

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Thursday 13 February 2025**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

### **CRIMES AMENDMENT (DISPLAY OF NAZI AND TERRORIST SYMBOLS) BILL 2025**

#### **SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES) BILL 2025**

#### **First Reading**

**Bills introduced on motion by Mr Alister Henskens, read a first time and printed.**

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:19):** I move:

That these bills be now read a second time.

The background to the Crimes Amendment (Display of Nazi and Terrorist Symbols) Bill 2025 and the Summary Offences Amendment (Public Assemblies) Bill 2025 presented to the Chamber today needs examining before I turn to the wording of the legislation. Just a little over 16 months ago, on 9 October 2023, the face of multicultural Australia changed. As the son of an immigrant to this country, I think it is incredibly important for all of us to ensure that multicultural Australia has not been changed forever. For, on that day, before the State of Israel had done anything about the attacks on Israel of 7 October 2023, an ugly mob was given a police escort to spew racist hatred on the steps of the most internationally recognised building of our nation, the Sydney Opera House. The Premier, who was taking a day off on 9 October, commendably wanted to light up the Opera House in solidarity with the Jewish community, similarly to what the Coalition had done on many occasions, including when Russia invaded the Ukraine.

The Premier wanted to show solidarity with the Jewish community after the tragedy that had taken place on Israel's soil but, unfortunately, it was a terribly botched gesture. A proper security appraisal of the kind the Coalition routinely did when it was in government before the Opera House was lit on occasions like the invasion of Ukraine was not conducted by Chris Minns and his Government. As a consequence, the Minns Government's action inspired protesters, and our Jewish community members were, appallingly, told by the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism to stay away from the city, so they could not see the lighting of the Opera House agreed to by the Minns Government.

The Opera House is one of the most secure places in Sydney, if not Australia, and is daily protected by security guards, concrete barriers and bollards on a peninsula easily defended against persons who want to gain access to it. But on 9 October 2023 it was effectively left unguarded for an angry mob to access it. Where was the riot squad or large numbers of our police officers blocking access to the Opera House? I can never remember any large group of protesters, since the Opera House was first occupied in the early 1970s, ever gaining access to the building before this Government allowed them to access it on 9 October 2023. At our nation's most iconic building, the mob had flares and made chants of a kind against our Jewish community.

After that terrible protest at the Opera House, protesters saying they supported the Palestinian cause started appearing in our streets each Saturday. The protesters on occasion carried flags similar to those of terrorist organisations and wore masks obscuring their appearance, making it difficult for police to identify them. Those tactics of obscuring their appearance in large public protests have become commonplace for many organisations who make public protests, thereby making policing of those protests difficult. Those weekly protests have made the CBD of our city an uncomfortable place for many people, including a particular segment of our community.

Despite the harm to businesses and the cost to taxpayers from these protests, the New South Wales Government has done nothing. The protests were sanctioned by the New South Wales Government, who had the power to give or not give them a certificate as a lawful assembly under the Summary Offences Act. On the last

sitting day of Parliament in November 2023, the Opposition tried to have an upper House parliamentary inquiry into the "incitement of violence" crimes under section 93Z of the Crimes Act, having regard to the events on the steps of the Opera House. The Minns Government blocked any such inquiry. A month later the Minns Government made a referral to the Law Reform Commission on the very matter that it had blocked Parliament from investigating. When it reported back, the Law Reform Commission recommended no changes to the law.

Now, 15 months after the Coalition wanted some action, the Minns Government has finally presented legislation, but the legislation presented this week to Parliament is weak. It does not cover all of the issues that have needed to be addressed in the last 15 months, and the penalties are too weak. The cognate bills which I present today will remedy those deficiencies. During the past 15 months, protesters have taken over our university campuses without any leadership from those institutions against the intimidation of a segment of our community who have been driven away by protesters, some of whom were not even students, and with reports that those protests have been funded in part by nefarious foreign players. Incredibly, many of our university institutions have safe rooms for certain groups of our community, but it was not until this week that the first university seemed interested in announcing that it would create a safe environment for Jewish students and faculty on its campus.

Although our universities are governed by legislation passed by this Parliament and overseen by a member of Chris Minns' Cabinet, the New South Wales Government has done nothing about this terrible situation on our university campuses. The Premier is a good talker. He has said a lot about his support for our Jewish community but he has not brought any legislation to try to stop this racism and protect the cohesion of our multicultural community. That is because the Labor caucus in this Parliament has not supported him doing that, with 18 Labor MPs said to have opposed the two pieces of legislation read by the Attorney General on Tuesday of this week. We are yet to hear any public statements as to whether the Government will support the Coalition legislation, which I am reading for the second time in Parliament today, and which was supplied to the Government on Tuesday.

Although the actions that I have referred to were against a section of our community of Jewish heritage, those actions could have been against any of the multicultural groups in our community. That is why an attack on one group is an attack upon the whole concept of multiculturalism. It is an attack on our community cohesion. We like to call ourselves the greatest multicultural success in the world, but New South Wales is looking like a dismal failure at the moment under the leadership of the current Government. With all of this inaction, was it really a surprise that antisemitic violence started to explode in our city in recent months, including the revelations yesterday involving two nurses at Bankstown hospital.

In September of last year a caravan was left on the side of a road near Dural. The caravan contained explosives and a plan to target Jewish locations. The caravan was not opened until January of this year when police were alerted to its contents. The Premier said a mass casualty event could have been caused by the caravan's contents, but he failed to contact the Prime Minister, under whom our national security bodies are responsible. The people ultimately behind the caravan's contents are still not known, although two people are linked but have not been charged with a crime.

On 17 October 2023 the Curly Lewis brewing company at Bondi was set on fire. The intended target of the two men alleged to have lit the fire was a Jewish kosher deli called Lewis' Continental Kitchen, which was torched a few days later. The men were taking instructions from somebody who called himself James Bond. The mastermind has not been identified or found, although three men have been charged. No change in the law was needed to severely punish these crimes inspired by antisemitism. Under part 4AD, division 2 of the Crimes Act, offences involving fire to damage or destroy property in company have maximum sentences from 11 to 25 years imprisonment, depending upon the circumstances. The sentence is much greater than the two years maximum for any offence created under the Minns Government's bill which was read to the Parliament on Tuesday.

The fear and trauma suffered by the eastern suburbs community suggested strongly that these two firebombing offences were in the serious range of offences and should be tried in the District Court, where the maximum penalties could be considered. But were they? Were the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism and the Attorney General monitoring how these offences were being assessed and prosecuted by those under their responsibility? Not at all. Incredibly, decisions were made to pursue these matters as low-level offences in the Local Court, which has a jurisdictional limit of only two years imprisonment. That decision gave the alleged perpetrators of these crimes more than an 80 per cent reduction in their possible maximum sentence before they were even brought before the court.

Given the seriousness of the offences, why did the people who are administering prosecutions on behalf of our State do that? How did the Attorney General and the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism not monitor what was going on and allow them to do that? When Guy Finnegan was sentenced to only 10 months imprisonment, or less than 10 per cent of the maximum sentence under the Crimes Act, the Premier bellowed to the media that this sentence of 10 months was the wrong message to send. He was right, but allowing the

prosecution to be conducted in the Local Court was the initial wrong message. The horse had already bolted because of the ineptitude of allowing those offences to be treated so leniently by prosecuting them in the Local Court. There was no point in shedding crocodile tears after the event.

If the co-accused is found guilty, then under the principles of parity in sentencing, his sentence will have to be similar to the Finnegan sentence. This is a terrible start to the justice response to the currently high levels of corrosive racism in our community, because there have been many other incidents. It is in this context that these reforms in the cognate bills are needed, and I make the following observations about the Government bills, as read on Tuesday, to give context to my cognate bills. It would seem that, under the Government's bills, there are no offences that will be punished by more than two years imprisonment. Therefore, all offences they are legislating will be heard in the Local Court.

It would appear that there has been no attempt by the Government to create a terrorism symbols offence and match the higher penalties for displaying Nazi and terrorism symbols passed in the Federal Parliament last week by Peter Dutton and the Labor Prime Minister. It would appear that there is no attempt to punish symbols that are deceptively similar to terrorism symbols, even though Hamas-looking flags with a minor alteration to include Ned Kelly were seen on 6 October 2024 in our streets in the context of pro-Palestinian protests, and they were therefore showing support for Hamas. It would appear that there has been no attempt by the Government to do anything about the repeat protests occurring in our city every week despite the great cost and great disruption to businesses and the community.

On 8 October 2024 the Premier mentioned that the weekly protests in Sydney on weekends had cost \$5 million in 2024 and that something had to be done about them, but his Attorney General has brought forward legislation that does nothing about them. It would appear that there has been no attempt to assist the police to identify protesters who chant racist words. How is the offence under the proposed changes to section 93Z to be policed if protesters disguise their appearance? It would appear that there are no changes to the prosecution process or policies which have allowed serious racist arson cases to be treated as low-level offences to be tried in the Local Court. It would appear there has been no attempt to show the seriousness of the offences that threaten our social cohesion by something similar to the mandatory minimum sentences passed by the Federal Parliament last week.

My two bills will rectify all of those deficiencies. In light of these shortcomings, I seek to go into the detail of these private member bills. I start with the Crimes Amendment (Display of Nazi and Terrorist Symbols) Bill 2025. Schedule 1 to the bill makes changes to section 93ZA of the Crimes Act. As I have said, it is currently not an offence under New South Wales law to display the symbols of a terrorist organisation. Given the state of tensions in the community, that is an unacceptable situation. The Coalition amendment will add to the outlawing of Nazi symbols those of a registered terrorist organisation as defined in the Commonwealth Criminal Code Act. Also, the Coalition amendment will add a new provision not yet in State or Federal legislation. It will include a prohibition and penalty for symbols which resemble a Nazi or terrorist symbol and which a reasonable person would believe is displayed to show support for the Nazi or terrorism causes.

As I have already said, people have tried to avoid the same law by slightly altering Nazi or terrorism symbols. Terrorism symbols are an existing offence under Commonwealth law. On Thursday of last week, the Commonwealth increased the maximum penalty for displaying a Nazi or terrorist symbol to five years imprisonment. Our amendment will meet that new Commonwealth crime as it provides for five years imprisonment, or a \$22,000 fine, for individuals who display a Nazi or terrorism symbol. This is an increase from one year or an \$11,000 fine, or both, currently allowed for the display of Nazi symbols. Our proposed amendment will also retain the same qualifications in the existing section 93ZA for Buddhism, Hinduism or Jainism.

To show the seriousness of these offences, the Coalition amendments will require section 93ZA cases to proceed on indictment, taking away the discretion of the prosecutor to proceed in the Local Court. All cases will have to be heard in the District Court. This will overcome the sort of 10-month Local Court sentence for the convicted firebomber that I have already spoken about. The Commonwealth Parliament introduced a mandatory minimum sentence of one year for its offence. That mandatory minimum sentence has several exceptions. Schedule 2 to the bill proposes to apply a standard non-parole period of 1½ years to these offences. If a court applies a longer or shorter non-parole period for an offence than the standard non-parole period for the offence, the court must make a record of the reasons why it would have done so and must identify in the record of its reasons each factor that it took into account.

I now turn briefly to the Summary Offences Amendment (Public Assemblies) Bill 2025 because I am running out of time. The bill inserts new section 27A, which provides a mechanism for the Commissioner of Police to take into account relevant factors in allowing or rejecting public assemblies, including the cost to the State, the economic and social impact of the assemblies, the impact on small or large businesses, the frequency of similar assemblies as well as public safety. New section 27B provides that there are effectively three consecutive or non-consecutive days of protest per year which will be allowed on a specific topic. The Government or court

can then, if it wishes, charge part or all of the cost of policing the protest as a condition of approval. New section 27C provides that if antisocial conduct occurs at public assemblies, policing is difficult because people hide their appearance. Therefore, new policing powers are granted—with an exception for religious dress obscuring a person's appearance—to allow the police to require the obscuring of a person's appearance to be taken away or, alternatively, for the person to be taken into custody for the remainder of the protest.

The Coalition believes this is a better balance of the rights of protestors to protest in the most disruptive parts of our State and the rights of the taxpayers to not have to pick up the price of excessive and repetitive protests. I conclude by saying that these extraordinary times call for extraordinary action by this Parliament to restore social cohesion back to our community and to punish those who would rob us of the peacefulness and security that every group in our community is entitled to in a civil society. These two cognate bills will ensure that our community is safe and that a small number of individuals cannot divide us and interrupt the peace, order and good government of New South Wales.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (WAR MEMORIALS AND OTHER PROTECTED PLACES) BILL 2024**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 21 November 2024.**

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (10:41):** I have about a minute left for my contribution to debate on the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024. I indicate that I will ask for an extension of time.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** We will do that now. An extension of time is granted.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** I thank the House. During this debate at the end of last year, I made the point in a bit of an animated way that I hoped members opposite would not fall into the trap of trying to politicise this issue. A comment was made that members on the Government side of the House—and I assume that it applies to any crossbenchers who do not support the bill at this time—somehow do not support protecting war memorials. That is blatantly false. It was a really low comment. It brings the Parliament into disrepute when members try to use those sorts of arguments instead of looking at the legal implications and understanding that there is a need for proper consultation and an examination of whether the current provisions already provide the protections that are being looked for. I hope those opposite do not fall into the trap of politicising what is an important issue.

Every member of this House supports protecting our war memorials and places of interment. I put firmly on record that I hope members opposite do not fall into the trap of really cheap politics. I raise that only because the allegation was made not by the shadow Minister but another member who spoke. I said at the time that I believe the shadow Minister has brought the bill forward from a good place. The Attorney General went into great detail as to why this needs further examination. I have indicated that we will shortly bring forward an Anzac Memorial bill, which has been in consultation for a number of years. It started under the Coalition, when it was in government, and we have continued on with it to make sure that it is right. Some of these issues are really complex because they cross jurisdictions.

The war memorial in Hyde Park involves Crown land, the Crown land manager, the Sydney City Council and the memorial precinct itself. These things are complex. When we change our laws, we have to make sure that they can be applied and that they do what we want them to do. I think that is the case here. We have made the point, and other Government members will build on the argument, that the current application of section 8 of the Summary Offences Act already provides protections, and we have to make sure that the courts take these matters seriously. The shadow Minister raised some examples in her second reading speech. We can see that the courts took those issues seriously and provided significant fines. I think someone who urinated on the Cenotaph was fined \$2,000, so the courts do take these things seriously. They understand that the community has an expectation that sacred places are protected.

I put firmly on record that the Attorney General clearly said that his door is open for discussion on penalties—and I backed him in—but it needs to be done along with wide public consultation. That has not occurred in this case. Whilst some people have very firm views, these issues have not gone to the wider community for discussion. As I have said, in this debate we have to look at whether the current provisions actually provide protections and whether courts are using those provisions to enforce penalties. From the examples I have looked into, that is the case. Significant fines have been levied, and the outrage from the community has clearly made the point that this sort of behaviour is unacceptable.

We also have to look at other jurisdictions to see if our laws are in line with theirs. It seems to be broadly the case that there are comparable offences across States. There certainly are in Tasmania and Queensland, for example. As a government, we will continue to monitor attacks on war memorials and, if necessary, we will go back and look at some of the penalties. At the moment, we think the provisions are adequate and we do not support the bill at this time.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (10:47):** The Government's position on the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024 is that it is not necessary and not needed in a legal sense. I know that the member for Hawkesbury, who has put the bill before the Parliament, is as committed to the protection of war memorials as every other member here, but the bill is just not legally required. The Minister for Veterans said that the consideration of any changes relating to Anzac memorials started under the former Government and it has continued. There has been widespread support in this Parliament for that.

Under section 8 (2) of the Summary Offences Act 1988 it is an offence punishable by a fine of up to 40 penalty units to wilfully damage or deface any protected place. Under subsection (3) it is also an offence punishable by a fine of up to 20 penalty units to commit any nuisance or indecent act in connection with any war memorial or interment site as defined in the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act. "Protected place" is defined in section 8 (1) as including a shrine, monument or statue located in a public place and, without any limitation, includes a war memorial or an interment site. Section 8 provides further that the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney, is the memorial referred to in the Anzac Memorial (Building) Act 1923, the land described in the schedule to the Act and any other structure on that land. The Anzac Memorial (Building) Act refers to the 1931 *Government Gazette* and describes the Anzac Memorial. It is also in the Anzac Memorial (Building) By-laws Act 1937 and the trustees' plan of management. Given all of that, it is not necessary to change the definition.

The private member's bill seeks to make three key amendments. The first is to amend the definition of "war memorial" to include the Pool of Reflection in front of the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park—which is actually included in the by-laws and the plan of management—as well as "war shrines, monuments, statues or other similar structures or places" and "things or areas within the vicinity" of such places. I will speak about the term "vicinity" later in my contribution. The bill also seeks to increase the penalty. In considering ways to further strengthen the Anzac Memorial, the Government has sought advice from stakeholders about the penalties. At this stage, the veterans community and the RSL do not consider it entirely necessary to increase the penalties, but that is being looked at with full consultation.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** That's not correct. They told me they have not been consulted in that way.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** The consultation that has been undertaken by the Government is different. They have talked to the Minister and we have looked at the comparisons with the other side. The consultation with the ex-service organisations has clearly found that they feel the current level of protection is adequate for this type of offence. That consultation has been undertaken by the Government. I consider the proposed amendments in the private member's bill to be based on a misinterpretation of section 8, and that is why I say that the proposed reforms are unnecessary.

Some of the proposed amendments are based on that misinterpretation of section 8 and would not achieve the objectives the member wants to achieve. Her second reading speech suggested that a war memorial must be prescribed by the regulations before it is protected under section 8, which is incorrect. The intended effect of the proposed amendment to the definition of war memorial is to allow section 8 to be applied to all war memorials by default. That is already how that provision operates, so it does not need amendment. The current definition in section 8 is "a war memorial located in a public place" and, without limitation, includes the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park and any other place prescribed by the regulations. That definition leaves "war memorial" largely undefined so as to allow a broad interpretation. It allows specific sites to be prescribed by regulation in order to put their status as a war memorial beyond doubt.

As I indicated in my opening remarks, as the Pool of Reflection and all war memorials located in public places are already within the ambit of the offences in section 8 (2) and (3) of the Act, the relevant amendments in the private member's bill become unnecessary. By expanding the definition of war memorials to include any thing or area within the vicinity of a shrine, monument, statue or place, the private member's bill also generates uncertainty. The last thing we want in the protection of our war memorials is uncertainty. The term "vicinity" does not have a clear, precise legal meaning, and its use in an offence provision results in uncertainty about what the Act would apply to.

I now talk about the current application of section 8 to conduct. In recent years people have been charged under section 8 (2) of the Act with wilfully damaging or defacing a protected place in various locations, indicating its wide application—for example, for defacing a war memorial belonging to the Ingleburn RSL club, located within the Ingleburn railway station; for damaging and defacing the war memorial in the Fitzroy Gardens, the

El Alamein Memorial Fountain, which members know extremely well; for spray painting graffiti on a Boer War memorial; or for desecrating the memorial pillar at Chatswood.

While section 8 (2) applies to a protected place—meaning any shrine, monument or statue in a public place—section 8 (3) applies only to war memorials and interment sites, such as cemeteries or crematoria. It too has led to charges for conduct in various locations, including skateboarding over the plaque of the cenotaph in Martin Place, swimming in the El Alamein Memorial Fountain, urinating upon the Shellharbour City Centre War Memorial and spitting upon the memorial wall at 16 Memorial Avenue, Merrylands.

The Summary Offences Regulation does not currently prescribe any places as war memorials, so the proposed amendments to the definition and regulation-making power in the private member's bill are also unnecessary. The proposal to reverse the regulation-making power from one that allows places to be included in the definition of a war memorial to one that allows places to be excluded from the definition also appears to be tied to the misunderstanding that the term "war memorial" has a narrow meaning, which the private member's bill seeks to address. The amendment is therefore unnecessary.

As I stated at the beginning of my contribution, it is also unnecessary to amend the definition of war memorial to include the Pool of Reflection because it is included in the by-laws and the plan of management. It is described in the schedule to the Anzac Memorial (Building) Act 1923. There have been several historical charges under section 8 (3) for incidents relating to the Pool of Reflection. In 2018 a person rode their bicycle through the Pool of Reflection, which members may recall. [*Extension of time*]

In 2019 another charge was brought against a person who actually sat in the Pool of Reflection, showing absolute disrespect. Charges were also laid under subsection (2) for similar incidents, including against an individual swimming in the El Alamein Fountain in Potts Point, and against an individual pouring red food dye into the same fountain. In addition to being unnecessary, the proposed amendments would lead to further uncertainty, which I referred to earlier, because of the word "vicinity". The proposal to add structures such as shrines and statues, as well as things in their vicinity, to the definition of war memorial would increase that uncertainty.

While the offence of committing a nuisance or similar acts under section 8 (3) applies only to war memorials and interment sites, the offence of wilful damage or desecration under section 8 (2) has a broader application. It applies to protected places, which include shrines, monuments or statues located in a public place. That includes war memorials and interment sites—cemeteries and crematoria. In practical effect, amending the definition of war memorial to include references to shrines, monuments and statues, as proposed by the bill, would lead to the definition of a protected place reading, "A protected place includes a war memorial, which includes a protected place". So it becomes a bit circular. As I mentioned earlier, the term "vicinity" does not have a clear legal meaning and is used rarely in offence provisions.

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

*Visitors*

## VISITORS

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a very warm welcome to the Hon. Mark Monaghan, a former member and former Speaker of the Northern Territory Legislative Assembly, who is a guest of the member for Heffron. I welcome Adam Hall from the Health Services Union, who is a guest of the member for Keira. I also welcome Alessio Maiese, who is a guest of the member for Drummoyne. I welcome graduates of the NSW Government Graduate Program. They are visiting the Parliament today as part of the Introduction to the Legislature program conducted by the Parliamentary Education and Engagement team. I also acknowledge year 8 students from Pymble Ladies' College, guests of the member for Wahroonga, who are on a tour of Parliament.

*Members*

## REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I advise the House that the Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault will answer questions today in the absence of the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion.

*Question Time***PSYCHIATRY WORKFORCE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:06):** My question is directed to the Premier. Referring to psychiatrist resignations, nurses' union secretary Shaye Candish said, "No-one's bothered to properly consult with our members. Yet the Premier has stated publicly that they're expected to fill in the shortfalls. It's not acceptable." What consultation did the Government undertake with the nurses before stating publicly that they are expected to fill in the shortfalls?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:06):** I cannot speak to the particular meetings that the Minister for Health or the Minister for Mental Health would have had about contingency plans.

**Mrs Tanya Thompson:** It's your Cabinet.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I am being honest; I do not know. I can certainly endeavour to find out.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members, including the Leader of the Opposition, will allow the Premier to answer the question.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The truth of the matter is that the contingency planning from NSW Health was comprehensive. It did not just involve nurses and psychiatrists; it involved psychologists, counsellors, clinical nurses, those in emergency departments, security guards that are covered by the Health Services Union—

**Mr Michael Kemp:** It's always the nurses.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The member for Oxley, who ran at the last election on imposing a wages cap, is now saying—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Dubbo to order for the first time. I call the member for Dubbo to order for the second time. Members will come to order or they will be removed from the Chamber. The member for Oxley is on his final warning.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Mr Speaker, it is like Pavlov's dog. Every time I say "wages cap" they erupt, don't they? The truth is that Opposition members ran on the platform of a wages cap. Am I wrong about that? I do not understand why it is even contentious. It is settled law.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The Premier made a public statement that he consulted with nurses. He now claims not to know what is going on. Why is he snubbing nurses? That is the question.

**The SPEAKER:** That is not the question that was asked.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Show me the quote. Let me have a look at it.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will come to order and allow me to rule on the point of order. The Leader of the Opposition asked a question, and the Premier is answering it. The Premier is in order. The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat or he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** He said that it is a quote from me. It is a quote from the secretary of the nurses' association, not from me.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. He is not immune from my rulings.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The president of the union, Shaye Candish, said, "No-one's bothered to properly consult with our members." Fair enough. She has made that statement. I did not make that statement. The Leader of the Opposition is implying that it is my statement. Is that right? If the Leader of the Opposition is going to misquote everybody, let us be clear here: The Government had contingency plans in place to deal with the fact that psychiatrists were threatening to quit en masse. That was because we could not leave our public hospitals, our forensic hospitals and our emergency departments in the lurch. Of course, senior clinicians as well as senior bureaucrats in NSW Health worked with all relevant unions and all relevant workplace associations to protect the public, and we do not apologise for that.

## TEACHER WORKFORCE

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (11:09):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the Government's work to rebuild public education by strengthening the State's teacher workforce?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:10):** I report to the House some good news in relation to recruitment for public education in New South Wales. As a result of changes made by the New South Wales Government, we have now reduced the teacher vacancy rate in New South Wales public schools by 40 per cent. As a result of that recruitment, we are now in a position where cancelled and merged classes have been reduced by 50 per cent in the public education system. Many people would remember that when they were school students—many decades ago for some members of this Parliament—when the teacher was away, a substitute teacher would come in and it was a good opportunity to act up. The Coalition Government brought in a system where classes were just merged or cancelled and kids were left to roam free. It was a free-range approach to public education. But, as a result of recruiting and keeping teachers, we are now in a position where children in public education get the education they deserve.

I can report to the House that the number of New South Wales public school teachers resigning dropped to its lowest level since 2020, from 2,050 to 1,700. The resignation rate for first year teachers fell from 4.7 per cent to 3.5 per cent. What was happening was young people were going through university, getting a teaching qualification, going to a school and dropping out in unprecedented numbers. Part of the reason was mentorship, and part of the reason was the support culture that we put around new teachers in public education to make sure that they knew they were valued. One of the simplest and most cost-effective things that the New South Wales Government did to tell teachers that they were needed in our public education system was to give them a permanent job. Some 16,000 teachers and support staff were given permanent jobs under the Labor Government in New South Wales. Under the Coalition they were given part-time or casual jobs and were not told that they were needed in their public school.

Think about how difficult it would be for a young family, in which perhaps both parents are teachers, going to a bank or financial institution to try to get a loan and saying to the bank manager, "I am pretty sure I will be employed in the local high school but I have not been given a permanent job." Under Labor they have been given a permanent job. Not only does that give them job security and financial security; it is a message from the Government that they are valued and needed in public education. In addition to that, the Government removed the wages cap in this State. [*Extension of time*]

Someone on the opposite side—a member of this distinguished Chamber, this august body—said, "The reality is that teachers did get substantial increases without demonstrating any productivity improvement." It was the Gordon Gekko of the New South Wales Parliament, "Greed is good".

**Mr Jihad Dib:** That's terrible. Who would say that?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It was the member for Wahroonga. Can you believe it? He cares about the next generation, doesn't he? That shows callousness towards people who devote their professional lives to the education of the next generation. We expect nothing less than the harshness that is associated with the Liberal Party from the member for Wahroonga. Ultimately the price is paid by young children in our education system. We believe they deserve the best and, under Labor, that is exactly what they are getting.

## MATERNITY SERVICES

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:14):** My question is directed to the Premier. An expectant mother from Gunnedah, while in labour, was asked to go to Tamworth Hospital because Gunnedah Hospital was on bypass. When she arrived at Tamworth, she was sent to Armidale, which was also on bypass to Inverell Hospital. That poor mother was turned away from three hospitals and forced to give birth on the side of the road between Armidale and Inverell because the Premier failed to maintain health services in regional New South Wales. Will the Premier apologise to her and the hundreds of other mothers and families put in that same dangerous and traumatic situation across regional New South Wales?

**The SPEAKER:** If the Premier is happy to answer the question, I will allow him to do so. If not, I will rule on the matter.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:14):** I take any individual cases of people in New South Wales getting the health care they need and deserve very seriously. If the information was given to me or the health Minister—or even through the Health Care Complaints Commission—we would act on it immediately. We know investment in the health service in New South Wales is fundamentally important, and we know there are real pressures in emergency departments as well as in maternity units and clinical care right across the system.



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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Part of the reason we are investing record amounts is to deal with the mess that was left to this Government by the previous Government. We are now in a situation where nurse retention rates are at the same level that we had prior to the COVID emergency. The reason for that is the introduction of safe staffing levels—which was not free—and also a commitment from the Government to recruit and keep COVID nurses. Lastly, there was the removal of the wages cap. I am not going to deny that we are in an industrial dispute with the nurses union in relation to wages. But it should not be forgotten that the Government is offering 40 per cent more than the previous Government offered when it comes to wages, and way more when it comes to conditions.

The member for Coffs Harbour has the gall to come into Parliament and say, "The way to solve these issues"—when it comes to the crunch, when it comes to service delivery for health—"is to reintroduce a wages cap." I think that is the most odious argument that can be made in this Parliament. Opposition members are trying to have it both ways. They are suggesting it should be immediately resolved with the nurses union and, at the same time and almost in the same forum, they are saying the wages cap must be kept at 2.5 per cent. They cannot have both. It is a fundamental premise.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order: I take a point of order under Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked about this yesterday, and it is a very simple question. What does the Premier have to say to those mothers giving birth to babies on the side of the road?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The Premier has been directly relevant. Because of how the last part of the question was worded, I will not be pedantic about the way it is answered.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** This was most ably demonstrated in this Parliament yesterday afternoon when the Government moved an amendment to an Opposition motion. It was very simple and straight to the point, and it should have been supported. I will read it to the Parliament.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I do not think mothers who are having to have their children birthed on the side of the road—

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** —which is what the question goes to, are worried about the wages cap or motions before this Parliament. Why will the Premier not answer that?

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the conclusion of the Premier's answer.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Wahroonga left the Chamber at 11:13.]*

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order, including the Opposition Whip.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The truth of the matter is—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat or he will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** —the Opposition has a callous approach to health care in New South Wales. The Government tried to introduce an amendment that said, "This House opposes the introduction of a wages cap in New South Wales," and it was opposed by the member for Coffs Harbour.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will not take points of order in that manner. I just dealt with the Manager of Opposition Business. Members will not take points of order in the last few moments of an answer. The member for Coffs Harbour had the opportunity to ask his question, which was questionable in the first place. I could have dealt with the matter then if a point of order had been taken.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:19):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to ensure that families across New South Wales have access to high-quality early learning opportunities?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:19):** I thank the member for Wallsend for a very important question about the future of our young people in New South Wales. The member is, herself, a very accomplished teacher, who gave many years to public education—somewhat of a trend on this side of the House. I know the member for Wallsend is pleased that the Government is building two brand-new public preschools in her electorate, at Shortland and Maryland public schools—two more than the Liberals and The Nationals delivered. In fact, in the whole of their time in government—which, just to remind everyone, was over a decade, at 12 years—they did not deliver a single public preschool. In comparison, we are delivering 100, proudly standing by our commitment to make the largest ever investment in public preschools in the history of New South Wales.

For us, it is not something that we just stumbled upon in the dying days of a government. It is something that we know makes a difference to working families and, most crucially, to that important transition point to kindergarten, to set our children up on the right track for their education and their life. In addition to the public preschool investment, I acknowledge the important work we are doing across early childhood education. Families in New South Wales are accessing early childhood education in preschools, in long day care, in community preschools and, basically, in any way they can to allow parents to return to work as well as give their children the very best start in life. We know that one of the barriers that families face in accessing early childhood education is the lack of flexibility.

That is why we invested in the Flexible Initiatives Trial. We established the trial, and the first round was very successful. It supported 16 services, and we recently announced the second round of the trial. It will support 36 services across New South Wales, including 21 in regional New South Wales. The challenge of the provision of early childhood education in regional New South Wales is often much bigger and is made much more difficult by the tyranny of distance and workforce challenges that plague rural and regional locations. We have to admit more locations than in the city of Sydney. We are really pleased that, in round two of the Flexible Initiatives Trial, we are able to support places like the Puggles School of Early Learning in Gunnedah. I am sure the member for Tamworth will be happy with that. *[Extension of time]*

Supporting weekend hours from 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. makes a difference for parents who need to work on the weekend. Parkes Early Childhood Centre is open for holiday care during school holidays. Coolibah Kids in Walgett is open on Fridays—an additional day so that parents can work a full week. We are working with Eurobodalla Shire Council to establish five new family day care services. We are attacking this on all fronts. There are services across Western Sydney, which makes me very proud as the Minister for Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Box Hill Public School needs a day care centre.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** I do not know why the member for Hawkesbury insists on talking about Box Hill Primary School in the Parliament. I do not know when she will realise that she is onto a loser with that. Members opposite did not deliver any schools in Box Hill. It is flabbergasting. Putting that to the side, Glenmore Park Child and Family Centre in the electorate of Badgerys Creek increased places by 15. There are now 95 licensed places in a community full of young families. I am very proud that a Labor government delivered for that community in that sense. We are proud of the work we are doing in early childhood education and care.

As the Premier said very clearly in his answer, and as we both said this morning when speaking to the media, there is nothing more important to this Government than investing in education. For our young people, it begins with early childhood education and care. It all starts with those early lessons in play-based learning and early intervention to identify the child who might need support. That is why we are so proud of the work we are doing to set our kids on the right track for kindergarten, primary and secondary school and for the rest of their lives.

## REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:24):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. A lack of succession planning six years ago at Parkes Hospital has seen its local maternity service disappear after retirements by longstanding local medical specialists. What proactive steps will the Government take to ensure that a pipeline of specialists in regional hospitals continues so that services like the Parkes maternity unit are not lost?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:25):** I thank the member for Orange. Those of us who know him well will agree that he is a tireless advocate for health services in the Central West, particularly maternity services and in the palliative care space. He has been a very strong advocate for improved palliative care services, working with

the Push for Palliative in Orange to secure funding from this Government. More importantly, I acknowledge that he has been a tireless advocate for people and families going through a very difficult time.

I also acknowledge the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Health Services Union. I am very fortunate as a Minister to have the pleasure of working with four unions and always having productive conversations. Sometimes they are challenging; we know we have some challenges now, but we are working through them. Maternity services across the Central West are a concern to the Government. At the moment, we have a global shortage of midwives, including in this State and around the country. We must do what we can to create a pathway for midwives and GP obstetricians to work in regional communities.

I assure the community of the Lachlan Health Service, which the member represents, that that service continues to support high-quality maternity services. Maternity care is provided through antenatal and postnatal services and the Lachlan Midwifery Group Practice, which are supported by midwives at both Forbes and Parkes hospitals. All birthing at the Lachlan Health Service continues to occur safely at Forbes Hospital. Let us be clear: This situation has come to us after a long time. Back in 2019, birthing at Parkes Hospital was stopped under the former Government. I have said in this House on many occasions that the biggest challenge I face is around recruitment and retention of the workforce. I said it on my first day and I will say it every day I am in this job. It is a big challenge.

It is not just a challenge for me as the health Minister of New South Wales. If leaders of health systems around the world are honest, it is a challenge for them as well. We are doing what we can. One of the specific things we are doing is doubling the incentives offered, from \$10,000 to \$20,000, in hard-to-fill and critical locations where we need healthcare workers, particularly midwives. To date, that initiative alone has supported around 10,000 health workers in our system—a significant number. *[Extension of time]*

We have committed around \$121.9 million in study subsidies. As the member for Orange referred to in his question, they are designed to help create a pipeline for healthcare workers. That will ensure eligible healthcare trainees or those doing professional study through the university system will be eligible for up to \$12,000. Those who are already in the system are eligible for up to \$8,000, provided they give NSW Health a five-year commitment to work in our system, which is designed specifically to address some of the shortages that the member outlined. We also announced a \$20,000 sign-on bonus for midwives who relocate and start work in rural, regional and remote New South Wales under the Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme. We are also supporting the growth of the midwife workforce with strategies such as GradStart and MidStart, allowing nurses at different levels to transition to midwifery and get the benefits of working in a very important profession.

The bottom line is that workforce issues are very tough. They are tough on all healthcare systems right now across this country. Now, more than ever, we are doing what we can to invest in the workforce. I say to the Nurses and Midwives' Association and the Health Services Union that they will never, under Labor, go back to a wages cap, which Coalition members support. It is something they believe. It is something they will implement after the next election, if they are elected. I say very clearly that, yes, there are issues in the workforce. Yes, we are working through challenges with the various unions. Yes, I understand that we have shortages, particularly in regional and rural areas. But we will continue to focus on this. We will work with those organisations and we will improve the delivery of health services across the community by focusing on our workforce.

#### WESTMEAD MATERNITY SERVICES

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (11:30):** My question is directed to the Premier. The nurses' union says his Government has closed eight purpose-built beds at the Westmead Hospital Mother and Baby Unit for mothers experiencing significant perinatal mental health problems. What is now being provided to mothers who otherwise would have been able to be admitted to those beds?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:30):** I will have to get a briefing about the specifics at Westmead. I am happy to take the question on notice. I do not know the answer off the top of my head. But I can say that there has been record investment when it comes to Western Sydney health. That is particularly important. The Government ran on an election promise of more net beds in Western Sydney. Part of that promise was Rouse Hill Hospital, the rebuilding of Fairfield Hospital and the rebuilding of Canterbury Hospital—three key health precincts and infrastructure for Western Sydney.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Canterbury will come to order. The member for Wollongong will come to order. The member for Kellyville will come to order. Members on both sides of the Chamber will come to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I make clear that there is, without a doubt, a net increase in beds for Western Sydney families as a result of new infrastructure builds. The most conspicuous example I can think of is Rouse Hill

Hospital. I know I got a few questions yesterday so I thought I would go through some media clips that tell the amazing tale of Rouse Hill Hospital, because we are talking about Western Sydney hospital beds.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I found one from the New South Wales Government.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Vacluse will cease her commentary.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was about the Westmead Hospital Mother and Baby Unit and what is replacing it because the Government has taken that service away.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier was quite direct about how he intends to answer the question. The Premier has the call.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Beds are important for Western Sydney. Part of the challenge and part of the jigsaw puzzle for infrastructure in Western Sydney is new hospitals. That is the truth. The Government is building capacity. One of the most conspicuous examples is Rouse Hill. An article in *The Daily Telegraph* from 2014 said, "Cross my heart, Rouse Hill will get a hospital if we are re-elected, I promise." That was from the then health Minister, Jillian Skinner, and the then member for Hawkesbury. That was 11 years ago. There is a photo of the member crossing his heart. What credibility does he have when it comes to hospital beds in Western Sydney when he ran in three elections in a row promising a new hospital and delivered nothing? It gets better.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I will not entertain any more points of order under Standing Order 129.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Late in the day before the election, Opposition members went onto the Rouse Hill Hospital site and did a sod turning. There was not even a development application for the site. Jean Nassif would have been proud—no planning approval needed. They had the shovels, but they did not have the beds. That is the difference between them and us.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has concluded his answer.

#### PORT MACQUARIE ELECTORATE ROADS

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (11:34):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to build better regional communities by delivering essential road and transport upgrades for the community of Port Macquarie?

