire seasons in Australian history. NSW emergency response is a collective effort in times of natural disaster. Marine Rescue NSW Commissioner Alex Barrell presented the awards at the special ceremony. Congratulations to volunteers Colin Cracknel, Vaughn Thompsett, Kenneth Brandli, Theodor Ceapa and Gary Nichols. Your courage and commitment exemplify the best of what it means to serve the community in times of need.

CAROLS BY THE SEA

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 express my appreciation for Bayside Council's Carols by the Sea event. Carols by the Sea had been a community favourite during the festive season. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Carols have not been celebrated since 2020 and only restarted in 2024. With the beautiful backdrop of Botany Bay's blue waters and the white sand of Lady Robinson's beach, the community was able to enjoy this event with performances by the Bay City Church Band and songs from Hepi and the JJ's, the Brighton Prep Scots College Choir, the Royal Australian Navy Band and the Mascot Wesley Uniting Church Choir. To add to the festivities, Bayside Council had also installed six Christmas trees around Bayside, with one in each ward and two on the popular beachfront. Reviving events such as these is one of the best ways we can capture back that spirit of unity we lost during the pandemic, and even the smallest of decorations can make the biggest impact towards community spirit. 2024's Carols by the Sea was a beautiful display of Christmas spirit and I thank Bayside Council for their continued commitment to creating positive community events.

MARTIN SPITERI

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)—I would like to acknowledge the amazing volunteering efforts by Martin Spiteri. For more than twenty years, Martin has been a committed volunteer and since September 2005 has worked at the Benevolent Society's Greenwood Cottage. Greenwood Cottage provides professional care and overnight support to seniors with low care needs in a home-like environment when their usual carers are unavailable. Despite needing to care for his father for the last ten years, Martin has committed numerous days to both working and volunteering. Martin has helped clean up meals and events, drive buses and aid residents in their activities. More than this however, Martin has been a compassionate volunteer who has treated every resident he has helped with dignity and care. In 2017 Martin was in The Greenwood Cottage Team that was a finalist in "The Volunteer Team Finalist Sydney South" and was the 2022 NSW Volunteer of The Year Sydney City/ Eastern Suburbs Senior Nominee. But no award or accolade could match the value of the friendships that Martin has created along the way during his time volunteering. I extend my most sincere appreciation for Martin's efforts as a worker and volunteer in my community.

CHRISTINE SPEER ESM

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—After forty-three years of on-the-ground service to the State Emergency Service, Charlestown electorate local Christine Speer has been awarded the Emergency Services Medal in the 2025 Australia Day Honours. I cannot think of a more deserving recipient. Over the course of many years, Christine has been an eye-witness to the worst nature can throw at our communities and she's always been there for those in need. In the 2007 tempest which will always be remembered as the "Pasha Bulker storm", she was there. During the 2015 east coast low, she was there. During the horrific bushfire season of 2019-2020, she was there. And when horrendous flooding hit Lismore in 2022, she was there. I have had many occasions to recognise Christine in this place in the past, and I am so proud to once again recognise her as an extraordinary member of the Charlestown community. Congratulations, Christine, on this well-earned honour, and thank you for everything you and the men and women who serve with you in the SES do for communities in the Charlestown electorate and across the state.

THOMAS GUSTARD OAM

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—My congratulations to Mr Thomas Gustard of Eleebana, on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division for service to rugby league as a referee as part of the Australia Day Honours. Thomas served in a range of roles with the New South Wales Country Rugby League Referees Association from 1957 until 1993, including on the executive as deputy chairman, vice president, and chairman of the coaching panel. He was made a life member in 1980. Mr Gustard was involved with Newcastle Rugby League Referees Association from 1957 until 1988, serving as president from 1985 to 1988, and referred fourteen grand finals, an interstate match between NSW and Queensland, and even international matches in Papua New Guinea. Thomas served with the New South Wales Rugby League Referees between 1971 and 1991, as well. Outside of rugby league, he worked for NSW Transport from 1951 until 2019, and served in the Royal Australian Navy and Navy Reserves. Congratulations on this well-earned honour, Mr Gustard.

ALEX HALE AND THE INVICTUS GAMES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—The Invictus Games are an international multi-sport event for wounded, injured, and sick service members and veterans, named for a poem by William Ernest Henley. "I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul," reads the poem, and I can think of no greater representative of that ideal than Charlestown electorate local Alex Hale. Serving in the Royal Australian Navy for 22 years, Alex's life was changed when an injury left him paralysed. Alex reports that fitness was always a part of his life, and became even more important after the accident. Just over 12 months after his accident, Hale participated at the 2024 Warrior Games in Florida—typically an event reserved only for wounded American military personnel, Alex and his teammates were granted an exception to compete. He received three medals. Now he is on his way to Vancouver to compete in the skiing and shooting biathlon, indoor rowing and wheelchair basketball. What an amazing story, and what an amazing athlete. Go well, Alex. We'll be cheering for you.

KNIT2GETHER – 2024 ACHIEVEMENTS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to recognise Knit2gether, a group of locals who meet together to make beanies, scarves and more, all of which go to directly supporting local schools, nursing homes and those in need. Knit2gether had a very busy year in 2024, and I would like to recognise them for some of their many achievements. They are now a group of over 70 individuals, meeting consistently each month at Oatley Uniting Church. In 2024, they distributed just over 2600 knitted and crocheted items to the Kogarah Storehouse, the Hurstville Salvation Army, the Hands & Feet Organisation, the Homeless Refuge for Youths at Penshurst, as well as many nursing homes and hospitals throughout New South Wales. Additionally, they have donated \$1600 to local schools, provided 90 handbags and tote bags to my Share the Dignity "it's in the bag" charity drive, donated raffle prizes for many local fundraisers and overall, helped countless individuals who are in difficult living situations. I would like to thank Linda Pritchard, director of Knit2gether, for her efforts in our community this year. It is certainly impressive to have an organisation of such calibre operating in our local area.

2024 WESTFIELD LOCAL HERO

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I am delighted to acknowledge Zoe Ong from Shopfront Arts Co-op, who was named the Westfield Hurstville's Local Hero for 2024. What an amazing achievement! Zoe's work in our community includes volunteering on the Shopfront Disability Advisory Panel, which has made an enormous difference within our local creative arts scene. As a young person living with a disability, Zoe is a champion for accessibility. The \$20,000 grant awarded to Shopfront will support their 360-Degree Access and Inclusion project to empower local youth through theatrical arts. I also want to commend the incredible contributions of this year's finalists, including the founder of Georges River Life Care, Glenn Power, and Stella Simmance, from Project Youth. Both of these individuals have worked incredibly hard for the vulnerable within our community, providing aid to those in need. Initiatives like the Westfield Local Heroes Program remind us of how strong our community is when we work together. Thank you to Westfield and the Scentre Group for recognising these remarkable individuals and organisations.