[Interruption]

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I understand the excitement and anticipation. Members will come to order and listen carefully to the Minister.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (11:34):** As the strongest representative of the party of the bush, there it is, everyone. I want to say hi to the nurses in the gallery, to Adam Hall from the Health Services Union and to the assistant secretary of the Maitland Hospital branch, Mel Gole, who is a passionate and great advocate for her community. I am a strong supporter of nurses and had such great service from those hospitals. I thank them for their service.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I thank the member for Lismore for her question. With a by-election coming up, there will be a little bit of noise on the Opposition side—members are probably fighting each other, rather than us—but I thought I would put some facts on the record.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** We have been delivering on safety upgrades and working on plans for future work in relation to issues at Port Macquarie. Half a million dollars in funding was announced last year for safety upgrades on Houston Mitchell Drive. There is \$20 million for the Pacific Highway and the Oxley Highway interchange, \$60 million for the Ocean Drive duplication, \$3.4 million for our Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund, \$7 million for the betterment of Maria River Road, the Oxley Highway Upgrade Program—

**Mr Michael Kemp:** Ma-ri-ah.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Sorry, the member for Oxley is right. I should have known that from the last time I was there with him. There is the Port Macquarie Integrated Transport Plan, and the Wrights Road and Lake Road intersections. There is a lot of stuff. This has been raised for years. So what has been the break? Those opposite were in government for 12 long years. According to The Nationals, they have held the seat since 1988—or, if we look at another release, maybe not quite since 1988. But the issue here is the fighting that goes on between The Nationals and the Liberals in the seat of Port Macquarie. This seat was held by The Nationals until our dear friend Leslie Williams spoke out in September 2020 about The Nationals' plans to make the koala extinct, and left the party. The Nationals then ran a campaign against her at the last election in appalling circumstances.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Things have been so toxic up there that The Nationals candidate—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Oxley to order for the third time. The member for Coffs Harbour has the call.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will be directly relevant.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The Nationals do not want to hear about roads and the history. Let me come to this week when, according to a press release, The Nationals endorsed their candidate on Sunday night.

**Mr Michael Kemp:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. Is the Minister going to fix Wrights Road? The Federal Labor Government took the money away. Are you going to fix Wrights Road?

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Oxley will remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Oxley left the Chamber at 11:37.]*

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** I recognise that the member for Lismore is on her feet but I will hear first from the Leader of the House.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: A habit has formed in this House whereby points of order are being taken in breach of Standing Order 131 (9). Members cannot use a point of order for the purpose of making a statement. It is happening far too often. Mr Speaker, I ask you to enforce that standing order.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the House will note that I removed the member for Oxley for breaching that standing order. I have made the same point to numerous members, including the Leader of the Opposition, over the past couple of days. The member for Lismore has the call.

**Ms Janelle Saffin:** I seek further information.

**The SPEAKER:** An additional two minutes is granted.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** This is important because it is why roads projects in Port Macquarie have stalled for so long. On Sunday night a media release stated that they are officially endorsing him.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** It is risky, but I will hear the point of order. The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. It is a real stretch for the Minister to be claiming that her answer is directly relevant to the roads.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister was directly relevant—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** But she is no longer directly relevant.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will return to the leave of the question. The Minister has the call.

**Mr Greg Warren:** Point of order: I respectfully draw your attention to Standing Order 79. I note that, further to the earlier point of order taken by Leader of the House, it is very clear and apparent that the Opposition—

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Oatley will remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the conclusion of the Minister's answer.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Oatley left the Chamber at 11:40]*

**Mr Greg Warren:** Opposition members do two fundamental things. First, they disrupt Ministers who are being relevant and talk over them, which is a very serious issue. Secondly—

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the member for Campbelltown. I have heard his point of order and it does not assist me as much as he may imagine. The member for Manly will cease interjecting. The member for Manly will remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Manly left the Chamber at 11:40]*

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has the call.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Before the member for Dubbo is removed from the Chamber, last night we heard from the NSW Nationals Central Executive—via member from Dubbo, who is on that committee—that "Dr Warwick Yonge was not endorsed". They used the incorrect word; he was disendorsed, but they do not want to say that. What do they know?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order: The Minister is not directing her comments through the Chair. She is behaving in a fashion and speaking about a subject matter which infringes Standing Order 74. She is creating quarrels.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member for Wairoa will resume his seat. The Minister has been directing her comments through me. I was quite frightened at times because the Minister was clearly directing her comments through me. The Minister will resume her answer.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** That raises some concerning questions. Given the lack of progress on roads in Port Macquarie, we need to know the answer to the oldest question in politics: What does the Leader of The Nationals know? When did he know it?

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Why was he in the photos?

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Why did The Nationals scrub their candidate? Did the Federal member for Cowper let them know?

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order—

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Or did the Central Executive let them know earlier in the week? Did the local Federal Nationals MP have to threaten to resign to get them to ask questions? Did the member for Coffs Harbour really not know anything at all, as he said this morning on the ABC, or was he left out of the loop even though he is the deputy leader?

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Mr Speaker—

**Mr Mark Taylor:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Winston Hills will resume his seat. I call the member for Leppington.

### HOUSING SUPPLY AND PLANNING

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:43):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the establishment of the Housing Delivery Authority will support the Minns Labor Government in building more homes sooner?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:43):** I am more than happy to update the member for Leppington and others in this place on the Minns Government's major planning reform that will assist with the delivery of homes for more people in New South Wales. The member for Leppington understands the importance of making sure that young people have an opportunity to get into a home in New South Wales and is a supporter of those reforms. The reforms that we have introduced include the biggest rezoning in New South Wales history so that people can live close to transport; the provision of greater housing choice through our low- and mid-rise reforms, of which there are more to come; the biggest injection into social housing in the history of this State; and our pattern book, to which we added more designs this week.

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Late last year we took action to make sure that the biggest housing projects can apply to enter a State significant development pathway, which includes the potential for simultaneous rezoning. The Housing Delivery Authority, announced by the Premier last November, provides certainty for industry by streamlining assessment, cutting approval times and speeding up the delivery of homes. It requires good-quality applications to be submitted quickly by requiring proponents who are selected to have their proposals declared State significant to get them in within nine months.

In the 12 weeks since its announcement, we have established the program, set up the application process and opened for expressions of interest. In the five weeks since they have been open, we have received 160 expressions of interest that have the potential to deliver more than 70,000 homes. Each expression of interest submitted is assessed by the Housing Delivery Authority [HDA] against a set of criteria, including its capacity to deliver high-yield, well-located, good-quality homes as quickly as possible. We are also expecting speedy completion with construction required to start within two years of approval. The public, councils and other stakeholders will have a chance to have their say on proposals, with public exhibition requirements in place. The Housing Taskforce will assist by making sure that when State government agencies set conditions, they are consistent and sensible, and not in conflict with one another.

The HDA met last week, and earlier today I received the first set of its recommendations, which will be published soon. Our other planning reforms are also starting to show results. Our affordable housing reforms came into effect in December 2023 and already five projects have been approved, which will deliver around 1,000 new homes, including 300 affordable homes. There are a further 25 projects under assessment, which could see the delivery of around 6,000 homes, of which 1,800 will be affordable homes. We are getting reports with headlines like, "Plans for infill affordable towers pile up in Sydney" and "Affordable housing in Sydney—what a great outcome." [*Extension of time*]

**Ms Robyn Preston:** They're all in units.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The member for Hawkesbury says, "They are all in units." In the past few years she might have realised that about 50 per cent of homes and dwellings in Sydney are apartments. People are choosing to live in apartments. She might look down her nose at people who live in apartments, but apartments have been part and parcel of Sydney's housing history since the earliest days of settlement.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The member for Hawkesbury has obviously not driven enough around Sydney to understand it. They are also in Newcastle, Wagga and Wollongong. They are great homes for people. She is shaking her head. She does not like them. She does not think they are good enough for people to live in. However, we are going to have more of them because we already have applications that will deliver more than 1,300 new homes around our Transport Oriented Development sites.

**The SPEAKER:** There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics last month shows that more applications are being lodged now than 12 months ago. The latest data in the Planning Portal indicates that more than 63,000 dwellings are under assessment. The number of approvals that are not yet commenced is falling, while construction approvals are increasing. Together that means more than 72,000 dwellings are under construction. But there is more reform to do. That is why the Premier and I have welcomed the offer from the Leader of the Opposition to provide bipartisan support for further planning reform. We have had a good first discussion, but there is more work to do. I hope this is a turning point. The member for Hawkesbury would do well to listen to the approach of the Leader of the Opposition. It should be a turning point for New South Wales and for the people who want to rent or buy in the future. We can turn this bipartisan approach to planning reform into true multipartisan planning reform in this place because getting access to a good home, whether to rent or buy, should not be a political plaything.

#### WESTMEAD MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (11:48):** My question is directed to the Premier. The nurses' union says that, among the over 60 mental health beds currently closed across the Western Sydney Local Health District, 16 beds are in the K7a Older Persons Mental Health Unit at Westmead Hospital. What is now being provided to those older persons who would have been admitted to those beds?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:48):** I am happy to check the details of that particular question.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Earlier in question time the member for Hawkesbury made the allegation that the Westmead Hospital Mother and Baby Unit had closed. Do you remember that?

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I checked and the unit is open. There are two patients there and no-one on the waitlist. I will not take what the member said as gospel, but we will check all the information Opposition members provide as facts in this Parliament. If they are going to claim that the Westmead Hospital Mother and Baby Unit is closed and, presumably, tell the community that, they should have their facts right before they make the allegation.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The Premier is misrepresenting the question that the member for Hawkesbury asked. It would be good if the Premier actually listened to the questions. The assertion was that eight purpose-built beds had closed in the unit; not that the whole unit had closed. It is a shame that the Premier cannot listen to the question.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Wairoa will resume his seat. The Premier is not misleading the House. There is no point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I will answer that question. I have got the information, and I will answer the question. At the moment, there are two patients in the ward and no-one on the waitlist. Opposition members come into Parliament and claim that units are closed and beds are not available.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Coffs Harbour will remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order No. 249A until the conclusion of the Premier's answer.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Coffs Harbour left the Chamber at 11:50.]*

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The obvious implication is that the unit is not available to the citizens of Western Sydney, but the facts show the opposite. We do have challenges with psychiatric care across—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. The question was about Westmead. If the Premier has to take the question on notice, he should say, "I don't know the details" and sit down. He cannot choose to answer another question. It was a question about Westmead.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** No, I am not taking the question on notice. We cannot take the facts provided by Opposition members as gospel.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the point the Leader of the Opposition is making. The Premier made it clear that he could not answer it in those terms. He is not answering the question.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I am not taking the question on notice. We cannot take the facts provided by Opposition members as gospel. I warn Opposition members that we will check all the facts and data they present to question time. None of it will go under the radar. We will check every bit of information they provide.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Mr Speaker, I cannot hear you. The Premier is continuing his answer.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. The member for Miranda will come to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Under Labor, we have the largest health budget in the history of New South Wales, at \$35 billion. We have allocated \$1 billion for additional nurses and saved 1,100 COVID nurses in our public hospitals. We are recruiting 500 additional paramedics for regional New South Wales. We brought in tertiary subsidies for those who want to work in regional health care across New South Wales. We have spent \$200 million on healthcare accommodation so that nurses and healthcare professionals can live and work in the regions. Study subsidies have doubled under Labor. None of those achievements were even attempted by the former Government.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

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



**Mr Mark Speakman:** Unfortunately, I could not hear the Speaker's ruling on my previous point of order. I have a new point of order. The Premier is now going beyond the question. What operational steps are in place to deal with the issue?

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I refer him to my earlier ruling. There is no point of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It is a \$35 billion budget. Opposition members have come into question time with a very specific question about a very narrow part of the health system in Western Sydney. They expect me to know the answer. I do not know it off the top of my head. I am happy to claim that. But we will check it. If Opposition members are misleading the Parliament or the people of New South Wales, we will call them out.

### STRATA LEGISLATION

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (11:52):** My question is addressed to the hardworking Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to improve the State's strata system by legislating better accountability and transparency?

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (11:53):** I thank the member for Cabramatta for his question and continued advocacy for the thousands of people who live in stratas in his electorate. I am pleased to inform the House that people living in strata communities across the State will be armed with better information and greater transparency under the new laws that came into effect just last week. The Minns Labor Government has made no secret of its ambitious housing agenda. Given the enormity of the housing crisis we inherited, an ambitious agenda on housing is essential. There are more than 86,000 strata schemes across New South Wales. More than 1.2 million people live in strata communities in our State. That number is set to grow under the Government's comprehensive plan to build a better New South Wales.

We need to ensure the laws that govern strata living are modern and fit for purpose. We cannot go slow when it comes to legislative reform for the many people who live in stratas. The laws that commenced on 3 February will require strata managing agents in this State to be up-front with owners about any kickbacks and conflicts of interest. Under the new laws, strata managers must disclose any connections with suppliers and developers, including the nature of their relationships. They must provide detailed breakdowns of insurance quotes, including commissions and broker fees. They must report in real time on any new connections that arise during their appointment. Strata managers must also detail any supplier and developer connections in the annual reports to the owners' corporations. The enhanced disclosure requirements will give strata owners the confidence they need to make informed decisions about their homes or their investments.

We know that stronger laws need to be backed by a stronger regulator. The Government has invested \$8.4 million in the budget for more resources to tackle unlawful conduct and bad behaviour in the strata and property services sector. NSW Fair Trading will enforce the new obligations. There are no excuses for strata managers who fail to update their practices and reporting. Managers who fail to meet the new disclosure obligations may face penalties of up to \$110,000. The Government is not wasting any time in improving strata living for the millions who live in strata communities. We need to get moving to deliver more and better housing for the people of New South Wales. The transparency and accountability laws are part of the second tranche of the strata reforms the Government has passed since March 2023. [*Extension of time*]

A third tranche of reforms was passed in the House only yesterday. That bill includes cost-of-living measures for people struggling to pay their levies, increases the accountability of developers and protects owners from unfair contracts. To be clear, the Government has introduced three strata reform bills in under two years. In the same amount of time, all the former Government managed to do was sit on a statutory review. It did not seem to grasp that urgent reform was needed for the 1.2 million people who live in strata communities. But this Government does. We not only moved quickly to improve strata living but also passed historic rental reforms in October last year to ban no-grounds evictions for the 2.3 million renters across our State. We turbocharged the powers and resources of the Building Commission NSW to rebuild the confidence in the residential construction industry.

Those changes are all part of the Minns Labor Government's efforts to address the housing crisis, which is the legacy and the record of the former Government. We have achieved all of those changes in less than two years, unlike the Coalition members, who sat on their hands for 12 years. The contrast could not be greater. This Government believes in urgent housing reform. That is why our strata reforms are so important. Strata managers now have an obligation to act in the best interests of their clients, which includes maintaining the trust of owners' corporations. The new laws that came into effect last week will improve oversight and ensure strata managers'

actions are open and transparent. Strata owners deserve clear, timely and honest information from their managers. The new laws provide a vital step in restoring trust and supporting better decision-making in strata communities. The strata reforms are an important pillar of the Government's agenda and comprehensive plan to build a better New South Wales.

### DUBBO REGIONAL SPORTS HUB

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:58):** My question is directed to the Premier. On 18 December 2024 the Government announced the withdrawal of \$33.3 million of funding from the Dubbo Regional Sports Hub project. Will the Premier commit to signing off on the variation to the project proposed by PCYC and supported by Minister Kamper and reinstate the funding to allow the project to proceed?

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:59):** I am happy to look at the specifics of the question. In fact, this has been a bit of a perennial issue in Dubbo. I had the opportunity to look at the timeline of the Dubbo PCYC centre. The member for Dubbo did not reveal to the House that the project was first announced in 2018. In February 2020 The Nationals announced it again. They put out a media release with a quote saying, "It's a goer in the near future." Again, in August 2020, Dugald stood up with his best friend, Paul Toole, and they proclaimed jointly that it was "fantastic to see the project really starting to gather momentum". That was in 2020. Then they did a sod turn in 2020. That is a classic—"We did not build it but we did a sod turn. What do you want, a basketball centre? We have already done the sod turn!"

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

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier should not be surprised by the point of order. I can direct the Clerk to stop the clock, but then we may run out of time.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** I am happy to run through the detail. You and I both know the detail.

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** The detail is there is 50 million bucks there. Will you commit—yes or no—to the sports hub in Dubbo?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Mr Speaker, I have answered the question.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Yes or no? Say it. Say it.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will allow me to rule on the point of order and deal with the member for Dubbo.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** Yes or no?

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The member for Dubbo will remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** I just want a yes or no.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Dubbo will be removed for the rest of the day if he continues to flout my rulings.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Dubbo left the Chamber at 12:00.]*

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The originally budgeted amount in 2018 was \$10 million. The budgeted amount today is \$70 million because those blokes did not get on with it. Do not take my word for it; take the word of local legend and pillar of the community Mark "Bomber" Forrester. He jumped up at a media conference with Dugald to say, "That's just BS. You've had more than enough time. You should have got on with it, you muppet. By the way, who are you?" The Leader of The Nationals was in his own electorate, and a local legend stands up and says, "I don't know who this bloke is!" It begs the question, how has the third most popular breakfast morning announcer become the Leader of The Nationals and member for Dubbo? How did that happen? The short answer is that we will work with the council and the local community. But if you want the real reason things are not moving in Dubbo, it is their terrible local MP.

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:01):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General please update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is working to create a safer New South Wales?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:01):** As we approach the halfway mark of this term and my nearly two years in the job, I thank those members in the House who have come to see me, the Premier and the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism about concerns for community safety. The best way to address community safety and keep the community safe is it to apply all the right policy settings. I have always said local members are the experts on their own electorates, and I thank them for that. There are a few areas that we have worked on and will continue to work on, because offenders do not rest and nor shall we. In the area of domestic violence, the Minns Labor Government has sent a clear message that the safety of victims and women and children is its paramount consideration.

In addition to the historic \$230 million package announced by the Government, we have made it more difficult for those accused of serious domestic violence offences to get bail, by extending the category of show cause offences. That includes serious domestic violence offences committed by intimate partners, including sexual assault, strangulation with intent to commit another offence, and kidnapping, with a maximum penalty of 14 or more years in jail. We have added those charged with coercive control into the category of show cause offences. Importantly, we have required electronic monitoring of people charged with serious domestic violence offences who are on bail. We have required decision-makers, during bail decisions, to consider things like red flags in domestic abuse contexts. We have made it easier to prosecute perpetrators who use tracking and surveillance devices.

We have strengthened the penalties for repeat and serious breaches of an apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] by including a new offence for knowingly contravening an ADVO with intent to cause harm or fear. It carries a maximum penalty of three years imprisonment or an \$11,000 fine. On the advice of the police and other stakeholders, we have introduced serious domestic abuse prevention orders. They are very tough new powers that allow a court to impose any condition considered appropriate to prevent a person's involvement in domestic abuse. The orders have a maximum duration of five years, so it is a long supervision period. Importantly, we have modernised the definition of "stalking", following a report by the Crime Commission, to include electronic tracking. We will continue to progress proposals to protect women and children from fear or harm. Our work will not stop. [*Extension of time*]

In relation to knife crime, we have tried to get ahead of the curve so as to avoid the situation we have seen in the UK where there are way too many young people leaving home of a morning with a knife in their pocket. Last year we provided new "wandering" search powers to the police to tackle knife crime by keeping knives off our streets. We have increased the maximum penalty for selling a knife to a child under the age of 16. We have doubled the maximum penalty for knife-related offences. In relation to youth crime, which is a perennial, ever-changing and very complex problem, we amended the Bail Act to make it harder for alleged repeat serious motor vehicle and theft offenders to get bail.

We have announced that we will extend those provisions, but those provisions are working. The bail refusal rate for matters that section 22C applies to is about 80 per cent, so 80 per cent of young people who are charged with those offences and come before the court under section 22C are refused bail. We cannot have them running around the streets. They are a danger to themselves and to the community. We have introduced a new "post and boast" offence so that those who promote their misdeeds are punished appropriately. We have taken action to prevent dangerous behaviour on rail lines such as that of people protesting, for example, in the Hunter, who were terrorising train drivers up there. Just this week we introduced legislation in relation to antisemitism. We are ensuring that disgusting acts of antisemitism and intimidation have no place. We have introduced two pieces of legislation this week, which will be debated next week. There will be more to come in that regard, because antisemitism is a cancer that must be stamped out in New South Wales.

#### HIGH POTENTIAL AND GIFTED EDUCATION POLICY

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:07):** My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education. Following last year's announcement of funding for selected high schools under the High Potential and Gifted Education Policy partner school program, will the Minister provide details of the opportunities that will be available to gifted and high-potential students at Wagga Wagga's Koorringal High School, which was on the list?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:07):** I acknowledge strong advocacy of the member for Wagga Wagga on behalf of the schools in his community. He is relentless in that regard. I am really excited about what we are able to deliver at Koorringal High School. Obviously we are very proud of the first-class public education that we provide at every school in New South Wales. Broadly, this Government's vision for the High Potential and Gifted Education Policy upgrade program is to stretch what we provide, ensuring that we have high expectations of our students in every school, pushing ourselves to continue to aim high and enhance the offering that we have for our students. We know that gifted and high-potential students exist in every single school in New South Wales. That

is the truth of it. We want to make sure that the opportunity for high-potential and gifted education is therefore provided at every school in New South Wales.

The first step in this, as the member intimated, is \$50 million across the State to upgrade specialist facilities at secondary schools in particular. We are talking about science labs, sporting facilities and creative arts spaces. These are the spaces where we are able to push our students to achieve, particularly our high-potential and gifted students. We are increasing enrolments and broadening the opportunities of the educational offerings that we give to our students. Koorringal High School, in the member's electorate, will be one of the first of 13 schools in New South Wales to benefit from this program. The school is getting a \$6 million upgrade, which is the biggest upgrade in recent years. It is clearly a priority for the Government, but probably not for those opposite.

We are upgrading three science labs and two art rooms that have not been touched or upgraded since 1973. Members of this place will think of their own schools when they think about the fact that quite a number of secondary schools around the State were delivered in the '60s and '70s. They look exactly the same. We are investing in an upgrade to specialist rooms in many of these secondary schools to deliver better high potential and gifted education opportunities. Performing arts facilities are outdated. We are putting in new lighting, benches and acoustic insulation. This stuff makes a difference for kids who may want to pursue creative arts and have high potential in that area. A key to attracting new students is to make sure that High Potential and Gifted Education Policy offerings are at every school across New South Wales and not just at selective schools. We want all of our schools to be schools of choice. *[Extension of time]*

This is crucial for giving children opportunities to reach their potential. We are upgrading a space in the library, which sounds like a small thing, but it makes a big difference. There is a part of the library that is dark and has an air-conditioning duct running through it. No-one uses it. We are going in there to make sure it is upgraded so that it is actually used. We are building new courts and a new covered outdoor learning area. We are making sure that kids who are gifted in sport can access opportunities at the best facilities that are available at these public high schools. Facilities will be upgraded right across the State. I am proud that we are doing this across suburban Sydney and regional New South Wales. These schools should really have gotten upgrades of this sort years ago, but they were neglected by those opposite when they were in government.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** We built 180 new schools.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Mr Speaker, we both know the principal of Lake Macquarie High School, which is also getting an upgrade under this High Potential and Gifted Education program. Other schools include Bowral High School, Tamworth High School, Lithgow High School and Canobolas Rural Technology High School. The member for Hawkesbury loves interjecting when I am speaking about public education. Those opposite really hate hearing about the truth of the past 10 years before we came to government. Yesterday, the member for Miranda was throwing up something about the 160 schools that the Opposition supposedly upgraded. I had a look at it, and do you know what? It may as well be a list of 160 schools that they promised but did not deliver. No work had been done at one-third of the 160 schools, like Tallawong and Marsden Park. It is like the Dubbo sports hub.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister has concluded her answer so it is a moot point.

### SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:13):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Lands and Property. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plan to utilise surplus government land to deliver much-needed social, affordable and market housing?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (12:13):** I thank the member for Parramatta for her question. She is a hardworking member who truly understands the gravity of the housing crisis we are addressing. For 12 years, the former Coalition Government sat on its hands and watched housing become more and more unaffordable. Actually, that is not true. It did not sit on its hands; it actively sold public housing and created a forever tax on the family home. We are taking the housing crisis seriously, and we are leaving no stone unturned. Through the land audit, we have already announced sites which are capable of delivering 7,000 homes. Just this Monday, we were out at Camperdown to announce that Landcom would be taking on the delivery of housing on the old WestConnex dive site, which has been sitting vacant for years. It will now deliver 200 affordable build-to-rent units and 300 affordable and market homes. That is a fantastic outcome.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It is just one of many sites the land audit has uncovered. We have an old site in Rydalmere where derelict buildings have been gathering dust right on the doorstep of the new light rail line. The land audit busted through the bureaucratic backlog, and we now estimate we can deliver more than 2,300 homes on this site. This is cause for a celebration.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** This is the land audit in action. I am so pleased that we have committed to the land audit being an ongoing process, but it is not the only way we are delivering housing. We are undertaking significant planning reform, and we are investing a record \$6.6 billion as part of Building Homes for NSW program. But wait, there's more! When it came to master precinct development, those opposite put it in the too-hard basket. We are powering on. We are moving ahead with the Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore Precinct. At Parramatta North, we are undertaking a rezoning proposal to deliver much-needed housing. We are working with one of the local members and the community to ensure that we get the balance right. Those opposite just flat out reject housing. They hate the idea of people being able to afford their own homes. It does not matter if it is opposite the member for Wahroonga's house— [Time expired.]

#### *Committees*

### STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

#### **Government Response**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 3/58 of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics entitled *Draft Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 2024*, received on 12 February 2025.

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH

#### **Government Response**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of the Government's 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 on 13 February 2025.

### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

#### **Reports**

**Mr JASON LI:** As Chair: I table report No. 3/58 of the Public Accounts Committee entitled *Accountability measures for decision-making: Critical Communications Enhancement Program*, dated February 2025. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Bills*

### SUMMARY OFFENCES AMENDMENT (WAR MEMORIALS AND OTHER PROTECTED PLACES) BILL 2024

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (12:18):** I continue my contribution to debate on the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024. I talked earlier about the proposal to reverse the regulation-making power and what it meant. I noted that incidents relating to the Pool of Reflection had been dealt with under the existing law, and I noted the uncertainty around the word "vicinity". The member for Hawkesbury is seeking to increase penalties, but further consultation on the adequacy of the penalties in section 8 is required. The private member's bill would increase penalties now, but the advice we have received from our consultations with ex-service organisations is that, at this stage, the penalties are seen as adequate. They need to be looked at in the broader context of some comparative examples from other States and jurisdictions.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (12:20):** I have listened to the debate on the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024, and we are debating semantics. It is time to stand up, to value our standards and to respect our culture. At the outset, I say to the Minister that we do not need to look at what other jurisdictions do. We are capable of leading reform and standing up for our values. I also say

to the member for Lismore that it is totally disingenuous to say that the bill is legally unnecessary. Our community is screaming out for someone to stand up and protect our values. It does not matter to me whether this is Opposition or Government legislation; that is semantics. This country's freedom and democracy are rooted in the principles that we espouse as a community.

The best State in the best country in the world rests its being on our freedom, fought for by veterans, who sacrificed either by laying down their lives or by facing the potential of losing their lives. Their service affected not only the individuals who put their health at risk to fight for our values but also their countless family members and friends. We have not only lost military personnel to gun battles; we have also lost many to a different, sometimes tougher, battle with mental health and suicide. As widely known as those challenges are, the recent royal commission into veteran suicide is yet to fully make its mark, so this bill matters. The veterans who fought for our values, our right to speak up and our world-leading freedoms must be cherished for all that they have given. The best State in the best country in the world also rests its being on our democratic ways, and this House represents that. I will come back to a personal demonstration later in my contribution.

Firstly, as a returned serviceman who proudly served in the Army Reserve and air force for nearly 10 years, including three tours of duty, I know there is no symbol more sacred than our war memorials. Those symbols of the preservation of our memories must be protected. After all, we have record levels of immigration and attempted immigration because it is the best State in the best country in the world. People want to come here. They want to be free from persecution. They want to enjoy our way of life, our values and our culture, and to thrive in our democracy. We welcome them with open arms, with our multicultural common sense, and our immigrants contribute greatly to our fantastic way of life.

Our war memorials are of such significance to our community that we see the highest ever numbers gathering around them on days of reflection—revered days like Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. How one could even consider deliberately damaging such sacred sites is totally beyond my thoughtful capability. While I support the bill, it does not go far enough. I call for mandatory minimum sentencing for guilty parties who show such deliberate disrespect as to damage our war memorials. Such acts are not minor offences; they are a direct attack on the values and sacrifices that define us as Australians. I had initially hoped we may have achieved such mandatory minimum sentencing. Unfortunately, I have been advised that, at this stage, it is unable to be broadly supported by this Parliament.

Let me return to why our democratic freedoms and veterans must be respected and cherished. Before being elected to this place I was not political at all. I did not have any ambition to be here and I had little understanding of what goes on in this House. But serving my community has always been at the heart of my values. On the advice of my beautiful wife, Brigitte, and other respected community leaders, I decided to have a crack at running for office. My journey started out as a little boy from the bush with nothing, to working hard and building a house, then a business, all the way to getting the opportunity to represent my country and then my community—is that not the epitome of why we fight like cats and dogs to maintain our democratic processes? Our model of elected representation, with compulsory voting to enable us to get the real view of the majority—is that not worth fighting for?

No matter how great our democracy is, there are always decisions to make. This democracy has had difficult decisions to make, both recently and further in the past. Those decisions have included sending our troops overseas during world wars and more recent conflicts in the Middle East. The sites designated as war memorials are our memory of those decisions—a symbol of our freedom. They are as sacred as our national flag, our parents and our families. War memorials are as sacred as this House. Do members not think there would be an outcry if someone deliberately damaged this House? I know the answer. I say we cannot separate Parliament House from our war memorials, because our democracy goes hand in hand with our freedom. Those who vandalise our war memorials attack the very foundation upon which this country stands. It is more than just an act of vandalism; it is a symbolic rejection of the freedoms that allow our society to thrive.

Those memorials are not only physical structures; they tell the stories of sacrifice, resilience and unity that have shaped our identity as Australians. They are the living embodiment of the pain, the loss and the courage that run through every family sending a loved one to combat. To those who might disrespect those sacred sites, I say that their actions dishonour the memory of those who gave everything for this country, and they dishonour the families who grieve and the communities who remember. They dishonour their own family and the freedom of choice we have in this country.

The bill embodies the values at the heart of our nation. It embodies our freedom, our democracy and the sacrifices that secure them. I stand in full support of this legislation, whether it is complicated or not. I strongly advocate to the Minister for even stricter penalties in the future. In the best State in the best country in the world, our war memorials are sacred symbols of our history and identity. They must be protected, respected, cherished and, above all, honoured. While we are debating semantics, with the Minister pussyfooting around and debating

whose bill is better, our war memorials are being disrespected. I do not care whether it is a Government or Opposition bill; let us get this done. I say to the Minister: Show up, stand up and protect our memorials, our freedoms and our culture.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:28):** I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024, which is a private member's bill. I acknowledge the member for Hawkesbury for bringing it to the Legislative Assembly. I do not think any member in either House of this Parliament is anything less than sickened and disgusted when our memorials are defaced or damaged. As the member for Oxley made clear, war memorials are very important places—and not just for fellow veterans and ex-service personnel. They are special places for people with friends and family who have served in the armed forces. They are particularly special when remembering those who left us in the theatre of war or who passed away later. Many of my friends visit memorials. For many widows of veterans, war memorials are a place of solace where they like to go to remember a partner who has passed, whether during a conflict or after.

I draw members' attention to my area. My good friend Minister Chanthivong will be aware of "Dasher" Wheatley's memorial in Mawson Park. It is a particularly special memorial—one of a number in Mawson Park. I commend Campbelltown City Council for its progressive approach to honouring and providing memorials for all our veterans. I know the council has plans for future memorials, not just because it is the right thing to do but because we have a rich and proud history in Campbelltown and the Macarthur region. The Kangaroo March of World War I passed the area where Mawson Park is now, and marchers gathered at what is now Waminda Oval. It was a gathering and staging area for our soldiers destined for Egypt and other theatres of war throughout the Middle East and Europe during World War I. To the south of Campbelltown, anyone who has ever had the privilege of going to the Menangle Park races will know that the ramp there was used to load horses onto the trains that were bound for Beersheba and the last charge of the gallant Light Horse.

I apologise to the House for giving a personal example, but I am trying to emphasise the significance and importance of these memorials to me. I accept that the member for Hawkesbury has good reasons for bringing this bill before the House. I was once a member of the board of trustees for the Anzac Memorial and I believe the member for Hawkesbury represents the Opposition leader on that board. It is a very good and constructive board. It has had its challenges, as the member knows, but I trust that it is working through them. When I had the privilege of being the shadow Minister for Veterans, I took a very nonpartisan and bipartisan approach to the issues involved. With the consent and support of my colleagues, the then Opposition wrote a submission to the Royal Commission into Defence and Veterans Suicide. We were on the same page as the then Government. We said, "Yes, let's have this royal commission, but the last thing veterans want to hear is another talkfest that costs a lot of money and results in nothing. What is the point of that?" I did a lot of work with the then Minister, David Elliott. There were a few Ministers during that time, which is ultimately irrelevant, but they were all very passionate about New South Wales veterans being heard and considered.

As to the Pool of Reflection, I understand what the member for Hawkesbury is trying to achieve with her amendment but I am advised that the Pool of Reflection is a structure on the land described in the schedule to the Anzac Memorial (Building) Act 1923 and thus already falls within the definition of a war memorial. I say that very respectfully. I simply draw attention to the letter of the law. I am also advised that under section 8 (2) of the Summary Offences Act, it is an offence punishable by a fine of up to 40 penalty units to wilfully damage or deface any protected place. Under section 8 (3), it is also an offence punishable by a fine of up to 20 penalty units to commit any nuisance or any offensive or indecent act in, on or in connection with any war memorial or interment site. A protected place is defined in section 8 (1), as including:

... a shrine, monument or statue located in a public place, and (without limitation) includes a war memorial or an interment site.

A war memorial is defined as:

... a war memorial located in a public place, and (without limitation) includes—

- (a) the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney, being—
  - (i) the memorial building referred to in the Anzac Memorial (Building) Act 1923, and
  - (ii) the land described in the Schedule to that Act, and
  - (iii) any other structure on that land, and
- (b) any other place prescribed under subsection (4) as a war memorial for the purposes of this section.

I believe adequate measures are in place at this time. However, if any amendments are requested by veterans in the future, I believe we should act appropriately. I am advised that veterans are comfortable with the adequacy of the measures that are in place under the existing laws of the State. However, I reiterate that if there is a request, the Government and the relevant Ministers—whether that be the Attorney General or the Minister for Veterans—

will give it the attention it deserves. I mentioned earlier that I had the privilege of serving as shadow Minister for Veterans, and I recall this matter coming up in a previous term of Parliament when the Hon. David Elliott was the Minister. I enjoyed a good working relationship with the former Minister to ensure that we took a nonpartisan approach to all issues concerning veterans. Why? It is because veterans dislike nothing more than politicians using veterans' service for their own political benefit.

I had the privilege of serving my country for 10 years in the Royal Australian Infantry Corps and Royal Australian Corps of Transport in the Australian Army. I remember that a member of Parliament visited the battalion for a few photos. We joked in the boozier afterwards that "They only rock up to get a photo with us because we do something they would never do." That was a bit of a boozy yarn. Of course, I have gained wisdom with age and I now know there are many members of Parliament—including you, Mr Temporary Speaker—who are good, decent people who would do anything to serve their country with dignity and respect. I know that those who did not serve their country as we veterans had the privilege of doing are equally devoted to the dignity and respect of our veterans and those who serve our nation.

The bill proposes three key amendments. First, it seeks to amend the definition of "war memorial" to include the Pool of Reflection. As I said earlier, that is adequately addressed through law at this time. Secondly, the bill seeks to increase the penalty for the offence under section 8 (2) from 40 penalty units to 50 penalty units or imprisonment for two years, or both. Again, I accept the proposal for stronger laws, but I am advised that there are adequate measures in the Act at this time. [*Extension of time*]

I thank the House for its indulgence. I reiterate that if matters arise and there is a requirement to increase those penalty units, then that should happen. If any charges are requested and required in the future, we should make them. I know that this Parliament will give that due consideration. Thirdly, the bill changes the regulation-making power contained in section 8 (4) of the Act that allows a place to be prescribed as a war memorial to one that allows sites to be excluded by the regulations. Again, respectfully, I am advised that this is adequately covered at this time. But, as I have repeatedly said, if further amendments are required in future, then that is precisely what this Parliament should do. I acknowledge the passion of the Temporary Speaker on this issue. I share that same passion, as do many veterans and communities.

We had one incident in Campbelltown—and I defer to my colleague the member for Macquarie Fields, a former mayor of Campbelltown. The only incident that I can recall was at the cenotaph in Mawson Park. I commend our community for their respect towards it. I am advised that when police investigated the matter, it was found that the perpetrators did not live in the Campbelltown region. That said, it was still a disappointing and disgusting circumstance we found ourselves in. Campbelltown City Council had recently done the monument up and the next day was Anzac Day. People had to work through all hours of the night to get it ready. The hurt and disappointment we felt was pretty bad.

I mention the current application of section 8 to conduct. In recent years people have been charged under section 8 (2) of the Act for wilfully damaging or defacing any protected place in various locations. Again, my good friend the member for Macquarie Fields has advised me that the Ingleburn railway station in his electorate was part of those considerations, as were Fitzroy Gardens, the El Alamein Fountain and the Boer War Memorial. Those are some examples which formed the motivation. I am advised that all of those perpetrators were apprehended and were hit with the full force of the law.

The Government is currently reviewing the relevant Acts to see what amendments can be made. I respectfully say to the shadow Minister for Veterans, when I had the privilege of being the shadow Minister for Veterans, I found engaging with the Minister and the Government very useful. We know that matters around veterans are not of a political nature; they are of a very serious nature. It is about the outcome. By having that engagement with the Ministers at that time, we were able to make sure we had provisions in place, particularly when the memorial was getting done up, which had various complications.

In conclusion, the good, caring and respectful people of New South Wales and I want those minority groups who have decided that it is smart to deface, defame, damage or vandalise any of our memorials to think about this: It may just be a piece of rock to you, but it is a place of remembrance for people who have loved ones who are no longer here. It honours the people who served and fought for the freedom you have to wander the streets. Take that into account because, if you do not, you will be met with the full force of the law. I thank the House.

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (12:43):** I contribute to debate on this important piece of legislation, the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024. I thank the shadow Minister for Veterans for bringing it to the House. I have considered this bill in regard to a number of factors. First of all, in my electorate of Castle Hill, we have a large number of veterans. We have a very strong RSL sub-branch and many of those veterans are members. I know that veterans in my electorate and in the wider north-western part of Sydney are crying out for stronger laws to send a strong message to would-be offenders that they



cannot, and will not, be permitted to deface and damage our war memorials. I acknowledge and thank the Temporary Speaker for his contribution to this debate in his capacity as the member for Oxley. Strong laws send a strong message to offenders that they cannot commit crimes.

As members of this House know, I am a former member of the NSW Police Force, a former police prosecutor and somebody who has been a lawyer for 30-odd years. I have taken that experience into account in considering this legislation. I have taken into account also my experience of some 40-odd years appearing in courts in various capacities as to whether or not this legislation should be passed by this House. I am firmly of the view that this legislation is worth passing by this House. I think all members should get behind it and pass it to send a message to the community.

Schedule 1 of the bill contains four amendments. I will go through those amendments, as well as some of the things the Attorney General said in response to those amendments. First, the bill inserts an amendment to the definition of "war memorial" in section 8 (1) of the Act. As it stands, that definition includes a description of the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, to which the bill inserts:

(ia) the pool of reflection in front of the memorial building referred to in subparagraph (i) ...

That amendment addresses the incident earlier this year when red paint was thrown into the Pool of Reflection. While it is a small amendment, it is important, given that offence committed earlier this year. In his speech, the Attorney General said:

... the Pool of Reflection is already included in the definition of "war memorial" because it is a structure upon the land of the Hyde Park memorial as described in the schedule ...

The Attorney General is correct; it is actually already included. That does not mean we should not be amending the legislation to make it clear to offenders. The Attorney General was admitted as a lawyer in 1998 and I was admitted prior to that. Offenders do not read legislation with the eyes of a lawyer, so legislation needs to be made clear and unambiguous. I think that including the specific words "the pool of reflection" within that definition will clarify the legislation and make it clear that people cannot commit offences in respect of that part of the war memorial. I note that the Commonwealth Attorney-General's website records the following principles when drafting legislation:

Laws that are clear and easy to understand are an essential part of an accessible justice system. Clearly written laws can be better understood, complied with and administered.

I think the legislation that is proposed by the member for Hawkesbury makes it quite clear to all persons that they cannot commit offences within that part of the war memorial. Any suggestion by the Attorney General that it is already there does not really support making the laws clear to would-be offenders.

Second, the bill deletes paragraph (b) from the definition of "war memorial" and creates an additional paragraph (b). As it stands in the Act, paragraph (b) says:

(b) any other place prescribed under subsection (4) as a war memorial for the purposes of this section.

The new paragraph (b) says:

(b) subject to subsection (4), a war shrine, monument, statue or other similar structure or place, and includes a thing or area within the vicinity of the shrine, monument, statue or structure or place. In other words, the proposed amendment is a catch-all provision that includes the types of shrines, monuments, statues and structures defined in the new definition. In my view, it makes a lot of sense to make the legislation much clearer. Third, there is an amendment to alter the sentence provided for the offence under section 8 (2). The alteration will increase the monetary penalty and also add a term of imprisonment. I will return to that amendment shortly, which I consider to be the main one. Fourth, the last proposed amendment is to delete the existing section 8 (4) and add into the Act new sections 8 (4) and (5). Those sections make sense having regard to the earlier proposed amendments to the definition of "war memorial".

I now return to give further consideration to the penalty provisions set out within the amendment to section 8 (2) to increase the monetary penalty from 40 penalty units, which is \$4,400, to 50 penalty units, which is \$5,500. That penalty provision has been in the legislation since 2007, when this House passed the War Memorial Legislation Amendment (Increased Penalties) Bill 2007. It has been in place now for some 27 years without increase.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** No, not if it was 2007.

**Mr MARK HODGES:** You're correct. Thank you for that. I might add it was put in place by the Labor Party, when it increased it to respect our diggers. It needs to be increased now, having regard to the fact that it has been there for more than 17 years. It would seem to me that a small increase in the monetary penalty from \$4,400 to \$5,500 makes a lot of sense. I suggest that is an appropriate amendment to include in the legislation. In his contribution, the Attorney General referred to the fact that there is already a more serious crime found in part 4AD

of the Crimes Act at section 195. Of course, the police generally charge what is the specific offence, and the specific offence here is the damaging or defacing of a shrine or monument. In that respect, amending the legislation in the way the bill provides will send a much clearer message to would-be offenders, and it will also assist members of the NSW Police Force.

I have many veterans in my electorate, and I know that they require that we strengthen the law to protect our monuments. It would also send a message to members of the community that we stand up for the values for which they fought over many, many years. The amendments contained in the bill are important. I urge all members of this House to get behind the amendments and support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:52):** I start by acknowledging the contribution of the member for Oxley to this place and his sincere contribution to debate on the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024. While I myself have never served, I have deep and abiding principles regarding our veterans and the importance of memorialisation of our wars. I have a number of very close friends of all ages who have served in modern and not-so-modern wars and peacekeeping activities. My great uncle died in World War I, on the first day in Pozières. His death has marked my family for generations, in particular my father. This topic is incredibly close to me, and I do not approach it lightly. I approach it sincerely, and I hope all members of this place feel similarly about our war memorials and the importance of them.

I raise a couple of points. I do not think this is just about semantics; this is about clarity. The member for Castle Hill raised the importance of clarity, and I have deep concerns with what is being proposed in the bill and the lack of clarity it has. Our responsibility as members of this place is to bring forward bills and laws that can actually be enacted and enforced. One of the worst things we can ever do is bring forward legislation that cannot be enforced. Over-regulation and under-enforcement is one of my pet peeves, and I see that as a bit problematic with this bill. I know that the shadow Minister has brought the bill forward with the best intentions. However, the proposed changes will create legal uncertainty, and that is deeply problematic.

As I said, every member of this Parliament respects the importance of our war memorials. This is a nonpartisan issue. These are the most sacred sites that we have that stand as enduring tributes to the courage and sacrifice of those who served our nation so that we can be here today having such debates. But protections for these places already exist, and this bill does not do much to enhance them. Instead, it introduces ambiguity, restricts future decision-making and ignores ongoing government efforts to ensure penalties are appropriate and effective.

Under section 8 of the Summary Offences Act 1988, it is already an offence to wilfully damage or deface a war memorial or other protected place. The definition of a "protected place" is incredibly comprehensive, covering shrines, monuments and statues in public places, including war memorials and interment sites. Further, under section 8 (3), it is also an offence to commit any nuisance or offensive act in or on a war memorial or interment site. These laws are very clear. Importantly, they have been able to be enforced effectively. We have seen numerous successful prosecutions under these provisions for a range of offences. That includes things from spray-painting memorials to inappropriate behaviour in spaces of commemoration.

The claim that additional amendments are needed reflects a misunderstanding of how the current laws are operating. The Pool of Reflection in Hyde Park, for example, is already considered part of the Anzac Memorial precinct under the Anzac Memorial (Building) Act 1923. The attempt in the bill to redefine war memorials by including "things or areas within the vicinity" is deeply problematic because it is not only legally ambiguous but also unnecessary. A more questioning and troubling aspect of the bill is the proposal to change the regulation-making power. Under the current law, places can be added as war memorials through regulation, providing flexibility for future recognition. The bill seeks to remove this power and replace it with the ability to exclude places from the definition instead. Quite frankly, this is illogical, and it is a restrictive approach.

The bill also introduces very dangerous ambiguity into this law. By seeking to include the terms "things or areas within the vicinity" of a shrine, monument or statue, the legislation would create uncertainty around what actually constitutes a war memorial. What exactly does "vicinity" mean in this context? Would a nearby park bench suddenly be protected under this provision? Would an adjacent footpath be covered? In this place, our responsibility is to make good laws. In doing that, the laws must be clear and enforceable. Very simply, if the police and the courts struggle to determine what falls under this new definition, then the law would be failing in its purpose. As I said, one of my absolute pet peeves is over-regulation and under-enforcement. We should not be introducing vague terms that complicate enforcement and create unintended consequences.

One of the shortcomings of the bill is the proposed change to penalties. Firstly, I say that in no way, shape or form is anyone claiming that people who deliberately damage, vandalise or desecrate war memorials should not face criminal charges and penalties. No-one at all is claiming that. But serious offences such as the deliberate destruction of war memorials are already covered under the Crimes Act and carry penalties of up to 25 years in

prison. Let us be clear: The Government is already undertaking a review of the adequacy of the penalties for those offences, in consultation with the Office for Veterans Affairs. I am sure that if the review finds that penalties need to be increased, the Government will introduce appropriate amendments. Increasing those fines, without consultation, is reckless. The Opposition's approach, in acting without the necessary consultation, is reckless.

This Government has a very strong record of protecting and maintaining war memorials across New South Wales. Through the Community War Memorials Fund, we provide grants to local organisations for conservation of memorials. Those who seek to claim that our opposition to the bill means that we do not support veterans are deeply wrong. I am a trustee of a new memorial in the eastern suburbs. We also have the Anzac Community Grants Program, which further supports projects that promote understanding of military service and sacrifice. We have invested significantly in the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, with millions of dollars allocated for its preservation and maintenance, and educational initiatives such as the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholarship. Furthermore, our Government is committed to ensuring that veterans of more recent conflicts are also honoured. *[Extension of time]*

We recently announced \$2 million in funding for a new war memorial dedicated to those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, to be located in The Domain in Sydney. That is the kind of forward-thinking, practical action that truly supports our veteran community. The bill is a solution in search of a problem. As I said at the outset, I know that the shadow Minister has the best intentions regarding the bill, but it is deeply problematic. The protections it seeks to introduce already exist, and the legal uncertainties it would create would make enforcement more difficult, not easier. Instead of wasting parliamentary time on legislation that will not enhance protections for our war memorials, we should focus on supporting real initiatives—funding maintenance, improving education and ensuring that our veterans and their families continue to be honoured in meaningful ways and get the support they need. I oppose the bill.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (13:04):** I support the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024 brought before this place by the member for Hawkesbury and shadow Minister for Veterans. I also acknowledge the speech the member for Oxley gave earlier. He speaks from real-world experience. Most of us in this place have never had to go through what he has, serving this country and keeping our democracy safe. I know a number of members of this place have served this country, including the member for Auburn. I thank her for her service.

I am the very proud great-grandson of a light horseman and very proud grandson of two RAAF officers who served during World War II. The people of the Central Coast, as the member for Oxley rightly articulated in his contribution, hold our memorials sacred. They are the most sacred places in our region, and Anzac Day is probably the most sacred day in our nation, surpassing Australia Day. It is because of the compassion and support that our community has for our veterans, for those who have protected our nation and democracy, and for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice, that those memorials are held in such esteem by the majority of people in this country. Sadly, we have seen desecration of these most sacred shrines, in not just New South Wales but other parts of this country. It cuts to the core of the majority of people; that vile behaviour cannot be tolerated in any way, shape or form. It behoves us to bring forward improvements to legislation, if necessary, to ensure that we respect and protect the memorials we have. That is what is expected by the community, and rightly so.

Debating any piece of legislation, from either side of the House, is not a waste of our time. That is what we are here to do. I find comments like that offensive. When members on this side of the House were in government, we debated and amended bills appropriately, without saying that it was a waste of our time. That is what we are supposed to do as legislators. We are the voices of our community. Whether we, rightly or wrongly, agree or disagree on that legislation, it is our job. Rather than criticising this bill for what may be perceived as shortcomings, I suggest that the Government might have sat down with the shadow Minister. The Attorney General, who I know well and who is a very honourable man, and the Minister for Veterans, who I also know well, could have worked with the shadow Minister. If changes were needed to improve the bill or the Government had concerns, they could have brought them forward. I am sure that the shadow Minister would have been happy to work through any amendments deemed necessary.

This is not about pointscore. This is not about the Opposition or the Government. This is about doing what our communities expect—doing the right thing to protect these important memorials right across our communities, whether it be a memorial at an RSL, in a community garden or in a school ground. There is one at Kincumber Public School, inside the school grounds. They need to be protected, and any desecration or vandalism of those memorials needs to be dealt with in the harshest possible ways, to reaffirm that there is zero tolerance.

Obviously, the laws are not effective enough because we see that antisocial and unacceptable behaviour continue. If the laws provided enough deterrence, we would not see the vandalism that has taken place. I say to the member for Coojee that if the laws were effective, we would not have those sorts of incidents. That is why the Opposition and the shadow Minister brought the amendments forward. We, as legislators, amend legislation

in this place all the time. That is our job. Legislation might have been drafted years ago. The Summary Offences Act dates back to 1988. Situations change and evolve and we, as parliamentarians, need to make sure the legislation evolves in a timely manner to meet public expectations. Whether or not a court believes this particular penalty is appropriate, it is not what community expectations dictate. We are here to listen to our communities. Every single MP in this room attends Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services in our electorates, and we are so buoyed and heartened by the incredible turnout and support from people of all ages, all denominations and all religious creeds because it bring us together.

Mr Temporary Speaker, I think you stole a few of my words because I often say that I live in the best region, in the best State and the best country in the world. I am so proud to represent an amazing community. Anzac Day typifies that. The relocation of the Terrigal Foreshore War Memorial was funded by this Government. It was moved from the Salvation Army site to the beachfront at Terrigal and has become truly iconic. Between 7,000 and 8,000 people turn out for the dawn service at the memorial, which is something we should be so proud of. We see people of all ages. It is so wonderful to see so many young people turn out for Anzac Day services. The memorial is in the middle of a chained-off square, which identifies what it is. However, people sit and hang towels on the chains and play around the chains and in the surrounding area. While they are not criminal offences, it shows a lack of respect for the site.

Locals always make a point of telling people not to do that and to show respect for the memorial. That is fine. But should the memorial ever be vandalised, the public outcry would be loud, strong and swift—and appropriately so. That is why this amending bill goes a long way towards sending a very clear message that that type of behaviour will not be tolerated anymore. That is exactly what needs to happen. Sadly, the current legislation does not offer enough of a deterrent, which is why this amending bill has been introduced. I must say I appreciate the respectful tone of debate in the House because this is an issue that we all take incredibly seriously. I have many memorials in my electorate, including some located on school sites. As the shadow Minister for the Central Coast, I also attend other memorials around the region.

The Wyong War Memorial is on a fantastic site. The Entrance War Memorial, the Gosford Cenotaph, the Forresters Beach Retirement Village War Memorial, the Terrigal Foreshore War Memorial, the Breakers Country Club War Memorial, the Davistown RSL War Memorial, the Avoca Beach Anzac Memorial Plaque and the Kincumber War Memorial—which, as I said earlier, is enclosed on the grounds of Kincumber Public School—are just a small number of the incredibly important sites in our Central Coast region. I say with confidence that the majority of people on the Central Coast are disgusted by the vandalism of any war memorial. That is why it is beholden upon us to ensure the bill is passed to send a very clear message. It is not just about the memorials themselves; the surrounding grounds are just as sacred and should be treated with respect and dignity.

Under the current legislation, the maximum penalty for damage or desecration of a war memorial is a \$4,400 fine with no term of imprisonment—none at all. That penalty is a totally inadequate. Our community expects more. When a fine is not imposed, offenders face a community correction order with no minimum specified hours. That is ridiculous. The current penalties are not strong enough. If anything, offenders should be required to spend a year looking after the memorial they defaced. We must stand up for those who have served our country—like Mr Temporary Speaker, my grandparents and my great-grandparents as well as the relatives of so many other members of this House—and say to offenders, "No, you will not do this. You'll never be allowed to do this and, if you do this, you will pay the maximum penalty that we can enforce." The summary offences legislation deals with minor criminal offences that are heard in the Local Court, which is not enough. Desecration is the ultimate insult to our most sacred locations. *[Extension of time]*

The proposed legislative reforms insert a provision into the Act to clarify that areas such as the Pool of Reflection are included as part of the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park and define the war memorial as inclusive of all shrines, statues, monuments and other similar structures and places, unless excluded by regulations. The bill will increase the current maximum of 40 penalty units—which, as I said, is a totally inadequate \$4,400 fine—to 50 penalty units, which is a \$1,100 increase, but, more importantly, it adds a maximum period of imprisonment of two years, or both. That sends a clear message that if people think they can desecrate our most holy sites they will spend time in jail, where they belong. That is exactly the message we should be sending to offenders. It is absolutely abhorrent.

The list of offences is lengthy. In 2019 vandals tampered with over 100 white crosses on the plot outside the Queanbeyan Visitor Information Centre that commemorate those who have died. Before the 2023 dawn service a statue commemorating Governor Lachlan Macquarie—which is located near the Windsor War Memorial—was doused in red paint, with red handprints and graffiti. Red dye was thrown into the Pool of Reflection. A plaque on the war memorial in Turrumurra bearing the names of veterans who passed away in World War I was stolen. On 14 June 2024 the Australian War Memorial was defaced. None of that should have occurred. On 18 March

2024 the cenotaph adjourning the Austinmer surf club was vandalised. We need to send the very clear message that we will not put up with such behaviour.

The shadow Minister is in the Chamber and will be present for the entire debate. If the Attorney General and the Minister for Veterans wish to amend the bill, they should do so. This is about us working together to deliver a better result and meet community expectations to protect our memorials. As I said earlier, memorials may not always be in high-profile locations. I know of one in a primary school that is just as sacred as the beachfront memorial at Terrigal or the Sydney Cenotaph in Martin Place. I also point out that the funding to upgrade war memorials throughout New South Wales was allocated by the former Liberal-Nationals State Government. We are so proud that the former New South Wales Government provided \$5,000 to upgrade existing memorials and \$10,000 for a new memorial. I am delighted that the current Government is continuing that investment because the sites need to be maintained, cared for and treated with love, dignity and respect to honour those who made the ultimate sacrifice. There should be no question about funding memorials.

I am also very proud to have been part of a government that made a record investment in the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park. It is a place where people can spend time and reflect on the reasons for the memorial. They can see soil samples from every single electorate that had a recruitment centre, which is truly humbling. I am so proud to have been part of the Government that delivered that. I implore the current Government to continue that investment to ensure the spectacular Hyde Park memorial remains in pristine condition, because it is a monument to the sacrifice that many thousands of people from right across New South Wales made to ensure that we have the freedoms we enjoy every single day. I encourage every member of this House to seriously consider the content of the amendments and to support community expectations about protecting our war memorials and sacred sites in all New South Wales electorates.

None of us wants to make a private member's statement or a community recognition statement about a memorial in our electorate that has been defaced and the disgust it has caused. Our memorials should never be treated with such disrespect. I commend the member for Hawkesbury, and shadow Minister for Veterans for introducing this amending bill. If Government members have concerns about the bill, I strongly recommend that they consider moving amendments to it. That is why we debate legislation. I urge all members to listen to their communities, because their expectations are quite reasonable. People expect war memorials to be protected at all costs and I expect the Government and all members of this House to do the right thing. I commend the member for Hawkesbury and the bill.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:18):** I thank everyone who has made a contribution to debate on the Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and Other Protected Places) Bill 2024. The Anzac Memorial has a long history in New South Wales, and the Pool of Reflection has always been a part of that memorial. The original memorial to the soldiers was actually Anzac Parade. The soldiers marched down Anzac Parade off to the Gallipoli campaign. They were camped at Moore Park. In fact, the pond in Moore Park remains there because it was used as a mortar site for the First World War before those soldiers moved from there. Indeed, gaslights that used to mark Anzac Parade as an Anzac memorial site for so many people can still be seen but have now been moved across to Centennial Park.

The First World War had such a horrific effect on the people of New South Wales that a permanent memorial needed to be constructed. That is what the Anzac Memorial is. More than anything else, the Pool of Reflection was a place for the mothers to go to wash away their grief and heal their wounds. If anyone suffered after the First World War, it was those mothers whose sons and husbands would never come back, and who would never receive remains of those sons or husbands. I went to the centenaries of Fromelles and Pozières, and Passchendaele, the Third Battle of Ypres, all of which took place in 2016 and 2017.

Some of the stories are so horrific. One is of Private Thomas Hurdis and his brother, John, whose remains were never returned to their mother, Harriet. In fact, Thomas's skull was taken to the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia and was only returned and buried properly after the recent centenary. To her dying day, his mother did not believe that her sons had been killed, because no-one could understand the butchery that was Fromelles and Pozières. She also did not get his payment. She wrote to the army at the time requesting payment, saying, "Surely I need that money more than the army." In reply to a card she received from the army, she wrote:

It was awfully sad that two sons went to the front with the A.I.F and were both dead in less than two years. Now I am all alone in the world.

The Anzac Memorial was such a significant place for mothers. The Pool of Reflection was built and encompassed as part of it so that those who had sacrificed so much for their nation had a place where they could wash away their grief and sorrow and let the water heal them. This bill becomes problematic when looking at what memorials are and how they are structured. I understand that the shadow Minister says, "The Minister could come and talk to me about it," but it is a two-way street. Quite frankly, David Harris, the best Minister for Veterans called David

this place ever had—unlike some of the other Davids that have held it before—is always open to talking to and working with people and would be happy to go forward on that.

The previous speaker raised a point that concerned to me. He talked about red paint on a statue of Governor Macquarie that was near a war memorial. Therein lies the problem with this bill: There is obviously a difference between people's reactions to an incident involving the Governor Macquarie statue and one involving a war memorial that may be further away, when considering what constitutes a war memorial. The statement made by Macquarie about terrorising Aboriginal people obviously still cuts to the quick. The definition of what constitutes a war memorial must be specific. They do not, as the previous member stated, have chains around them. Many of them sit in different types of places such as railway yards, schools and pools.

In fact, Parramatta pool was built as a war memorial. That is the pool that the previous Government decided to pull down and put a stadium over. Originally it would not even provide funds to build a new pool, let alone call it a war memorial pool. Clearly what constitutes a war memorial is very broad. Gardens that surround them, such as the park that surrounds the Lidcombe War Memorial, are large areas, but the whole park becomes a memorial. There is no definition. That is one of the big problems with this bill: It is indecisive about what and where it covers, which causes problems with the law.

There is an ongoing review of war memorials. They have not been reviewed since 2007. I am not trying to be partisan but, quite frankly, the previous Government did have 12 years to look at the issue if it was a problem. I can assure members that I am not being inundated with reports of vandalism of our war memorials. War memorials are very significant in my area because the electorate of Auburn has the largest Korean and Turkish populations in the State. On Anzac Day our war memorials are not just for Australians and our wars. They have become war memorials for conflicts around the world. Both communities attend our Anzac Day services in large numbers, and it is right that they should because, at the end of the day, what happened in the First World War was so horrific.

Two of my great-grandfathers were on the Western Front and one other was at Passchendaele, sent as late as June 1917. They were obviously rounding up the older people, because he was 38 and had four children. He was sent to Belgium. Within six months of arriving in Belgium, his medical records showed "shell-shocked", but he was then sent to the Third Battle of Ypres, Passchendaele, where mustard gas rained down like hell upon those people. The next entry on his medical record is "self-inflicted hand wound". My great-grandfather was very lucky that there was a bloke called General Monash, who is our greatest soldier ever. The British would shoot their wounded soldiers on the spot but Monash made sure every single one of our guys got home. That is why he is our greatest general.

Likewise, my other great-grandfather was in the Battle of Albert, which is, from memory, near Pozieres. He said he had the million-dollar wound: He lost his hand at Albert and got sent home from the front. For him, that meant everything, because he would have died there. My other great-grandfather died shortly afterwards. The Anzac Memorial is still a hugely significant place, because every person who knows what happened to their family in the First World War knows that that was the memorial. It was the women who fought to get it built and it has always been—

**Ms Robyn Preston:** And it needs to be protected.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** Yes, and it is protected. It is all right to say it needs to be protected—

**Ms Robyn Preston:** The penalties are lame.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** It is protected within the Summary Offences Act. It is fine to make that type of statement but it has always been protected in the Act. It is our most significant—

**Ms Robyn Preston:** It is an opt-in option at the moment.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** The member for Hawkesbury will cease interjecting.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** It is our most significant site. I am sorry if the member for Hawkesbury does not appreciate that or want to talk to the current Minister about the review he is undertaking. At the end of the day our war memorials hold a special place in our hearts. We want them protected because they are so significant to our communities. I am confident that the current Minister for Veterans, who is a very good bloke and a very consultative bloke—sorry, I should not say "bloke"; I should say "Minister"—is open to anyone's views on how to improve an Act. But there cannot be an Act in this Parliament that defines so poorly what a memorial is and where the offences start and end. That is hugely problematic. I will leave it there. I am obviously keen to see the Minister's review and what happens there, and I will support it. Everybody in this Parliament wants to see war memorials protected.

**Ms Robyn Preston:** You will put your own bill up and you will ignore mine. That is what you will do.

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ:** I am glad that the member wants to interrupt me, but I have stood at war memorials, when I was in the Australian Regular Army, doing rest on arms reversed and listening to the *Last Post* so, from experience, I think I understand war memorials a bit better. I have also been on the Anzac Memorial trust, so I am well aware of and well versed in what the Acts say and what is covered.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** The time for consideration of general business orders of the day for bills having expired, I set down resumption of the interrupted debate as an order of the day for a later time. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 1.55 p.m.

#### *Members*

### **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY**

At 14:00 the House proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to attend a joint sitting to elect a member to fill a seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. Sam Faraway, resigned.

At 14:30 the House reassembled.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I report that the House met with the Legislative Council in the Legislative Council Chamber to elect a member to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the resignation of the Hon. Sam Faraway, and that Nichole Lorraine Overall was duly elected. I table the minutes of proceedings of the joint sitting. I order that the document be printed.

#### *Motions*

### **CAMDEN VALLEY WAY DEVELOPMENT**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (14:33):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the strong opposition of the Horningsea Park and surrounding community to the proposed road network for the development of the former Trash and Treasure site along Camden Valley Way.
- (2) Notes the community's ongoing concerns regarding increased traffic congestion, lack of amenities and minimal consultation during the development approval process.
- (3) Urges Liverpool Council and developer Trifalga Property Group to consider a left-in, left-out access point along Camden Valley Way to alleviate local traffic impact and address the concerns of residents.

Just under two years ago, this Government was elected with a mandate to fix the mess left by 12 years of neglect by the Coalition.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Members will take their conversations outside the Chamber.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** The Minns Labor Government has hit the ground running in education and health. We are backing our essential workers and ending toll mania. Of course the Government has committed to fixing the housing crisis. It has implemented a suite of measures for planning in this State, including the Housing Delivery Authority—which I asked about earlier today in question time—to ensure that major developments include proper infrastructure before approval. That is very apt, given what we are discussing today. The Government has also implemented the Transport Oriented Development Program to ensure housing growth is linked to major transport hubs and families can travel to work and school and have good places to live. The Government has ensured stronger developer accountability through a suite of reforms introduced by Minister Chanthivong.

Given the way the development system works, there is a long tail and a lag, and development applications and developments that were approved by the previous Government are working their way through the system. That is what we are talking about today. I will provide the House with a bit of history. The site on Camden Valley Way was a bit of a local landmark. It was the home of Trash and Treasure. Anyone who drove down there saw its particular style of architecture. Many of us have been there. I used to go there quite a bit with my father-in-law. He had an attraction to rusty old appliances and nuts and bolts. I would go down there for a very good bacon and egg roll and a coffee in the morning. My wife has done a few second-hand clothing boot sales out of there. Back in 2019, Trash and Treasure closed up. Many years ago it was zoned for residential. Now pretty much all of the surrounding area has been developed. The Camden Valley Way site is the last patch to be developed. The area was developed throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The Trash and Treasure site is a bit of a leftover.

The road network in the area is as it was in the 1990s. Today we know much more about planning. People have changed their habits. The housing crisis means that people live at home with their parents for longer. There

are more cars per dwelling. Effectively, the road network is inappropriate. The approved development is proposing that the cars from 124 residential lots will travel not from Camden Valley Way, where the current entrance is, but instead into the surrounding streets. I have received multiple complaints from residents about the current traffic situation.

If the development adds 124 houses, with two to three cars each, into the neighbourhood, it is going to cause absolute deadlock. I have been campaigning against the proposal since at least 2022, before I was elected to this place. At the time, a local resident got a petition going. I also ran a petition, which was signed by hundreds of people who want the Camden Valley Way entrance to remain open. They are not opposed to housing—they knew the area was going to include housing and would love to have more neighbours—but they are concerned about the traffic network. I have written to the developer. I have not received a response, which is very disappointing. I call on both the council and the developer to reconsider. Earthworks are underway.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** You should make representations to Transport for NSW. It's a State road. Do your job and make representations to Transport for NSW and the right Minister.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. If the member for Holsworthy continues to interject, she will be placed on two calls to order. Her interjections are totally inappropriate.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** I note the interjections of the member for Holsworthy. You would think she would have an understanding of how the planning system works. An amendment to the development application is required to change the way the road network works. As part of the amendment, Transport for NSW would consult to see if that was appropriate. But that has not happened. Residents are very concerned about what will happen, and they want action. That is why I have moved the motion today. Further to the lack of response to or consultation with the community, I have heard reports of dust being blown across the site, which is very concerning. There are always requirements to water down the dust to make sure that it does not blow through.

More disturbing than that is cracking in nearby homes. I am still looking into it; I have written to council and to Trifalga. I have seen the photos and I hope that we have a responsible developer that wants to do right by the people of Horningsea Park by leaving a viable, thriving community. I ask all members to support good development through the State Government's planning reforms. Unfortunately, over the next few years, I think we will see a long tail of developments that could have been better as a result of the poor planning system we inherited. But make no mistake: We are fixing it, as we fixed the transport system—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** —as we fixed health—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order!

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** —and as we have fixed New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The member for Leppington will come to order. The member for Oatley will cease interjecting. He immediately started interjecting and pointing his finger as he entered the Chamber. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. I call the member for Holsworthy to order for the first time. The member for Leppington has 11 seconds left to speak.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** I make a very reasonable request: I am happy to have a meeting. My phone number can be found on the internet. I ask Trifalga and Liverpool City Council to sit down with me to work issues out for the good of residents.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Before I call the member for Davidson, I remind the member for Terrigal that he is on one call to order. The member for Oatley is on one call to order and the member for Holsworthy is on one call to order. Government members will be called to order also if they continue to interject. All members will remain silent and listen carefully to the debate.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (14:41):** I do not oppose the motion moved by the member for Leppington. He clearly brings a local issue to the Parliament, as all members of Parliament do, to raise concerns from and advocate for their constituents. But there is a big difference between those opposite and members on this side: When members are in government, they are on the same side as the decision-makers. When an issue such as this comes across their desks, members opposite can go to the Minister for Roads or the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to advocate for their community and get actual results, because that is what being in government is about. Instead, the member for Leppington moves a motion in the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Liverpool is very close to being called to order, as is the member for Leppington.



**Mr MATT CROSS:** I am not sure whether the member for Leppington is a yimby or a nimby, but I read the following quote. "It is absolutely crucial, and we know that part of this is an attempt by the Government to tackle this nimbyism that is gripping Sydney. It is not nimby, it is 'now in my backyard'. It is time we backed urban consolidation in New South Wales." Who said that? It was Premier Minns. Now we have a motion before the House from the member for Leppington that asks that the House:

Notes the community's ongoing concerns regarding increased traffic congestion, lack of amenities, and minimal consultation during the development approval process.

It sounds like the member for Leppington is not on the same page as the Premier. He is off message. It sounds like he is a member of what Premier Minns has called the nimby faction. It sounds exactly like what is going on in my community with transport oriented development, which I oppose. When it comes to planning, we need more supply, which members opposite are overlooking, with the lowest building approval levels in 12 years. We need more consultation with the local community because it should have a strong say in planning. We also need to invest in absolutely necessary infrastructure for the future: roads, rail, hospitals, schools, water and green space. I could go on. I note the advocacy of locals like Lejla Kalender, who is fighting for the community and has even started a change.org petition, to her credit. I note her comments about this development: that the main entry to the subdivision will cut her quiet street of Taubman Drive. She says:

The street is narrow and it won't be able to withhold the extra cars coming through and parking on the road already takes up a lot of space.

The community member rightly has a lot of concerns about this development. I acknowledge that. But regarding this motion, I am still confused. The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces said, "It is the nimby versus the yimby." He then went on to criticise members of the House and nimbys by saying, "They would lock young people out of their suburbs." Like I said earlier, clearly the member for Leppington is a member of what the Minister and the Premier describe as the nimby faction of the Parliament. I also note he is a member of another faction called the Fergs, named after the Ferguson family. The member for Leppington is a very ambitious member, and there is nothing wrong with that. There is now a vacancy in the Cabinet for a left-wing faction member. If we think about who could go into Cabinet, I of course want to back the weakest candidate. It is not the member for Campbelltown because he is a member of the wrong faction.

**Mr Mark Coure:** Linda Voltz.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** Linda Voltz—I acknowledge that interjection. She is standing up against the Government for the good golfers of Moore Park. She is too strong to be beaten.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Point of order—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** He didn't mention you—is that the problem?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! The member for Kiama entered the Chamber and started interjecting immediately.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** I did so deliberately.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I am deliberately telling the member for Kiama to remain silent. He should not take lessons from the member for Oatley or he will be in trouble. What is the point of order?

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** I could listen to the member for Davidson speak about the glorious Ferguson left, but I question its relevance.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I uphold the point of order. The member for Davidson will confine his comments to the Camden Valley Way development.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** I continue to speak about what the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has called the yimby versus nimby faction. We know the member for Leppington is a member of one of those factions and is also a member of the Ferg faction. We also know that I want to back in the weakest candidate for the Cabinet position. We know that it cannot be the member for Blue Mountains, because she has been a great advocate when it comes to cutting transport services in her electorate. But when it comes to planning, it is disappointing that members opposite are not on message. They claim they are standing up for their communities but, like the member for Holsworthy has said, they should go to the Minister for Roads or the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to get it sorted instead of moving motions in the House.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (14:49):** I speak in support of the motion. Camden Valley Way is a major road that connects Camden to Liverpool via Leppington. The member for Davidson accused the member for Leppington, and I assume people in the surrounding areas, of being nimbys. One thing that we can be very

proud of is that we have well and truly done our fair share of developments in the area. My electorate has been the fastest growing electorate every year for the past 10 years, and it has had a 200 per cent growth in housing.

**Mr Mark Coure:** See? We did build something.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** No, you did not. You did not build schools like Gregory Hills Public School. You did not build roads or any rail links. Those opposite had an opportunity to connect Leppington station to Macarthur station. That was a beautiful opportunity with greenfields all the way from Leppington station to Macarthur station through Oran Park. Through inadequacy, or maybe because they fell asleep at the wheel, that did not happen. All of that land has sold, and that opportunity has gone. In 2023 the people of Camden spoke quite loudly about the way in which the former Liberal-Nationals Government treated the people in our areas. As the member for Leppington said, we are seeing the long tail of developments that are still coming through.

These developments were being approved with absolutely no regard for the housing infrastructure that would be needed. People in Mount Annan will happily tell you about the hundreds of townhouses that were put up with zero access to more roads. We suddenly had a complete logjam. There was no development of public transport, roads, public infrastructure or communal infrastructure. In many cases it was left to community members who had to fight and fight and fight. At the time, they were told by Ministers, "You do not need this because you do not have enough people out here." There is this idea that we do not want young people to come to our area. I inform the House that the average age in my electorate is 33, and the largest age group in my electorate is zero- to five-year-olds.

I do not know if there is something in the water, but I assume that people are either moving to my area with children or they are having children. We are trying to play a desperate game of catch-up where we are often having to deal with developments that were not done in an acceptable way. They are not being done as well as we would like them to be. We need to work with every level of government. In a hearing the other day, someone described it to me as a triathlon. Sometimes we need to work. We have been working with the Federal Government to get roads like Fifteenth Avenue upgraded. We continue to work on roads and infrastructure, but it is a very large ship to turn around after 12 long years of inadequacy. As hard as we are trying, sometimes some of these things are being left out.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:53):** I think some members have been a bit harsh to the member for Leppington. Members are entitled to come into this House and present a motion that they feel strongly about on behalf of their electorate. I would not call the member for Leppington a hypocrite, but others might. The issue that people may have with him is that when the Government's position is growth at all costs, and then he opposes growth, it makes him look like he is trying to have very long legs and walk both sides of the fence. The other day I noticed that my colleague the member for South Coast was in Narrawallee with a petition opposing development in her electorate whilst in this very building she was asking the Premier questions about how the Government was getting on with growth.

The reality is that this Government is talking about infrastructure, but it is not delivering it. In fact, it is cutting the capital budget. It does not matter whether it is cutting rail projects, like the Toolijooa passing loop, or failing to deliver projects like upgrades to the Princes Highway and other roads. It is talking about growth, but it does not have reform that ensures infrastructure alongside that growth. I have been in this place long enough to remember a little thing called part 3A, which some members may remember. The former Government had to get rid of that provision because it allowed the Minister extraordinary power.

Calderwood—in a beautiful part of my electorate—was meant to come after a major development that had been planned for West Dapto. In comes a \$40,000 donation from the applicant, and what happened? There

was a part 3A application and a tick of approval by Kristina Keneally. Now we have an issue with infrastructure backlogs in that community, which they are experiencing because of a lack of planning. I commend the member for having a go on behalf of his community, but the reality is that this Government is saying "growth, growth, growth," without ensuring infrastructure alongside that growth. That balance needs to be achieved with meaningful planning reform.

We also need to be a bit more honest about immigration levels, which no-one wants to talk about. We have to tap the brakes on immigration because too many people are coming in and forcing up rents. They are making it harder for young people to buy. We should be having that conversation with the Commonwealth. At the same time, we should be banning foreign overseas developers from buying Australian land. There are so many countries that I cannot buy land in. All of these things are having a perverse impact on the market, but of course the Government's paymasters, The Greens, will not let it touch any of this stuff. We know who really runs this Government: When Labor is in office, The Greens are in power. They are running this State with their woke

nonsense and agendas. That is why we will not see anything meaningful for the great State of New South Wales other than the student council glitterati sitting opposite.

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** We're glitterati!

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Yes, indeed you are. The member for Camden is a very glittering member. Whilst I appreciate the advocacy of members, it needs to be fair dinkum. We need a government that will not just talk about more homes but actually deliver them. Members opposite have not met a single housing target, which they set. They cannot even do the paint-by-numbers job they set out for themselves. Why would anyone take this Government seriously when it comes to planning and development? Not only are members opposite failing their own targets, they are also cutting infrastructure and putting drivers on driverless trains. You fools are failing the people of New South Wales.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I was not impressed by the final comment from the member for Kiama.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** I withdraw that statement.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** I call the member for Liverpool. I hope her contribution will actually be about the motion.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (14:57):** I hope so too, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am not surprised that the Opposition has so far totally missed speaking about south-west Sydney, given that the member for Davidson led for the Opposition in debate. He is certainly a very good member, but the Davidson electorate is very far from Horningsea Park, from the Leppington electorate and from south-west Sydney entirely. A very telling aspect of the debate so far is that it has been led by Opposition members whose electorates are nowhere near south-west Sydney. I think that is why the communities of south-west Sydney spoke very loudly at the 2023 election and turfed out the former Liberal-Nationals Government. That is why we picked up the seats of Camden and Leppington. We almost picked up the seat of Holsworthy, but do not worry—we will do that in 2027. As local as this situation is, it is a telling example of where the community—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You've got no chance.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** You're betraying the people of south-west Sydney.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** She's going to increase her margins.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** Yes, we will increase the margins in favour of Labor.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. I call the member for Holsworthy to order for the second time.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** The member for Davidson highlighted aspects of poor planning from a previous government that was ruled by nimby's. The current Government is in favour of transport oriented development. We favour putting development in communities where infrastructure already exists, unlike the communities of Leppington and Camden, which have had to grapple with putting in often inadequate infrastructure after the fact—whether it is schools, hospitals, water or any other essential infrastructure that our communities depend on, day in and day out. The member for Davidson can complain about—

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Oh, please. You don't know what you're talking about.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** You never saw a development application you wouldn't vote for.