ST GEORGE FIRST RESPONDERS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise today to recognise the extraordinary efforts of our first responders in my local community. Day after day, they protect and serve our area, often receiving little recognition for their efforts. Today, I would like to recognise the heroic efforts of Senior Constable Melissa Poulton and Constables Owen Lartey and Jessica Lindsay, Police officers in our local area whose quick thinking recently saved the life of a child. When an 18-month-old toddler began choking on a piece of apple, the three officers did not hesitate to jump in. Within minutes of the call, they performed life-saving measures to dislodge the obstruction. Paramedics arrived shortly after, providing further care and ensuring the young boy was safe. His parents certainly were relieved. This story is a testament to the courage, skill, and professionalism of our first responders. Their ability to act quickly and calmly in high-pressure situations brings comfort and security to all of us. We owe our deepest gratitude to these heroes and all first responders who serve St George. Their sacrifices often go unnoticed, but their impact on our lives is immeasurable.

PETER JOHNSTON

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I sincerely congratulate Peter Johnston on his recognition as the City of Canada Bay 2024 Sports Citizen of the Year. Having been a dedicated member of the West Harbour Rugby Club for over 12 years, Peter has served both on and off the field. His contributions span a wide range of roles, including committee member, president of the West Harbour Juniors, and club captain. In 2023, Peter was instrumental in establishing the first All Abilities Rugby Union program and match in New South Wales. This initiative provides opportunities for adults living with disabilities to participate in the sport. Having

also worked with the "Let's Get Going", program it is evident that Peter is committed to using sport as a tool for empowerment and inclusion. Off the field, Peter has also organised fundraisers supporting individuals living with cystic fibrosis, collaborating with local organisations such as CF Together and the Sydney Children's Hospital. Additionally, he has championed mental health initiatives within the rugby community, promoting the importance of positive mental wellbeing. Congratulations Peter, I have no doubt your contributions will continue to inspire and make a difference in our community for years to come!

KATE BARRY

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I sincerely congratulate Kate Barry on her recognition as the City of Canada Bay 2024 Young Citizen of the Year. This award celebrates her incredible contributions, going above and beyond to make our community a better place. Kate serves as Young Ambassador for Belvoir St Theatre Company, a member of the Youth Advisory Board for the Australian Theatre for Young People and has been involved in a range of arts and public speaking programs since a young age. In 2024, Kate placed equal third in Australia at the Australian Individual Public Speaking and Debating Competition and will represent Australia in Malaysia at the World Series in March. She also won 2024 district Rostrum Voice of Youth and is an active member of PLC theatre sports program. In addition, Kate is a young entrepreneur. Her business Scrunchie Munchies was started when she was just 11 and is now in its seventh year. Kate's success has given her a platform to champion entrepreneurial thinking encouraging other young people to enter business. Congratulations Kate, I have no doubt your contributions will inspire many for years to come! You have an amazingly bright future ahead.

FAUSTO BIVIANO

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I sincerely congratulate Fausto Biviano on his recognition as the City of Canada Bay 2024 Arts & Culture Citizen of the Year. Having migrated to Australia from Italy in 1964 at the age of nine, Fausto has proudly contributed to the Canada Bay community ever since. Most notably, Fausto ran the Mediterranean House Function Centre in Five Dock from 1971 until its closure in 2018. During his time at the Mediterranean House, Fausto supported numerous cultural charities and organisations, often volunteering as an MC and providing financial assistance to various causes. For many in our community, the Mediterranean House was a place where weddings, anniversaries, significant milestones and family gatherings. Since retiring, Fausto has served as an Executive Director of the Canada Bay Club and has resumed his role as President of Associazione Isole Eolie. He is actively involved with the Fr Attanasio Gonelli Charitable Fund, the Ferragosto Committee, the Children's Medical Research Institute Strathfield Committee, and has raised \$225,000 through Dine & Dance for a Cure for Bowel Cancer. Congratulations Fausto, I have no doubt your contributions will continue to inspire and make a difference in our community for years to come! Wishing you all the best.

HABERFEST

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Haberfield Public School's Haberfest rocked Haberfield on Sunday 3 November. A large and enthusiastic crowd descended on the school's grounds to enjoy amazing food and market stalls, thrilling rides, live entertainment and a dance party. Put on by the dedicated Haberfield Public School P&C the whole inner west community got behind this great event with local businesses and the Haberfield community donating many goods and services and setting up stalls on the day. Live entertainment ranged from bollywood dancers to rock music and ukuleles! Haberfest truly reflected the wonderful diversity and richness of our inner west community. These events don't come together without many hours of hard work behind the scenes. Congratulations and thankyou to Farzana ("Zan") Macleod and Bev Kirkwood for putting on such an amazing event for our local community and raising important funds for their school. I can't wait for next year's Haberfest!

HABILIS

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I was recently honoured to visit the new Habilis housing project in my Summer Hill electorate. Habilis is a values-based initiative to provide serviced housing for the homeless. Habilis 1 in Summer Hill is the first project for the organisation. It is a purpose built complex of individual units that provides physical security and access to support services. Providing this type of housing aims to overcome the barriers to secure accommodation experienced by many people facing chronic homelessness. Not only providing shelter, also included are regular visits from a range of service providers on site, and assistance maintaining an independent lifestyle. Led by Olav Nielssen, a psychiatrist who has performed a weekly clinic at Matthew Talbot Hostel for the last seventeen years, the team at Habilis are providing a much-needed service for vulnerable people in our community. Congratulations Olav and all involved with this project and thank you. I wish you all the best for what is hopefully the first of many locations.

ALI DIBLEY - BELL ST

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I wish to acknowledge the fantastic contribution of Ali Dibley to our inner west's passion for sustainable fashion through her Marrickville shop Bell St. Ali started Bell St in early 2018 as a dress rental shop, as she was frustrated seeing the amount of clothing waste involved in weddings and special events and thought there should be a library of fun sparkly things for people to borrow for special events without contributing to Australia's huge textile waste problem. Ali announced that sadly Bell St will be closing however she will continue to explore creative opportunities in the community and will be able to spend time with her young daughter. Growing entirely from word-of-mouth recommendations, Ali built a loyal and passionate community through her Bell St shop. Bell St was the proud winner of a local business award in 2022. Congratulations and thank you Ali for offering this unique service and helping contribute to reducing waste and giving new life to some fantastic fashion! I wish you all the best in your next endeavours.

BUSHLINK SCHOOLS INCLUSION PROGRAM

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Monday 25 November 2024, I attended supported the Bushlink Schools Inclusion Program at Oxford Falls Grammar School. It was a wonderful morning volunteering in our natural environment and promoting inclusion between local Bushlink employees and local students. The Bushlink Schools Inclusion Program supports individuals with disabilities to thrive while fostering sustainability. It also provides students to witness inclusion and promote a deeper understanding and appreciation for people of all abilities. I recognise the leadership of Duncan Wakes-Miller for his long-term community service at Bushlink, and Oxford Falls Grammar Principal Peter Downey. I look forward to supporting Bushlink and the important work they do for our community.

HAYMARKET CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: YEAR OF THE SNAKE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Friday 7 February 2025 I attended the Year of the Snake 2025 Lunar New Year Banquet for the Haymarket Chamber of Commerce. The Lunar New Year is one of the most important holidays in Chinese culture. The Year of the Snake is a time for personal growth, wisdom and shedding bad habits. The snake symbolises intelligence, mystery and renewal. The snake is a symbol of good luck and rebirth. The not-for-profit Haymarket Chamber of Commerce represents the business community of the Haymarket precinct. It is committed to the ongoing success of Chinatown and Haymarket and is a strong and supportive representative for continued improvement of the precinct for the more than 3000 businesses located there. I recognise President Vincent Lim and the chamber's past and present committee members, Ruby Cheung, Jonathan Wong, San Koh, Richard Hughes, Simon Chan, Brad Chan, Jessie Xiao, Serena Tran and Yvonne Young, and lifetime members George Wing Kee and Peter Wong. I thank them for their service to the vibrant multicultural Haymarket community.