**Mrs Tina Ayyad:** Never knew one—every single booth in Liverpool. You don't even know what you're talking about.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** Madam Deputy Speaker, is that conduct appropriate?

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I direct the member for Holsworthy to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the conclusion of the debate. The member for Oatley will come to order. The member for Davidson will come to order.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Holsworthy left the Chamber at 15:00.]*

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** I find it quite telling and coincidental that the member for Holsworthy has decided to create such a ruckus as to cause herself to get kicked out of the Chamber for the remainder of this debate, because she has nothing to say to the communities of south-west Sydney. She has no comfort to give the communities of south-west Sydney.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** The member for Liverpool will resume her seat.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 76. The member for Holsworthy has left the Chamber, and this is not a debate about her. She should not be attacked except by way of substantive motion.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I uphold the point of order. I hope the member for Kiama will also adhere to that standing order in the future. The member for Liverpool will return to the substance of the motion.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** I will return to the substance of the motion, which is about how the former Liberal-Nationals Government neglected south-west Sydney for 12 long years. That has resulted in a situation where our communities have to deal with dust issues and traffic congestion and have to catch up on planning and infrastructure. Unfortunately, the debates around nimbyism, yimbyism, the planning system et cetera are a cold comfort to the communities that had to deal with that neglect over 12 years. There was no greater example of the condescension and neglect by the previous Government than the COVID pandemic, when the communities of south-west Sydney were treated with absolute disdain. The unique needs of our community were ignored.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (15:02):** I support the motion, which is about community expectations. It clearly enunciates that the community feels that it needs more time or more consultation in the development approval process. Any community deserves to have input into what the needs of that community are, whether it is schools or roads—particularly, in this case, Camden Valley Way—and they need developers to listen. Developers need them to take on board community concerns and not just give lip-service to what they have to say, because they have real lived experience. I commend the member for Leppington for moving the motion and putting forward the concerns of his community. It is not about not wanting development in our backyard.

Everyone realises that we have a housing crisis, but I correct the record by noting that the Government has a plan. We have put forward proposals, we have them on the board and we have done land audits. We absolutely are getting on with the job, but with that development comes the necessary infrastructure. I applaud the member for Leppington for bringing the motion forward, putting his concerns on record and advocating for his community, who have been overlooked for a long time. We have really shouldered the burden of housing in western and south-western Sydney. I take on board what the member for Camden said about the growth in her electorate year on year, without schools, roads, hospitals or public transport. Those things have to happen side by side; they cannot happen in isolation. I conclude by congratulating the member for Leppington on moving the motion.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:04):** In reply: I thank the member for Davidson, the member for Camden, the member for Kiama, the member for Liverpool and the member for Penrith. Unfortunately, I did not get to thank the member for Holsworthy. There are quite a few words in this motion—it is a good, well-written motion. If members opposite read it slowly out loud, that might help with their comprehension. This is an issue about local transport. As I said during my initial contribution, the people of Horningsea Park have no issue with additional houses being built there. They always knew houses were coming. It is essentially a local transport issue. I think members opposite saw the word "development" in paragraph (1) and gravitated to that. The dollar signs spun in their eyes, worse than a bunch of Liberal Party preselectors up in the Hills shire. But it is not about development; it is about transport.

Essentially, all the motion asks is that we sit down and listen to the community to see if we can work out what to do about an oncoming traffic disaster. We will have hundreds of cars every day, on top of the hundreds of cars that are already there. We have schools down the road, small streets and a legacy of poor planning. We can do one of two things. We can twiddle our thumbs and say, "Oh, geez, poor planning—can't do anything about that", or we can say, "We know more now." We know there will be some issues, and we can make some changes to provide better outcomes for existing residents and new residents, whom I happily welcome into Leppington. I call on Liverpool council and Trifalga property group to go forward with what is an obvious, commonsense solution—that is, to retain the left-in, left-out access point along Camden Valley Way. That will ensure an additional traffic point to get people onto a main road and avoid gridlock when those hundreds of houses go in.

As I said in my opening contribution, the previous Government left us a legacy of emergency departments in crisis, a record-low number of teachers, essential workers crippled by a wages cap, toll mania and a poor planning system. We are methodically working our way through that legacy. Unfortunately, in this case, we cannot go back and fix the planning system. I thank all members who contributed to debate, but I am very disappointed in those opposite. They went through their caucus room—and I know it is getting smaller and smaller—and asked, "Is there anyone here from south-west Sydney?" They could not find anyone from south-west Sydney to contribute to debate on this important issue, not just for Horningsea Park and Leppington but for the entire region—whether it is Camden, Liverpool or even Holsworthy, where I know they have some issues with development and traffic.

But it is really disappointing that once again, when it comes down to it, members opposite do not care about Western Sydney and especially about south-western Sydney. I thank members for their contributions and look forward to overwhelming support for this very important motion.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### STATE DEBT

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:09):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the Government delivered the largest ever net debt in 2023-24 of \$96 billion.
- (2) Notes the Government has forecast to deliver the largest ever net debt in 2027-28 of \$139 billion.
- (3) Condemns the Government for losing control of the budget, with no clear framework on public sector wages.
- (4) Recognises that only the Liberals and The Nationals can manage the New South Wales economy.

I acknowledge the packed public gallery! This is a very important issue: the largest ever debt in New South Wales history.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Watch out, this is high risk. Put him on a call now.

**Mr MARK COURE:** We do not need audience participation. Which party has delivered the largest ever debt in New South Wales history? It is the Labor Party. I speak on one of the most pressing financial issues facing our State: the spiralling debt and deficit under Labor. Just last year New South Wales recorded its highest ever net debt of \$96 billion. The outlook only gets worse. In 2027-28 the net debt is set to reach—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Liverpool is perilously close to being placed on a call to order. As the member for Oatley said, he does not need audience participation from the members behind him. Members will offer their support silently.

**Mr MARK COURE:** By 2027-28 the net debt is set to reach a staggering \$139 billion, with no clear plan to rein it in. Gross debt will hit \$200 billion. That is more than 20 per cent of the State's economy. This is not just a number in a budget paper; it is a crisis in the making. It means high interest payments, less funding for essential services and a weakening economy for generations to come. We are seeing world-leading deficits in New South Wales and many other Labor-led States across Australia. Australia's big-spending State governments are recording some of the largest deficits in the developing world, putting State debt on track to triple by 2028 relative to pre-pandemic levels, as many rating agencies have already warned.

There are deficits as far as the eye can see. The numbers paint a clear picture of financial mismanagement by those opposite. There was a \$9.7 billion deficit in 2023-24, a \$3.6 billion deficit in 2024-25 and continued deficits every single year into the future. Yet this Government is telling us that it is stabilising the debt. What is actually being stabilised is a steep upward trajectory of endless borrowing, higher taxes and more debt. By 2027-28 interest payments alone will cost \$8.6 billion per year, which is more than double what we paid just five years ago. That is \$8.6 billion not being spent on schools, hospitals, roads, transport, infrastructure or cost-of-living measures, for that matter. This is Labor's financial legacy: debt, deficit and broken promises.

We have the highest taxing State Labor Government in history. Where is all the money going? New South Wales is not short on revenue. The rivers of gold continue to flow into government coffers. But, despite record tax collections, the Labor Government is spending without restraint and governing without a plan. Where is the plan to return to surplus? There isn't one. Where is the plan to manage the rising cost of expenses? There isn't one. Where is the plan to reduce the waste? There isn't one. Instead we see the same pattern that has played out time and again under Labor: a government that racks up massive debt with no real plan to pay it back. Who foots the bill? It is the people of New South Wales. It is the working families, the small businesses and the workers in New South Wales who will face higher taxes and fewer services as a result.

Why does this matter? Some might argue that debt is just part of managing the economy. Yes, debt can be used responsibly to invest in critical infrastructure, to grow the economy and to improve the lives of citizens. But that is not what is happening in New South Wales. Labor is not borrowing to build a better future; it is borrowing to cover its inability to manage a budget. When the Coalition was in government, we delivered record infrastructure without sending debt skyrocketing. We built new schools, hospitals and transport links while keeping the State's finances strong. Some 180 health infrastructure projects were delivered and 130 were underway on our watch. Members on this side delivered 250 new and upgraded schools. We delivered light rail, the metro and many other massive transport projects.

Under the Liberals, we had a strong plan, a responsible budget, a clear framework for wages and disciplined spending. Under Labor, what do we have? We have debt, deficit and economic chaos. This Government has lost control of the budget. It is plunging our State into record levels of debt, with no credible pathway out. The people of New South Wales deserve responsible economic management. They deserve a government that invests wisely, spends responsibly and plans for the future, not one that racks up billions of dollars with no strategy to repay it. Members on this side of the Chamber have the experience and the track record to restore fiscal responsibility in New South Wales. Only we can manage the budget, ensure responsible investment and secure our economic future. It is time to hold the Labor Government to account. It is time to stop the waste, stop the reckless spending and start delivering real financial stability for New South Wales.

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (15:16):** Let us be very clear about one fact that will override all that is said in the Chamber today: The Minns Government inherited a budget in complete disrepair. The only explanation I have for the motion moved by the member for Oatley is that on 26 March, the day after the 2023 election, the member was born anew. He woke up. He had been narrowly re-elected—I congratulate the member on the work he does for his electorate—but his party had lost government. He breathed a sigh of relief and then went to the office to clean it out. In his cleaning out, he got his copies of the budget books going all the way back to 2011 and threw them in the bin. He was born anew.

The member for Oatley should know—as I am sure all members know—that no incoming government inherits a zero position. They all inherit a position from the former government. They inherit a budget position and budget settings from a former government with different priorities and different means of addressing its ideological position in the State. That is what happened in 2023. Members opposite left New South Wales saddled with the largest debt in the State's history. Let us recall that in 2011 the incoming Liberal-Nationals Government inherited a gross State debt of \$22 billion.

In 2023, after 12 long years of Liberal-Nationals management of the budget and management of the State, the incoming Labor Government inherited the largest debt in the State's history: \$130 billion in gross State debt. Let that sink in: A gross State debt of \$130 billion is what Labor inherited in 2023, along with a budget deficit, according to the pre-election budget update, of \$12 billion, and budget settings that would see gross State debt reach \$188 billion-plus by 2026. The reality is that the incoming Labor Government inherited a budget position which reflects serial and compounding debt going back to 2019.

Let us recall budgets past: The 2022-23 budget had a printed deficit of \$10.5 billion. That increased to a \$12 billion deficit by the time of the pre-election budget update. In a very short period the deficit in the printed document had blown out from \$10.5 billion to \$12 billion; in 2021-22, a \$15 billion deficit; in 2020-21, a \$7 billion deficit; in 2019-20, before the uptick in pandemic spending, a \$7 billion deficit. We have to go back to 2018 for the last surplus budget in this State, \$1.4 billion surplus on that date. Where was the member for Oatley during all those years? Where was he in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023? Where was his concern about debt and deficit then? It was nowhere. He was on the front bench, and he had big ambitions for himself and his party.

What has the Government done with that position? In Labor's first budget, we trimmed the deficit we inherited. We inherited a deficit of \$12 billion and we trimmed it to \$10 billion. In our second budget, we cut that deficit to \$5 billion. We more than halved the deficit in two budgets. That is what budget repair looks like. We are determined to continue the process of budget repair so we can deliver the public services the people of New South Wales want, rely on and deserve. Over the forward estimates, we are holding expenses growth to below 2 per cent. That is real restraint. Revenue is projected to grow 3 per cent plus. If expenses are growing less than 2 per cent and revenue is growing more than 3 per cent, that is a sustainable budget position. That is the pathway back to surplus: getting the debt down over time.

Members will recall that between 2018 and 2022 expenses growth under the Liberal-Nationals Coalition, the masters of budgets, was 9.5 per cent. If we take out pandemic spending—and that is fair—the target for spending under Coalition budgets was 5.6 per cent. That is how it was trending under the former Liberal-Nationals Government. It stoked inflation at every budget. Labor's settings have taken pressure off inflation in this State. Remember, the Reserve Bank's comfortable inflation band is 2 per cent to 3 per cent. If the State Government is getting its spending increase below 2 per cent, that is not putting pressure on inflation. That is having a positive outcome for our community. Our budget settings are on track to reduce gross State debt over the forward estimates by \$9 billion so that by 2026, by our settings, gross State debt will be under \$180 billion. Under the Coalition, it was on track to be \$188 billion-plus.

We have done this without privatisation and without a cap on the wages of the State's public servants. That is what responsible economic management looks like: the calm and methodical approach of Treasurer Daniel Mookhey to reduce waste, investing in the must-haves, and reviewing the budget, line by line, through our comprehensive expenditure review led by finance Minister Houssos. All of our work is underpinned by Labor values, to get debt under control, and not just for the sake of it. It is not done simply to say, "That's a good set of

books." It is to invest in the public services the people of New South Wales want, rely on and deserve. Our investment is paying off. We have more teachers and more policemen. We have more face-to-face teaching in our schools. We have committed to safe staffing levels in our hospitals.

The Opposition's attempt to condemn the Government is nothing more than an attempt to rewrite history. The people of New South Wales deserve a government that invests in them, strengthens our public services and restores fiscal responsibility. That is exactly what the Minns Labor Government is doing. This motion should be rejected. I foreshadow that we will move an amendment. I ask the House to support that amendment and to reject this motion.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (15:23):** I am proud to support the motion of the member for Oatley. I know that the member for Oatley has definitely read the budget papers, and he knows the importance of the budget for New South Wales households. I will make some introductory remarks about how important the economy is to New South Wales and its people. Firstly, a strong economy is central to everything, and we in the Liberal Party know and understand that. Secondly, only with a strong economy can we make sure we are investing in the infrastructure and services that our State needs and deserves. Finally, when it comes to the economy, only the Liberal Party knows the work, discipline and focus that is required to make sure that the budget is full of growth and that we are not burdening households and, in particular, small businesses.

When it comes to net debt in New South Wales—and the member for Oatley has articulated it very well—the Australian Labor Party has overseen the largest debt in the history of New South Wales over two budgets. I will say that again: The Labor Party in New South Wales has overseen, in two budgets, the largest debt ever in the State's history. When Labor came to government, as members opposite have rightfully pointed out, there was net debt from COVID. But Labor has taken that level of net debt and increased it—and it continues to increase. I prepared this graph in my office. It shows the Liberal Party paying down Labor's debt from 1995 to 2011. We actually had \$10 billion of negative debt. We had a pandemic, but we are now seeing the Australian Labor Party increase those debt levels to be the largest ever in history.

I am happy to read the budget papers, but the midyear economic statement said, "Gross debt is projected to be \$199.9 billion by June of 2028, in line with the 2024-25 Budget projections." The Australian Labor Party will be overseeing the largest net debt in history. I have some interesting quotes that I will share with the House. The first reads, "It would be grossly reckless, if you were the government of today, to rack up the largest debt the State has ever seen in its entire history." Who said that? Chris Minns. The next quote reads, "The idea that some future generation will have to pay off this debt, it just doesn't occur to them." Who said that? Chris Minns. Another quote reads, "New South Wales will pay more each year in interest on the State's massive debt than it spends on New South Wales police and TAFE combined, Premier Chris Minns has revealed."

The interest payments on debt is \$7 billion, which is more than those two agencies combined. That is completely outrageous. That means the interest expenses we are borrowing will increase by \$453 billion by 2027-28. One might say that debt does not matter, but it absolutely does matter. More debt means higher interest rates, which means higher cost of living for the families and businesses of New South Wales. Government has a responsibility to the taxpayer and to future generations to do everything it can to lower debt.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:27):** I am delighted to make a contribution to debate on the motion of the member for Oatley. I thank him for bringing it to the House so we can yet again display the incompetence of those opposite. They were the architects of the debt, deficit and destruction left to Labor when it came to government in March 2023. The previous Government left a deficit in excess of \$180 billion. They left the legacy of those three Ds—debt, deficit and destruction—but they will also be remembered for selling, slashing and sacking. That is what they did to the public service. They sold off everything. I have said before, they would sell their own dog. The reality is, they sold off revenue-raising assets that we no longer have. But it got worse. They then went on a spending spree like a drunken sailor. The economy of a sub-Saharan country was in better shape than the New South Wales economy left to Labor. It was absolutely appalling.

The sad thing about all of this is that our local businesses and local families continue to pay the price. We have a very astute Treasurer and a very diligent and honest Premier, who is dealing with the New South Wales economy whilst also trying to deliver services that people need and deserve. Whether it is nurses, police or teachers, all of our Ministers and, indeed, the broader Government are focused on that, whilst we continue to navigate our way through debt recovery and getting the economy back on track. We know that if we do not get the budget right now, there will be long-term ramifications.

I have spoken to many stakeholders in my electorate and they understand the simple fact of the legacy that we were left by members opposite. They have no credibility in this space at all. They are a bit like a scratch lottery ticket when it comes to the New South Wales economy. You pick up the ticket and think, "This is great." Then you scratch the surface and are terribly disappointed. But you do not have to scratch too far to find that

disappointment, because the people of New South Wales—workers, families and everyone—are living it every day. Sadly, they are the ones suffering.

It might be appropriate for the member for Oatley to bring this motion forward. He is a member who I know works very hard in his electorate. But the reality is that his motion is totally inconsistent with fact and, at best, leaves most of those facts out of the motion. The 2024-25 budget included \$8.9 billion of targeted assistance, including toll relief, energy bill rebates, bulk-billing incentives and stamp duty concessions for people buying their first home. That assistance can make a real difference for families. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting all words after "House", instead inserting:

- (1) Notes that under the Minns Labor Government gross debt is projected to be \$9 billion lower by June 2026 than was projected in the 2023 pre-election budget update.
- (2) Notes the former Liberal-Nationals Government left New South Wales with the largest ever debt and budgeted with two biggest ever blowouts in the State's history.
- (3) Recognises that the Minns Labor Government's investment in public sector wages is already delivering returns for the community by reducing teacher vacancies, boosting police recruitment and more.
- (4) Notes that the Minns Labor Government's responsible approach to financial management has delivered these public sector wage increases while also bringing down the State's deficit from \$10.6 billion to \$4.9 billion.

I urge the House to support the amendment and put credible facts back into this debate.

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (15:32):** The Minns minority Labor Government is failing the people of New South Wales because it is failing to manage the economy. Our State gross debt is projected to reach nearly \$200 billion by 2027-28. The interest repayments alone on that debt will be \$8.5 billion per year in 2027-28. That is nothing off the principal; it is \$8.5 billion just to pay the interest on the debt. That is more than we spend each year on police, Fire and Rescue and other emergency services. Just to pay the interest on the debt, the Government will need to either make massive cuts, like cutting the entire police, fire and emergency services budgets, or raise taxes on families. Every family in New South Wales will need to pay an additional \$2,500 per year just so the Minns minority Government can pay the interest on its debt. Every family will be \$2,500 worse off.

That money will need to be raised through higher stamp duty, land taxes, higher payroll taxes and an ever-increasing reliance on poker machine revenue. Those are taxes that flow through to families. They will be feeling the impact of increased prices at the shops, increased prices for services and an increased cost of rent and housing. The people of New South Wales are already frustrated by rising prices, and it is going to make things worse. Most concerning, Government overspending is focused on short-term costs, not long-term infrastructure. There is no spending we can see that will grow the State economy through productivity improvements. To put it in business terms, this debt is akin to credit card debt to make this month's payroll work.

There is a lot to be said about the position that the Minns Government found itself in, but it is deteriorating that position significantly. The Minns minority Government is mismanaging the economy through more taxes, more deficits and more debt. Before the election, Chris Minns said that his union wage deals would not cost the people of New South Wales a cent. They would all be funded through productivity offsets. That was the critical promise that he made to the people of New South Wales. It was the core of his message about how he would manage the budget and his economic credibility.

But the Premier betrayed the people of New South Wales and he broke that promise. The Premier effectively handed the keys to the Treasury over to the unions. Not a cent in productivity offsets has been identified by the Minns Labor Government. The size of the debt is an issue of intergenerational injustice. It is a debt that will have to be repaid by young people and young families. This is the most critical thing: No government can claim any moral standing when its enduring legacy is a structural debt that forces our kids to choose between taxes they cannot afford and a healthcare system that they deserve. That will be the legacy of the Minns minority Labor Government.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (15:35):** I support the amendment of the member for Campbelltown. If the original motion proves anything, it is that the Opposition has an impressive talent for selective memory. Were Opposition members asleep for those 12 long years? Talk about a coalition of Rip Van Winkles. They talk about debt as if they did not hand us the biggest debt in New South Wales history, leaving their mess behind for us to fix. Remind us which government lost the triple-A credit rating from Standard and Poor's, which has called out and acknowledged the fiscal mess we inherited? Opposition members want to condemn us for poor fiscal management as if they were not the ones who delivered two record budget blowouts and their legacy of a \$7 billion black hole of unfunded programs. The facts are an inconvenient truth for them, so let us remind them, yet again. They set gross debt to hit a record \$188.2 billion by 2026. They left us a \$10.6 billion deficit. They froze public



sector wages, causing a workforce crisis and deterioration of our essential services. And now, they want to condemn us for fixing their mess.

The amendment put forward by my colleague the member for Campbelltown sets the record straight. It acknowledges that the Minns Government has done the hard work of budget repair, keeping spending tight and focusing on the things that matter most to the people of New South Wales. We have lowered projected gross debt by \$9 billion, and that is helping us to save on interest repayments so we can put that money back into the essential services our communities rely on. We have also given public sector workers their biggest pay rise in over a decade, removing the Opposition's wages cap for good.

Under our industrial bargaining framework, we have signed multi-year agreements with more than 250,000 of the 400,000 public sector workers in the State, giving them the certainty they deserve. Because of that, we now have more teachers in schools, more police on the beat and more paramedics saving lives. We are building more health infrastructure and upgrading our hospitals. Just this month, thousands of students across New South Wales started term one in brand-new or upgraded facilities at 18 schools across our State. That is what delivering for New South Wales looks like, and we are doing all of that while bringing the deficit under control—down from the \$10.6 billion we inherited to \$4.9 billion.

This Government is making responsible fiscal choices. Those opposite made reckless ones. I will spotlight just one example. Previous analysis by the New South Wales Auditor-General from the last five years of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government shows it spent more than \$1 billion on external consultants, which was done with inadequate procurement and management policies in place. Let us put that in perspective: That is a rate of one consultant engagement every working hour for five years straight. It is unbelievable. Do not even get me started on buying ferries that do not operate at night, fit under bridges or go backwards. How about buying trains that do not fit the tracks or that are too wide to go through tunnels? What a monumental waste of taxpayer funds, given that those projects required billions of dollars to fix.

The Opposition selectively forgot about those issues. When Labor builds for the people of New South Wales, at least things are fit for purpose, and the people of this State can see the difference. The Coalition saw that difference at the March 2023 election, despite spending \$27 billion in the nine months before it. The amendment to the motion will ensure that the House sees that difference. I support the amendment.

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:39):** In reply: I thank members on both sides of the House for their contributions to debate. Labor's financial legacy is debt, deficit and broken promises. The new member for Hornsby said that the State's interest payments alone will total \$8.6 billion per year, which is more than double the interest payments of five years ago. That is \$8.6 billion not spent on schools, hospitals, roads, transport, infrastructure and easing the cost of living. I commend the motion to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** The member for Oatley has moved a motion, to which the member for Campbelltown has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....48  
Noes .....36  
Majority.....12

# **AYES**

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
Butler, L  
Car, P  
Catley, Y  
Chanthivong, A  
Cotsis, S  
Crakanthorp, T  
Daley, M  
Dalton, H  
Davis, D  
Dib, J  
Donato, P

Finn, J  
Hagarty, N (teller)  
Harris, D  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Li, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K

O'Neill, M  
Park, R  
Piper, G  
Quinnell, S  
Saffin, J (teller)  
Saliba, D  
Scrubby, J  
Scully, P  
Stuart, M  
Tesch, L  
Vo, T  
Voltz, L  
Warren, G  
Watson, A  
Whan, S

## AYES

Doyle, T

Mehan, D

Wilkinson, K

## NOES

Anderson, K

Hodges, M

Singh, G

Ayyad, T

James, T

Sloane, K

Butler, R

Kemp, M

Smith, T

Clancy, J

Lane, J

Taylor, M

Cooke, S

Layzell, D

Thompson, T

Coure, M

Leong, J

Toole, P

Cross, M

Moylan, B

Tuckerman, W

Crouch, A (teller)

Petinos, E

Tudehope, M

Davies, T

Preston, R

Wallace, J

Di Pasqua, S

Provest, G

Ward, G

Griffin, J

Roberts, A

Williamson, R (teller)

Henskens, A

Shetty, K

Wilson, F

## PAIRS

Minns, C

Speakman, M

Washington, K

Saunders, D

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....51

Noes .....34

Majority.....17

## AYES

Aitchison, J

Hagarty, N (teller)

Park, R

Atalla, E

Harris, D

Piper, G

Bali, S

Harrison, J

Quinnell, S

Barr, C

Haylen, J

Saffin, J (teller)

Butler, L

Hoenig, R

Saliba, D

Car, P

Holland, M

Scruby, J

Catley, Y

Hornery, S

Scully, P

Chanthivong, A

Kaliyanda, C

Shetty, K

Cotsis, S

Kamper, S

Smith, T

Crakanthorp, T

Kirby, W

Stuart, M

Daley, M

Leong, J

Tesch, L

Dalton, H

Li, J

Vo, T

Davis, D

McDermott, H

Voltz, L

Dib, J

McGirr, J

Warren, G

Donato, P

McKeown, K

Watson, A

Doyle, T

Mehan, D

Whan, S

Finn, J

O'Neill, M

Wilkinson, K

## NOES

Anderson, K

Hodges, M

Sloane, K

Ayyad, T

James, T

Taylor, M

Butler, R

Kemp, M

Thompson, T

Clancy, J

Lane, J

Toole, P

Cooke, S

Layzell, D

Tuckerman, W

Coure, M

Moylan, B

Tudehope, M

## NOES

Cross, M  
Crouch, A (teller)  
Davies, T  
Di Pasqua, S  
Griffin, J  
Henskens, A

Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provost, G  
Roberts, A  
Singh, G

Wallace, J  
Ward, G  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R (teller)  
Wilson, F

## PAIRS

Minns, C  
Washington, K

Speakman, M  
Saunders, D

**Motion as amended agreed to.***Community Recognition Statements***AUNTY NELL MOONEY, OAM**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:50):** I acknowledge Aunty Nell Mooney, OAM, and congratulate her on her incredible contributions to the Shoalhaven Indigenous community. Aunty Nell's lifelong dedication to education, health and community service has had a profound impact, and her efforts have been rightfully recognised with a Medal of the Order of Australia. Aunty Nell's work began in the mid-1980s when she helped establish Ulladulla High School's Aboriginal homework centre, a program that became a national model for supporting Indigenous students. Aunty Nell mentored students, helped break down barriers and even drove children home after sessions. She also introduced year 11 students to the University of Wollongong, inspiring many to pursue higher education, including her own daughter, Natasha, who is now a teacher at Ulladulla High. Beyond education, Aunty Nell was a founding member of the Nowra medical service, a leader in the Wandana Aboriginal Education group and longtime member of the Ulladulla Local Aboriginal Land Council. Aunty Nell's legacy of leadership and care will continue to inspire generations to come. Congratulations, Aunty Nell, OAM.

**MARTHA JABOUR, OAM**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (15:51):** I proudly recognise the extraordinary contributions of Martha Jabour, OAM, and congratulate her on being awarded the 2025 NSW Local Hero award for her tireless advocacy for justice and support for families affected by homicide in Australia. In 2013 Martha envisioned Grace's Place, a world-first trauma recovery facility for children and families impacted by homicide. Through her efforts, land was secured from Blacktown City Council and the Western Sydney Parklands Trust, leading to the opening of Grace's Place in 2023. Martha is the president of the Carlingford Rotary Club and continues to serve the people of Epping and beyond through this role. On behalf of the Epping community, I express our deepest gratitude to Martha Jabour.

**PCHUM BEN FESTIVAL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:52):** On 5 October 2024 I had the pleasure of attending the ancestral ceremony organised by the Khmer Krom and Australian Buddhist Association of NSW at the Khmer Buddhist Temple in Rossmore. Known as Bun Pchum Ben and Bun Daunta in Khmer, the ceremony is a cherished tradition honouring deceased ancestors. It is part of a broader cultural celebration that spans several days and is typically observed by Cambodian Buddhists in September or October to mark the end of Buddhist Lent. The event began with the graceful robam choun por, a traditional Khmer blessing dance, where dancers offer blessings of good fortune, peace and prosperity through delicate hand gestures and movements. It is always a privilege to join such a warm and welcoming community, sharing in their treasured traditions, listening to their stories and witnessing the deep respect they have for their heritage.

**DENISE WALKER**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (15:53):** Today I tell an incredible story about an incredible lady, Denise Walker. Denise, 83, is a beloved figure at Wauchope High School, with an incredible history of 60 years in education. Despite the evolving demands of the education system, since 1964 Denise has never wavered in her love for teaching. With a passion for teaching that runs through her veins, retirement is not an option. She finds fulfilment in shaping young minds and making a difference in their lives. With characteristics inherited from her parents, both of whom were educators, Denise makes a lasting impact on all children in her classroom. Whether it be with her vibrant personality that is reflected in her colourful fashion choices of overalls and distinctive brooches, or the deep, lasting bonds formed with her students, Denise is full of warmth, kindness and unwavering

support. For Denise, teaching is more than a job; it is a calling that continues to bring her joy and fulfilment. A true testament to the heart and soul of education, she is the teacher, through and through, that every child wishes they had.

#### **BRIDGET AND LAURA O'NEILL**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:54):** I congratulate local eastern suburbs women Bridget and Laura O'Neill on their outstanding achievements at the Crookwell Show. Bridget was recently awarded first prize for her exceptional fig jam, while Laura won first prize for her pickles. Unfortunately, their mint jelly came in second. Notwithstanding, it was well-deserved recognition of the talent and dedication to homemade produce of the mother-daughter duo. In addition to that success—fun fact—Bridget is also the back-to-back winner of the highly competitive potato peeling competition at the Crookwell Potato Festival. Their skills, passion and community spirit make the women valued and celebrated members of our community. I extend my warmest congratulations to Bridget and Laura and look forward to their continued success in future competitions.

#### **TRIBUTE TO SANTO SEVERINO**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (15:55):** Today I honour the life of Santo Severino, a beloved member of our community who sadly passed away last week at the age of 74. Santo was a remarkable man with an extraordinary presence. Born in Italy, Santo immigrated to Australia in the 1950s, building a life defined by resilience, family and community. With his wife, Alba, Santo established the Miramare Gardens function centre, a well-known and much-loved establishment in our community. They helped create lasting memories for countless couples. A businessman, builder and past president of Brookvale Rotary, Santo was a generous friend and mentor to many. Santo was a proud and caring family man, cherished by his devoted wife, Alba, their four children and numerous grandchildren as well as great-grandchildren. He built not just a successful career but a close-knit family that will continue to carry his memory. His passion extended beyond business; he advocated for public spaces, particularly Dee Why beachfront, which he championed as public space for recreation and dining. His charm, warmth and impromptu wedding singing will be dearly missed. May he rest in peace, knowing his legacy will live on in all who knew him.

#### **GRAND TAMIL PONGAL FESTIVAL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:56):** On 19 January I was delighted to represent Premier Chris Minns and join community leaders and distinguished guests to open the Grand Tamil Pongal Festival at Pendle Way, Pendle Hill. Thai Pongal is an annual festival to celebrate the end of the harvest and has been celebrated for over 1,000 years. The festival marks the first day of the Tamil calendar and gives thanks to nature, farmers and animals as part of traditional Tamil life. Tamil Australians are a dynamic part of the Prospect electorate and Western Sydney community, and Pendle Hill is the beating heart of Tamil community life. This year's Pongal festival was hosted by no fewer than 60 Tamil organisations and small businesses in a wonderful display of community spirit. My heartfelt congratulations go to Parthy Gunaratnam and all our fantastic Tamil Australian volunteers for hosting a truly memorable Pongal festival.

#### **JULIE WILCOX**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (15:57):** I recognise Julie Wilcox, a member of the Forster Surf Life Saving Club [SLSC], who has been awarded the Emergency Services Medal for her contributions to surf lifesaving. Julie has been an active member of the Forster SLSC for over 30 years, serving as a patrolling member since 1993 and holding numerous roles, including patrol captain, treasurer and first aid officer. She has trained and mentored countless members in lifesaving skills, including the use of drones for surveillance and search operations, which make our beaches and waterways safer for everyone. Julie has been involved in emergency responses from search and rescue operations to supporting the community during the 2019 bushfires. Julie's recognition with the Emergency Services Medal is very well deserved. I congratulate Julie and thank her for her many contributions to our community.

#### **APOLOGY TO AUSTRALIA'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (15:58):** Today marks the seventeenth anniversary of the National Apology to Australia's Indigenous Peoples, particularly the stolen generations. The national apology was an acknowledgement of the past laws, injustices and policy failures from successive governments that have inflicted profound grief and suffering on the lives of children, families, communities and country. We honour the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. While progress has been made since the apology, we all have a responsibility to address the inequalities that still exist by listening to and placing our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities at the centre of all decision-making. Creating a State where everyone has equal life outcomes is not only the right thing to do; it strengthens our society, economy, culture and our communities. To create a better, fairer system for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in New South

Wales, we must close the gap, and to do that we must stay focused. When we close the gap, every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person will have the same opportunities as everyone else in New South Wales to enjoy a safe, healthy and prosperous life.

#### TRIBUTE TO JAMES KEITH MCGILL

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (15:59):** I pay my respects to the late Mr James Keith McGill, known simply as Keith, who has left an enduring mark on the Kenthurst community. On 22 May 2024, Keith passed away at the age of 90 after a sudden illness. At a recent Robbie Burns supper held in his honour, Keith was remembered by the Rotary Club of Kenthurst. In 1983, Keith was inducted into the Rotary Club of Kenthurst and served two terms as its president, from 1984 to 1995 and 2014 to 2015. He was a true friend and an active Rotarian. He was instrumental in several of the Robbie Burns nights and an enthusiastic supporter of the club's community program. He played an active role at the John Benyon Rotary Park, including the building of the rotunda. Keith was an active and knowledgeable gardener. He was helpful to all, always had a kind word and offered clear, concise and accurate suggestions. Keith is survived by his wife, Jean, and family. He will be sadly missed by not only the Rotary Club of Kenthurst but also the wider Kenthurst community.

#### LINDA NGUYEN

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:00):** I congratulate Dr Linda Nguyen on receiving the Community Woman of the Year Award at the recent Canterbury-Bankstown Australia Day Awards celebrations. Dr Linda's dedication to delivering accessible and compassionate optometry services has made a profound impact on our community. During the challenging times of COVID-19, she founded her practice with a clear mission to serve those often overlooked by larger providers. From children and the elderly to people with complex medical issues, Linda ensures that everyone receives the care they deserve. Her commitment to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities further reflects her passion for equity and inclusion. Linda's work is a testament to the power of compassion and community spirit. She has not only improved people's vision but also changed lives. We are so lucky to have people like Linda in our community. I thank her for her incredible contributions, and congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition.

#### THE SOCIAL CLUB

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:01):** I recognise Kiama's The Social Club for its fun, safe and supportive environment for neurodivergent teens. Facilitated by Sabrina Kelly and Shayd Flegg, the club champions neurodiversity and celebrates unique strengths and perspectives. Offering an alternative to traditional therapy, The Social Club prioritises genuine connections, reflecting increased neurodiversity recognition, as highlighted in the 2023 APS Employee Census. Following a successful launch at the Kiama Community Gardens, the club has received tremendous support. I applaud The Social Club for its innovative approach. It is contributing to a more inclusive society, empowering teens and promoting neurodiversity awareness. I congratulate everyone involved.

#### BATEMANS BAY HERITAGE MUSEUM

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:02):** Last month I was honoured to visit the Batemans Bay Heritage Museum. I congratulate the museum members on winning an exhibition award at the 2024 IMAGinE Awards, an initiative of Museums and Galleries of NSW. The awards highlight the resilience, innovation and creativity of our heritage spaces and those who contribute to them. The award was presented at Paddington Town Hall on 21 November 2024. The award-winning exhibition, *A Tale of Two Valves*, celebrates the oyster farming history of Bhundoo, the Clyde River. The exhibition covered the history of the river from the traditional owners, the Walbunja people of the Yuin nation, to the modern commercial farmers who, in our pristine waters, produce the finest oysters in Australia. The exhibition was an innovative demonstration of an integral part of the community. The museum enriches our lives and informs locals and visitors. I congratulate the wonderful team of volunteers at the Batemans Bay Heritage Museum. I look forward to supporting the continued development of this very important cultural resource.

#### ARIKA SHETTY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:03):** I am always inspired by the achievements of the youth in Willoughby. I would like to single out Arika Shetty, a young badminton champion from Willoughby Girls High School. Born in Bangalore, India, in 2008, Arika has had a lifelong love of sport. Despite the challenges of living with cerebral palsy, Arika has gone on to achieve great feats in the sport of badminton. In 2023 she won gold at the All Abilities competition in Melbourne and multiple bronze medals at the Oceania Para Table Tennis Championships in the Solomon Islands. Recognised by the national para-badminton team, she now competes as a Para Falcon for Australia. Her recent achievements include bronze at the Spanish Para Badminton International and silver at the national championships. Aiming for the stars, Arika now has her sights set on the 2028 Paralympic

Games in Los Angeles. Arika's story of determination, perseverance and success is an inspiration to us all. I acknowledge the contribution of Willoughby Girls High School, the Willoughby Badminton Club and, of course, Arika's family to her sporting success. I congratulate Arika. Her community is very proud of her.

#### **SUMAN REGMI AND SHISHIR ADHIKARI**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:04):** I congratulate Suman Regmi and Shishir Adhikari, two true community champions whose tireless efforts have made a lasting impact on the residents of Grantham Farm and the wider north-west area. In a region experiencing rapid growth, the pair recognised the need for better bus services to ensure residents can easily access Riverstone, Schofields and Tallawong stations. Taking matters into their own hands, Suman and Shishir launched a petition that garnered widespread support. They brought their petition and concerns to me, playing a crucial role in securing improved bus services for that area of the north-west. Suman and Shishir also founded the North West Everest Community Group, an advocacy group committed to building a better community for all of us. Their ambition for a better future is clear as they continue working to address local issues and create a thriving, inclusive environment in Grantham Farm, Riverstone and Schofields. Their dedication and passion for community wellbeing are truly commendable, and their efforts have set an inspiring example for others to follow. I thank Suman and Shishir for their continued efforts to see better services in our community.

#### **FERNANDO FLORES**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:05):** I congratulate Lockhart Shire Council's Citizen of the Year, Fernando Flores. Mr Flores, who hails from Chile, began his career as a sailor. His travels took him all over the world. But when he and his wife, Portuguese-born Idalina, found their way to Yerong Creek, they knew they had found their forever home. Mr Flores has become an icon in his community, which is not surprising, given his enormous contribution. He has been a Rural Fire Service member for 19 years and received awards for his services to his brigade and the community during the 2019-20 fire emergency. Fernando is a stalwart of the Yerong Creek Bowling Club and member of the Yerong Creek Hall Committee. He has volunteered with Meals on Wheels and raised more than \$8,000 for local charities by recycling bottles and cans, yet Fernando still finds time to volunteer as caretaker of the town's recreation ground. Mr Flores says it is the people who make his adopted home so special. It was moving that the Chilean-born Mr Flores received his award from the Ukrainian-born Australia Day Ambassador Viktor Kovalenko. It was a testament to the positive multicultural nature of our country.

#### **LUNAR NEW YEAR**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:06):** On 2 February 2025 I had the honour of representing the Premier of New South Wales and the Minister for Multiculturalism at the Lunar New Year celebration ceremony at Mingyue Lay Temple. As we welcomed the year of the wood snake, the celebration was a vibrant cultural and spiritual gathering, bringing together community leaders to mark the new year with joy and tradition. The festivities featured a spectacular dragon dance, firecrackers and a fireworks display, all symbolic traditions in Chinese culture believed to bring good luck, health and prosperity in the new year. I extend my sincere appreciation to the venerable monks, community leaders and dedicated volunteers for organising such a warm and meaningful event. I extend my heartfelt thanks also to chairman Mr James Chan, OAM, and president Mr Vincent Kong, OAM, for the kind invitation. May the year of the wood snake bring wisdom, health, happiness and prosperity to all.

#### **COMMUNITY BANK FRESHWATER AWARDS NIGHT**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:07):** I celebrate the incredible future leaders from across the northern beaches who were recognised at the Community Bank Freshwater awards night last Monday at North Curl Curl Surf Life Saving Club. For 13 years Community Bank Freshwater has provided scholarships to support outstanding high school graduates from Manly and the northern beaches as they embark on the next stage of their education. The scholarship offers a generous \$5,000 towards the recipient's first year of university, followed by \$10,000 for their second and third years of study. The award recognises well-rounded students who embody an outstanding spirit of achievement. While all the nominees were incredibly deserving, the winner of this year's Ken Ward Memorial Scholarship was Liliana, a remarkable student from Freshwater Senior Campus. Her excellence across both academics and co-curricular fields is truly impressive. I extend my sincere thanks to Community Bank Freshwater for its generosity and ongoing support of this initiative. I congratulate Liliana on such a well-deserved achievement. I wish her all the best with her studies.

#### **IT'S IN THE BAG**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (16:08):** I am always blown away by the extraordinary generosity of the Charlestown community. Last year when I put out a call for donations to Share the Dignity's It's in the Bag drive, the response from my electorate was absolutely incredible. It's in the Bag

involves putting together a bag of essentials, including hygiene products such as shampoo, soap, toothpaste and period products, as well as optional luxury items, and donating it to Share the Dignity, which passes them on to women in need. The aim was to collect 85,000 bags to ensure at least that many vulnerable women and girls could receive a gift of love and hope at Christmas. Over the course of the drive, it was truly wonderful to see so many of my constituents do their part to reach that goal. I had the pleasure of dropping off the last few donations to Bennetts Green Bunnings just in time for the last day of collection on 1 December 2024. I thank everyone who dropped off donations to my office, including the fantastic Lake Macquarie Family Day Care team, who donated 50 bags.

### GLEBE HOUSE

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:09):** Today I acknowledge the vital work of Glebe House, which recently marked 50 years of service to our community. Since 1974, Glebe House has assisted generations of men to overcome addiction and homelessness. Its rehabilitation and support programs have been instrumental in enabling innumerable members of our community to find purpose and dignity in their lives and pursue positive relationships. I was deeply honoured to be able to attend the celebration of 50 years of Glebe House and express my support for its crucial mission. This milestone is a fantastic opportunity to reflect on the progress of the past 50 years and to commit ourselves to continuing to work together to help those in our society who need assistance the most. All the staff and volunteers of Glebe House deserve our congratulations on reaching this milestone and our thanks for their contributions to our community. I say a special thank you to David McAllister, the manager of Glebe House, for his tireless efforts to uplift its mission. I congratulate all of the people who have been through Glebe House on this incredible milestone.

### TRIBUTE TO PETE RAWSON

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (16:10):** I speak to the life and loves of my good friend Pete Rawson who passed away in January. Pete loved his adult children, Lachlan James Rawson and Mia Grace Rawson, and his family members. He loved his job as a New South Wales corrections officer, as well as motorbikes and a good yarn. I knew Pete when he lived and worked in Grafton. We would meet and talk on the phone, and sometimes text. Whenever I saw Pete's name come up when he called, I knew it would be a long yarn. Pete then went to Moree, where he was a corrections officer assigned to the court system. We still talked and continued our friendship. Referring to Pete "Dubbo" Rawson, the Last Governor posted on their Meta site on 14 January:

Pete was one of a kind, to know him was to love him. He will be sadly missed by all those who had the privilege of knowing him. Our blue family has lost an irreplaceable member and will be all the sadder for Dubbo's passing.

...

Rest in Peace, Pete. Your watch is over and your keys are correct.

### SUTHERLAND SHIRE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:11):** I acknowledge the outstanding recipients and nominees of the 2025 Sutherland Shire Citizen of the Year Awards, celebrating individuals who have made remarkable contributions to our community. I congratulate the Young Citizen of the Year, Harrison Edwards, a dedicated 12-year-old who plays an integral role in the operation of the Barden Ridgebacks Football Club. Harrison helps his team coach set up and pack up fields for training, organises equipment for weekend games, and paints the field lines every Friday. He also assists with setting up goals, posts, benches and game sheets. Harrison is an active referee for the Mini Roo competitions, guiding new referees and volunteers for barbeque and canteen duties during busy times. He also supports club fundraising efforts. During finals and grand final weeks, Harrison plays a major role in setting up and packing away equipment, and proudly hosts the presentation of premiership medals, often addressing large crowds. I show my gratitude and congratulate Harrison on his dedication, leadership and community spirit, which make the Sutherland shire such a wonderful place.

### VALENTINE'S DAY

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (16:12):** As a human race, we have grown and achieved so much. We are more eager for success and extremely productive, yet demanding of ourselves and others. We are too busy and too distracted to care for ourselves, and that is my call-out today. I have worked in this role long enough to confidently say that the members in this place are amongst those who work the hardest. I am often inspired by the love that members have for their families and communities. Tomorrow is Valentine's Day, a day of love. I want members to pay attention to themselves, and most importantly to their physical and mental health. Self-love should be our way of life. We all can agree that you cannot truly love someone until you fully love and care for yourselves. We all understand what it means to love and to care for others, yet caring for ourselves becomes just another item on the list. It does not matter what you do or what your background is, looking after yourself should be the priority. Happy Valentine's Day and may your heart be filled with self-appreciation. Please remember you are loved.

**DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (16:13):** At the end of last year, some incredible young students took part in the Drummoyne electorate bearpit public speaking competition that I hosted in this Chamber of the New South Wales Parliament. I sincerely acknowledge and congratulate the primary school students who participated: Oscar Rawson, Tom Looney, Zoe Munro, Koda Leslie, Alena Finn, Chris Pitronaci, Ayana Antony and Adelaide Garcia. I also acknowledge and congratulate our senior students on their participation: Makayla Day, Charlotte Mansfield, Sophie Murphy, Sienna Vitale, Lenita Taylor Soto, Jesse Singh, Harriet Alder, Olivia Harper, Moses Lawrence and Mantee McGinty. Each student presented a speech. The various topics included "If I was the member for Drummoyne for a day, I would ...", "If I could have one superpower, it would be ...", "Artificial Intelligence—friend or foe?" and "What makes a good leader?" I was so inspired by the talent and intelligence of our young students. Our future is extremely bright.

**PAUL WYNNE**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:14):** I congratulate Paul Wynne on being named Blacktown City Citizen of the Year as part of the 2025 Australia Day awards. Paul is an integral part of the committee for the Homicide Victims Support Group that established Grace's Place at Doonside, the world's first purpose-built facility to support children affected by homicide. Paul is also the President of the New Leaf Op Shop at Parramatta, which helps fund Grace's Place. Paul has been Blacktown South Public School parents and citizens president, and has played Santa at school celebrations for the past 25 years. Paul's professional working life includes being a police officer, and he received the National Police Medal, the National Medal and the NSW Police Medal during his career. Paul also enjoyed being a president of the Prospect United Football Club and he received lifetime membership for his long service. I thank Paul for his wonderful service to the community.

**ANTHONY CHARLES BRIFFA**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:15):** On behalf of the Badgerys Creek electorate, I thank and commend St Clair local Mr Anthony Charles Briffa for his outstanding and continued service to the Badgerys Creek and wider Western Sydney community. Mr Briffa served our nation in Vietnam and is a valued member of St Marys RSL Sub-Branch and of the St Marys Vietnam Veterans' Outpost. He regularly gives his time attending the grounds of the train several times a week and assists with keeping the grounds and hedges in pristine condition. Mr Briffa was instrumental in the formation of the St Clair and District Men's Shed, having supported men's sheds in other areas and realising the absence of one in the area. His dedication and tenacity was crucial in its formation. He served as president of the St Clair and District Men's Shed, which continues to grow and now has more than 60 members. Mr Briffa's service to the community has included his quest for grants towards essential equipment for the shed to enable the members to continue the important work of volunteering. I thank and commend Mr Briffa.

**TERESA TRAN****PHONG LE**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (16:16):** I congratulate Teresa Tran and Phong Le on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia as part of the recent Australia Day awards. It is a fitting and richly deserved recognition of their contribution to Wollongong, the Illawarra and the Vietnamese community over decades. Teresa and Phong's story is the story of many Australians: refugees who fled war-torn Vietnam and made a fantastic life for themselves in their adopted home. They are staunch advocates for refugees and the strongest of supporters of Australian veterans of the Vietnam War. They have never forgotten the kindness of each of the ship captains who plucked them from the ocean and took them to safety. They continually give back to the community. There is not a local, national or international cause that they do not rally the Vietnamese community to support. Always humble, they dedicated their award to the entire Vietnamese community and everyone who had helped them in their resettlement. Australia Day already holds a special place for them: It is their wedding anniversary. This year their hard work and inspiring story of escape, renewal and commitment to community was recognised in a way that all great Australian stories should be: by being awarded one of the highest honours the country can bestow upon a citizen.

**ST ANTHONY'S PARISH MARSFIELD****ANDREW HILL**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (16:17):** The Parliament acknowledges St Anthony's Parish Marsfield and long-serving coach Andrew Hill for their outstanding contribution to the community. For over 70 years, the tennis courts and clubhouse opposite Curzon Hall have been a cherished hub for sport and social connection. Established in 1952 by Father Hayes to unite the community through tennis and dance, they have welcomed generations of



players. That chapter will close on 15 June this year to make way for a childcare centre, but today we celebrate their legacy. A special tribute goes to Andrew Hill, who for 45 years has coached players of all ages and abilities, from tots to seniors and those with special needs. His dedication and that of his fellow coaches has created a welcoming and inclusive sporting environment. The facility has also hosted remarkable events, including Olympic and Paralympic torch visits, corporate sports days, university programs and international table tennis competitions. I thank St Anthony's, Andrew Hill and everyone involved for their enduring contribution. Their work builds on an enduring legacy of Marsfield, and our Ryde community is stronger because of it.

#### **TABLE TENNIS CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:18):** On 6 December 2024, I had a wonderful time attending the Christmas party and award presentation event organised by the Table Tennis Club at the Cabra-Vale Diggers Club. It was an enjoyable occasion filled with celebrations. I extend my sincere thanks to the President of the Table Tennis Club, Mr Van Viet Nguyen, for the kind invitation to this fantastic event. I congratulate all the award recipients on their outstanding achievements and contributions. It was truly inspiring to see their hard work and dedication recognised. The event not only celebrated the accomplishments of the past year but also brought the community together in a festive and positive atmosphere. It was a pleasure to connect with fellow community members and celebrate the achievements of the Table Tennis Club. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of such a positive and uplifting occasion. I look forward to continuing to attend Table Tennis Club events and witnessing even more success in the future.

#### **KU-RING-GAI AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:19):** Ku-ring-gai Council's Australia Day Awards celebrated some of the fantastic people that live in my local community. The Mayor's Award for an Outstanding Contribution by a Community Organisation was presented to the well-deserving Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter, led by the incredible Catherine Knox, in recognition of its efforts to support women and children in crisis. Ku-ring-gai's Environmental Citizen of the Year is Sofia Zvolanek. The Young Citizen of the Year was Matthew Hayes, who I have had the pleasure of knowing for a number of years. He attended Ku-ring-gai High School and is passionate about politics, public transport, planning and advocating for young people with disabilities. Ku-ring-gai Council's 2025 Citizen of the Year is Madeleine Steel. When she became a parent, Madeleine experienced firsthand the isolation and challenges that new parents can face. Three years ago she decided to set up the Empowering Parents in Crisis organisation as a way of connecting parents. It was great to meet Madeleine and her family. I congratulate all of our great local citizens.

#### **CLAYTON BARNES**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:20):** I congratulate Wagga Wagga ophthalmologist Clayton Barnes, whose dedicated service to regional health care has been recognised by a Distinguished Service Medal from the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists. It is a fitting honour for the long-serving specialist, who has dedicated his energies to community care and better regional health for more than 30 years. His journey as an advocate for the regions began soon after specialist graduation when he moved to Wagga Wagga in 1992. He has changed the lives of thousands of patients over the years. He has trained more than 110 registrars and attracted five ophthalmologists to our community. Dr Barnes was raised in Sydney and is an example of those medical experts who have built a career and made a genuine difference by moving to a regional centre and delivering vital services while enjoying a great lifestyle in a country environment. He hopes his example will inspire other metropolitan-based doctors to make the move to the regions. As a doctor from Sydney, I can testify that life in the regions is rewarding work. I thank Dr Barnes for his work.

#### **JOSEPHINE BORG**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:21):** I had the great honour of attending the Fairfield City Council's 2025 Australia Day Community Awards and citizenship ceremony on Australia Day. I proudly presented a medal to Josephine Borg for being a nominee in the Fairfield City Council's Volunteer of the Year category. Josephine has been fundraising for the Cancer Council's annual Australia's Biggest Morning Tea in Horsley Park since 2003. With a dedicated team of helpers and many local business donations, Josephine has raised over \$400,000. Josephine continues to be an incredible asset to the community through her service as a volunteer. On behalf of the Badgerys Creek community and all of those impacted by cancer, I extend my congratulations to Josephine Borg and thank her and her team for their dedication in joining us to fight this horrendous disease.

*Bills***MARINE SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2024**  
**JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CIVIL) BILL 2024****Returned**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I report receipt of messages from the Legislative Council returning the bills without amendment.

**ENERGY AMENDMENT (PIPELINES AND GAS SAFETY) 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.

*Private Members' Statements***BATTLE OF GEMAS**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:24):** The Battle of Gemas was a significant event in Australian military history. The battle took place during the Japanese invasion of Malaya in the Pacific campaign of the Second World War. On 14 January 1942, Australian soldiers from the 2nd/30th Battalion launched a successful ambush on the Japanese 5th Division, resulting in nearly 800 Japanese soldiers killed, wounded or missing. Fewer than 100 Australian soldiers were wounded or killed. I had the honour of addressing the 2nd/30th AIF Battalion Association at the Suakin Barracks in Pymble for the eighty-third anniversary of the battle.

In the presence of my beloved brother, Professor Frans Henskens, the member for Davidson, Mayor Christine Kay and Councillor Matthew Devlin of Ku-ring-gai Council, and family members of veterans, I shared the story of my uncle Jacques Henskens, who faced indescribable horrors during his imprisonment as a prisoner of war of the Japanese alongside Australian, British, Dutch and American soldiers. Within a month of the Battle of Gemas, most of the surviving members of the battalion became Japanese prisoners of war after the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942.

A few weeks later my uncle Jacques, who served in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, surrendered to the Japanese on 10 March 1942 in Atjeh, West Java, with other Dutch soldiers. Jacques, the surviving men of the 2nd/30th Battalion and those captured in Java became part of the 61,000 Allied prisoners of war who worked on the infamous 400-kilometre Thai-Burma Railway. The prisoners of war consisted of 30,000 British, 18,000 Dutch, 13,000 Australian and 650 American servicemen. Sadly about one in five of those prisoners of war would die during the construction of the railway. Dutch casualties were much higher: Nearly one in three Dutch soldiers died. Fortunately my uncle survived.

Many of the family members of the Australian prisoners of war who were in the 2nd/30th Battalion told me, after hearing my speech, that aspects of my uncle's story filled in gaps in their knowledge of their father's imprisonment or, alternatively, was consistent with their father's experience. I heard my uncle Jacques' story firsthand during a conversation in 1982, when I first met him in the Netherlands as an 18-year-old backpacker. Jacques had only just begun processing his experiences after years of suppression. He shared that upon reaching his late 50s he was overcome by uncontrollable melancholy that caused him to cry for no reason. A psychologist explained to him that it was normal to look back on one's life as you get old, but this reflection brought back the worst memories of his time as a prisoner of war.

He also learned that his years of malnourishment had impacted his neurological development, as he was only 19 years old at the time. My father recalled that, when he returned to the Netherlands, Jacques' back was like a piece of leather from the beatings he had endured. Pieces of bamboo were still being removed from his back for about a year after his return. Jacques spent the first six months of his return to the Netherlands in a hospital. He described the lack of empathy when he returned. No-one knew the pain the soldiers had endured. No doubt this sort of response did not help the soldiers who returned as Japanese prisoners of war to recover from their trauma.

In our conversation, Jacques did not dwell on the physical challenges of the work they performed but instead focused on the psychological effects. He said that humans are reduced to little more than animals when they are starving to death and every waking hour is consumed with the thought of food. He said that although they are capable of philosophy, poetry, music and great things, humans are completely incapacitated by starvation. Jacques said that things happened as a prisoner of war which were impossible to make sense of. One of his friends

was brought before a parade and executed by the Japanese before all the prisoners of war, and it was not clear why he had been executed.

Jacques made some unsolicited observations about the Australian soldiers which indicated that he thought they were incredible. He said that the Australians stuck together, helped each other and sang songs like *Waltzing Matilda*, which he believed lifted the spirits of the Australians and seemed to have a positive impact on the soldiers of other nationalities. There are numerous mentions in the diaries of the Australian soldiers about the Dutch soldiers. Sick and ailing Dutch prisoners were assisted by the Australians and treated by Australian doctors. Jacques stayed alive by telling himself that everything has an end, including the war, and that he had to survive until its end. I do not think that we can even begin to understand what these brave men went through. It is truly remarkable, and it is important to remember them and honour their memory.

### BLACKTOWN ELECTORATE EVENTS

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:29):** The 2024-25 break from parliamentary sittings includes the Christmas, New Year and Australia Day festivities, which are a wonderful time to be in Australia and celebrate with family and friends. While we enjoyed the break, it was an extremely busy time in the electorate, with activities associated with the festivities as well as parliamentary committee work on the inquiry into essential worker housing. I note that the Temporary Speaker, Mr Alex Greenwich, chairs that committee. Australia Day saw a number of events across Blacktown City. A regular favourite is Wake Up With The Wildlife at Featherdale Sydney Wildlife Park. The park has only Australian fauna and is therefore a particularly Aussie thing to do on the morning of Australia Day, to see and hear the various bird life, the kangaroos, the koalas, the wombats and the wide variety of reptiles.

As I understand it, Featherdale holds one of the largest collections of Australian animals in any wildlife park or zoo in the world. I thank all the employees and volunteers for their great service, led very well by Tony Chiefari and zookeeper Chad Staples, who has since gone on to become the director of Mogo Wildlife Park. Whilst council still promotes the event as part of the Australia Day festivities, I am sad to note that some four or five years ago the council broke with its 20-year tradition of sponsoring the morning session by providing free tickets to local residents. It is now a paid event. Given the cost-of-living crisis, free access to that iconic and wonderful wildlife park would have been a great initiative to maintain for families, elderly people and others who are struggling.

I note the attendance of the New South Wales Governor, Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AC, KC, at the Blacktown City Council Australia Day Awards. On one of the busiest days in her calendar, it was wonderful that the Governor made time to visit Western Sydney. My good friend Paul Wynne, a community activist, was named the 2025 Blacktown Citizen of the Year. Paul is an integral part of homicide victim support, having established Grace's Place at Doonside, along with many other community service activities. Marion Coles, the founder of Pay It Forward Angels, was awarded Young Citizen of the Year. Marion has developed a network of 1,400 volunteers and last Christmas distributed over 400 gifts to people in need. The Mount Druitt Family Science Day, organised by Mount Druitt Ethnic Communities Agency, was named Community Event of the Year.

I attended the Australia Day celebrations held by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of Australia at Marsden Park. The national president, Imam Kauser, presided over the service, with many community leaders and politicians in attendance. It started with a flag-raising ceremony, and the youth proudly sang the national anthem. They also have Australia's largest flag on display, measuring 16 metres by eight metres—larger than the ones on the Sydney Harbour Bridge and at Australian Parliament House. It was a super hot day, and the outdoor location meant the speeches were shorter than normal. I was particularly impressed by the young people who spoke passionately about what it means to be Australian.

Kazeem spoke about how wonderful his homeland of Australia is, and Ahmadi spoke about what it means to be Australian and the opportunities it offers. Those young people are already knowledgeable and articulate, and they are making a difference by understanding their cultural heritage and blending it into modern Australia multiculturalism. A young man, Naila, shared the tragic story of his family's persecution in their homeland and how his father was killed. His family then immigrated to Australia, where he re-established his life, married and became a professional who makes a wonderful contribution to Australia. From adversity, he has made a huge positive difference in our community.

Those stories are so important for us to hear as we are caught up in our busy lives, with the cost-of-living pressures and the other legitimate challenges we face. Hearing those difficult and tragic stories of resilience leading to positive outcomes makes us all proud to live in Australia, a land of opportunity. The faith leadership of Australian national president Imam Kauser at the Masjid Baitul Huda Mosque is exemplary as he spreads his message of love for all and hatred for none. The Blacktown electorate is a wonderful place, with so many of the sorts of multicultural events that make Australia a wonderful place.

## CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:34):** It was recently Chinese New Year—Lunar New Year—and this year is the year of the snake. I attended a lot of Lunar New Year functions across my electorate of Strathfield, and they were such uplifting events. They always commence with an acknowledgement of country, and it is fantastic that we can celebrate the year of the snake in modern Australia while acknowledging that we stand on the traditional lands of Indigenous peoples. I reflected on how that is a wonderful expression of our mighty Australian multiculturalism, which binds together Australia's past, present and future and unites Australians of all different backgrounds. It makes me really proud that Lunar New Year is celebrated not just by the Asian communities but by Australians of all different backgrounds. It still impresses me that non-Asian Australians generally know which year of the Chinese zodiac they are born in. I understand, Mr Temporary Speaker, you are a monkey.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** A metal monkey.

**Mr JASON LI:** I am a pig. Again, that is a terrific expression of our amazing Australian multiculturalism. Being among the Australian Chinese community allowed me to take the temperature of how the community is going. As a Chinese Australian, I can say how relieved we feel that Australia's relationship with China has improved and normalised. Australian politicians are no longer talking about the drums of war beating, and lobsters are back on the table in China. It goes far beyond even the important trade and investment relationships or the diplomatic relationship. It goes to whether Australians of Chinese heritage can feel comfortable in the Australian community, whether we feel like we have a sense of belonging and are trusted here in Australia.

We remember what it was like during the COVID pandemic. Because of the political rhetoric that it was the "China virus" and that the People's Republic of China was somehow responsible for it, Chinese Australians were attacked on the street and spat on. I remember a neighbour asked me if I could go to the supermarket for her because she was afraid that she would be attacked or abused. While the environment is better now for Chinese Australians, other community groups—the Jewish community in Australia in particular—are facing unprecedented levels of horrific racism.

It is crucial for our concepts of multiculturalism and social cohesion that we are able to separate what we think about a particular foreign government, its leadership or its policies from how we treat fellow Australians of that ancestry. In other words, no matter what we think about a foreign government, a foreign leader or their policies, that should never result in hostility or discrimination against a fellow Australian of that heritage. That is partly about ensuring that we do not import foreign conflicts into our domestic communities, but it is also about the notion of Australian citizenship. Part and parcel of the great rights and obligations that Australian citizenship bestows is a presumption of trust and a right to be considered Australian, first and foremost. Whatever happens in the rest of the world, our titanium-strength social cohesion makes Australia strong, resilient and dynamic. We must do everything we can to protect and defend that.

## KIERAN WADE

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (16:39):** Tight-knit towns like Bellbrook are special for a reason. When one of their own is doing it tough, people show up. It is not always easy to say, "I need a hand," but when the community comes together it makes all the difference. Kieran Wade, a much-loved Bellbrook local, has had more than his fair share of tough times lately. He is only 29, and he has faced challenges that would test anyone. Earlier this year he was in a motorbike accident that left him with two broken legs. Just as he was getting back on his feet—literally—life threw him another curveball. He was diagnosed with leukemia. That is tough enough for anyone, but throw in a young family—little boys, Joseph, just 18 months old, and Tyler—and suddenly the weight of it all gets even heavier.

On Sunday 12 January the Bellbrook Hotel, the beating heart of the town, got behind the family and put on one hell of a fundraiser. Anyone who knows Kieran's dad, Chunk, knows that it would have to be big to get that fella's pulse to quicken. It was impossible to get a park anywhere near the place. Cars were lined up from the general store all the way down to the cabins. Friends, neighbours and families all came together for one purpose: to help Kieran, his fiancée, Nita, and their boys tackle this tough time without the weight of financial stress dragging them down.

What a day it was. Everyone's rumbling stomachs were filled with a barbeque and a spit roast. There was live music from local legends who kept the good vibes rolling. It was a day of community and generosity. The charity auction was nothing short of amazing. Locals donated a Suzuki DRZ400 motorbike—I would love to have one of those—signed Olympic swim caps from the McKeown sisters, farm tours, horse training sessions and even a world title belt from Mike Tyson. It was not just the big-ticket items. Locals threw in spraying services, earthmoving jobs and even days of labour to help raise money. The generosity of the town was absolutely amazing.

By the time the final tally was done, an incredible \$60,000 had been raised. I cannot do the maths on how much that is per capita, but there are not many people in Bellbrook. The money will make a world of difference for Kieran and his family. Now they can focus on his treatment, their little ones, and getting through this fight without the extra stress of mounting bills and financial worries hanging over their heads. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the army of good-hearted volunteers working behind the scenes to pull it off. The bar staff were run off their feet, the kitchen crew worked like clockwork and the barbeque boys kept everyone fed. Even though he could not be at his favourite local, Kieran's gratitude was felt by everyone there.

The community has done what country towns do best: look after their own. You hear people in the city talk about community, but out there we do not just talk about it; we live it. Maybe it is because we all know each other. We know people's first names and their second names. Maybe it is because we notice when a ute has not moved for days, or when someone who is usually at the pub every Friday has not been seen in a while. Life in small towns can be tough due to droughts, floods, financial stress and health battles like the one Kieran is facing. Sometimes, the weight of it all can feel too much. Mental health is just as important as physical health. In the bush, we have learnt that checking in on your neighbours can make all the difference. We want to reduce the isolation.

That is why events like this auction fundraiser are not just about money; they are about reminding people they are not alone. Stories like these make me proud to live in this beautiful region. I urge everyone to continue to check on their neighbours. Send that text or drop by for a chat. Sometimes that small act of kindness—or, in Keiran's case, a massive act of kindness—can mean the world to someone doing it tough. The people who have donated, organised, lent a hand or simply showed up are at the heart of what makes rural towns so special. Their kindness and generosity have lifted a weight off Kieran and Nita's shoulders, giving them one less thing to worry about. Kieran, Nita, Joseph, Tyler, Chunk and the rest of the family are not in this fight alone. They have an entire community standing beside them every step of the way. I wish them good luck and good health.

#### ANTISEMITISM

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (16:43):** I am extremely proud to represent the electorate of Prospect, where we live in harmony. We have communities from throughout the world, from every single continent and every religious group. They all live in harmony in my part of Western Sydney. We have never had any racial prejudice that I am aware of. We have never had any threats of violence towards our communities. Today I speak for my multicultural, multiracial, multireligious community and say that we are disgusted by the antisemitism we have seen over the past 12 months. The community deplores the way the Jewish community in New South Wales and throughout this country is being targeted and treated.

We are all Australians. We are all together as one. Those fringe groups and individuals who attack our Jewish brothers and sisters have no place in this State or this country. It is not a political act; it is pure domestic terrorism. It is disgusting. Modern Australia is over 200 years old—40,000 years old with our Indigenous community—and we have never seen the like of this antisemitism. We have made our mistakes as Australians. We have had the White Australia policy. We have had situations where we should not be proud of the way we have treated our Indigenous community. But we have never been antisemitic as a nation. We have never, as a community, attacked our Jewish brothers and sisters like this.

Jews started coming to this country on the First Fleet, and they have come ever since. They helped build this modern nation. They have led in the judiciary, the business sector, local government, politics, charities, the medical profession and so on. They have enriched our community like nothing on earth. We are a better nation because of them. Those who openly attack that community—those vile individuals who speak antisemitism against it—have no place here. They have no place in Western Sydney, where our multicultural community are building lives. People have often come from terrible backgrounds with terrible histories. But I say if you bring antisemitism to this country, whether you were born here or you have moved here as a migrant, you have no place here. You are not supported.

We love our Jewish community. We support them. In Western Sydney, we have a long history of Jewish migration and growth. Famous people have stood out. Close to me in North Parramatta is the Parramatta and District Synagogue. It has been there for over 75 years, and it is a beautiful example of what it means to be Jewish in Western Sydney and a part of the community. The Parramatta synagogue is open to everybody. There were days when the synagogue could be open to people to play on the front lawn. I remember that when I used to live in North Parramatta, kids would play on the front lawns of the synagogue on a Sunday.

Everyone is invited to come to the synagogue to visit the education centre and sit and watch a service. But fear because of the attacks on our Jewish brothers and sisters has led to security measures and all kinds of steps being taken for protection and control. I say that this will not stand. This will not last. Those among the community in Western Sydney and throughout New South Wales who are perpetrating this disgraceful antisemitic behaviour

will be removed, and our Jewish community will continue on from strength to strength. Let it be known that my community in Prospect supports our Jewish community. We love them and we stand with them.

### PATYEGARANG REZONING PROPOSAL

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:48):** The recent Los Angeles wildfires were shocking in their scale and ferocity. More than 10,000 homes were destroyed, with losses estimated at over US\$250 billion. In an interview on the ABC's *7.30*, fire expert Professor Char Miller, from Pomona College in California, explained that building in high-risk fire zones in the Los Angeles foothills has escalated in the past five to 10 years, partly setting the scene for the destruction we have just witnessed. When asked who was responsible for those decisions, he responded, "Planning commissions and zoning commissions, all of whom greenlight these subdivisions." He said, "If it's a policy problem, then we can make better policies. But at the moment, there doesn't seem to be the political will."

Experts warn us that it is only a matter of time before a fire event at the scale and of the ferocity of the Los Angeles fires happens here in Australia. In *The Sydney Morning Herald* in January, NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner Rob Rogers said:

In the northern beaches, the north shore itself, and the southern suburbs, there's quite a lot of bushland and significant areas of national park, and then you've got housing built on the ridge tops ...

That's because of historical planning and we can't change it, but obviously that makes fire management more difficult.

It is true that we cannot change historical strategic planning and land use decisions, but we can make better decisions today. I am particularly interested in consideration of bushfire risk in land use decisions because of the Patyegarang—formerly Lizard Rock—planning proposal in my electorate of Wakehurst. That proposal, brought by the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, seeks to create a new 370-home subdivision in an area of bushland on Morgan Road in Belrose. The NSW Rural Fire Service has consistently opposed the rezoning due to fire risk, but it is yet to be finally decided.

The catastrophic Los Angeles fires and our own devastating 2019-20 fire season carry important lessons for strategic planning in urban bushland interface areas in our own State, including the Patyegarang-Lizard Rock proposal. The profound ramifications really start to hit home when it comes to insurance. My office has been speaking with experts who follow these matters closely, and a fascinating and disturbing picture emerges. Since the 2019-20 bushfires, forest fire cover in Australia has increased significantly but, largely, it is still available. I suspect it will not be for long. Unlike flood insurance, there has not been a threshold where insurers leave the market. In recent years insurers in California stopped insuring for forest fire cover. In January 2024 State Farm Insurance announced it would not renew 30,000 home owner policies, including 1,626 in the Palisades. Many other insurers have done the same. Dr Karl Mallon, climate risk expert and CEO of Climate Valuation, said:

This has not happened in Australia yet, but it is unreasonable to think it won't. California and Australia are the two fire hotspots of the developed world.

Dr Mallon paints a picture of "mortgage prisoners". To exchange contracts, banks require an insurance policy on the property. That means when owners go to sell, if insurance is unavailable or prohibitively expensive, sellers are limited to cash buyers who themselves will not be able to get insurance. Those houses will essentially become stranded assets. When new subdivisions were being approved in the past, we did not know that. Today there is no plausible deniability for governments and no claim of ignorance. That raises serious questions about liability, a point explained in an extraordinary contribution to the Sydney North Planning Panel hearing for the Patyegarang rezoning from the head of sustainability from Landcom in December last year. She said she could not "in good conscience or with my expertise, recommend to our board that this project proceed". She said:

The climate-related physical compounding risks are too extreme and insurmountable regardless of any redesign or restructuring of the proposal.

...

As these risks are foreseeable, the proponent would not only be at risk of future class actions, it would also unreasonably expose people and properties to insurance risk, mortgage risk, and risk to life.

I understand the planning department's motivations in wanting to find ways for the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council to generate income from its lands. However, we cannot right past wrongs by committing new wrongs that deny the facts of escalating fire risk and put lives at risk, including those of volunteer firefighters. Will we make the right decisions that avoid future human suffering, or will we continue to recklessly greenlight subdivisions that we know are bushfire traps? Do we really want to put volunteer firefighters, let alone residents, at risk? The Government was smart when it abandoned building on high-risk flood plains in Western Sydney. We should be smart and stop building in bushfire zones too. How many lives and structures need to be lost in bushfires before we plan smartly for the future?

## NSW PHARMACY TRIAL

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (16:53):** In today's fast-paced world, individuals and families in my community are grappling with the dual challenges of demanding schedules and cost-of-living pressures. Those challenges often make it hard for people to prioritise their health, leading to delays seeking medical care and, in turn, increasing risks of more serious health problems. The Minns Labor Government recognised those challenges and acted by implementing the NSW Pharmacy Trial to enhance health care accessibility and affordability. This program allows highly trained pharmacists to provide essential services, freeing up our overburdened GPs and ensuring that no-one has to wait days or weeks for simple treatments.

I have always been impressed by my local pharmacies, not just for their dedication to patient care but also by how deeply they are embedded into the fabric of our community. They know people by name and provide comprehensive service with a personal touch. Their combination of convenient locations and extended hours makes them easily accessible. It is that strong community presence that made pharmacies the perfect choice to take on a greater role in frontline health care. The Minns Government launched the first iteration of the trial in May 2023. At the time just under 100 pharmacies were offering treatment for urinary tract infections [UTIs] through pharmacist-led consultations.

The success of that phase has meant that, today, UTI consultations are now a permanent service in more than 1,200 pharmacies and have already helped more than 16,000 people to access fast, convenient care. That is outstanding news, especially bearing in mind that UTIs are one of the top causes of preventable hospital visits in Australia, resulting in around 100,000 emergency presentations and 75,000 hospital stays annually. Moreover, hospitalisation rates for UTIs are nearly twice as high for First Nations people, and those over 65 are five times more likely to be admitted to hospital than younger Australians.

In September 2023 we expanded the trial to allow pharmacists to resupply the oral contraceptive pill, saving women time and money, and ensuring they can access contraception without unnecessary barriers. This now permanent one-stop-shop approach to the resupply of oral contraceptives is not just convenient; it offers women greater control over their reproductive health. Building on those successes, the trial took another step forward in July last year by allowing pharmacists to treat common skin conditions, including school sores, shingles, mild psoriasis and eczema. This trial is not just about convenience; it is about fairness. It means fewer unnecessary trips to the GP or expensive specialists for busy workers and parents. But, more importantly, it is about making health care more accessible for those who need it most. For instance, school sores disproportionately affect First Nations and Pasifika children, and by allowing pharmacists to diagnose and treat it, we are not just easing the burden on families but tackling health inequality head-on and reducing the risk of serious complications like acute rheumatic fever and rheumatic heart disease.

The work does not stop there. Through the trial, we are laying the foundation for an even bigger expansion of pharmacy services. Work is already underway to allow for the treatment of middle ear and outer ear infections, wound management, nausea and vomiting, acid reflux, acne, and muscle and joint pain. In case the Opposition is wondering, that is what real reform looks like—practical, people-centric solutions that make health care more accessible and take pressure off the entire health system.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:58):** A crisis that the Labor Government refuses to address is unfolding across south-west Sydney and throughout New South Wales. Mental health services in our community are deteriorating at an alarming rate, leaving some of our most vulnerable citizens without the care they desperately need. In hospitals across New South Wales, right now, mental health beds are closing. Patients in distress are being left in emergency departments for more than three days, waiting for the specialist care they need. That care simply is not available because the Government has failed to act.

The delays do not just impact those waiting for help; they place unbearable strain on our doctors, nurses, and frontline health workers, who are already stretched to their limits. After failed negotiations with the State's specialist psychiatrists, the best solution Labor has come up with is to push more workload onto already overworked health professionals and to engage locums. That is not a solution. The result is a mental health system that is at breaking point, leaving patients to suffer and putting staff under impossible pressure.

Investment in mental health is not optional; it is essential. It ensures the safety and wellbeing of individuals, families and entire communities. It keeps people out of crisis situations, prevents tragic outcomes and reduces the burden on our emergency services. When mental health services fail, we see more homelessness, more substance abuse, more crime and more families in distress. The social and economic cost of inaction is staggering. The people of south-west Sydney, and all of New South Wales, deserve better. They deserve a government that prioritises their wellbeing, listens to health professionals and takes real action to fix this crisis. We cannot afford

to wait any longer. The Minns Labor Government must stop turning a blind eye to this growing emergency and start delivering the mental health services that our communities desperately need. Anything less is a betrayal of the people it was elected to serve. The people of New South Wales deserve a proactive response from this Government.

### WYONG ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (17:00):** It is my great pleasure to talk about some exciting projects happening in the Wyong electorate. I am particularly pleased to see the \$4.9 million TAFE NSW Wyong animal studies facility, which I will be at the opening of, for the influx of students starting courses in 2025. It is an important facility, and will offer technical and vocational education and training certificate II in animal care, and short courses for high school students to learn more about animal studies. The Animal Studies Training Centre at Wyong will expand opportunities for students interested in a career in animal care, with training in wildlife and exhibited animals, animal care services and veterinary nursing set to be offered at the new facility.

This dedicated facility is an important first for the Central Coast. Some of those courses ran previously but did not have the wet labs and the animal storage facilities et cetera, to enable students to do the necessary training. The facility is set up in such a way that the entry is like the waiting room in a veterinary surgery. Students will learn skills from welcoming people and their animals right through to treatment, grooming and all associated things. At the end of last year I spoke to a young student who was working at the reptile park. Her speciality was wildlife and exhibited animals, and she was working with the alligators there. It is an amazing facility, which everyone in the northern Central Coast of New South Wales can be very proud of.