AUSTRALIAN CHINESE CHARITY FOUNDATION: YEAR OF THE SNAKE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Saturday 8 February 2025 I attended the Australian Chinese Charity Foundation Inc [ACCF] 2025 Chinese New Year Celebration Dinner at the new Zilver Restaurant in Chatswood. Australian Chinese Charity Foundation was formed in 1990. It is a not-for-profit charitable organisation, whose voluntary members have shared the foundation's mission, to foster love, care and harmony in the community, and to provide welfare services and financial assistance to those in need locally and globally. Its vision is to foster multiculturalism and to increase understanding of the Australian Chinese community. I recognise ACCF Chairman Dr Michael Tse, Dr Anthony Ching, Victor Yeung, Dr Peter Wong AM, Dr Victor Tsang, Annie Tang and their fellow management committee, board and youth members, together with the Lion Dance performers of Tommy Tang's Traditional Performing Arts Centre and Roseanna Gallo OAM. Thank you for all your outstanding charity work in our community.

GAVIN RAYWARD

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I congratulate Gavin Rayward on being named Clarence Valley Citizen of the Year. Gavin is a dedicated community leader whose passion for outdoor activities and mental health advocacy has enriched the lives of many. Since 2013, Gavin has organised events such as the Street-O orienteering in Grafton and traditional orienteering in Bom Bom State Forest, encouraging people of all ages and abilities to engage in physical activity and community connection. His efforts have introduced many to the sport, fostering a sense of adventure and inclusion. In 2021, Gavin co-founded the MAD (Men Against Depression) Paddlers group, creating a safe and supportive space where men can come together to improve their mental health through paddling. Through his advocacy, he secured funding for equipment, ensuring accessibility for all participants. Beyond this, Gavin volunteers with South Grafton schools and played a key role in establishing the Grafton Park Run, further promoting community well-being. His leadership, commitment, and ability to bring

people together are truly inspiring. On behalf of the Clarence Valley community, I congratulate Gavin on this well-deserved recognition and thank him for his unwavering dedication to making our region a better place.

JULIE HERMANSEN OAM

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I congratulate Julie Hermansen of Woombah on receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for her outstanding service to community health, particularly through dyslexia support. Julie has been a tireless advocate for people with dyslexia, dedicating years to raising awareness and breaking down stigma. As a founding member and secretary of Code REaD Dyslexia Network, she played a pivotal role in building a national organisation that provides vital support and advocacy. Her work has helped change perceptions, ensuring that dyslexia is better understood and that individuals receive the recognition and assistance they deserve. Julie's impact extends beyond Code REaD. She has spearheaded campaigns such as Light it Red for Dyslexia and My Red Letter, both of which have helped bring national attention to literacy challenges. Through social media, she has built support networks, including Dyslexia Support Australia and Dyslexia NSW Clarence and Northern Rivers, offering guidance to thousands of families. Her passion stems from firsthand experience as a mother determined to make a difference. Julie's efforts have transformed lives, and this OAM is a fitting recognition of her incredible contribution. I congratulate Julie on this well-deserved honour and thank her for her advocacy.

NASH CROFTON

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I congratulate Nash Crofton of Maclean on being named Clarence Valley Young Citizen of the Year. Nash is an inspiring young leader whose entrepreneurial spirit, dedication to the arts, and commitment to the community have made a lasting impact on the Clarence Valley. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nash saw an opportunity to support local artists and founded Clarence Tunes, a home-grown music festival that has since become a regional highlight. Launched in February 2022, the festival not only provides a vital platform for emerging musicians but also ensures that proceeds go directly to supporting performers. Nash's leadership extends to the Grafton Jacaranda Festival, where he manages the Youth Stage, giving young artists a well-deserved spotlight at one of the region's most celebrated events. In addition, through his business, Crofton Productions, he provides professional audio engineering services and collaborates with local production companies to enhance the success of community events. Balancing these remarkable achievements with his Year 12 studies, Nash exemplifies dedication, creativity, and leadership. His contributions to the cultural landscape of the Clarence Valley are invaluable, and I congratulate him on this well-earned recognition. Our community is fortunate to have such a passionate young advocate for the arts.

TONY RENEKER - LEETON

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today, I would like to acknowledge Tony Reneker, who recently retired as Mayor of Leeton Shire Council. Tony served as a councillor for eight years, including three as mayor. Tony was a strong advocate for key local issues, particularly in the areas of water and health. His leadership and commitment to the community were evident throughout his tenure. Before entering local government, Tony had a distinguished career as a Chief Inspector with the NSW Police Force, retiring in 2017. His service to country policing was recognised with the Australian Police Medal for meritorious service. Tony's passion for history has seen him take on roles as President of the Family and Local Leeton Historical Society and as a member of the Wagga Wagga and District Historical Society. He also contributes to the community as President of the Leeton and District Bowling Club. Tony's dedication, advocacy, and community spirit are truly commendable. I thank him for his years of service and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

CAROL PETERSON OAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I extend my sincere congratulations to Carol Peterson on receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for her outstanding service to youth, particularly through Girl Guides. Carol has dedicated over three decades to empowering hundreds of girls and young women, helping them develop confidence, leadership skills, and a strong sense of community. From her early days as a Brownie and Girl Guide to her extensive service as an adult leader, Carol has worn many hats, including unit leader, district manager, and state board member. As the Coastal Valley Region guide shop manager and leader at Beresfield-Thornton, she continues to create opportunities for young girls to thrive. Carol's leadership has extended to large-scale events, including coordinating a zoo sleepout at Taronga Zoo for 1200 girls and leading snow trips to Perisher. Carol's passion for mentorship has also been recognised with the Girl Guides Australia Emu Award and Flowering Gum Award. Carol's dedication has left a lasting impact on countless young women, and the Maitland community is incredibly proud of her achievements.

LAUREN PARKER OAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—Congratulations to Lauren Parker, who recently received the Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] in recognition of her outstanding service to sport as a gold medallist at the 2024 Paris Paralympic Games. Lauren's journey from a devastating life-changing accident in 2017 to becoming a dual Paralympic champion is a testament to her resilience, dedication, and unwavering spirit. At the Paris Games, Lauren secured gold in both the women's wheelchair paratriathlon and the H1-4 cycling road race, etching her name in Australian sporting history. Her achievements have earned her numerous accolades, including Australia's flag bearer at the closing ceremony, the AIS Performance of the Year award, and NSW Champions of Sport's Athlete of the Year with a Disability. Now based in Louth Park, Lauren continues to inspire, with her sights set on new challenges—including rowing and even winter sports. Her determination and passion make her an incredible role model, proving that with perseverance, anything is possible. Thank you Lauren, Maitland and Australia are so immensely proud of you!