I joined Central Coast Mayor Lawrie McKinna and my good Federal colleague Emma McBride to open a second project, which was the restoration of the stairs and ramp at Soldiers Beach and Jenny Dixon Beach. Those beach accesses were damaged in the 2022 storms. Previously, when repairs were made, we would often get back something similar to what was destroyed. But, in this case, through Federal and New South Wales government funding of over \$2.4 million, we actually have better facilities. Now the ramp down to the beach is properly constructed. It has piers that go down to the bedrock so that if we do get another storm and the sand is undermined, the ramp will not collapse. That is a big bonus.

**Mr Geoff Provest:** Climate change.

**Mr DAVID HARRIS:** That's right. The stairs at the north part of Soldiers Beach were moved across and constructed in a much more engineered way so that they can withstand the heavy seas they are subjected to. The same happened at Jenny Dixon Beach, where new steps and rails went in to make sure that beach would remain accessible. These areas are highly used by tourists, so it is a bonus for not only locals but also that tourist community.

Among all the things happening in Wyong—so much is going on that I will need lots of private members' time—the final thing I talk briefly about this evening is the \$7 million for new health worker accommodation in Wyong announced by the wonderful Minister for Health. That accommodation will be dedicated units to help attract a specialised health workforce, which we need in the northern part of the Central Coast. The local health district tells me that one of the biggest issues it has is not just attracting staff but having somewhere for them to live. Members might wonder why that would be a problem on the Central Coast, but our vacancy rate is very low, at about 0.6. New people moving to the coast, who we desperately need, often turn down appointments because they cannot find somewhere to live. We will now have this accommodation for specialised doctors, health staff and nurses to make sure that our beautiful Wyong Hospital, which has been upgraded over the past few years, will be able to attract the workforce it needs. Those are three great projects, and I will be back next week to talk about a few more.

### TWEED ELECTORATE

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:05):** I give the Tweed summer wrap-up. It has been another hot summer in the Tweed and, while there have been some wonderful celebrations and events over the summer parliamentary break, there have also been several extreme weather events that have left their mark. The Tweed celebrated Australia Day with a number of events held around the electorate. In Cabarita, I attended the Lions Club of Cabarita Beach Pottsville Beach annual Australia Day barbecue and local community awards. Recipients included Ian Hamilton, who was presented with the Johansen Family Award for his service to the Pottsville Refugee Support Group and the Cabarita Beach Surf Life Saving Club. Pottsville and District Men's Shed received the Garrard Family Award, recognising the shed's input to the local community. Six students from St Ambrose



Catholic Primary School in Pottsville, Bogangar Public School and Pottsville Beach Public School received awards for most improved and Aussie mateship. I congratulate all those winners.

On Australia Day I also had the honour of helping to present the Tumbulgum Community Awards alongside Jenny Kidd from the Tumbulgum Community Association. The Tumbulgum Community Junior Sportsperson Award was presented to the Rangers Soccer Club grade 12 girls team. The Tumbulgum Community Citizen Award winner was the Tumbulgum Fishing Club, with over 400 members. Well done to those award winners. Following the award presentation, the highly anticipated Tumbulgum Cricket Challenge 2025 began. We saw the Village People take on the North Tumbulgum Cavaliers. The Village People were victorious.

During the parliamentary summer recess I also had the opportunity to meet with Condong locals at the Condong Bowling Club. Like much of Condong, the club was underwater during the February 2022 flood event. The damage was extensive and the clean-up arduous. The club basically had to start from scratch. It was great to see the club three years on, thriving and improving its resilience in future floods. I met with club members and supporters, all of whom have been instrumental in restoring the Condong Bowling Club following the floods. It is a wonderful example of how communities in the Tweed come together and unite in the aftermath of floods. It happened that the day of my visit to Condong was also the day an enormous and fierce thunderstorm hit the Tweed. It rolled in from the south-west and battered the region, with high winds, hail and intense rainfall. It caused flash flooding, including on the M1, fallen trees and damage to homes and businesses, all in a couple of hours, before heading out to sea.

By the time I arrived in Condong, the sun was shining and the clouds were gone. Unfortunately, that was not the only extreme storm to pummel the Tweed. One week later another huge and intense storm thrashed the Tweed, this time at around 9.00 a.m. Day turned to night as the enormous storm cell approached the Tweed, bringing with it wind gusts of up to 100 kilometres per hour plus huge rainfall and hail. It downed powerlines and left 21,000 households across the region without power. A giant gum tree fell on a car and daycare centre in Tweed Heads. Miraculously, no-one was seriously injured. Fallen trees caused chaos across Tweed Heads South, Kingscliff, Banora Point, Clothiers Creek and many other locations, as roads were blocked and clean-up resources stretched. I thank all the responders from the SES, Rural Fire Service, Tweed Shire Council and Essential Energy, and local arborists and Tweed residents who worked tirelessly to clear roads of downed trees and debris.

We are all very well-versed in a summer thunderstorm in the Tweed, but this year's storm events have been particularly ferocious and damaging. While the Tweed is resilient in the face of extreme weather, I speak for many of my constituents when I say that I will be grateful to see the summer storm season come to an end. I look forward to another year representing the good people of the Tweed and updating the House on similar matters. All members of the House would have experienced extreme weather, whether it is heat, storms or hail. We are all indebted to and grateful for our volunteers in the SES, RFS and Marine Rescue, who go out every day and risk their lives. My son was involved in the SES, and he was very keen to go out. As a parent, I was keen to hear the front door click when he came home. I must admit that when he came home after an event or if another crew had turned up first, he would be rather disappointed that he was no longer required. I take my hat off to the families of all those emergency workers. We owe them a debt of gratitude. I do not think we can ever repay them. I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

### RIVERSTONE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:10):** It has been just under two years since the people of Riverstone and New South Wales voted for a fresh start. As we approach the halfway mark of this Government's tenure, I reflect on what we have achieved for residents of Riverstone. Upon entering this place, I knew that the challenges facing my community were difficult. After 12 years of neglect and mismanagement by the former Liberal-Nationals Government, our schools were over capacity, our roads were outdated, public transport was failing, progress at Riverstone had stalled and Rouse Hill Hospital was nothing more than a broken promise. Since being elected, I have worked hard to kickstart the projects my community so desperately needs.

Starting with Rouse Hill Hospital, the Minns Labor Government delivered \$700 million in funding in its first budget, some \$400 million greater than was promised by the former Government, which means the new hospital will offer significantly more to support our growing population. The upgrade in funding and scope required a complete revision of the plans and included increasing the number of beds from 58 to around 300, an emergency department and other crucial services that were initially left out. Planning for the hospital is in the final stages, and construction is expected to commence in early 2026. At the beginning of 2023, almost all of our schools were grossly over capacity. We started to address the situation by setting up two temporary schools in Nimimba Fields and Tallawong, and construction has begun on their permanent sites.

We have secured a site for Tallawong High School, and major upgrades have started at other existing schools. This Labor Government is committed to getting public education back on track, especially in our growing

suburbs, and we have only just begun. When I took office, access to public transport was anything but equitable, especially in the northern parts of my electorate. Ending the metro at Tallawong instead of Schofields station, combined with the failure to upgrade bus routes, has strained local roads and parking facilities at heavy rail and metro stations. The final business case for Metro North West is underway. Construction of the missing link is key to unlocking the movement of people and alleviating the parking problems experienced across the electorate.

Shortly after being elected, our Government established the NSW Bus Industry Taskforce. More than 12 per cent of responses came from frustrated commuters in our area, leading to significant improvements to bus routes. From 20 January, commuters began benefiting from increased bus capacity, higher service frequency and new routes, like the 748 for Melonba and Schofields, while services on routes such as the 742 and 747 began running more frequently. We are investing in roads that will keep our community connected, alleviate traffic and serve as crucial flood evacuation routes. Work has begun on Bandon Road and Garfield Road East, two major road connections that should have been completed years ago.

In my first meeting with Transport for NSW, I discovered that in both cases the initial steps in the process were incomplete. In the case of Bandon Road, it had been shelved completely and removed from the north-west road strategy, despite multiple announcements indicating its progress. It has taken longer than I would have liked, but construction should begin in 2026. Further, Transport for NSW has begun a strategic plan for the level crossing on Garfield Road, which will include options for both road over rail and rail over road. That means the town centre can be designed based on what is best for the community, rather than what is best for the road. We are also investigating the possibility of doing minor works on the intersection to provide short-term relief for residents of Riverstone before the full solution is implemented.

It is no secret that Riverstone has been left behind, and the lack of a workable master plan for the Riverstone town centre is the clearest example of that. When I became the member for Riverstone, the master plan for the town centre, adopted by Blacktown City Council, was rejected by Planning with no clear pathway forward. The town centre is now included in the State Significant Rezoning Policy, and I expect to have something to show the community in the coming months. Marsden Park North and West Schofields both had unworkable precinct plans due to flooding. Those plans have been scrapped, and work is underway to develop new plans that are biased towards job opportunities rather than residential uplift. Richards, known locally as the old meatworks site, is in the final stages of the development application process, and work is expected to begin there soon. Combined, those four precincts will deliver around 40,000 to 50,000 local job opportunities.

In a broader sense, when the Minns Labor Government took office less than two years ago, Sydney inflation was at 7.3 per cent; today it is 2.4 per cent. We have lifted the wages cap on public sector workers and now, under Labor, people are beginning to rebuild their purchasing power with real wage growth for the first time since March 2021. When we took office, real wages in New South Wales were going backwards by 3.6 per cent, but by September 2024 real wages were growing at 0.6 per cent, and they are on an upward trend. We have made a commitment to the people of north-west Sydney for a fresh start. We are only halfway there and there is much more to do, but thanks to the Minns Labor Government, Riverstone is finally seeing progress—better schools, roads, health care, transport and plans for a better future.

## ROZELLE INTERCHANGE

### ROZELLE PARKLANDS

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:15):** I used my first private member's statement in 2024 to speak about the problems in my community caused by the Rozelle interchange and Rozelle Parklands. Members might recall the horrors of the 2023-24 summer, when traffic in my electorate was brought to a standstill thanks to the completion of the private toll road. Not long after that, the long-awaited parklands were suddenly fenced off after friable asbestos was found in the garden mulch used across the park. The clean-up took months, and we were not allowed back into the parklands until the end of April 2024. I use my first private member's statement in 2025 to speak about my concerns with Rozelle Parklands, and I hope this is not the start of a tradition. Perhaps next time I will be able to talk about the site in more positive terms.

The first issue is that three exhaust stacks sit within the grounds of the parklands. Two of them are currently active and one will open when the Western Harbour Tunnel opens. They are spilling toxic fumes into the air. There is another exhaust stack along Victoria Road near the Bay Run and Iron Cove Bridge. Our community has sent a clear message that we do not want unfiltered stacks and unfiltered carcinogenic pollution pumped out near our schools, parks, playgrounds and homes. We want those toxic stacks to be filtered. Despite world's best practice and mounting scientific evidence that transport pollution is extremely harmful to our health, the New South Wales Government will not commit to filtering those toxic stacks. To justify the inaction, it has pointed to a report from the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer that considered the impacts of road tunnel air quality.

In response to the strong concerns in my community, and with new research that indicates the health risks from transport pollution are higher than the medical profession previously understood, I have called for a review of the chief scientist's findings. To its credit, the Government committed to that in June 2023. Twice we have expected that report to be delivered, and we have pressed the Minister's office for an update ever since. Now it is February 2025 and I am still waiting for a briefing on the chief scientist's updated findings. I am very hopeful that it will happen soon. If the Government is not going to commit to filtering the WestConnex exhaust stacks, the least it could do is let residents know the extent of any health risks that could be associated with their presence in our community.

The second concern relates to the ongoing costs associated with Rozelle Parklands. Inner West Council has been pressing to take over the care, control and management of the parklands at an estimated cost to ratepayers of \$650,000 a year. I am concerned that this is ill-advised, given the difficulties of the site that have been presented, including the asbestos debacle, and more costly surprises may yet greet us. We are still waiting for contractors to finish the work that should have been delivered when the toll road opened over a year ago, including the promised sports courts, lighting and more amenities blocks. The parklands are not even finished.

The New South Wales Labor Government offered Inner West Council a sweetener of up to \$20 million if it took control of Rozelle Parklands. But that would go towards upgrades across the precinct, not ongoing running costs, and \$8 million of that money has already been siphoned off by council to an earmarked fund for another project that could see astroturf installed at an entirely different location. The council wants to put synthetic playing fields in one of our heritage-listed harbourside parks where it has not adequately invested in the upkeep of the existing natural turf.

There are concerns about the council's poor track record on playing surfaces. Recently Leichardt Oval had high-profile A-league women's matches taken away from it because the surface was in a poor state. The remaining \$12 million of the \$20 million has been earmarked to finish off the parklands. There will be nothing left over after the council has looked at everything else that needs to be delivered to make it a decent parkland. There will be no money left to fund the ongoing costs. In the Balmain electorate there are two examples of parks that are still controlled by the State Government. Placemaking NSW looks after one of the parklands. Greater Sydney Parklands still looks after Callan Park.

I am very concerned that the council wants to take over those parklands and push those costs onto ratepayers who have already borne a great expense with all of the work and pain that has come with the Rozelle interchange. The council could still be a key stakeholder and control the sporting fields without taking on the control and care of large, expensive parklands. The community is urgently waiting on a new raised pedestrian crossing to connect Easton Park and Rozelle Parklands across Lilyfield Road. Next week the Inner West Council will discuss the master plan and the proposal of \$650,000 per year of ratepayer funds. I will be keeping a very close eye on the issue as it progresses.

### WENTWORTH POINT HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:20):** On Thursday 6 February 2025, on day one of term 1 of the school year, Wentworth Point High School opened its doors to students for the very first time. I was so pleased to see the year 7 students arriving in their freshly minted uniforms. Parents, students and staff all appeared equally excited to step over the threshold. For some it was extra special because they were not only the first students of Wentworth Point High School but also the first students of Wentworth Point Public School seven years earlier. I was honoured to attend the school's official opening ceremony along with principal Melissa Johnston; deputy principal Julia Alvarado; City of Parramatta councillors Dr Patricia Prociv and Michael Ng; P&C president Leon Li; Jamison High School year 10 student Shyla Madden, who performed a wonderful tribute and acknowledgement of country; education secretary Murat Dizdar; John Kennedy; and our indefatigable Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning.

Wentworth Point may be one of the newest high schools in our State, but it certainly has a long history. As many members know, Newington was the first residential suburb on the Olympic peninsula, which was established as the athlete village for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Over the past 20 years apartment living has become the norm in and around Sydney Olympic Park. The rise of apartment living has come with a rise in the number of school students needing a secondary school close to where they live. The suburbs of the Olympic peninsula have been included in the catchment for Concord High School, which is a great school. But with the rapid increase in student numbers, successive local members have advocated for more than a decade for a new high school closer to home to cater for students living on the Olympic peninsula.

Formerly, the Olympic peninsula suburbs were located in the Auburn electorate and three strong Labor members of Parliament ran vocal campaigns and advocated for the community to secure a high school in Sydney Olympic Park. Several locations were earmarked within the park, but the former Liberal-Nationals Government

failed to make a new school on the land a priority. When I was elected to the City of Parramatta council in 2017, we joined the local MP and community in advocating. Alas, it fell on deaf ears. Eventually a school was announced in the 2018-2019 State budget. However, there was a clear lack of any commitment from the former Liberal-Nationals Government to progress the project until, curiously, the final announcement of the New South Wales State electoral districts redistribution, which saw Wentworth Point and the Olympic peninsula move from the Labor seat of Auburn to the Liberal-held seat of Parramatta.

Located on Burroway Road, Wentworth Point High School took 418 days to build, with 1,150 individuals working tirelessly to bring the vision to life. On day one, Wentworth Point High School welcomed 183 year 7 students. Reflecting the wonderful diversity of the suburbs in the catchment—Rhodes, Newington, Sydney Olympic Park, Silverwater, Wentworth Point and parts of Lidcombe—74 per cent of students have culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Wentworth Point High School has opened its doors with 78 new classrooms; a support learning unit with five classrooms; specialty spaces for science, hospitality, design, technology, and creative and performing arts—including a baby grand piano—landscaped recreation areas; outdoor games courts; and canteen facilities with capacity for 1,500 students.

The \$18.5 million stage two upgrade to Wentworth Point High School is well underway and will provide a new hall, sports courts and additional landscaping. The school will also have access to the Wentworth Point Peninsula Park, another failed promise by the former Government, which left residents without much-needed green space. The former Government promised that park for 10 years and failed to deliver. Peninsula Park early works have started, and the overall works in Wentworth Point will include a new road, car park and future sports fields adjoining the high school. Wentworth Point High School is more than just a school; it is a new chapter for the students, families and communities who will call it home. I am proud to see this vital piece of infrastructure finally built—with stage two to come—delivered, open and already shaping the futures of young people living in the Parramatta electorate.

### PSYCHIATRY WORKFORCE

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (17:25):** I express my deep concern with the ongoing dispute between the Minns Labor Government and NSW Health psychiatrists. On 30 January 2025 it was reported that more than half of all the staff psychiatrists in the Sydney Local Health District had resigned, leaving our local mental health departments and services under extreme pressure. I call on the New South Wales Government and NSW Health to act to address the resignation of specialist psychiatrists across our State. Over the past two years there has been growing pressure on our healthcare workers, including our nurses and midwives, who were also protesting today. Further disputes across the health sector will only increase the strain on our hospitals.

Public hospital psychiatrists play a pivotal role in diagnosing, treating and rehabilitating some of the most vulnerable individuals in our community. According to an Australian Bureau of Statistics study conducted between 2020 and 2022, more than 8.5 million Australians aged between 16 and 85 have experienced mental health symptoms at some time in their lives. Whilst not all cases require the assistance of a specialist psychiatrist, 8 per cent of people had self-harmed at some point in their lives and more than 16 per cent had experienced suicidal thoughts. The Concord Centre for Mental Health at Concord hospital in my community is one of the largest mental health specialist facilities in our State and will be detrimentally impacted by the mass resignation of psychiatrists. The ward consists of 173 psychiatric beds, which I understand are being staffed by less than a dozen part-time specialist psychiatrists following the resignations, boosted by some support from locums.

I am not going to stand here and say that this problem has not been developing for a number of years. I will not play tit for tat or petty politics. I am just interested in a solution. I mentioned mental health in my first speech in this place. It is one of my priorities. I want this fixed, particularly for our young people and families, so patients can receive the dignity and mental health treatment that they deserve. Over the past month I spoke to many people in my community, including hospital staff, who expressed their growing frustrations with the state of the healthcare system. One constituent emailed me to say:

Dear Ms Di Pasqua,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the mass resignations of 203 staff specialist psychiatrists in New South Wales Health. As one of your constituents, I feel compelled to share my thoughts on this pressing issue, which I believe poses significant risks to mental health care and specifically Concord Hospital.

I do not think I need to remind you that the NSW mental health system has been drained of public psychiatrists for decades now, due to pay disparities between NSW and other states, as well as significant demand for private psychiatrists. Psychiatry is inherently a specialty which deeply cares for the most vulnerable patients in the community, and public psychiatry has by far one of the hardest working conditions in medicine.

The psychiatrists who have remained staff specialists throughout all these years represent the best of us as they have sacrificed and invested their time and effort into building a system which cares and tries its best to treat as many in the community as they can.

Mental ill-health takes its toll on patients, families, friends and loved ones. The effects of the psychiatrists' resignations will be felt by all. I have written to the Minister about this issue on multiple occasions, particularly when I was first alerted to the issue by a local resident in June last year. We have heard that budget constraints are the reason behind the Government's failure to negotiate. Yet, following the resignations, NSW Health sought to hire temporary contactors to fill the roles. The ABC reported that almost one-third of the psychiatrists who resigned were rehired as visiting medical officers. That decision is ultimately costing taxpayers. It is not addressing the underlying dispute; it is creating greater instability in our hospitals.

I hope it is not lost on the Government that the psychiatrist resignations affect real people's lives. The psychiatrists who choose to work in the public system often do so at a financial disadvantage because they believe in their vocation. I do not want them to be forced to find new jobs interstate or work as casual locums without job security, or to lose them to private psychiatry, which ultimately locks out the most vulnerable patients who cannot afford the cost of private services. We need the Government to resolve the crisis so that our psychiatrists feel like they are valued for the important work they do. I believe politics is about people. I want to give everyone the very best opportunity in life, including those living with acute mental illness.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:30):** I appreciate the passion of the member for Drummoyne in highlighting the significant issues facing our health system in relation to the wage negotiations currently being undertaken by public psychiatrists. As a former mental health worker, I appreciate the strains that have been placed on the mental health system over not just the past 12 or 18 months but the past decade and a half. Although the member acknowledged that the issue has been in play for a long period, alarm bells were rung back in 2018 when there was an upper House inquiry into the mental health system. The issue is not going to be resolved overnight but the Government is committed to resolving it.

#### LISMORE ELECTORATE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore) (17:31):** I provide members with a regional round-up about the Lismore electorate. I recently attended Australia Day events in the Lismore electorate. There are many Australia Day events in Lismore because each of the five local government areas has more than one, particularly in the villages. I decided it was Kyogle's turn first this year. I did not get to Kyogle for the actual event, but I saw everybody setting up, wished them well, thanked them and personally congratulated Roz Knights on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for outstanding public service. Roz manages a staff of 40 at the Kyogle Lions food pantry, which supports more than 800 families a month. True to form, Roz was cutting onions, getting ready for the barbeque and giving back to her community, as she has done since moving to Kyogle from Melbourne in 2012.

Tweed Shire Council had its combined Australia Day awards and citizenship ceremony on 24 January, and I was able to get to that. I must say that Tweed Shire Council does its citizenship ceremony so well. They are very special occasions as becoming a citizen of an adopted country is probably one of the biggest decisions a person can make. The awards went off spectacularly well, and I will talk about all the recipients at another time. I was also in Tabulam for community meetings, particularly with the Rural Fire Service and local farmers. We had been in conversation for about a year about controlled burning, including when we can burn and other issues with neighbours. In many areas, lifestyle landholders who are not farmers have moved in and they do not do a lot of fuel reduction. Some people do not believe in fuel reduction, which makes it a challenge for our farmers who have been on the land a long time. I see members in the Chamber nodding, so they know exactly what I am talking about.

I thank Steve Yorke, who has returned to service in an acting position and who came to meet with my farmers. I thank Shellie Smythe, who is the RFS manager of community risk for the north. I also thank farmers David Young, John Cousins, Clive Cousins and Rod Ramsay. Rod was also an active member of the RFS for a long time, so it was a very valuable meeting when we talked about issues and reached some agreement about the way forward. John Cousins would like a lot more to happen, and we will continue to have conversations. Next up, I had a Tabulam "open office" in the hall. I talked about local issues with people from the showgrounds, where we also have the races in Tabulam, and a few other community members. I then attended the Tabulam Progress Association—a small group of dedicated, committed people who do wonderful work in the community.

Then it was on to Tenterfield. I stayed overnight, had a meal with people at the club and met with locals the next day. I met members of the Tenterfield Swimming Club, who do terrific work. I managed to help them get a substantial amount of money through the Community Building Partnership program to heat the pool because Tenterfield gets very chilly. It is good to have the pool open longer, and I will support them in their efforts to upgrade it even more. I know that will not happen overnight—as do they—but I told them I will back them all the way. I met with one of the local farmers to discuss ongoing struggles with fence repair and stock replacement arising out of 2023 floods.

I then caught up with St Joseph's Catholic School students and staff, who were back at school, and then opened the Dumaresq Overflow Channel Bridge near Mingoola on the road to Texas and Boggabilla in my electorate. It was fantastic. There was interest all around. People came from Toowoomba. All the locals came, including the mayor, Bronwyn Petrie, and the councillors. Helen Duroux did a welcome to country, and Mingoola Hall put on a cracking afternoon tea afterwards.

### MYALL LAKES ELECTORATE PARAMEDICS

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:36):** I speak on an issue of importance to the Myall Lakes community but also right across regional New South Wales: taxpayer-funded paramedic rosters. Our paramedics are the first line of defence in emergencies. They deserve the resourcing and the support required to protect lives. In the Manning-Great Lakes region, Taree is fully funded to operate three day-shift paramedic crews seven days a week, which is identical to regional centres like Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour and Lismore. Despite having this capacity, NSW Ambulance insists that Taree can manage with only two day-shift crews and routinely reallocates the third crew to cover shortages in other areas like Forster, and areas out of the Myall Lakes electorate like Gloucester and Kempsey. That practice leaves the Manning-Great Lakes region dangerously under-resourced every single day.

Our region is already poor in health resources, lacking a T1 trauma hospital and cardiac cath lab. When paramedics transfer patients with life-threatening conditions such as STEMIs or other cardiac emergencies to John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle, which is two hours away, they are taken out of the area for extended periods, and sometimes for an entire shift. That creates a domino effect, with neighbouring towns like Tuncurry, Bulahdelah and Gloucester forced to cover emergencies in Taree, leaving their own communities without essential ambulance services. The strain on our paramedics, coordination staff and our residents is immense.

One example occurred last Friday when Taree paramedic crews signed on for the day. Two crews were immediately dispatched to Newcastle for cardiac transfers. That left only one operational crew available to respond to emergencies in our entire region, once again placing residents at unacceptable risk. The other week, a day-shift crew from Taree was sent to Kempsey for an entire 12-hour shift, even though Taree was already short staffed. That decision left locals without adequate emergency services for a full day. If a local had had a stroke, car accident or any other medical emergency, help may not have arrived in time.

Those occurrences are not isolated. I have been told that, on average, only four or five paramedics are rostered on in Taree four to five days a week. Instead of bringing in a sixth to maintain three full crews, the fifth paramedic is routinely sent elsewhere. Last weekend that very scenario played out when a paramedic was sent from Taree to Forster, resulting in not one but two understaffed crews across the entire region. The Ambulance Division of the Health Services Union [ADHSU] has highlighted similar challenges across regional and metropolitan areas. The pattern is disturbingly consistent from Lithgow to Tweed Heads and the Central Coast. Communities are being left vulnerable due to a refusal to maintain the rosters that taxpayers have already funded. The situation is unsafe and unsustainable.

NSW Ambulance's outdated staffing model, known as planned ambulance rosters, continues to fail communities across the State. As the ADHSU has pointed out, this model leads to overworked paramedics, delayed response times and higher injury rates. This leaves New South Wales with the worst ambulance response times in the country. Our paramedics are not asking for additional funding. They are demanding that NSW Ambulance deliver the services it has already been paid to provide. When paramedics are overworked, response times increase, fatigue sets in and community safety is compromised. Our residents deserve better. Our paramedics deserve to work in conditions that prioritise public safety and, most importantly, staff wellbeing.

Funded day-shift crews in Myall Lakes and regional New South Wales need to be maintained without pulling resources to plug gaps elsewhere. I call on the New South Wales Government to immediately direct NSW Ambulance to maintain fully funded rosters. Casuals should be called in or overtime authorised rather than stripping resources from already under-resourced regions. We need paramedics to start in Taree and stay in Taree to ensure that residents in the Manning and Great Lakes regions receive the timely lifesaving care they deserve. I will continue to stand with ADHSU members. It is time to ensure that promises made are promises kept, so that paramedics can continue their lifesaving work without unnecessary obstacles. The community deserves nothing less than the paramedic numbers that they fund.

### ROB HORNER

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (17:41):** I honour Shoalhaven City Council's director of Shoalhaven Water, Rob Horner, who announced his retirement on 17 January 2025 after a long and distinguished 29-year career with the council's water utility. Rob's working career spans 40 years, and he has spent the past 34 years in the water industry. Rob is widely respected by his peers across the New South Wales and Australian water

industry. When Rob joined Shoalhaven Water as a civil engineer in 1996, many of our smaller towns were not connected to town water or sewerage. Rob became the project manager responsible for the design and construction of Lake Tabourie, Lake Conjola, Bendalong, Manyana, Currarong and Kangaroo Valley sewerage schemes, which removed old septic tank systems from properties. Rob also delivered major water supply projects such as the Milton water treatment plant and the Porters Creek Dam upgrade. Rob said:

I've seen a lot of progress, a lot of change and a lot of weather over my time and with each challenge we've become a more adaptable and resilient water manager.

For Rob, one of the highlights for Shoalhaven Water was winning the best tasting water in the New South Wales and Australian Capital Territory competitions in 2019 and 2022. These wins were career highlights and worthy recognition of the operators and attendants of Shoalhaven Water. When reflecting on these wins, Rob said:

I'm proud of the high-quality water and wastewater services we provide for the community, particularly managing in excess of \$2 billion in assets that supports a growing population of around 110,000 people and the millions of visitors to the region each year.

Rob became the director of Shoalhaven Water in 2019. He led the organisation through the devastating and destructive Currowan bushfires and then, three months later, through some of the worst flooding on the South Coast in 30 years. For the duration of the Currowan and Tianjara fire events, the infrastructure and technical and support staff, many of whom returned from holidays to assist, were placed under extreme pressure to continuously provide these essential services.

While limited infrastructure was destroyed by the fire, there were considerable challenges in maintaining constant water supply to all areas. Rob Horner worked tirelessly throughout this time. Rob has been behind many other key achievements over almost 30 years, including the project management of Shoalhaven's renowned and multi-award-winning Reclaimed Water Management Scheme, which included major upgrades to St Georges Basin, Huskisson, Vincentia, Callala, Culburra and, more recently, Nowra and Bomaderry sewage treatment plants. He managed several major water supply projects, such as the Milton water treatment plant, the upgrade of the Bamarang water treatment plant, the design and construction of the 20-kilometre-long and 600-millimetre-wide pipeline from Bamarang to Bewong and the Porters Creek Dam upgrade. He oversaw progress in the water supply system for the Jervis Bay Territory, which will now connect Jervis Bay Territory to the Shoalhaven City Council water network.

He won environmental and engineering awards, including for the Reclaimed Water Management Scheme. He also won the Sam Samra Award in 2023 for excellence in water management. This award is not by self-nomination. It is instead determined by a panel of water industry leaders. Rob Horner will leave a legacy of efficiency, strategic direction and the creation of a high-performing team within Shoalhaven Water. Rob will be sorely missed by everyone in the community, not just for his knowledge of our water and sewerage systems, infrastructure and day-to-day operations, but also for his natural leadership skills, which have created a professional and positive team culture. Rob Horner is simply a nice guy. Rob's move into retirement at the end of a long and distinguished career is well deserved. On behalf of the residents of the South Coast, I thank Rob Horner for his dedication and professionalism in a career spanning 29 years in Shoalhaven. He will be sorely missed. I wish him all the best in his retirement.

### MORISSET SPORTS FACILITY

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (17:45):** Late last year, alongside the Minister for Sport, I had the pleasure of announcing that the Office of Sport has finally secured land to build a state-of-the-art sports facility at Morisset. The seven-hectare site is at the northern end of the Morisset Hospital complex and takes in the existing bowling club and sports fields. It is ideally situated on the shores of Lake Macquarie, and water sports enthusiasts will enjoy easy access to the lake. This announcement comes five long years after Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre closed. I have spoken six times before in this place about the unexpected closure of the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre and how this affected the Lake Macquarie community.

On 29 March 2019 locals were blindsided when the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre was suddenly evacuated and closed. The Office of Sport had been advised by Origin Energy that, in the event of a major earthquake, the ash dam wall at the nearby Eraring Power Station posed a significant risk to the centre. International visitors, school students and staff were bundled out within the day. It is no secret that I was frustrated with the decision, and this was a sentiment shared by many in Lake Macquarie. However, the community and I have since had to accept events and focus on engaging with Office of Sport to develop a vision for a new sports centre.

Finding the right location for this new centre has been complex. Locations earmarked for the new facility have included land in Eraring and in the Lake Macquarie State Conservation Area. Ultimately, both sites were left wanting. The Eraring location faced local opposition, and the State Conservation Area site, while the best available public land at the time, had challenging topography and was not situated right on the lake. An opportunity came

about when, in October 2023, Minister Rose Jackson announced an intention to close Morisset Hospital mental health facilities and transfer services to a new facility in Metford. I immediately recognised the opportunity to secure a site like no other for the new sport centre.

Many may not be aware that sport has a long history at Morisset Hospital. Sport was a part of patient therapy, and there were many combined patient and staff sporting teams as well as intra-hospital competitions. Local schools also used the hospital sporting facilities, and many kids learned to swim there in the 1950s and 1960s. Morisset Hospital Bowling Club was built in 1955 for patients and staff and is still used by local residents. It will be incorporated into the new facility, which will give it life for years to come. That Lake Macquarie's new sport hub will find its home on the old hospital grounds is fitting and continues the long tradition of sport bringing the community together.

I need to acknowledge the disappointment of some locals that the new sports facility will not have accommodation like the Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre did. I understand this is linked in large part to the fond memories many have of the camps that they or their loved ones attended at Myuna Bay, which had been a much-loved community asset since 1944. However, the new facility is being designed to suit the needs of the community today. The Office of Sport is not planning a facility with accommodation like the former Myuna Bay Sport and Recreation Centre, nor has that ever been its stated intention. Doing so would mean the facility could not open to the public, who are now set to benefit from indoor multi-sports facilities, an outdoor multi-sports oval and courts.

Rather, schools and other groups can continue to take advantage of accommodation at the nearby Point Wolstoncroft Sport and Recreation Centre for camps, while the Morisset Sports Facility will be geared towards the wider community. I also highlight that the part of Morisset Hospital remaining with NSW Health has enormous cultural and historical value. In particular, the recreation hall and chapel, situated near the new sports facility site, are perhaps the most significant heritage buildings in Lake Macquarie. I hope that a valuable public use may similarly be found for those beautiful buildings so the New South Wales public can enjoy them for generations to come.

I thank those who worked towards securing the site for the Morisset Sports Facility, particularly CEO Karen Jones and her former team at the Office of Sport and NSW Health. I also thank the Premier, the Minister for Sport, the Minister for Health, the Minister for the Hunter and the Treasurer for their support. Finally, I thank the people of Lake Macquarie for their ongoing patience and their engagement with the Office of Sport about what they want from the new facility. The closure of the Myuna Bay centre deeply affected our community. I am sure that the new facility will provide an innovative space for us to come together, generate local employment opportunities and serve all of Lake Macquarie and the region for generations to come.

#### **TRIBUTE TO DAVID WILLIAM GALLAGHER**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (17:50):** It is with great sadness that I speak about David William Gallagher—or "Gal", as most know him—who passed on 9 February 2025. I am honoured to have known Gal through my former employment with the NSW Police Force and in my political life. In my role as a region manager for Western Region police, I used to perform audits on the local area commands. Gal was in charge of the target action group at Broken Hill. While I was talking to Gal about his vehicles, his portable equipment and his accountable books, I got to know him pretty well over 10 years with the police. He was a great guy. Gal was a dedicated councillor on Broken Hill City Council, a leader in his community and a committed family man. In 2021 Sergeant Dave Gallagher retired from New South Wales police after serving for 40 years. At the time he was the longest serving policeman in Broken Hill.

Gal also had another name. When you met him and shook his hand for the first time, he would say "G'day, my name's Dave, but people call me 'The Legend'." That was always a bit of fun. Gal was born in regional New South Wales and worked in Sydney. He was first assigned to Kings Cross and stayed in Sydney for almost 10 years, before the bush called him back and he moved to Broken Hill in the late '80s. For distinguished service to the force, he was awarded the National Medal in 1997 and the Australian Police Medal in 2010. He served the people of the Barrier Ranges for over 30 years and was incredibly passionate about the Broken Hill community. When he was interviewed about his retirement, Dave is reported to have said, "Best place in the world to live, great community and I'll never, ever leave. It's in your blood, the red soil."

Gal participated in numerous community events and organisations, often as a member of the executive or leadership group. He served as president of the Silver City Racing Club, which hosts a race day in November. It is the sister event to the St Patrick's race day, held in March, and I will be there this year. Both events are valued racing attractions and are integral to the social fabric of Broken Hill. The racing community has lost a significant contributor and friend. Whenever I saw Gal at St Pat's race day, he was bursting with energy. He was so excited.



He loved the fact that all of those people came to enjoy his beautiful city and have a great time. He was a huge supporter of the races.

But it did not end there with Gal. He also had a lot of energy for his community. He was a member of the Country Universities Centre Far West board. That highly successful organisation supports people in the Far West in pursuing higher educational qualifications. Gal's support for the organisation was immense. In addition, he served as the chair of the Regional Development Australia Far West board and was a passionate advocate for the Far West. His leadership on the board resulted in numerous projects receiving funding in the remote communities of Tibooburra, Milparinka, Packsaddle and Silverton, thereby enhancing their liveability. One should not underestimate the benefit of a small amount of money going into those communities for projects—the difference it makes to the morale and liveability of the community. Dave certainly understood that.

Since 2011 Dave had served as an Independent councillor on Broken Hill City Council. His lifelong commitment to the community was complemented by a genuine enthusiasm for the city, and he promoted Broken Hill whenever possible. Just days before his passing, he took Australia Day Ambassador Mike Goldman and his family on a highlights tour, showcasing everything Broken Hill has to offer. His pride in Broken Hill was always evident. Dave was the master of ceremonies for this year's Australia Day ceremony, and I had the pleasure of catching up with him on that day. I offer my sincere condolences to Dave's wife, Julie, as well as to his family, friends and former colleagues. He will be missed, and I will miss him.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:54):** Fixing the housing crisis is a top priority for this Government, but it did not begin when we were elected in March 2023. It was predicted and preventable, and it is the direct result of decades of inaction by State and Federal Liberals. In 2004 the Howard Government was warned loud and clear that housing affordability was slipping out of reach for many working Australians. Recently released Cabinet papers reveal it was advised to review negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions, which fuelled investor speculation and drove up prices. The Productivity Commission urged reform. The evidence was there but, instead of taking action, the Liberals did nothing—as they are very good at doing. Property speculation spiralled, locking an entire generation out of home ownership.

Fast-forward two decades, and we are dealing with the fallout. Home ownership rates have plummeted, rents are at record highs and the supply of affordable homes is not keeping up with demand. In New South Wales, and especially in my patch in south-west Sydney, the housing crisis means young people are unable to get a foot in the door. Some parts of Sydney have resisted new housing, blocking developments and rezoning, while south and north-west Sydney communities like mine in Leppington are taking on the bulk of the State's housing growth. It is not just about meeting demand; it is about fairness. Every community must do its part to tackle the housing crisis. With major high-rise projects planned in Leppington and Edmondson Park, thousands of new homes will ease the crisis. But we cannot do it alone. Growth must be shared across Sydney, and that is why the Minns Labor Government is stepping in to fix the housing mess that the Liberals left behind.

Under the previous Liberal Government, there was a plethora of alphabet soup organisations that accomplished nothing—agencies with overlapping responsibilities, no accountability and little to show for their existence. Instead of fixing the problem, they buried it under a pile of bureaucracy and red tape. That is why we have established the Housing Delivery Authority [HDA]—a single, focused agency with the power to fast-track approvals for major housing projects. The HDA is cutting through red tape and delivering more homes near transport, schools and jobs, so people can get where they need to go without relying on cars. That means higher density housing near train stations in areas like Leppington and Edmondson Park, and perhaps along the new \$1 billion Fifteenth Avenue transit corridor, which will make life easier for commuters and families.

We are also fixing social and affordable housing after years of neglect. We are partnering with community housing providers to build thousands of new, affordable homes. They will not be just numbers on a spreadsheet; they will be real homes for real people, close to services, jobs and transport. New planning reforms will require a percentage of all major developments to include affordable housing—no more unchecked luxury developments pricing out local families. We are making sure that communities remain diverse and inclusive. Under the Liberals, renters were treated as an afterthought. Rents soared while protections got weaker. Now families will not be forced out just so landlords can charge more. We are also rolling out a portable bonds scheme, meaning renters will not need to scrape together thousands of dollars every time they move.

For too long, south-west Sydney has done the heavy lifting while other parts of Sydney refused to change. That is simply not fair. Every community needs to step up and be part of the solution, not just Leppington and the north-west. That is why we are ensuring that new housing targets are met across all of Sydney. The HDA is working with councils to identify underutilised land and fast-track approvals in high-opportunity areas. It is also why we are ensuring that State-owned land—like underused government buildings and sites—is repurposed for

housing where appropriate. Instead of sitting vacant or being sold off to the highest bidder, those sites will deliver more homes for more families.

The Liberals had plenty of chances to fix the current crisis. Instead, at both State and Federal levels, they were asleep at the wheel. They let house prices spiral, cut funding to social housing and created layers of bureaucratic agencies that employed plenty of their mates but did little else. Instead of tackling the problem, they made it worse. They oversaw years of stagnation while housing approvals slowed, infrastructure did not keep pace and investors were given free rein as families were left behind. The Minns Labor Government is fixing this mess. It is cutting red tape and making the housing market fairer and more sustainable, because having a place to call home is not a privilege; it is a basic right. We are making sure everyone has a fair shot at finding a home they can afford.

### **TERRIGAL ELECTORATE AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:59):** I recently had the pleasure of attending several Australia Day ceremonies on the Central Coast. I am proud to proclaim my great support for celebrating Australia Day. It is a day that unites us as a nation and provides an opportunity to reflect on the great things that make our country so unique and wonderful. Whether it be recognising our inspiring Australia Day award recipients, welcoming new citizens into our community or simply gathering with family and friends, Australia Day is a time for celebration, reflection and unity.

Australia is one of the world's most successful multicultural nations—a fact we proudly celebrated on the Central Coast this year. It was a privilege to spend the weekend attending community celebrations across the coast, where I witnessed firsthand the sense of pride, inclusion and camaraderie that defines our region. One event that I attend every year is the Wagstaffe to Killcare Community Association Australia Day ceremony. I extend my sincere thanks to President Mike Allsop and his dedicated team of volunteers for their efforts in organising a wonderful free community breakfast, followed by a moving flag-raising ceremony. I congratulate the school leaders from Pretty Beach Public School on their role in raising the flags and thank the volunteers whose tireless efforts make this event such a success each year.

Across the coast, family-friendly Australia Day events were attended by more than 10,000 locals and visitors who enjoyed fantastic entertainment and perfect weather. These events highlight the importance of our local community get-togethers and the strong bonds we share as Australians. On Australia Day I had the honour of attending Central Coast Council's citizenship ceremony, where 218 new citizens from 37 countries took their oath of allegiance. It is always a privilege to welcome new Australians into our community. For those individuals, Australia Day now holds an even deeper significance.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my role as a parliamentarian is acknowledging and celebrating the outstanding achievements of individuals in our community. The Australia Day 2025 Honours List once again showcased the remarkable talent, dedication and service of Australians nationwide. On the Central Coast seven exceptional locals were awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia or appointed a Member of the Order of Australia, adding to the region's proud history of excellence and contribution. In addition, three dedicated individuals received medals recognising their service in fire, ambulance and emergency services. These honours celebrate a diverse range of individuals, from sports champions and medical professionals to advocates, artists and veterans, all of whom have made significant contributions to our community. Their dedication and selflessness remind us of the quiet brilliance that thrives within our community.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of Australia's honours system. It is an important milestone that reminds us of the significance of honouring our fellow Australians. I congratulate the following outstanding Central Coast residents who have been recognised in the Australia Day 2025 Honours List. Matthew Formston from Wamberal was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to people with disability and to Para sports. Professor Julie Redfern from Terrigal was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to cardiology, allied health, research, education and the community.

The late Frank "Max" Davis from Kincumber was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to veterans and their families. Dr Karen Douglas-Make from Avoca Beach was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to medicine as a general practitioner and to the community. Alan Gilmour from Tumby Umbi was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the arts, particularly through music. Amanda Noffs from Macmasters Beach was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to youth through health programs.

Alan Wardrope from Tuggerawong was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the film and motion picture industry. Daniel van Keimpema from Bateau Bay was awarded the Emergency Services Medal for distinguished service in Australian emergency services. Ellen Majella Davies from Green Point was awarded

the Ambulance Service Medal for distinguished service in Australian ambulance services. The incredible Jennifer Farrell from Lisarow, who I have the privilege of knowing, was awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal for distinguished service in Australian fire services.

I also acknowledge the winners of the 2025 Central Coast Council Australia Day Awards, which celebrate the unsung heroes who make significant contributions to our local community. The Citizen of the Year Award went to Happiness Habits Inc., a non-profit organisation supporting disadvantaged women facing social isolation, domestic violence and mental health challenges. The Community Group Award went to The Bikers Hand Inc. The Young Person Award went to Matilda Taylor and the Senior Citizen Award went to Betty Brown. The Community Life Award went to Louise Chiekrie.

The joint winners of the Volunteer Award were Derryck Klarkowski and Paul Mikkelsen. Paul has been volunteering for more than 20 years in the kitchen at Coast Shelter, and he is an absolutely outstanding recipient. We celebrate the dedication and contributions of all our Australia Day Honours recipients and award winners. Their work reflects the generosity and strength of our community and inspires us all to give back in meaningful ways. I congratulate them and thank them for their contributions to the Central Coast.

### **BANKSTOWN-LIDCOMBE HOSPITAL**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (18:04):** *My Hospital View* hangs on the walls of the paediatric ward at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital. It has not changed over the past two days. What it means has not changed over the past two days. *My Hospital View* is an artwork created by a teenage boy, Terrence Tran. For two months in 2023, Terrence sketched images of the paediatric ward while he received treatment at the hospital. The artwork was unveiled during Public Education Week, which was themed "Proud to belong". Terrence wanted to show how one can feel a sense of belonging, no matter the setting.

Aristotle tells us that the aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of things, but their inward significance. Every day the staff at Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital—security, orderlies, hospitality, cleaners, nurses and doctors—walk past *My Hospital View*. They represent the inward significance of the outward appearance. They endeavour to make the patients in my community feel like they will be looked after and that they belong. They reflect the best of us: service, respect and care. That is my Bankstown-Lidcombe Hospital view. This morning I visited the hospital. The staff had very heavy hearts. They told me of the struggle they felt in coming to work today.

Two particular encounters stand out in my mind. One was an older patient who made sure that he told me that he had received the best care, and the other was a 20-year veteran of the public health system who told me, with teary eyes, "This is not who we are." The past two days have cast a shadow on a place of care, as horrific comments in a video on social media threaten to undermine what I know to be true. The Bankstown that I know is a generous, kind-hearted and diverse community. The healthcare workers I know turn up to care for people in our community every single day. Today, they are heartbroken.

The two individuals in the video do not reflect our hospital or the people I spoke to today, who agree that there is no place for those comments in our society. Again and again, I have heard stories that clearly demonstrate the care of patients by all staff, regardless of their role. Today, knowing how hard it would be, those people still turned up for duty—as they always have and always will. Yet the hospital has been inundated with threats and hateful rhetoric. That does not help. It comes from people who do not know Bankstown. We are the community that walked for respect and against racist hate speech. We are the community that held candlelit vigils for peace in the Middle East when others projected hate and violence onto our views and associations.

We cannot minimise the hate expressed in the video or the hurt it has inflicted, but we all know pain and we should let our empathy be a bridge to other communities rather than a point of division. When we do that, we begin to heal the wounds that are tearing us apart. When I think of *My Hospital View*, I think of a vulnerable teenage boy undergoing treatment being reminded that he belongs, and that he will be cared for. The inward significance should make us pause and reflect on the role we all must play to deliver on the spirit of that artwork. I do not have all the answers; no-one does. However, I know that preserving our social cohesion requires our collective effort.

Now, more than ever, we need words of unity, not words of division. We need people who will bring us together, rather than those who will try to tear us apart. There are good people from all parts of our diverse society who believe, as I do, that the foundation of social cohesion is respect and empathy. Our shared humanity, our shared values and our shared decency will light a path to the better future that we all so desperately want.

*Bills***CRIMES (ADMINISTRATION OF SENTENCES) AMENDMENT BILL 2024****Returned**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Private Members' Statements***DRUG SUMMIT**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:09):** Last year's Drug Summit is helping the State establish a new way forward for reducing drug-related harm and saving lives. People take mood-enhancing substances for a range of reasons, including to deal with trauma, anxiety and depression, or to have fun. Only some will develop a drug problem or experience significant harm, and we need to focus on reducing that harm. The 2020 Special Commission of Inquiry into the Drug "Ice" and the 2019 coronial inquest into the death of six patrons at music festivals showed how devastating drug-related harm can be and why we cannot keep taking the same approach. The special commission of inquiry produced over 100 sensible recommendations which were consistent with inquest findings supporting a move away from the law-and-order response to drug use.

To build on those important findings and recommendations, and establish consensus among politicians and stakeholders, the Government held a Drug Summit late last year. The summit took place 25 years after the groundbreaking 1999 summit that put New South Wales at the forefront of drugs policy, including opening the world's first medically supervised injecting facility, expanding needle and syringe and methadone programs, and increasing the availability of naloxone. Those policies continue to save lives, reduce overdoses and prevent the spread of bloodborne disease today. The 2024 summit was chaired by the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt and the Hon. John Brogden and was held in Griffith, Lismore and Sydney. It gave members of this Parliament the opportunity to hear firsthand from people with lived and living experience—families, frontline service workers and health experts.

We heard about new emerging challenges from the growth in contamination and high-potency drugs. Families told us about losing loved ones from taking MDMA that was stronger than thought or other drugs that contained contaminants. Some did not practise harm reduction and overheated or took high doses. NSW Health reported that opioids and fatal nitazenes are turning up in a wide range of drugs. Drug checking helps reduce harm, allowing people who use drugs to have their substances checked for contaminants and potencies, and to have discussions with health professionals about risks and potential mitigations before using. Prior to the Drug Summit, drug checking was already occurring at music festivals in Victoria and at events and fixed locations in Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory.

I joined the Health Services Union, Uniting, Unharm, the Australian Festivals Association, members of Parliament, religious leaders, unions and families to call for drug testing in New South Wales. The Government responded by introducing a pill testing trial for music festivals this year, and I look forward to seeing a schedule. We called for other important reforms. The Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in Kings Cross has helped keep alive thousands of people who use drugs, providing them with a pathway to support and treatment while keeping drug use off the street. Intravenous drug use is not limited to inner Sydney, and other areas could benefit from supervised injecting facilities. We called for legislative changes to allow NSW Health to work with drug and alcohol service providers and communities to deliver additional supervised injecting facilities in other locations.

The diversion program introduced to divert people using low levels of drugs away from the criminal justice system is not being applied consistently, with some communities, including First Nations people, rarely offered diversion. The discretionary application leaves the program open to inequity, and we called for eligibility based on set quantities of drugs found. People with prescription drug dependencies are often maintained by acquiring multiple prescriptions from multiple doctors. We called for a prescription drug strategy with safeguards to prevent dependence through built-in interventions to identify and help those at risk.

The legalisation of medicinal cannabis has provided health benefits to many people. However, the crime of driving with traces of cannabis continues to apply to people lawfully using medicinal cannabis. The absence of an exemption acts as a de facto criminalisation of medicinal cannabis, limiting access and resulting in people driving in fear. We called for medicinal cannabis to be treated like any other prescription drug, with offences based on driving under the influence and not the detection of traces of a substance. There was a strong consensus across the summit for new approaches to drug use, particularly ending strip searches and decriminalising use. The need for increased funding to alcohol and other drug services across the State, especially in rural and regional

areas, and reducing stigma for those with lived experience were also priorities. I thank the co-chairs of the Drug Summit and the Minister for Health, Ryan Park, and his staff, particularly Vivienne Moxham-Hall. I call on the Government and members of this House to urgently adopt key reforms to start saving lives.

### ST GEORGE SCHOOL

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport) (18:14):** I take this opportunity to recognise a small school that makes a big difference. St George School in my electorate of Rockdale specialises in the provision of educational services for students with severe physical disabilities. All children have a right to an inclusive learning environment and to feel happy and safe at school, no matter their background or ability. St George School ensures that is possible. This exceptional school utilises a range of specialised teaching methods designed to support the diverse learning needs of each student. That includes tailored learning programs, therapeutic interventions, sensory experiences, assistive technologies designed to enhance cognitive and physical development of students, and programs designed to engage and stimulate students through music therapy, art programs, sports activities and excursions. It is through these programs that St George School provides invaluable opportunities for these children to have social interaction and help build their social skills.

Under the exceptional leadership of the principal, Annette Fuller, the St George School team fosters a warm and welcoming atmosphere where every student feels safe, valued and supported. Behind Principal Fuller is a group of highly skilled educators, therapists and support staff who go above and beyond to work closely with students and their families to create a safe, supportive and nurturing environment. It is touching to see the profound impact staff and educators of St George School make to the lives of students and their families. This school provides students with opportunities they may not have otherwise had. I particularly acknowledge the generous support from Garry Morris, OAM. Mr Morris and the team at the Morris Children's Fund have contributed significantly towards enhancing the resources and opportunities available to the students. The fund has enriched the overall education experience and helped to significantly develop the school to reach its exceptional standard.

In 2021 the school opened its new interactive immersive room. The room allows students to immerse themselves in interactive digital environments. Comprised of four projectors that project images onto three walls and the floor in one continuous image, the room enhances learning and provides opportunities that are endless, simply by projecting real-life scenarios onto the screen. In a practical sense, it can teach students how to cross a road safely or how to catch a train. Those are basic social skills that these kids would ordinarily not be able to learn. The program also uses sounds, images and other sensations to give students a full sensory experience, giving them an actual feel for the environment by participating in virtual experiences.

In 2023 the school's instructional leader supported the implementation of the My Say My Way program through body mapping and photovoicing to support student voices. That program allows students to provide feedback to the school on their likes, dislikes and preferences regarding the school environment. The initiative was embraced by the staff, who recognised the need to involve students in self-advocacy. The teachers extended students' voices into a selection of personal goals. With a focus on visible learning, the goals were displayed in each classroom. The students were involved in conversations about their learning progress as part of an ongoing reflection. It is because of the professionalism and hard work of those involved in the school and the broader school community that those children can thrive. I thank the principal, the teachers and the Morris Children's Fund for the amazing work they do every day to give students with disability the best quality education possible and, most importantly, an enriched quality of life.

### MANLY TOWN HALL

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:18):** I speak today in strong support of pursuing the adaptive redevelopment of Manly Town Hall into a vibrant multi-use arts and entertainment space. This project represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to breathe new life into one of Manly's most iconic heritage buildings while delivering long-term economic and cultural benefits for our community. After years of talking about the project, the owner of the town hall, Northern Beaches Council, has chosen not to proceed following receipt of a consultant's report. I believe the potential of the redevelopment remains clear and should not be abandoned. Constructed in 1937 and once the former Manly Council chambers, Manly Town Hall is a cornerstone of our civic and political story. However, since council meetings ceased at the chambers and the majority of operations were rightly moved to the headquarters in Dee Why, this iconic structure presents an amazing opportunity for a new lease on life.

Manly is world renowned for its iconic beaches and vibrant tourism industry. Yet we lack a dedicated theatre and performance space to boost our visitor economy, especially during the colder months, and to expand our arts and culture scene. Converting Manly Town Hall into a multi-use venue has the potential to fill that gap, drawing both locals and visitors into a vibrant and dynamic cultural arts and entertainment precinct. One only has

to look as far as the Concourse in Chatswood or the reactivation of the Theatre Royal in the CBD to see what an ambitious and well-planned redevelopment of that kind can achieve. Those projects have transformed spaces into thriving cultural hubs, invigorating communities and boosting local economies.

Beyond the cultural benefits, the project is a strategic economic opportunity. Northern Beaches Council has faced well-documented financial pressures, and this development provides one pathway toward greater financial sustainability. By relocating council staff to more appropriate facilities and repurposing the town hall as a revenue-generating asset, the historic building will serve the community in a way that is both meaningful and financially viable. That could potentially be done by a long-term lease arrangement, ensuring that the town hall always remains in public ownership.

Ticketed performances, concerts, exhibitions, conferences, private events, and food and beverage offerings have the potential to ensure a steady stream of revenue that benefits ratepayers and reduces the burden on council resources. While the internal operations of theatres and performance venues are expensive and their surpluses are often modest, their flow-on effects to surrounding cafes, restaurants, bars, hotels and retail stores, and the general employment opportunities they generate, are significant. A 2018 study undertaken by the University of Technology Sydney revealed that the Enmore Theatre alone produces an additional \$39 million per annum to the surrounding area.

Of course, I acknowledge that this project is not without its challenges. As far back as 2021 the council began the process of seeking expressions of interest on how best to adaptively re-use the site and surrounding precinct. A project working group was established, the community engaged and a feasibility study completed. Concerns identified in the study included costings, logistical complexities and the challenge of retaining the town hall's heritage while adapting it for contemporary use. While those challenges have led some to resign themselves to thinking that the project is dead and buried, I firmly believe that those challenges can be overcome. The good news is that the hard work has already been done by that report.

Proper oversight, expert planning and ongoing community engagement will be key to ensuring that the redevelopment achieves its full potential. If managed well, the redevelopment of Manly Town Hall can become an example of how we can balance heritage preservation with growing modern needs, cultural enrichment with economic sustainability, and community aspirations with responsible governance. Ultimately, converting Manly Town Hall into a multi-use performing arts space has the potential to stimulate our local economy, drive good urban renewal and provide opportunities for established and emerging artists to deliver cultural experiences on the other side of the harbour.

I urge all stakeholders, including Northern Beaches Council, the New South Wales Government, the Manly Business Chamber and the broader community to work together to bring this vision to life. It is a golden opportunity that cannot be overlooked. If we approach it with a flexible model and effective leadership, Manly Town Hall can become a lasting asset that will serve our community and the broader community for generations to come.

#### **GRAND MASTER HASSAN ISKANDAR, OAM**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (18:23):** I announce that one of our wonderful local community leaders in the Canterbury-Bankstown community, and also the wider Sydney metro community, Grand Master Hassan Iskandar, OAM, has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the Australia Day Honours for services to taekwondo. Hassan has many achievements, including being the first Australian in 50 years to be elected to the World Taekwondo federation and inducted into the Taekwondo Hall of Fame. He was also the former Australian Taekwondo president. As a community we are so very proud. Over the weekend I attended a family and friends event that Hassan's family put on. It was wonderful to see hundreds of people, including extended family, and the pride that they have in Hassan's achievements.

The Iskandar family have played a pivotal role in our local community, as well as the wider community, through their contribution not only to multiculturalism but also to supporting people who are doing it very tough. Their family has been involved in all aspects of our community, whether it is in politics or community service. They are entrepreneurs and small business operators. Grand Master Hassan Iskandar also has the Pinnacle Martial Arts academy, which has a number of locations.

His family is involved in martial arts as well. When I was celebrating with the family over the weekend, it was fantastic to see kids, particularly young kids, who attend taekwondo. Grand Master Hassan Iskandar and the other teachers have played a pivotal role in the lives of those students. As they were being presented to Hassan, they were weighed down by the many medals around their necks. I spoke to a number of parents, who told me stories of the difference that taekwondo has made to the kids' general coordination and confidence, and of the

principles, philosophy and values that have been imparted by Grand Master Hassan and his martial arts academy. That is what I kept hearing the whole afternoon.

I thank the Iskandar family for the important contribution they have made to the lives of many students and those in our community. I thank them for their many years of service. They continue to service our community in many different ways. I felt so honoured to be there. It was great that the member for Bankstown was there as well. Our candidate for Barton, Ash Ambhaipahar, was also there congratulating Mr Iskandar on his honours. I wish Mr Iskandar and his family all the very best. We felt honoured to celebrate with the family. We enjoyed the hospitality and lively conversation. It was great to speak to the families of students to whom Hassan has made a difference.

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:27):** I share with this House the voices of my constituents in Ryde, who have been left frustrated, stranded and financially burdened by ongoing disruption, delay and strikes on our rail network. We all saw the headlines. Some of us experienced the chaos firsthand. I hazard a guess that more members than would like to admit it received the potent dose of reality that this place can be a force for progress, a force for regress or, worst of all, the enabler of inertia. Inertia is what we are experiencing right now in public transport. This speech is about rail but could equally be applied to buses, the lack of innovation and integration across the transport sector, and the utter failure to couple transport planning with the one area of policy that this Government seems vaguely interested in pursuing: property development.

Recent rail strikes wreaked havoc on the daily lives of thousands, forcing them to endure uncertainty, stress and additional costs. At the peak of the strikes, only 5 per cent of services ran on time. That is catastrophic to the viability of a functioning city, catastrophic to the individual lives of people impacted, and catastrophic to the already shattered public belief that they can count on New South Wales Government services. Five per cent is just a statistic; the names of the people behind that statistic matter. Maria from West Ryde told me that she had to drive to her office in the city because of the uncertainty with the schedules. She had no other choice because she needed to be back from the office to pick up her son from child care at 5.30 p.m. Parking in the city cost her \$20 per day, plus the tolls on the M4 tunnel, not to mention the time cost of sitting in traffic. She had to pay significantly more in this cost-of-living crisis, which added avoidable stress to her day. Maria is a single mum with no support, and endless train strikes are an extra load on her shoulders. Another resident, Jane, put it bluntly. She said:

I arrive late to work and I am left on the platforms waiting like an idiot because you never know when the trains are going to come. To be honest, I don't even know what I'm paying for. It is not cheap to catch the trains. I am paying for unreliable service and delays.

Travis lives in Denistone and catches the metro. He observed the knock-on effect of the already strained system. He said:

I'm a metro user. I'm not going to pretend that the metro has been hard hit by the strikes, however, due to the intersection of the metro at other train stations such as Epping and Chatswood, the metro services which were already at capacity before the strikes, are now over capacity, leaving customers often stuck on the platform needing to wait for later services.

That burden shift is fast becoming a theme with the Government. Nurses and doctors have similarly been asked to absorb the added workload from the mass psychiatrist resignations. As with health, the public transport system only works as a whole when the sum of its parts are reliable; otherwise, like a scale without a balance, it is bound to tip over. For other residents, the frustration is simpler but just as painful. Andrew was forced to take the Carlingford light rail and then cycle from Epping in 30 degree heat. He described his experience as appalling, because even on a bicycle he still beat his usual train from Westmead to Central, though he arrived at work two hours late. Joey, from West Ryde, told me that he could not get to work on time either. That story is shared by many others who spoke with my office staff and me in recent weeks.

The stories are endless, but the messages are the same. People are tired of being caught in the middle of a fire that seems to have devolved into an endless blame game. The Government is blaming the unions and the unions are blaming the Government, but people just want solutions. As obstructive as a union's action may be, and regardless of the legitimacy of its claims, governments, unlike unions, are accountable to people. That is what matters. That is why the Government must take responsibility and that is why I am raising the matter in Parliament. Those in government must hear directly about the human consequences of wilful inaction. I was horrified to hear threats of more industrial action this week. I am of the view that the stand-off must end. More than that, there must be accountability. That is why I echo the words of the then Opposition transport spokesperson, who said at the last election:

It's clear there is no accountability. No one knows who's in charge and passengers are yet again paying the price.

Refunds and fare-free days are just one part of the solution, but it would be an important gesture today that would buy the Government much-needed confidence for tomorrow. If the Government will not build and cannot manage

the infrastructure needed to sustain Sydney's growth, it should at least save people the indignity of paying through the nose for a problem that is not their fault.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:32):** Like me, the member for Ryde was elected in 2023 and is therefore one of the newer members of Parliament. It is important to inject some context and understanding into the issues highlighted by the member. I acknowledge the public's frustration with the situation, which is not ideal for anyone. During the 12 years of the former Liberal-Nationals Government, the wholesale privatisation of the bus network resulted in—

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Opposition members will come to order. The member for Liverpool will be heard in silence.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** —a whole range of issues, including delays across the network, a \$500 million rail maintenance backlog that was ignored by the former Government, and a wage cap that lasted 12 years, which directly resulted in the industrial action we see today.

### ANTISEMITISM

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (18:33):** As a society, we pride ourselves on our commitment to the fundamental belief that every individual, regardless of faith or background, should be able to live safely and free from fear. Yet what we have witnessed in our State in recent times tells us that antisemitism is not just a relic of the past but an unfortunate reality in the present. The Jewish community has faced a disturbing rise in antisemitic incidents, ranging from hateful graffiti to defacing places of worship and firebombings at childcare centres. That is unacceptable. The rise in antisemitic rhetoric and attacks is not just an attack on the Jewish community but on all of us. It threatens the very principles of our democracy, undermines social cohesion and fosters an environment where discrimination can take root and spread.

In times like these, leadership matters, words matter and actions matter even more. We must stand shoulder to shoulder with our Jewish friends to ensure that antisemitism is confronted head-on. It is not enough to condemn those acts; we must actively work to eradicate the ideologies that fuel them. Fortunately, we are not without leaders who have taken up that fight. One such leader is the Federal member for Berowra, Julian Leeser, who has been a steadfast advocate for the Jewish community, standing firm against antisemitism and taking meaningful steps to ensure that New South Wales remains a place of tolerance and respect. His work is deeply personal, shaped by his own Jewish heritage and his unwavering belief in the need to protect religious freedoms. Among his most significant contributions is his advocacy for stronger protections against hate speech and hate crimes.

Julian has worked tirelessly to strengthen laws that target those who incite violence and spread extremist propaganda. While the efforts of leaders like Julian Leeser are commendable, there is much more work to be done. This is not just a Jewish issue; it is an issue for all of us who believe in a fair and just society. We must stand together to say with one voice that antisemitism has no place in New South Wales, Australia or the world. Let us follow the example set by Julian Leeser and others who have taken a principled stand against hatred. I hope we commit to being allies with the Jewish community, speaking out when we see injustice and creating a future where no-one has to live in fear because of their faith. We must all take part in this fight, not just today but every day. Together we can ensure that our State remains a place of tolerance and peace.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:37 until  
Tuesday 18 February 2025 at 12:00.**

### *Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

### RIGHT TO WORK

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Right to Work. Right to Work is a social enterprise that was founded in 2021 by Clare Jones and Carolyn Roche which works with the local community to facilitate employment opportunities for young adults with autism and intellectual disabilities. The program provides training for young people with disability supporting them to learn, whilst also working collaboratively with local businesses providing the young people with a gateway and opportunity for work. Clare has a Master of Music Therapy, accompanied with vocational training and assessment, adult education, autism, and sensory processing. Carolyn is a parent, carer and advocate having also worked in the vocational education and training sector. There are over forty-five local Goulburn businesses and organisations partnering with Right to Work including retail, hospitality, public and social services, real estate, performing arts, education, medical and horticulture. I congratulate Clare and Carolyn, all the Right to Work team, and collaborative partners that provide the gateway to life-long learning and employment opportunities for young people with disability.



### CARA ELLISON

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Cara Ellison. Cara is an impressive young woman who has utilised her lived experience of family illness to create a range of artworks that depict a feeling of tranquillity and peace. Cara uses acrylics and watercolours aiming to captivate the viewer of her works into a space which allows them to feel as though they are surrounded by nature, enabling them to sense and even hear the sound of water and birds. The visual artist has now been commissioned to create artworks for the Palliative Care Unit at Goulburn Base Hospital. Her work will be displayed at the Gallery on Track in early February 2025 before they are installed at the Palliative Care Unit. I congratulate Cara on being selected to commission her artworks and recognise her understanding and sensitivity of the nature of the works to be completed to instil those receiving care in the Palliative Care Unit with a sense of peace.

### ELSIE APPS

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Elsie Apps. Elsie has demonstrated her remarkable passion and athleticism in cycling and has been selected by the Australian Cycling Academy to be part of the Jayco Alula Skip Capital team. This selection will see Elsie living in Belgium and racing in Europe for three months later this year. Elsie has participated in a number of events and achieved outstanding success at the National Track Championships (Cycling), National Road Championships, NSW Track Championships (Cycling), VIC Road Championships, NSW Road Championships, NSW Track Championship Team Pursuit, and the NSW Time Trial Championships and was awarded the 2024 Senior Sportswoman of the Year at Trinity Catholic College. Elsie was recently nominated as a finalist and announced winner of the 2025 Australia Day Award, Junior Sports Person of the Year in Goulburn Mulwaree. I take this time to recognise Elsie's significant dedication to her chosen sport and congratulate her on her resounding success thus far and wish her every success in Europe.

### PHEASANTS NEST RURAL FIRE BRIGADE 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—On the afternoon of Saturday 30 November 2024, I had the honour of attending the 50th anniversary celebration of the Pheasants Nest Rural Fire Brigade, which was a wonderful occasion to reflect and celebrate the outstanding contributions of past and present members. A big thank you to Terry Lewis for organising such a successful and memorable event. Established in 1974 by 15 local residents, the Brigade has grown into a vital emergency service that safeguards our community and responds to challenges across the region. This milestone brought together guests from the Rural Fire Service, Wollondilly Council, and many Brigade members and supporters. Captain Max Lazarus proudly shared stories of the Brigade's achievements, and we all enjoyed reminiscing about the past 50 years. A heartfelt congratulations to June Ingleson on being awarded life membership for her tireless service since joining in 1985. June has held multiple leadership roles including Brigade President, and has been instrumental in countless activities. Her dedication is truly inspiring and deeply appreciated by everyone. Lastly, my gratitude goes to the families, friends, and employers who support these volunteers. Here's to the next 50 years of courage, commitment and community.

### PICTON CARS AND COFFEE GIVING TREE

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Thank you to everyone who donated to the Picton Cars and Coffee Group giving tree in December 2024 for their very special Raptor Christmas. The car club community, who come out early every 2nd Sunday of each month, not only enjoy the cars and support businesses, but also raise funds for charity along with my fellow Lions Club of Tahmoor members. We all joined with Wollondilly Shire Council this year for the Mayoral charity. We have made sure all seven shopping trolley loads will get to the Mayoral giving tree at the Wollondilly Council Administration Building in Picton, with gifts going to those most in need in the area. Thanks again Picton Cars and Coffee Organisers and the community for their generosity and kindness. I look forward to the Group continuing to host giving trees for the Festive Season in 2025 and beyond.

### SHINING STARS FOUNDATION STREET OUTREACH

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—It is said that Christmas is the season of giving, and there is no better way to give at Christmas than donating. The Shining Stars Foundation Street Outreach Service makes an incredible and real difference by putting together Christmas hampers and giving gifts to those in need. The Service is an incredible, humble and generous organisation that makes a real difference through their outreach and support. The Wollondilly Electorate Office in Tahmoor was proud to be an official drop-off point for donations. The donations we received until 16 December 2024 reached the right place to brighten Christmas for kids and young people in our community. Together, we made the Festive Season for those who needed it the most. I want to express my thanks to the Shining Stars Foundation Street Outreach Service for their incredible service to the community, and to those who donated to such a valuable cause - bringing Christmas joy where it was missing.

### MICK CONOMOS SURF BOAT CELEBRATION

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—The launch of the Mick Conomos surf boat marks a significant milestone for the Kempsey-Crescent Head Surf Lifesaving Club. This new addition is a fitting tribute to Mick Megaloconamos, a mega member whose contributions have been vital to the club's history and ongoing success. Mick's dedication to surf lifesaving has helped save countless lives and has shaped the foundation of the club. It was a joyous gathering that brought together Mick's family, friends, life members, sponsors, and dedicated club members, all united by a shared sense of gratitude and pride. The occasion was not just about the launch of a surf boat; it was a moment to reflect on Mick's enduring legacy and the profound impact he has had on the local community and beyond. This celebration was also an opportunity to thank everyone who has played a part in making the Mick Conomos boat a reality. Thanks to their support, the club is now even better equipped to continue the club's lifesaving work, continuing to protect and serve those who visit our beautiful beaches. Well done Mick, your efforts, both past and present, are deeply appreciated.

### BOWLERS, BATSMEN, AND A LOT OF TEAM SPIRIT

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Kempsey East Public School's girls cricket team has made the community proud by finishing as State Runners-Up in a competitive NSW tournament with over 100 participating teams. Their amazing journey to this achievement is a testament to their incredible effort, determination, and teamwork. Throughout the competition, the team demonstrated true sportsmanship and resilience, leading to an exciting final match against Artarmon Public School. Despite a fierce contest, the team's commitment to each other and their game plan stood out. Their performance was a perfect example of the dedication and skill they've honed throughout the season. Congratulations to the girls and their outstanding coaches, Mr. Kinnaird and Mr. Henry, who guided the team every step of the way. Their expertise and encouragement played a pivotal role in shaping the team's success. The support from the families who cheered them on during each game added to the sense of community that drove the team forward. Congratulations to the Kempsey East Public School girls cricket team for their exceptional performance!

### SIX DECADES OF LOVE FOR TEACHING

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—I stand today with an incredible story on an incredible lady, Denise Walker, 83, is a beloved figure at Wauchope High School with an incredible history of 60 years in education. Despite the evolving demands of the education system, since 1964, Denise has never wavered in her love for teaching. With a passion for teaching that runs through her veins, retirement is not an option—she finds fulfillment in shaping young minds and making a difference in their lives. Characteristics inherited from both her parents, who were both educators, Denise has a lasting impact on all children within her classroom. Whether it be for her vibrant personality that is reflected in her colourful fashion choices of overalls and distinctive brooches, or the deep, lasting bonds formed with her students, full of warmth, kindness, and unwavering support. For Denise, teaching is more than a job—it's a calling that continues to bring her joy and fulfillment, a true testament to the heart and soul of education, she is a teacher that every child wishes to have.

### KIAMA SHOW

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama Show Society. The 177th Kiama Show was held on Friday 24th and Saturday 25th January 2025. I would like to acknowledge the following Kiama Show Society Committee Members including the President Mr Guy Stearn, Secretary Emma Howard and Treasurer Carolyn Perry. The show featured 1,700 pavilion categories and competitions in beef and dairy cattle, horses, showjumping, woodchopping and the always popular pet show. The Local and Homegrown Hub, a space where the community can connect and engage with local agriculture industry farmers and local businesses proved to be a popular attraction for many locals in attendance. The first Kiama Agricultural Show was held 1849 in the Fitzroy Inn brewery in Collins Street, a building long enough to display the produce grown by local farmers. There were just 18 houses, two stores, two inns, a church and a jetty in the township and the Agricultural Show was a way to connect the community so farmers could workshop better ways to farm. I acknowledge the Mayor of Kiama, Cllr Cameron McDonald, Member for Gilmore Fiona Phillips and representatives from Kiama Municipal Council in attendance.

### 2025 BERRY SHOW

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Berry Show Society. The 2025 Berry Show was officially held on Friday 31st January and Saturday 1st February 2025. I acknowledge Berry Show Society committee members: President John Miller, Secretary Catherine Mason and Treasurer Paul McLean Williams. The Berry Show is always a great experience for local families and visitors alike. Congratulations to Bonnie Cox who has been awarded winner of the Young Woman Competition at the 2025 Berry Show! Bonnie will now go on to represent Berry and connect with other outstanding Young Woman

recipients from Zone 2. A huge thank you to Bonnie Cox, Bronte Batchelor, and Ali Osbourne—all wonderful entrants who showed dedication and community spirit throughout the competition. I know the Berry Show Society Committee members truly appreciate your time and commitment in entering. A huge thank you and well done to everyone who made the 2025 Berry Show such a wonderful weekend of community engagement and enjoyment. From the Berry show competitors, exhibitors, attendees, supporters, sponsors and the team at the Berry Show Society who all worked tirelessly, as they do every year, to bring the Berry Show to life.

#### **ALBION PARK SHOW**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Albion Park Show Society. The 2025 Albion Park Show was held on Friday 17th and Saturday 18th January. I acknowledge Albion Park Show Society Committee: President Mr Michael Arthur, Secretary Alison Edwards and Treasurer Tracey Goodwin. Congratulations to Kate Bourke, the 2025 Young Woman of the Year. To the other three contestants well done, you are all amazing young women. Thank you to sponsors Enchanted Florist, Nutrimetics by Wendy Woodward, Anastons Hair & Beauty and Maci's Collection & Beauty. Kate Bourke now goes to the Zone Final in Kiama on 15th February 2025, where she joins nine other young women for a chance to spend a week at the Sydney Royal. Good luck Kate. The Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Agricultural Shows Award was presented to Mr Geoff Jones. Mr Jones has been involved with Albion Park Show for over 55 years. He began his association by holding the position of Secretary from 1968 until 1973. I acknowledge Shellharbour Mayor Chris Homer and Councillor Kellie Marsh who attended the show. Congratulations to Albion Park Show Society committee and volunteers for putting together a terrific show.

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - YI HONG**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Yi Hong a joyous 39th birthday! Yi's partner, Chen, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Forget the past, look forward to the future, for the best things are yet to come. Wishing you a very happy birthday!" 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 Yi'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 Yi!

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - SAHANA HURLEY**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Sahana Hurley a joyous 11th birthday! Sahana's father, Paul, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Happy Birthday Sahana! Congratulations on being such a wonderful person with so much intellect, stamina and beauty. We all love you so much and wish you many more years to come! Also keep dreaming big and we look forward to seeing you compete in Germany." 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 Sahana'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 Sahana!

#### **BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - YASMIN ALLEN**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in wishing Yasmin Allen a joyous 39th birthday! Yasmin's brother, Zakki, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Dearest sister, wishing you the bestest birthday love Olivia and Zak." 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 Yasmin'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 Yasmin!

#### **MS ASHLEEN KHELA – YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to acknowledge and congratulate Ashleen Khela on being awarded Young Citizen of the Year at The Hills Shire Council's Australia Day Awards. At just 12 years old, Ashleen is one of Australia's youngest-ever female published authors. She released her fiction book, 17 Stories, at the age of 11, with proceeds supporting Australian charities and aid programs in developing nations. Demonstrating remarkable initiative, Ashleen self-funded the production of her book through creative efforts such as recycling bottles, selling backyard plants, and using her personal savings. Ashleen's dedication to philanthropy and her commitment to making a difference at such a young age is truly inspiring. Her achievements exemplify the values of leadership, generosity, and perseverance, setting a powerful example for young people in our community. Congratulations to Ashleen Khela on this well-deserved recognition. I wish her continued success and look forward to seeing the impact she will make in the future.