2024 DUSSEHRA EXHIBITION

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—The 3rd annual Dussehra exhibition on September 2024 at the Granville Centre was an exciting display of culture, entrepreneurship and colour. The Dussehra is traditionally celebrated on the tenth day of the month of Ashvin and the major Hindu festival, Navaratri, honouring the divine feminine. The festival is a beautiful display of religion, with colourful clothes and authentic food. The local exhibition featured a variety of stalls offering unique and exquisite fashion and accessories, including shoes, shawls, jewellery and home decor. It was an opportunity to soak in the beauty of a wide range of glamorous textiles but also purchase items that reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Hindi community. I bought a lovely pair of beaded Indian shoes. In addition to the shopping experience, there was a fashion parade, cultural performances, delicious food stalls, and activities for the whole family to enjoy. Thank you to Urmi Talukdar and her team for coordinating this wonderful celebration of women.

TEMASEK RESTAURANT IN PARRAMATTA

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Temasek Restaurant is an icon of Parramatta dining. Since 1992, Temasek had been serving Singaporean-Malaysian cuisine to not only to hungry Parramatta residents but from fans who travel from far and wide to enjoy the food on offer. Temasek has operated in the base of The Roxy but has now relocated and opened at Smith Street directly opposite my office and next to the infamous Collector Hotel. What a perfect time to open these new premises – in time for Lunar New Year celebrations. I can't wait to enjoy delicious laksa, pork satay, Hainese Chicken rice and ice kacang in these more spacious premises. I know there are many within and beyond the Parramatta electorate who would agree. Hats off to Jeremy, who is following in the footsteps of mother Susan and her sister Gladys Wong who together started Temasek with their brother Marc and mother Ow-Yeong over 30 years ago.

GNOO BLAS CLASSIC

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—The Australian Touring Car Championship passed another milestone this year and what better place to celebrate than its birth place – Orange. To that end, I congratulate the Gnoolas Classic Car Club on another wonderful show at Orange's Jack Brabham Park, a show which marked 65 years since the first Australian Touring Car Championship was staged - at the Gnoolas circuit. Apart from the 800 stunning classic vehicles on display, the show features a dinner and this year's special guests included Australian Motorsport Hall of Famer Colin Bond, a former Australian Touring Car Champion. Also speaking was commentator Will Hagan and photographer Ray Berghouse, who spoke about the history of touring car racing in Australia which started with the first race at the Gnoolas circuit in Orange in 1960. Now integrated into Orange's road system, the historic circuit holds a sentimental place within its community, with Mrs Mutton's Corner, The Sweep, Bloomfield Straight, Speet's Bend and Windsock Corner all marked thanks to the work of the Classic Car Club. I thank the Gnoolas Classic Club and the work it does in preserving our motorsport history, and Orange's significant part in it.

CHRIS GRYLLIS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, Chris Gryllis is the epitome of what it means to be a Rotarian, having dedicated more than 50 years to the service of his community through Orange Rotary. A recipient of the club's highest honours, the Paul Harris Fellow, Mr Gryllis joined Rotary on October 11 1971 and during his more than half-century, has held a number of positions on the club executive, highlighted with a stint as president from 1977 to 78. Prior to leadership, Chris cut his teeth as community services director from 1973 to 76 and then as VP from 1976 to 77. After his leadership term, Chris served regularly as public relations manager, publicity officer and vocational services director. Entwined with Chris's Rotary commitments was a 27-year career in local government as an Orange City councillor and a deputy mayor. He was also chair of Council's sister city

committee for 20 years which illustrates his commitment to the betterment of his community and those overseas – in 2013 he was awarded the Logohu Medal, part of Papua New Guinea's Independence Honours list. I congratulate Mr Gryllis on the wonderful contribution he has made to his community and thank him on its behalf.

KERRY RAWSON

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, Kerry Rawson is the epitome of what it means to be a Rotarian, having dedicated more than 50 years to the service of his community through Orange Rotary. A recipient of the club's highest honours, the Paul Harris Fellow, Mr Rawson joined Rotary on August 24, 1970 and during his more than half-century, has held several positions on the club executive, highlighted with a stint as president from 1983 to 84. In a very active membership, Mr Rawson has also served as sergeant at Arms, club service, community services director, secretary and vice president before taking on the presidency. After his term as president, Mr Rawson filled the roles of co-program officer and public relations officer. He is currently the Orange club's historian. Mr Rawson's classification has since been changed to Senior Active, to recognize of his years of distinctive service, while he was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship in 2002. A life-long Orange resident and owner of established business Regency Jewellers which employs around 70 people, Mr Rawson is a pillar of our community and I congratulate him on being a member of Orange Rotary for more than 50 years.

MRS PENELOPE GERSTLE AM

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker - I would like to congratulate Mrs Penelope Gerstle AM of Northwood for her services to human rights, community health, and to people with disability. Her nomination was supported by members of the Afghan community who she has tirelessly advocated for. Her achievements include many other noteworthy initiatives such as the Aminata Maternal Foundation which has greatly improved outcomes for mothers and families in Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. Congratulations Mrs Gerstle.

MRS MARITSA CIBAS OAM

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—I would like to congratulate Mrs Maritsa Cibas OAM of Huntleys Cove for her services to the Australian Lithuanian community. Whilst Mrs Cibas is of Greek Heritage, she has embraced the culture of her husband Romualdas and committed herself to the Sydney Lithuanian Club and the Lithuanian Community Publishing Society. Congratulations Mrs Cibas.

MR ROMUALDAS CIBAS OAM

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker - I would like to congratulate Mr Romualdas Cibas OAM of Huntleys Cove for his services to the Australian Lithuanian community. Since arriving in Australia as a displaced 8-year-old following World War Two, he has been immensely active in the Lithuanian community, alongside his wife Maritsa, and was a passionate advocate for Lithuanian Independence, which occurred in 1990. Congratulations Mr Cibas.

ANNE MCENROE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I wish to congratulate Anne McEnroe of the Manly Electorate for being selected in the latest edition of Seniors' Stories. It is the 10th year of the NSW Seniors' Card publication, which contains 100 stories from NSW Seniors, this time under the theme, 'What Made Me?' Anne's story, which describes the impact of her discovery at the age of 70 that she was adopted, is as absorbing as it is inspiring. She writes in part, "Instead of the large extended family tree I had always identified with, here was a mass of broken tree limbs, where all the branches had fallen." However, in her closing paragraph, Anne concludes that "the branches may have fallen off my former hybrid tree, nevertheless a promising healthy new branch is starting to bud on the old well established tree trunk." I congratulate Anne for her bravery in sharing such a personal, life-impacting story and hope – as I am sure everyone in this House would hope – that her story helps to inspire others who may have found themselves in a similar situation. Thank you, Anne, and congratulations on this wonderful piece.

LAURELEI MOORE AND GAYE MCLINDIN

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge Laurelei Moore and Gaye McLindin of Dee Why who were recently honoured at this year's 2025 Northern Beaches Australia Day Awards for Outstanding Community Service. Identical twins Laurelei and Gaye have made a remarkable impact on the Northern Beaches through many years of volunteer work. Every morning at 6 am, this dynamic duo clears Dee Why Beach, removing hazardous waste like needles, plastic, and fishing lines to protect both beachgoers and our local wildlife. However, the extent of their community service does not stop there. Beyond the beach, they regularly assist elderly passengers through their volunteer work with the Northern Beaches Easy Link Community Transport Bus Service, and involvement with St. John's Anglican Church Op Shop, providing essential services and affordable goods to those in need. With 15 and 11 years of dedicated service respectively, Laurelei and Gaye's

sustained efforts have strengthened our community and inspired others to give back. Their commitment to environmental care and community support should be commended. I extend my heartfelt thanks to both Laurelei and Gaye for their service to the Dee Why community and congratulate them once again.

FRIENDS OF IVANHOE PARK BOTANIC GARDEN

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the excellent work of the Friends of Ivanhoe Park Botanic Garden, and particularly their recent successful sausage sizzle fundraiser. Based in my Electorate of Manly, Ivanhoe Park Botanic Garden is one of Sydney's oldest gardens and provides a major green space adjacent to the Manly CBD for both our local wildlife and the community to thrive in and enjoy. The Friends of Ivanhoe Park Botanic Garden represent the very best of our community. They are constantly and tirelessly working to provide a space that offers diverse opportunities for the community to enhance their education about plants, horticulture, landscapes, botany, ecology, conservation, and heritage. I am proud to be a supporter of Ivanhoe Park and this fantastic community organisation, and I congratulate the Friends of the Park on their vision and their enthusiasm. The Manly Community is lucky to have them.

STUDIO A - SUMMER SUCCESS PROGRAM

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—In honour of the International Day of People with Disability, I was thrilled to help launch Studio A's new artistic program 'Summer Success' on 3 December 2024. Located in St Leonards, Studio A is dedicated to empowering artists with an intellectual disability to thrive by providing access to education, professional development and opportunities to realise their creative aspirations. The launch was a wonderful opportunity for me to catch up with the incredible Studio A artists once again – it's always a joy and privilege to do so. The event showcased stunning artwork, a beautiful new bespoke merchandise range, and interactive art activities – a testament to the creativity and talent of Studio A's artists. John McCabe, the Studio A Chair, demonstrated how business and professionals can partner with Studio A artists to fulfill their corporate social responsibility and help generate income for these artists in colourful and creative ways. I would like to thank Gabrielle Mordy and the whole team at Studio A for hosting such a fantastic and memorable event.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE, HARBOURSIDE DIVISION, AWARDS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—On 4 December 2024, I had the privilege of attending the Harbourside Combined Division of St John Ambulance for their Awards Night in Chatswood. It was an honour to celebrate the incredible achievements of their members, from cadets transitioning to adults to those receiving well-deserved awards. Their dedication to the community through emergency first aid and paramedicine is a priceless service to us all. This event showcased the amazing spirit of volunteerism that keeps our community strong and I was truly humbled to present some awards and share a few words about my own volunteer experiences. Each International Volunteers Day, we acknowledge the tireless efforts of our volunteers. It's inspiring to know that St John Ambulance has a waiting list for those eager to join their ranks—proof of the vibrant community spirit it has generated and draws from. I thank the Commissioner Ilan Lowbeer and the entire St John team for your unwavering commitment to supporting our community.

DAVID OSLAND

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I honour the outgoing Principal of Chatswood High School, David Osland, and thank him for his eight and a half years of leadership. Since taking office as Principal in July 2016, David led the school through a period of growth and expansion with new state-of-the-art facilities built across the school grounds. Dedicated to fostering academic excellence, David's principalship saw Chatswood High improve its performance in the HSC with many of its students achieving outstanding results. Under David's leadership, the creative and performing arts flourished with the school's exceptional music program showcasing the depth of student talent and creativity. David brought a strong focus on student leadership, promoting positive values and developing in his students, a sense of responsibility to our local community and wider world. David leaves a high school that is healthy, dynamic and dedicated to the education of the whole person. David's leadership as Principal has done so much to contribute to the fine reputation and esteem of Chatswood High in my community. I congratulate David on his tremendous service and legacy and wish him every happiness in his well-earned retirement.

LEXIE CARROLL

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I wish to acknowledge Aunty Lexie Carroll, recipient of the 2025 Arts and Cultural Award at the Liverpool Australia Day celebrations. A proud Wiradjuri woman, Aunty Lexie is a respected and active member of many First Nations groups. Her forthright approach and unwavering dedication to reconciliation and community engagement are invaluable in fostering cultural understanding and respect. As a

founding member of the Elders Coffee Club, Aunt Lexie demonstrates ongoing commitment to supporting First Nations businesses, promoting cultural practices such as yarnning circles, and offering Acknowledgements to Country at community events. Her leadership and advocacy play a vital role in strengthening connections within the local First Nations community and beyond. Liverpool's Australia Day event celebrated individuals like Aunt Lexie, whose contributions enrich our community's cultural landscape. I commend Aunt Lexie for her dedication to cultural preservation, reconciliation, and community engagement. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.

ARYAN NARAYAN

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I wish to acknowledge Aryan Narayan, recipient of the 2025 Sports Award at the Liverpool Australia Day celebrations. Aryan, a Year 8 student at All Saints Catholic College Liverpool, is a rising star in the sport of goalball, showcasing exceptional talent and dedication at a young age. Aryan represented New South Wales at the National Goalball Championship in Perth, where his team secured the national title. His outstanding performance earned him the prestigious All-Star Medal as the top scorer of the tournament, a remarkable achievement that highlights his skill, determination, and passion for the sport. Liverpool's Australia Day event celebrates young athletes like Aryan, whose achievements inspire and uplift our community. I commend Aryan for his extraordinary success and dedication to sporting excellence. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition, Aryan—we look forward to seeing your continued growth and achievements in the future.

MR BRUCE CLARK

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)—I wish to acknowledge Mr Bruce Clark, recipient of the 2025 Senior Citizen of the Year Award at the Liverpool Australia Day celebrations. Bruce has been a dedicated volunteer in the local community for over a decade, contributing his time and skills to Search Dogs Sydney and the NSW SES. His commitment to assisting the community during times of disaster is truly commendable. Bruce has dedicated hundreds of hours to supporting emergency response efforts, maintaining facilities for search dogs, and undertaking canine search and recovery training. His proactive involvement in public education campaigns has also played a significant role in raising awareness about disaster preparedness and community safety. Beyond his emergency service contributions, Bruce is well-known for his legendary sausage sizzles, bringing people together with his community spirit. Liverpool's Australia Day event celebrated outstanding individuals like Bruce, whose selfless service strengthens our vibrant community. I commend Bruce for his remarkable dedication and ongoing contributions. Congratulations, Bruce, on this well-deserved recognition.

VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA – TET FESTIVAL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Saturday 8th February, I was pleased to join community leaders and distinguished guests for the official ceremony opening the annual Tet Festival at Fairfield Showground. Prospect Electorate is home to our thriving Vietnamese-Australian community, part of a Western Sydney which is the beating heart of modern Australia. Our local Vietnamese community have made a truly remarkable contribution to our inclusive multicultural society. The Tet Festival is the most important cultural event in the Vietnamese-Australian calendar. This year, three days of celebrations also marked the 50th anniversary since the Vietnamese Refugees Settlement in Australia. A solemn moment's silence was observed by the tens of thousands in attendance, for their ancestors who suffered and made the ultimate sacrifice in their ancestral homeland. At the official ceremony, I was joined by Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, State and Federal Parliamentary colleagues Chris Bowen MP, Tri Vo MP, Charishma Kaliyanda MP, David Saliba MP, Anne Stanley MP, as well as Labor candidate for Fowler, Tu Le. Congratulations Peter Thang Ha, President, and all our wonderful volunteers at Vietnamese Community in Australia – NSW Chapter for hosting an amazing festival. Happy Year of the Snake, Chúc mừng năm mới!

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL – 2025 RED MASS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Monday 3rd February, I was pleased to join judicial officers and legal practitioners to celebrate the annual Red Mass at St Mary's Cathedral. The Red Mass signifies an ancient tradition that has been carried forward by members of the legal fraternity since the year 1245. It emphasises the significance of law and justice in our fair and democratic society. At St Mary's Cathedral, the Red Mass has been held annually since 1931. Officiated by Most Rev. Anthony Fisher, OP, Archbishop of Sydney, I was joined at the Red Mass by Parliamentary colleagues, the Hon. Michael Daley, Attorney General, Jennifer Ball, President, Law Society of NSW, Judges from the Supreme, District and Local Court of NSW. The Red Mass is a call to act according to Christ's teachings, to carry out our vocation equally and justly. During the service, I was humbled to join colleagues from the legal profession and read the Prayers of the Faithful, to mark the commencement of the 2025 legal year. My thanks go to the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney, Richard Perrignon, President of the St Thomas More Society, and society members for honouring this reverent tradition.

MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL – MALTESE HERITAGE DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Sunday 19th January, I was delighted to join our local Maltese-Australian community to celebrate the annual Maltese Heritage Day, with an event at La Valette Social Centre, Blacktown. Our local Maltese-Australian community has played an historic role in our Prospect Electorate and our Western Sydney community for many decades. Today, NSW is home to over 78,000 people with Maltese ancestry, who have integrated harmoniously into modern Australia. From humble beginnings in Greystanes and Blacktown, they have consistently served as ambassadors for our thriving Prospect Electorate community and across Western Sydney. Established in 1967, the Maltese Community Council of NSW is a peak community body who provide social, cultural, recreational and welfare support to the Maltese community in NSW. At the event, festivities included a car show, stalls, music presentations and raffle. It was great to be joined by my parliamentary colleague and proud Maltese-Australian, Mark Buttigieg MLC, as well as the new Consul General of Malta in Sydney, Ms Anneliese Sammut. My congratulations go to Miriam Friggieri, President, Marisa Previtera OAM, Acting Secretary, and all our wonderful volunteers across MCCNSW and our Maltese-Australian community on an excellent celebration of Maltese Heritage Day.

GLEBE COMPUTER PROJECT

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the important work of Glebe Computer Project, which this year will mark its 21st year of operation in the Glebe Community. The project is a not-for-profit initiative offering inexpensive access to the internet, printing, scanning and copying for residents of Glebe who don't have computer equipment or an internet connection available to them at home. Operating out of the Old Fire Station since 2004, it began when the late Robyn Kemmis secured a donation of computers from the City of Sydney. Over its twenty years of operation, the project has provided much needed technical support, increased computer literacy through its education programs, and offered an important community space for its users. It has been kept running by the extraordinary JP Alexandre, with unwavering support from community members like Laurie Murphy and Megan Fletcher, utilising other local initiatives like the Have-a-Chat Café and Glebe Community Op Shop. I congratulate the Glebe Computer Project on reaching the milestone of 20 years of operation. Thank you to all who keep it going to support our community.

ALL ABILITIES CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I bring to the attention of the House the wonderful All Abilities Christmas Carols hosted by Together2 in Rozelle last November. Now in its second year the All Abilities Christmas Carols has become one of the hottest items on the Christmas calendar in Sydney's inner west. Together2, formerly the Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre, hosted the completely free event for locals, friends and family to come together and enjoy the spirit of the season in a friendly and welcoming atmosphere. Last year's theme was "Shining Together": celebrating the unique talents and contributions of each individual, highlighting that everyone has something special to offer. It was a wonderful event and I was so pleased to be able to attend. A big thank you to Yulika, Marco, Steven and the team at Together2, as well as Les from the Balmain Uniting Church and Maya from Fort Street High School for putting on such a great event. Thanks to the amazing Maliya for the Acknowledgement of Country and Didgeridoo performance, and thank you to all the wonderful performers for making it such a memorable evening.

CLONTARF COTTAGE FESTIVE SEASON GATHERING

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I would like to acknowledge the wonderful festive season gathering held at Clontarf Cottage in Balmain last November. Built around 1844, Clontarf Cottage was saved from demolition by our community coming together to protect it in 1974. It was later restored with assistance from Leichhardt Council in 1988. Today this charming building is available for a range of community uses, and it stands as a testament to community collaboration and place-based activism. It speaks to the importance of neighbours working together for a shared vision. The story of Clontarf Cottage is something I take inspiration from as the Member for Balmain. It was wonderful to gather with our community, to hear some of the many contributions that make up its remarkable story, and to learn from its custodians about its ongoing care needs and plans for its future. A special thank you to Viv Miller & Alan Rosen and the Friends of Clontarf Cottage for hosting this event, and for the care you have taken to preserve this valuable community asset for generations to come.

ANDREW MOWBRAY AM

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda)—I recognise Professor Andrew Mowbray of Oyster Bay on being made a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to law, particularly for his access to legal information and tertiary education. In 1995, Professor Mowbray co-founded the Australasian Legal Information Institute [AustLII] as a joint facility of University of Technology Sydney and the University of New South Wales through

an Australian Research Council infrastructure grant. With nearly 300 million page requests annually, AustLII is an important online resource that promotes free access to laws in more than 100 countries. Moreover, AustLII has played an instrumental role in providing free access to legal services across countries including the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa and the Pacific Islands. Additionally, Professor Mowbray has lectured in law and information technology at the University of Technology Sydney since 2003, supporting students in their degrees and shaping the next generation of legal minds. I congratulate Professor Mowbray on being made a Member of the Order of Australia and thank him for his efforts in ensuring individuals have free access to the law.

MONA VALE LIFESAVERS – MARK MCMANUS, WILL BACK, JAKE MATTHEWS AND SEAN GIELIS

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—I want to publicly thank senior lifeguards Mark McManus, Will Back, Jake Matthews and Sean Gielis, senior lifeguards at Mona Vale Beach. In January they collectively brought a 15-year-old boy, found unconscious in the surf, back to life. Mark dragged the boy to the beach after his friends raised the alarm and, immediately recognising he was not breathing, commenced CPR. Will raised the alert and requested an ambulance, while Jake grabbed the defibrillator and oxygen and began assisting with the CPR. Approximately four minutes later, the boy began to show signs of life and drift in and out of consciousness. Paramedics arrived 10 minutes later and took control. The boy's condition continued to improve over the next 15 minutes, and he was transported via a Careflight helicopter to hospital in a stable condition. All four men are full-time senior lifeguards with the Australian Lifeguard Service and live locally. Afterwards all the lifeguards described the rescue as 'all in a day's work', but I'd like to formally recognise their swift action and expertise, and thank them for saving this young man's life, on behalf of my whole community.

CHRIS GILLETT

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—I want to acknowledge the contribution made by Chris Gillett, who is marking 35 years of dedicated service volunteering with the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard and more recently with Marine Rescue NSW, at Cottage Point in my electorate. During this career he served as National Commodore of the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard. Chris has earned a second National Medal Clasp with Marine Rescue, been awarded the Emergency Services Medal, is a recipient of the Centennial Medal, the National Search and Rescue Award and Marine Rescue NSW Service Medal. Chris is a life member of Marine Rescue NSW and Marine Rescue Cottage Point. Chris has served Marine Rescue as a trainer and assessor and regional operations manager and those who have worked and volunteered with him describe him as an inspirational leader, mentor and teacher who has made a lasting impact on his colleagues and the community. Reaching 35 years of dedicated service is a wonderful achievement, and I would like to take this opportunity to formally thank Mr Gillett on behalf of my community.

BEI LOON PINKS

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—I want to acknowledge the wonderful Bei Loon Pinks dragon boating club. The Pinks are made up of breast cancer survivors. The club, based at Rowland Reserve in Bayview, is now in its 21st year. Members come from diverse backgrounds and life experiences, and many haven't been involved in group sports before, or at least not for many years. Together they focus on 'thriving not just surviving' by offering fitness and friendship on the beautiful waters of Pittwater, as well as the opportunity to travel to regional, national and international regattas. I'd like to acknowledge the work of manager Jenny Neilson and coach Wynette Monserrat and congratulate Moira Payne and Jenny Jones, who have been with the club since it was founded in 2004. Long may they all paddle on together.

WENONA STUDENT TO PERFORM IN ANNIE THE MUSICAL

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to congratulate eleven-year-old Wenona student Skye Spiden, who was recently cast in the upcoming Australian production of Annie the musical. Wenona is renowned for nurturing exceptional talent in the performing arts, and Skye's casting is a perfect reflection of this reputation. She will be taking on the role of 'Friday', one of the orphans in Miss Hannigan's orphanage, and will be performing in some of the musical's most iconic numbers, including 'It's a Hard-Knock Life.' Skye was selected from hundreds of hopeful applicants, and will share the role with three other talented performers. What an incredible achievement. It's no surprise to hear that Wenona's staff are being incredibly supportive of Skye's opportunity, working alongside Skye and her family to ensure her academic commitments are balanced with this exciting opportunity. The Wenona School community is truly one of support and collaboration. I commend the teaching staff on their dedication to helping students reach their potential. I can't wait to see where Skye's musical career takes her, and I wish her every success in her role as Friday in the upcoming Musical. Congratulations Skye, and good luck!

AUSTRALIA'S YOUNGEST JUI-JITSU CHAMPION

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I want to extend my warmest congratulations to Mosman local India Risby, who has made history by becoming Australia's youngest Jui-Jitsu World Champion at just 18. In November last year, India flew to Abu Dhabi to compete in the Brazilian Jui-Jitsu World Championships, where she claimed gold. What's just as impressive is that while she was training for World Championships, India was simultaneously completing her HSC at Mosman High School. India would take her schoolwork with her to training and study between sessions – a testament to her discipline and determination. In addition to her World Champion status, India is a four-time national champion, a two-time Pan Pacific champion, and holds multiple state championships. India also spent 2023 as the Gracie Barra Oceania Ambassador, representing one of the largest Brazilian Jui-Jitsu organisations in the world. India's dedication, hard work, and talent have truly set her apart. I love seeing young women pursuing and succeeding at their ambitions. What a fantastic role model for all young Aussie athletes.

WENONA SCHOOL ACHIEVES HISTORIC HSC RESULTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—Speaker I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the 2024 HSC graduates from Wenona School, who have achieved the highest academic results in the school's history under the current HSC model. This exceptional cohort has broken records across every key measure. Seven percent of students received an ATAR of 99 or above, 37.8 percent achieved 95 and above, and 62.9 percent achieved 90 and above. The highest median ATAR for 2024 at Wenona was 92.95 and the highest mean ATAR was 91.8. Wenona also celebrated 11 all-rounders and a record 44 HSC Exemplar nominations, earning the school the rank of 27 in NSW - an incredible result. I congratulate all the girls in the 2024 cohort, who I am sure are enjoying a well-earned summer break and gearing up for their first year at university or perhaps a gap year. These results reflect the hard work of the students, the unwavering support of their parents and carers, and the commitment of the outstanding teaching staff at Wenona. The teachers' tireless work has helped shape these young women not just for the HSC, but for success in all aspects of life.

CORTNEY CLARK – COOLAMON'S CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Cortney Clark came to Ardlethan as a young health worker and as often happens, she fell in love with and married local farmer Tom Clark. She is now a busy farmer's wife and mother to two small and energetic children but she still finds time to throw herself into projects that have made an outstanding impact in our region. Cortney recognised the need for a centre that catered for young mothers, establishing a Play Group to bring their children together to discuss like-minded problems such as isolation and coping with busy lives. This centre is a real success and invaluable in helping mothers share and solve their problems in a friendly and non-confrontational atmosphere. In 2024 Cortney took her passion for childcare safety one step further and organised a Quick Shear Competition to raise money for Dolly's Dream. This event raised \$12,000 and was such a success it will be a regular event on the Ardelethan Show program. Cortney is an inspiration to many with her drive and dedication to getting the job done is to be commended.

NADINE PAVING THE WAY FOR WOMEN IN MINING

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Congratulations to Nadine Heal of West Wyalong on becoming the first woman from Cowal to win a Women in Resources National Award. Nadine's award was in the Outstanding Tradeswoman/Operator/Technician category. Nadine's leadership has been pivotal in the advancement of women in technical roles, a testament to her resilience and dedication. Nadine's commitment to diversity and inclusion is evident in her role as a mentor, where she has not only inspired but also actively guided other women in the industry, making a significant impact on their careers. When Nadine made the transition to the mining industry in 2007, she was one of only five women in open pit operations. The increasing opportunities for women in the mining sector, coupled with mentors like Nadine, are paving the way for a more diverse and inclusive industry. As more women like Nadine step up and progress in their careers, our mining and resources sector is set to continue its upward trajectory, growing from strength to strength.

COWRA AND DISTRICT CANCER GROUP CELEBRATES ITS 19TH ANNUAL CHARITY RAISER

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—The Cowra and District Cancer Action Group recently held its 19th annual fundraiser with resounding success, bringing the community together for a cause that touches many lives. The event, a hallmark of the local calendar, saw residents and visitors gather to raise funds for cancer support services, treatment, and research. Local businesses and individuals generously donated items for the auction, taking place at Club Cowra, the lunch featured silent auctions and well as transparent bid for items previously viewed at Magpie Gallery. Attendees were moved by heartfelt speeches from cancer survivors and caregivers, who shared their journeys and highlighted the critical role of community support. Funds raised will directly benefit local patients and families, easing their financial burdens and providing access to essential services such as

transportation and counselling. The event demonstrated the strength of Cowra's spirit, with volunteers, sponsors, and attendees united in their commitment to making a difference. As the fundraiser approaches its 20th year, organizers expressed gratitude for the ongoing support and determination to continue their mission of hope, support, and solidarity in the fight against cancer.

FORSTER PACIFIC PALMS SES UNIT

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise the Forster Pacific Palms SES unit and Commander Greg Dodd, who recently showed exceptional resilience during one of the busiest periods in their history. Over ten days in January, the unit responded to 99 calls for assistance, with one day being particularly challenging, handling 34 emergency calls, including two critical flood rescues in Bulahdelah and Mount George. Their calls included evacuating residents, managing fallen trees, and securing properties impacted by severe weather. The team placed over 1,500 sandbags along Point Road in Tuncurry, to resist rising floodwaters, making sure our community and holidaymakers are safe. Special thanks to RFS teams, residents, holidaymakers, and businesses like Salt by the Sea for their support. We thank the Forster Pacific Palms SES for their ongoing hard work, we appreciate all they do for our safety during difficult times.

GARRY MCQUILLAN

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Garry McQuillan for his role as Chairman of the Tuncurry-Forster Jockey Club. For nearly twenty years, Garry has been working hard growing the club, from its very early days with struggles to securing a racing license and more recently, hosting major events, including Country Championship races. Garry's tenure began with the club's first race meeting in 2009, and the Tuncurry-Forster Jockey Club has now become an example of racing excellence on the Mid North Coast. Garry has a unique approach to promoting the club's meetings, each with different themes, this has boosted community attendance and engagement over the years. As Garry steps down from his role as Chairman, we celebrate his wonderful contributions and his passion for racing. Although retiring from the chairman's position, I'm so glad that Garry will continue to support the club moving forward. Thank you, Garry, for your service and commitment to our community.

KICK START SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge the 2024 recipient of the Tanya Thompson Kick Start Scholarship, Bonnie McMaster of St Clare's High School, as well as runners-up Will Border from Wingham High School and Ivy Hoadley from MidCoast Christian College. The scholarship, now an annual initiative, supports young achievers in the Myall Lakes with resources to help them reach their goals. This year, Bonnie was awarded the \$5,000 scholarship for her resilience and impressive accomplishments. She plans to study psychology or criminal law at university. Will and Ivy, chosen as runners-up from a group of 18 exceptional applicants, will each receive a \$250 Officeworks voucher to assist with their educational needs. The scholarship package includes vouchers for school equipment, uniforms, and books, as well as contributions toward TAFE or school fees, offering support for young people in our community. Congratulations to Bonnie, Will, Ivy, and all other applicants on their achievements - they are a credit to the Myall Lakes electorate.

HSC HIGH ACHIEVERS LIST IN 2024

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises a number of local high school students who were included in the HSC High Achievers List in 2024. I would like to acknowledge the following students: Bomaderry High School - Jasmine Beetson, Tobias Binns, Patrick Higgins, Riley O'Carroll, Matilda Pee, Charlie Rudd, Eva Stones, Jenson Wardle, Daniel Whittaker, Kiama High School - Summer Brooks, Jonathan Brown, Olivia Cunningham, Zali Guy, Jack Maguire, Molly McEachern, Jennessa Morley, Charlie Philpott, Clare Smith, Erin Sweeney, Chloe Wallace, Nowra Anglican College - William Bizeray, Brendon Bladen, Tyler Crawford, Emile Gasbarri, Sarah Goldman, Arielle Gomez, Thevan Hettige, Aleag Kourshounian, Kate Leung, Sascha Matuschka, Stella Maxted, Josie Russell, Niamh Treacy, Thoshni Wijendra, Nowra High School - Nash Connell, Tristan Tucker, Nowra Christian School - Erik Kubinyi. Shoalhaven High School - Dylan Peter, Hollier Giorjet, Amali Pinkard. Albion Park High School - Jackson Jay, Chloe McAuley. A huge congratulations and well done to each of these outstanding HSC high achievers across our region and I wish them all the best in their future career endeavours.

ROB HORNER

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Shoalhaven Water Director Rob Horner who recently announced his retirement after a distinguished 29-year career with Shoalhaven City Council's water utility. Mr Horner joined Shoalhaven Water as a civil engineer in 1996, coming through the ranks to become Director in 2019. The design and construction of Lake Tabourie, Conjola/Bendalong, Currarong and Kangaroo Valley sewerage schemes occurred under Mr Horner as the leading project manager.

There were also major water supply projects like the Milton Water Treatment Plant and Porters Creek Dam upgrade. Rob Horner has been at the forefront of design and innovation during a period in which Shoalhaven Water was recognised for its excellence in water management and winning the Sam Samra Award in 2023. I had the privilege of seeing Rob's work during my time as a Shoalhaven City Councillor and I can personally attest to his professionalism which has made Shoalhaven Water a better and stronger asset. A huge well done and congratulations to Rob Horner from Shoalhaven Water, for his outstanding contribution to our region and I wish Rob and his family all the very best in their future endeavours.

SNAPPAROOS OLYMPIC GALA DAY

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—The inaugural Snapparoo Olympic Gala Day, held on 3 August at Hoxton Park Reserve, was a fantastic celebration of community and sport. The event was seamlessly organised by Liverpool Olympic Football Club in collaboration with SNAPP and Southern Districts. This Football 4 All Gala Day brought together teams from Moorebank, Kemps Creek, Nepean, and Macarthur for a day filled with friendly competition, laughter, and camaraderie. But the event was more than that. Football 4 All was founded in 2008 and aims to create playing opportunities for individuals with disabilities while offering a support network for players, coaches, volunteers, and parents. It fostered a sense of collective identity, where participants and spectators united in support of their teams to enjoy thrilling matches, showcasing the talent and passion within our community. The addition of classic Aussie sausage sizzles and raffle prizes added to the festive atmosphere, making it a day of fun and connection. Events like these highlight the vital role sports play in our lives, providing opportunities for individuals to engage, socialise, and celebrate their shared love for the game.

LIFELINE GALA DINNER

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—On 22 June, I had the privilege of attending the Lifeline Gala Dinner, an inspiring evening where our community came together to make a real difference. The event was not just a fundraiser but a celebration of hope and resilience. We were treated to wonderful entertainment, great company and an exciting live auction that had everyone engaged. I am proud to share that the event raised an incredible \$112,000, which will go directly towards suicide prevention and supporting Lifeline's essential services. With one life lost to suicide every four hours in Australia, the importance of this cause cannot be overstated. Thanks to the generosity of everyone involved, Lifeline will be able to continue providing critical support, ensuring that no one faces their darkest moments alone. Thank you to all those in attendance, your contributions are ensuring that Lifeline can continue to answer over a million calls each year, offering hope and support to those who need it most.

CHIEF INSPECTOR DAN SKELLY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)—I wish to formally acknowledge and celebrate the life and service of Chief Inspector Daniel Robert Skelly, who passed away on 13 January 2025 at the age of 61 after a courageous five-year battle with leukaemia. Chief Inspector Skelly dedicated nearly three decades to the NSW Police Force, serving communities across the state with unwavering commitment. He began his distinguished career in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, then moved to Dubbo. In 2020, he returned to the Hunter region, assuming the role of officer-in-charge Raymond Terrace sector within the Port Stephens-Hunter Police District. Throughout his tenure, Chief Inspector Skelly was renowned for his leadership, integrity, and dedication to public safety. His colleagues and the communities he served held him in high esteem, reflecting the profound impact of his service. On 23 January 2025, hundreds of emergency service personnel gathered at Newcastle's Sacred Heart Cathedral to honour Chief Inspector Skelly's life and legacy. On behalf of the Maitland community and the broader Hunter region, I extend our deepest condolences to Chief Inspector Skelly's family, friends, and colleagues. We honour his remarkable contributions to law enforcement and his unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of our communities.