**MS MEGAN SUTTON – YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to acknowledge and congratulate Megan Sutton on being awarded Young Citizen of the Year at The Hills Shire Council's Australia Day Awards. Megan's dedication to disability advocacy and volunteerism has made a significant impact on the community. As Run Director for Rouse Hill Parkrun, Megan has volunteered more than 130 times over the past eight years, ensuring the smooth and safe operation of this weekly 5km community event. Living with a disability herself, she is a passionate advocate for inclusion, championing initiatives like the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Scheme, which provides support and recognition for individuals with non-visible disabilities. Megan's commitment extends beyond advocacy. Through the Duke of Edinburgh Award program, she has been highly commended for her service in supporting young people with intellectual disabilities. Additionally, she dedicates her time to Camp Kedron, offering one-on-one support to children with additional needs. Her outstanding contributions have also earned her the Youth Community Award from the Order of Australia. Congratulations to Megan Sutton on this well-deserved recognition. Her selfless service and unwavering dedication continue to inspire and uplift those around her.

**ALAN GRADY – SENIOR CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to acknowledge and congratulate Alan Grady on being named Senior Citizen of the Year at the Hills Shire Council's Australia Day Awards. This well-deserved recognition reflects his decades of dedication to community service and volunteerism. For over 50 years, Alan has been an active and valued member of Rotary, currently serving with the Norwest Sunrise Rotary Club. His commitment to service also extends to the Wesley Castle Hill Uniting Church and as a charter member of the Hills Older Men's Network. His generosity with time and energy is evident in his unwavering enthusiasm for volunteering. One of Alan's most significant contributions has been his long-standing involvement in selling Rotary Christmas trees, with proceeds supporting various charitable initiatives. For the past 20 years, he has played a key role in the Rotary Warehouse, where he helps pack and distribute donated medical and school supplies for those in need overseas. Alan Grady's commitment to helping others and his passion for making a difference truly embody the spirit of community service. On behalf of our community, I commend him for his outstanding contributions and congratulate him on this well-earned recognition.

**KARL LUPIS**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to applaud the wonderful achievement of Forbes', Karl Lupis, who has passed an amazing career milestone as a surveyor. Mr Lupis is a 60-year veteran of his profession and I can only guess at the enormous change he has witnessed and adopted since his registration in 1964. During his six decades Mr Lupis has worked on a wide scope of projects, from carports to major road construction, ensuring the mapping is precise and the boundaries correct. They say good fences build good neighbours – Mr Lupis ensures those fences are in the right place! Mr Lupis earned his qualifications studying at night at Technical College before moving to the Forbes Shire in 1969. One of his early projects was surveying part of the Newell Highway. He started his own business in 1981, and while he still has a Gunter chain, Mr Lupis has embraced the rapid development of technology. During his more than 50 years in Forbes, Mr Lupis has witnessed, and been at the forefront, of the town's growth. He's had a huge impact on his home town but is one of its quiet achievers. Congratulations on an amazing career.

**OSCAR HENDRY**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to commend a young man from Parkes for his proactive approach to highlighting one of the challenges his hometown is facing. In the latter part of 2024 Red Bend Catholic College's Oscar Hendry entered the Parli Flick short film award organised by NSW Parliamentary Education and Engagement. Entrants were asked to produce a one-minute film answering the question 'If you were an MP what law would you pass and how would you implement it'. Oscar used the opportunity to bring attention to Parkes' struggle to attract allied health expertise to the town, particularly doctors, and suggested offering incentives to spend time in regional areas. The film 'Medicos for Mildred' won best regional entry, which I congratulate Oscar for, as well as his willingness to take up an issue which is plaguing rural communities. Oscar personalized his film by telling viewers that he was born in the Parkes hospital and hopes one day other local babies will be delivered in their home town. I commend Oscar on his activism, congratulate him on his award and look forward to his next projects.

**TONI BILTON**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I would like to congratulate Toni Bilton on her commitment to fostering the arts through a stellar 35-year teaching career. In fact, Toni's name has become synonymous with Kinross Wolaroi School's arts faculty where she has spent 34 years of her wonderful career, a large portion of it as head of visual arts. During that time she has mentored hundreds of students, nurturing their creative instincts and

refining and focussing their talent. The result is a number of works being selected for the annual ArtExpress exhibition, reserved for the best of the Higher School Certificate candidates. Considering the scope covered by the visual arts, Toni's ability to engage and foster her students is nothing short of outstanding. Apart from her visual arts role, Toni was also responsible for starting an in-house hospitality certificate course, drawing on her previous career in hospitality where she rose to chef. Toni has also instigated an art residence program and creative workshops for adults. Enriching the lives of her students is just one chapter of Toni's life and I would like to thank her for dedication and wish her well for her next venture in the broader community.

#### **VALE MARJ ANSLOW OAM**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Narrandera is poorer for the passing of Marj Anslow who has been described as a true Narrandera icon. Marj Anslow was a life member and Patron of the Narrandera Race Club. She joined the Race Club Committee in 1986 working tirelessly on the Club's finances year-round and was a regular in the office on race days for roughly 30 years. When Marj first joined the Race Club it was in financial difficulty but with her positive outlook and financial acumen she, and the Late Tom Lee guided the committee and members back into solvency. Marj's skills didn't stop with finances, she was a very dedicated secretary for Narrandera's Meal on Wheels and was instrumental in assisting with the set up of the Distribution Centre. An asset that not only assists Narrandera clients but the broader Riverina area. Marj was also a long-time member of the Red Cross which was known for the way they quietly helped the community. The Red cross closed its doors in 2020 after 105 years of service. Marj's super power was her ability to calm heated moments, and there were occasions where order was restored by her sheer presence.

#### **BAILEY'S SKILLS TURNING HEADS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Temora local, Bailey Lowes has been showcasing his exceptional skills on the lathe, at the recent held Riverina Murray Region WorldSkills competition, a craft he has mastered, around the workshop at Goldenfields Water where he is a third-year Apprentice Fitter and Machinist. With more than 500 Regional Competitions held in 34 regions across Australia with competitors provided the opportunity to compete at a national level, a significant step in their journey to showcase their skills on a larger platform. Bailey has not only been benchmarking his skills against others in his field across the regions, but this competition has also provided Bailey with the connections to help support and inspire him in his career. Bailey's participation in such a large-scale and prestigious event is a testament to his talent and dedication. Bailey was awarded a gold in Fitting and silver in Turning, which now allows him to represent the Region in the NSW team at the WorldSkills Australia National Championships in June 2025. We are all so proud of you Bailey, well done on your achievements so far, I'm sure there will be many more and I look forward to following your journey.

#### **RON AND EUNICE CELEBRATE 65 YEARS OF MARRIAGE**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to recognise and congratulate Ron and Eunice Huckbel, who this year celebrate their Sapphire Anniversary or 65th year of marriage. First meeting via the Methodist Church Youth Fellowship in 1956, they married three years later and have been inseparable ever since. They first purchased a house and mail contract in the Pullabooka Range just west of Caragabal. Which they operated for 46 years, along with the farm that Ron ran with his father. Over the decades, their partnership has been a shining example of love, commitment, and resilience, inspiring everyone around them. From their early days together, Ron and Eunice built a life rooted in mutual respect and shared values. They've supported each other through life's highs and lows, and, as their friends and family will attest, their bond has only grown stronger with time. Together, they have raised a loving family, with four children, nine grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. As they celebrate this sapphire anniversary, Ron and Eunice look back on a lifetime of cherished memories and the unwavering love that has sustained them.

#### **2322 BERESFIELD MEN'S SHED**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—There are around 1200 men's sheds in Australia, with around 400 in NSW, providing a means of community support – a place to talk, being productive and contributing to the community, connecting with friends and maintaining an active body and mind. 2322 Beresfield, the smallest club in the area, has around seventeen members, with a core of about ten, their main focus being to support kids at a local school with breakfasts, and helping out at a day care centre. Members include a tailor, butcher, electrician and railway shunter, ages varying from 19 to 87. Office bearers of this sociable club include President Brian Durrant, Treasurer Ted Kokoszka, Vice President Alex Szokolik, still active Founding President John Bell and Committee Members Ian Heffernan and Neil Cummings. In 2011 a working party got together, the shed beginning in 2012. In their new premises, members enjoy making little things, doing repairs and enjoying monthly barbecues. They sell products and take orders like dog beds and kennels and planter boxes using recycled timber. Thank you, everyone, for all that you do in providing a much-needed community service.

### **BLUE GUM HILLS MEN'S SHED**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Established in 2012, Blue Gum Hills Men's Shed comprises around forty members who volunteer their time, skills and experience to support the local community. One of around 1200 sheds in Australia, this one is open 7am to 12 midday, Tuesdays to Thursdays. Office bearers are Treasurer Phillip Murnain, President John Devlin, Vice President Graeme Berry, Secretary Roy Powell and Members Representatives Anthony McDermott, Stephen Devon and Ken Blanch. A site was set up in 2018 and a new shed finished in December 2023. The Women's Auxiliary meets once a week on Thursdays. Toys are made from recycled timber in the workshop, also refurbishing furniture and repairing broken items. Members are using more technology like laser cutters, there is a spray-painting booth, a welding section for steel repairs and making handrails, and a metal lathe for machining. Small jobs are done for elderly community members, as well as some money-making jobs, such as lawn maintenance. Members look after and maintain the greyhound track at Sandgate and have worked on murals in Nelson Street, Wallsend. Thank you all for providing a much-needed community service.

### **ELERMORE VALE MEN'S SHED**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—In 2010, founding members joined with a local community centre, becoming a unified club in 2012. Now, in 2024, there are around 40 members, with a core of twelve or so. They have been in their new premises for about nine months, meeting Monday to Friday from 8am to 12 midday, performing an important role for men's health. Office bearers comprise Secretary Glenn Turton, Treasurer Laurie Chesterfield, Vice Chair Gordon Morrison and Committee members Gordon Steele and Bryan Evans. Elmore Vale Men's Shed members fix broken furniture and aim to help their community in any ways that they can. For example, at Bunnings sausage sizzles and working with some charities. They are a friendly group, enjoying morning tea chats together, along with projects such as wood turning and metal work. They are equipped to train members on machines and to run ATWEA welding classes, one per month, for ten months of the year, and completing tasks like small engine repairs. The members also enjoy regular Friday in-house barbecues. Thank you everyone for all that you do and for providing a much-needed community service.

### **JOHN VEAGE – SUTHERLAND SHIRE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Cronulla's John Veage on being recognised as Sutherland Shire Citizen of the Year. After 39 years as a photographer for the Leader newspaper, John became as well recognised as many of the prominent people he's photographed. His catalogue of images record most of the events and faces of the news of the St George and Sutherland Shire areas for four decades of our history. On top of his work with our local newspaper, John has also served as the official photographer for both Cycling Australia and Surf Life Saving Australia and has pursued his lifelong passion for surfing in his roles as a founding life member of Cronulla Sharks Boardriders Club and life member of Surfing Sutherland Shire. John's passion for surfing shone through his surf photography that was on solo exhibition at Hazelhurst Arts Centre. So extraordinary was the way in which he captured moments in and around the surf, that his exhibition was one of best attended ever at Hazelhurst. Our community is better for having had John's eye for framing a photo to record the story of local life in pictures.

### **PROJECT YOUTH – SUTHERLAND SHIRE COMMUNITY GROUP OF THE YEAR**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Project Youth on being named the Sutherland Shire Community Group of the Year. The Project Youth team is passionate about working with young people across the Sutherland Shire and St George regions to address youth homelessness. When a young person doesn't have stable accommodation, Project Youth works tirelessly to ensure it's not for long and not repeated. After starting with three staff members focused on housing and street-based outreach in 1992, Project Youth has grown to around 50 staff and 70 volunteers, helping 3,000 local young people last year using early intervention, employment, education and training. Its first social enterprise, Labour Y, was formed in 2014 and sees Project Youth work with corporate and business partners who hire young people as valuable and fast-learning members of their workforce. Café Y, its second social enterprise, is open to the public and has been training young people in hospitality and cooking for more than ten years. Whenever I've been invited to one of Project Youth's events, I've been encouraged by the dedication and enthusiasm of the team members to helping young people and they are deserving winners of this award.

### **DETECTIVE INSPECTOR CRAIG JAMES APM**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Detective Inspector Craig James, who was awarded the Australian Police Medal in the 2025 Australia Day honours list. After joining the NSW Police Force and being posted to Hurstville in 1995, he was designated a detective in 2000. His award citation says "Detective Chief Inspector James has displayed exemplary achievement and commitment during his impressive 29-year career as

an outstanding leader and change manager." After being appointed to the Sutherland Local Area Command in 2010, he implemented a unique emergency management traffic management plan for Australia Day celebrations and a sector model which reinvented the operational deployment within the command. Now as a long-standing manager of the Shire-based Dog & Mounted Command he has had a dramatic effect on its positive culture, playing an active role instilling pride back into a historic unit. Police Commissioner Karen Webb APM said the award recognised officers who "have gone above and beyond what it means to be a dedicated member of the NSW Police Force". Craig James has made a significant contribution as a police officer and this award is fitting recognition of his distinguished service.

#### **CAPTAINS FLAT AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)**—A heartfelt congratulations to John Gough, Captains Flat's Citizen of the Year. John's dedication to the Captains Flat Brigade and his creative contributions, such as maintaining the town's rose garden and creating memorials and plaques for the town, reflect his deep love for his community. His tireless service during emergencies and fires as well as his commitment to preserving Captains Flat's heritage are deeply valued. Young Citizen of the Year, Isabelle Hume, is equally commendable for her role in the Captains Flat RFS. Isabelle's leadership, mentoring, and active involvement in community events highlight her remarkable dedication and passion for helping others. There are certainly a number of young RFS members who are looking up to her and thriving due to her leadership. Well done Isabelle, and I look forward to seeing your involvement in the community continue to thrive. The Captains Flat Bush Dance, awarded Event of the Year, exemplified community collaboration and joy. From prizes for best boots and hats to the shared snacks and lively atmosphere, the event was a heartwarming celebration of Captains Flat's spirit.

#### **AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS – BOMBALA REGION**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)**—I'd like to acknowledge the achievements of our residents in the Bombala area of the Snowy Monaro LGA. This Australia Day saw four awards go to the residents and organisations that make Bombala and surrounds such a great place to live. Stephen Reed was awarded Citizen of the Year for his commitment to the Southern Monaro region as the resident vet for the last 40 years, and Patrice Clear was awarded Sportsperson of the Year for her efforts in Australian OzTag as premiership-winning captain. Community group Currawarna Assisted Living received a very well-deserved Community Achievement Award for their tireless efforts working towards Bombala becoming a role model town for how aging-in-place can work in rural areas. Currawarna lets locals stay local so people can age with dignity in the town they've called home for so many years. Well done to Lakyn Tonks for receiving the Special Achievement honour. Lakyn is a very promising young cricketer and golfer, and I wish him every success.

#### **AUSTRALIA DAY AWARDS – JINDABYNE REGION**

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)**—I'd like to acknowledge the achievements of Jindabyne region residents – acknowledged on Australia Day 2025. Congratulations to long-term resident, business owner, and former Olympian, Manuela Berchtold on being awarded Citizen of the Year. For the last 20 years, Manuela's business, High Country Fitness, has provided a space for the residents of Jindabyne, to train and develop healthy lifestyles. From future Olympians to older Australians, Manuela has provided a space for everyone. Alongside the Citizen of the Year were many other locals being recognised for their achievements including Terry Chalk, Melissa Phillips, Jodie Evans, Malika Bailey, Todd Costa, Marty Firlie, Hunter Clark, and Nira Windeatt. I was fortunate enough to meet Hunter Clark recently at a Country Universities Centre event in Cooma, and I can't think of anyone more deserving of Young Citizen of the Year. Hunter is an exceptional student and has a very bright future ahead of her.

#### **INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 8 December 2024, I had the honour and privilege of attending an International Human Rights Day event in Cabramatta celebrating the 76th anniversary since the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This year's theme was: "Our rights, our future, right now". The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations adopted in 1948 has had immense impact on people and communities all around the world, including our local community in Cabramatta. Following the Fall of Saigon in 1975, thousands of Vietnamese refugees sought safety and a chance to rebuild their lives. Many found a home in Cabramatta where they built a flourishing community. The Vietnamese community in Cabramatta demonstrates how the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can help individuals prevail over adversity. Today, Cabramatta is a testament to the resilience of the community and the importance of protecting human rights for everyone. I thank Viet Tan Sydney for organising this event at Cabramatta Freedom Plaza, and for inviting me to attend.

**SUMMITCARE CANLEY VALE 2024**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Recently, I had the pleasure of visiting SummitCare Canley Vale in my electorate. In 2023, I had the opportunity to visit during the celebration of Christmas in July, and last year in 2024, it was Christmas in December. Both occasions provided a wonderful opportunity to connect with the residents and staff, sharing in the joy of the season. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the wonderful team at SummitCare for their warm and welcoming reception. It's always a pleasure to see the strong sense of community within the facility, and the event truly highlighted the importance of connection and celebration. A special thank you goes to Peter Nguyen and the talented lion dance team for their hard work in organizing and bringing this unique cultural performance to life. Their efforts made the event even more memorable. It's occasions like these that remind us of the value of community spirit and the importance of coming together to celebrate the people who make our neighbourhoods so special. I'm grateful for the opportunity to join in the festivities and look forward to attending future events at SummitCare Canley Vale.

**30TH YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE ASIAN WOMEN AT WORK**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 24 November 2024, I had a fantastic time celebrating the 30th Year Anniversary of Asian Women at Work at Marrickville Town Hall. Reaching this milestone reflects three decades of dedication to empowering migrant and refugee women through advocacy, support, and community programs. Asian Women at Work is a vital network of over 2,000 migrant women workers in low-paid and precarious employment. For 30 years, it has empowered women to stand up, speak out, and take collective action to advocate for their rights. Through education, support, and advocacy, the organisation has played a crucial role in ending workplace and domestic exploitation, securing fair employment opportunities and conditions for all. I congratulate the organisation on this remarkable achievement and sincerely thank Coordinator Ms Ronnie Wang and Ms Bich Thuy Pham for their invaluable leadership and dedication. I also extend my appreciation to all the volunteers for their outstanding contributions. I look forward to continuing our collaboration and seeing Asian Women at Work expand its impact in the years ahead.

**AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS - JOCELYN (JO) OSMOND OAM**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate the following outstanding individual from Albury who has been recognised in this year's Australia Day Honours: Jocelyn Osmond was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] in recognition of her volunteer commitment to the Albury community. Her service of several decades, marked by 40 years of volunteer work with Meals on Wheels Albury, 20 years with Lutheran Aged Care, and another 20 years as a life member and volunteer at the Jindera Museum. In addition, Jocelyn continues to support her community through her volunteer work at St David's Uniting Church Albury Bargain Centre. Thank you Jocelyn, for your tireless dedication and volunteer work in our community,

**VALE MIKE EGAN**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Mike Egan, a pillar of the Albury community, who sadly passed away on October 18, 2024. Mike's legacy of service and leadership will forever be remembered by those whose lives he touched. A long-serving member and past president of the Rotary Club of Albury, Mike's dedication to the community was immeasurable. He tirelessly worked to make Albury a better place. Mike would regularly hire a bus at his own expense to transport fellow Rotarians to various community projects. He played a key role in numerous fundraising initiatives and was also involved in creating a home for children from impoverished countries needing medical care. Mike's commitment earned him the prestigious Paul Harris Fellow award and a trusted role in preserving the Rotary Club's historic legacy. Mike was well known for his support of the Albury Football Club and was their Number 1 ticket holder. Alongside his wife Mary, he continued the tradition of community service as part of Lester & Son Funeral Directors. Mike your contributions have left an enduring legacy in our community, and your spirit of service will guide and inspire all who were fortunate enough to know you. Vale.

**AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS - MARCIA ARMSTRONG – PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate the following outstanding individual from Albury who has been recognised in this year's Australia Day Honours: Marcia Armstrong has been honoured with the Public Service Medal for her exceptional service in maternal and child health, particularly during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. With over 40 years of experience and multiple qualifications across four nursing specialties, Marcia's role as the Principal Maternal and Child Health Nurse Adviser for the Department of Health and Human Services was critical during this unprecedented time. She played a key role in interpreting and applying advice from the Chief Health Officer, ensuring vital services continued to support Victorian families and children during the pandemic's most challenging moments. Marcia, your work speaks volumes about your passion



and your deep care for the wellbeing of others. This honour is a reflection of the lasting impact you have made, and I am incredibly proud of all you have achieved. Congratulations on this remarkable recognition.

#### **DAPTO PUBLIC SCHOOL - WAKAKIRRI**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Dapto Public School's Dance Group for being awarded a National Award for Wakakirri 2024. Dapto Public School's Dance Group were awarded a Highly Commended for their performance titled "Misinformation Social Media Story". Wakakirri is a nationwide Festival for Australian schools that provides a platform for students to express their thoughts, ideas, and aspirations through the art of storytelling and dance. Inspired by the belief that great stories can inspire change, Wakakirri is designed to promote student engagement and well-being in schools through the creation and performance of captivating Story-Dances. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Dapto Public School's Dance Group on this this wonderful achievement.

#### **HORSLEY HEROES – DAPTO HIGH SCHOOL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Horsley Heroes - Mia Cole, Nevaeh Fulton, Hannah Tate, Ruby Cruden-Taylor and Ebony Gallagher, from Year 8 at Dapto High School, for being recognised for their vision of a customisable car for people of all disabilities. The idea, which the five-strong group developed and fine-tuned over the 2023 and 2024 Game Changer Challenges, is now a step closer to reality. While they might not have won the competition, the technology company HP was so enamoured with their project it backed them to produce a prototype. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Horsley Heroes on this this wonderful achievement.

#### **NOAH WRAIGHT**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Noah Wraight, for being elected as vice-captain of Shellharbour Anglican College 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 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 Noah on this this wonderful achievement.

#### **LOUISE CHIEKRIE**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Louise Chiekrie for receiving the Community Life Award at the Central Coast Council's 2025 Australia Day Awards. Drawing on her own musical background and a deep understanding of the needs within residential aged-care settings, Lou founded 'Happy Tappers with Lou', a unique drumming workshop that visits aged-care facilities across the northern Central Coast. Happy Tappers is dedicated to bringing joy and fostering meaningful connections among residents by providing them with a valuable space to enjoy music, engage in physical activity and rediscover their creativity. Lou's initiative encourages residents to connect with one another in an enriching and uplifting environment. Staff have shared that these sessions are often the highlight of the week for residents, with noticeable improvements in mood and overall well-being observed among the participants. Congratulations Lou, you are a credit to the community. I commend the incredible work your program continues to achieve and the positive impact it has on the lives of so many.

#### **NORDS WHARF PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2025**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Lachlan Peers, Alahni Moore, Oscar Parker, Lakyn Jones, Mila Terrey, and Sylvia Lindsay on being named as the Nords Wharf Public School leadership team for 2025. These students have consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic and a deep commitment to their school community. They represent Nords Wharf Public School with exceptional pride and integrity. Throughout their time at school, each of these students have actively contributed to a wide range of school activities and events. Beyond their achievements, they have consistently served as positive role models, inspiring their peers with their behaviour and actions. Their appointment to the 2025 leadership team is a testament to their hard work, character, and dedication. I have full confidence that they will embrace their new leadership roles with great pride, and in doing so, develop valuable skills that will benefit them throughout their lives. I congratulate Lachlan, Alahni, Oscar, Lakyn, Mila, and Sylvia on this well-deserved achievement. I also wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

#### **GABRIELLE HOLLAND**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to Gabrielle "Gabby" Holland, who has been named Creative Arts Person of the Year for her outstanding

contributions to Maitland's cultural and creative community. Gabby's passion for the arts has spanned decades, beginning at just 13 years old when she became the resident organist at her church. Since then, she has played a crucial role in shaping Maitland's performing arts scene, particularly through her long-standing involvement with the Maitland Musical Society. As a performer, director, and volunteer, Gabby has dedicated countless hours to ensuring the success of local productions. Her talents extend to music arrangement, including orchestrations for the society's 60th-anniversary concert. She has also served as Vice President of the Musical Society, offering guidance and leadership to the next generation of performers. Beyond her work in theatre, Gabby is a passionate advocate for accessibility in the arts. She has mentored young artists, taught music to children, and volunteered with all-abilities groups to ensure that creative expression is open to everyone. Maitland is incredibly fortunate to have someone of Gabby's dedication and talent enriching our artistic community. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!

#### **IMOGEN BROWNLEE, YOUNG CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations to 16-year-old Imogen Brownlee, who has been named Maitland's Young Citizen of the Year for her exceptional contributions to our community through her involvement in cricket and netball. Imogen has demonstrated remarkable dedication as a coach, player, and umpire, particularly with the City United District Cricket Club's Blasters program and the Thornton Netball Club. Her commitment to developing young athletes is evident in her hands-on approach, where she not only imparts technical skills but also fosters a love for the game among participants. Beyond her coaching roles, Imogen has taken on leadership responsibilities by mentoring young umpires, promoting teamwork, and encouraging active participation in sports, especially among young girls. Her efforts have been instrumental in growing junior cricket and enhancing youth engagement in sports within our community. Her nominator, Kristy Brownlee, aptly stated, "Imogen epitomises the values of what it means to be the Young Citizen of the Year. Through her unwavering dedication, selflessness, and positive impact on the Maitland community, she consistently demonstrates leadership, responsibility, and service." Congratulations to Imogen Brownlee on this well-deserved recognition. Our community is enriched by her passion and dedication to fostering youth development through sports.

#### **MAITLAND SPORTSPERSON OF THE YEAR 2025 BRONTE PEEL**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—Congratulations Bronte Peel on being named Maitland's Sportsperson of the Year at the 2025 Australia Day Awards. The 2024 season was an outstanding one for Bronte, receiving the NSW Emily von Egmond medal for the Player of the Year, winning the Golden Boot award and the Players' Player award and as such Bronte is deserving recipient of this prestigious honour. Bronte's hard work, perseverance, and passion for football have seen her excel at a high level, which highlights the strength of local sporting programs that continue to nurture and support exceptional athletes. Bronte, a Greta-Branxton Wildcats junior has played with the Newcastle Emerging Jets, spent a season in the USA College system playing for the Little Rock Trojans and the last local seasons up front for Maitland FC. Bronte's success is a source of immense pride for Maitland, and I have no doubt she will continue to achieve great things as she joins Melbourne Club Heidelberg. On behalf of the community, I congratulate Bronte on this well-earned recognition and thank her for her contribution to Maitland FC and Maitland sport.

#### **ULTIMATE LIFEGUARD**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—On behalf of the Coogee Electorate I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Troy Quinlan and his fellow lifeguard friend, Tom Woodruff in promoting Surf awareness. Troy and Tom have set up a program called Ultimate Lifeguard Xperiences. The program aims to give people confidence in the calm water before venturing out into the surf. By practicing technique and skill of paddling in flat water, participants are then more confident to go in rougher conditions. By helping the community build these skills, they are keeping our community safer in the waters. Each program also includes first aid and resuscitation sessions. I would like to commend these men in their dedication to building community water safety and confidence.

#### **CAPTAIN OLIVIA MILEY-DYER**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—On behalf of the Coogee Electorate, I would like to congratulate Captain Olivia Miley-Diley for her selection and gold medal at the Invictus Games in Whistler, Canada. Captain Miley-Dyer, a Bronte local and UNSW alumni, has served in the Australian Army since 2017. The Invictus Games gives wounded, injured and sick armed forces personnel a chance to grow and excel beyond their injury. During the pandemic, she was diagnosed with advance thyroid cancer. After extensive treatment and rehabilitation, she was able to return to work. Now, she is in Canada competing for her country, and has already brought home the gold in the Women's Novice Nordic Skiing event. Captain Miley-Dyers' story is one of strength and incredible resilience. We wish her and the rest of Team Australia the best of luck for the rest of the games.

**JORDAN MAILATA**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—On behalf of the electorate of Coogee, I would like to congratulate Jordan Mailata on winning a Super Bowl Championship with the Philadelphia Eagles. As a former Coogee Dolphins player, with great physical presence, skill and courage he has become the first Australian to be part of a Super Bowl championship winning team. His journey as a 17-year-old who, had never played the game, to joining in 2017 NFL's International Player Pathway [IPP] program to in 2017, to becoming a Super Bowl champion. Jordan has shown himself to be an integral member of the Philly's offensive line and had a significant role in the Philly's win. His achievement is one to be celebrated and will be recognised as one of Australia's great personal sporting successes.

**NATHAN CZINNER**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Armidale local Nathan Czinner, for being named in the Australian Hockey Squad, with this 22-man team announced for the Sydney FIH Pro League. This competition is an annual global league event, involving hockey's best national men's and women's teams from across the world. I congratulate Nathan on his selection, which will commence at Sydney Olympic Park playing hockey against Spain and the Netherlands this month. Following on from this, the team will travel to Argentina going up against the Argentinians and Belgium. Such success did not happen overnight, with Nathan initially taking up hockey in Armidale, at 17 years playing for Newcastle and soon after, playing in the Premier League in Sydney. I commend Nathan on his hard work and commitment to his chosen sport of Hockey and for taking opportunities to reach this elite level in sport. We wish Nathan all the best at the upcoming FIH Pro League competition and hope to see his selection for both the World Cup in 2026 and 2028 Olympics.

**INVERELL TO HOST 2026 SWIMMING NSW COUNTRY REGIONAL MEET**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Inverell Shire Council, Inverell Swimming Club and Belgravia Leisure, on securing the 2026 Swimming NSW Country Regional Meet, to take place at their new state-of-the art aquatic centre at Inverell. This two day event is expected to attract 400 participants, with 85% of attendees coming from outside Inverell Shire, providing significant economic benefits to the township. I congratulate all involved in this collaboration, including Inverell Shire Council, Mayor Kate Dight, General Manager Brett McInnes, Peter Caddey and staff of Corporate Services. Special thanks also to Inverell Swimming Club President Pam Weste and committee, along with General Manager Operations NSW/ACT Katherine Forman and the Inverell team of Belgravia Leisure Aquatic Centre. I commend all involved in this wonderful achievement, for their hard work, commitment and giving of their expertise. Their efforts enabling this important event to benefit the community, whilst providing an integral stepping stone for swimmers to qualify for the NSW Country and State Championships.

**RECOGNITION OF DR BRUCE MENZIES OAM**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Armidale local Dr Bruce Menzies OAM of for his accomplished career in Medicine, being a General Practitioner since 1984 and servicing the New England, through the Faulkner Street Medical since 1989. I congratulate Bruce on his significant service to his patients and contribution to our community. Bruce is an esteemed Doctor and the founding Chairman of the New England Division of General Practice in 1993. Adding to his repertoire, Dr Menzies was awarded the Australia Day Armidale Citizen of the Year in 2005; Rotary International Paul Harris Fellowship in 2007, for services to Medicine and to the community; and in 2010 an honoured recipient of a Medal of the Order of Australia, for services as a General Practitioner and to the Arts, in the Armidale region. I commend Bruce for an impressive career and for his enduring and selfless commitment to improve the health outcomes and the lives of others. The Northern Tablelands electorate wishes Dr Menzies all our best for his well-earned retirement.

**JAAKS AND THE KYLE BAY VOTED BEST OF THE BEST**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to recognise and congratulate George Christodoulou and Diana Valsamis, owners of JAAKS Restaurant and Bar, and the Kyle Bay. I am proud to say that JAAKS and the Kyle Bay recently won two awards at the 2024 National Restaurant & Catering Awards for Excellence. What a wonderful achievement! JAAKS was awarded a Gold Medal as the National winner for the 'Best Greek Restaurant' category, whilst the Kyle Bay received a Bronze Medal in the Event/Convention Centre category. I have taken my family to JAAKS on several occasions, and we have always enjoyed a fantastic meal with great views of the beautiful Georges River. I would like to congratulate the entire team from both JAAKS and the Kyle Bay for all the fantastic work they have put in over the years. Hospitality is a key cornerstone of our community and helps to make our area a great place to live. I look forward to visiting and enjoying some fantastic food again very soon!

### SHARE THE DIGNITY DRIVE

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the meaningful work of Share the Dignity, a national charity working to end period poverty in Australia. Every year my office is a collection point for our community to donate toiletry items in support of the 'It's in the Bag' charity drive. This year we have collected close to 150 handbags full of donations from generous locals. I am honoured to have participated in this charity drive for many years now, and it always fantastic to see my community get around the drive with so many wonderful donations. This year in particular, I would like to recognise Linda Pritchard and the ladies from Knit2gether at Oatley, a local community group who have been incredibly generous over the years. Last year, they made an effort to support Share the Dignity by donating just under 100 handbags filled with essential items. I would like to thank the Share the Dignity team for their incredible support. I also pass on my thanks to everyone in the community that has supported this wonderful cause! I look forward to taking part in this initiative again in March this year.

### SHUNDE ASSOCIATION 30TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently had the privilege of attending the Shunde Association's 30th Anniversary Dinner in Hurstville with Deputy Mayor Nancy Liu and my Parliamentary colleagues. I have been working alongside with the Shunde Association for some time now, and I must say, every one of their events is always so culturally enriching. Everyone I spoke to enjoyed the evening thoroughly, with the music and cultural performances making for an incredible atmosphere. This Shunde Association is such a vital part of our local community. They have been around since 1994 and promote the values of friendship, fraternity and cooperation of the Shunde migrants in Australia. The Shunde Association do a fantastic job of encouraging cultural relations and promoting multiculturalism in Australia and I am extremely grateful for their contributions to diversity and difference. I would like to thank President, Sam Luo, and Inaugural President, David Lung for their warm hospitality and the hard work they put into promoting cross cultural relations here in New South Wales. I look forward to our continued friendship and attending more events with the Shunde Association in the future.

### CONGRATULATIONS SHARON BUCKLEY ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Congratulations to SES Ashfield-Leichhardt Unit Commander Inspector Sharon Buckley, on receiving the Order of Australia medal in the 2025 Australia Day Honours. The Order of Australia Medal recognises Australians who have demonstrated outstanding service or exceptional achievement. Sharon joined the Ashfield-Leichhardt Unit in 2006, holding many roles and taking on the position of Unit Commander from 2023. In her near 20 years at NSW SES, she has been awarded many awards, including Cyclone Yasi (QLD 2011), 2019/ 20 Premiers Bushfire Citation, 2019/20 NEM for Bushfire, National Medal, NSW SES Long Service - 15 years, and the Commissioner's Certificate of Appreciation. Well-known for her dedication and commitment to the community, Sharon also ensures that she brings a sense of fun to what can often be very serious jobs. In a sign of her energy and enthusiasm Sharon was not available to celebrate her award on Australia Day, as she was on a scientific voyage in Antarctica. Congratulations Sharon and thank you for all you do to help keep our inner west community safe.

### CONGRATULATIONS PETER GAINSFORD PSM

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Congratulations to Mr Peter Gainsford, General Manger at Inner West Council, on receiving the Public Service Medal in the 2025 Australia Day Honours. Peter's local government career started in 1983 when he became an apprentice carpenter at Leichardt Council. By 2003 he had risen through the ranks to become Director Infrastructure and Service Delivery. Following the 2016 Council amalgamation that formed the Inner West Council Peter was appointed Deputy Manager of Assets and Environment. He spent two years in this role before becoming General Manager for Canada Bay Council. In 2021, Peter returned to the Inner West Council as General Manager. Peter is known for his diligent work ethic and dedication to ensuring that services essential to the community are run efficiently and effectively. Peter's efforts to promote inclusivity and protect the environment through projects such as Pride Square in Newtown, the Greenway and the FOGO initiative, have delivered significant benefits to our inner west community. Congratulations, Peter. Thank you for your dedication and hard work and I look forward to continuing to work with you to improve life across the inner west.

### BEATING HEARTS OF LISMORE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—Beating Hearts of Lismore is a grassroots initiative started and still run by dedicated volunteers, who offer a 'free' weekly singing and movement group for older adults in the Lismore region. It's a godsend, particularly for older adults living with Dementia or Parkinson Disease and their carers, and for people at risk of social isolation. The volunteers offer their time to organise, fundraise and lead the weekly group, including providing morning tea. The program started in May 2023, initiated by the Lismore-based

Geriatrician Dr Rachel Jones. She was concerned about growing social isolation for older adults following the Covid-19 restrictions, which was further compounded by the Lismore 2022 floods. The program has been so successful that they now see between 60 to 80 older adults attending weekly. They have achieved this with very little financial support, relying on the occasional small grant, donations and Bunnings barbecue sizzles to raise funds to deliver the popular program. There is also an intergenerational component where students from the Corndale Public School attend monthly, benefiting the students and Beating Hearts attendees. Beating Hearts of Lismore supports healthy ageing, by providing a platform to allow older adults to make social connections.

#### **TRIBUTE TO CRICKET VOLUNTEER THE LATE JOHN BUTTRUM, OAM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—I join Cricket NSW in paying tribute to the late John Nicholson Buttrum, of Lismore, who in the Australia Day Honours List was posthumously awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] for his service to cricket and to the community. Born and raised in Lismore, Mr Buttrum, who died aged 82 in 2023, was a life member of the Far North Coast Cricket Council, serving as its president from 2007 until 2021. He was also a life member and former president of the Mullumbimby-Brunswick Cricket Club. More recently, he was a founding member and treasurer of the charity Lord's Taverners Northern New South Wales, which raises money to help underprivileged and disadvantaged young people, including those with disabilities, engaging them through cricket and other sports. Teachers by profession, Mr Buttrum and his wife Robyn had long careers in public education with postings around New South Wales. He taught at Main Arm Upper Public School and Tregeagle Public School, up until his retirement. Mr Buttrum will be remembered in local communities across the Northern Rivers as having had lifelong love of cricket, a fine administrator, dedicated volunteer and effective fundraiser.

#### **WHO LET THE BOATS OUT? A NSW SES TRAINING EXERCISE**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore)**—As NSW Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery, it's an honour to see close-up the dedication and skills of our emergency service personnel in action. Who Let The Boats Out? This was the name of a NSW State Emergency Service-led mass flood rescue exercise involving drones, boats and more than 800 emergency service personnel on more than 80 waterways across the state last Saturday. I observed the event, staged locally on the Richmond River at Coraki and at SES Headquarters in Goonellabah, which was designed to strengthen core skills of SES units from the Richmond Valley cluster for on-water flood rescue and flood support operations. This year, the SES trialled drones during the exercise to demonstrate how they can be used to support flood rescues, and to deliver reconnaissance and rapid damage impact assessments to incident management teams who are often a distance away. I thank SES Deputy Zone Commander Superintendent Scott McLennan and Chief Inspector Hayden Doolan for comprehensive briefings on the benefits of Saturday's exercise. Other participating organisations included NSW Police, the RFS, Surf Life Saving NSW, Marine Rescue, the VRA, Maritime, Fire and Rescue NSW and Ambulance NSW.

#### **HORSLEY PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate Principal Mrs Anica Tanevski and Horsley Park Public School on the school's 90th anniversary last year. It was wonderful to join the school and broader community with my son Harry on 6 December 2024 to celebrate this historic milestone and the school's rich history and achievements. I wish the school community the very best in the years ahead.

#### **KINDERGARTEN CLASS OF 2025**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I wish all Kindergarten students and their loved ones in my electorate of Badgerys Creek the very best during the commencement of their schooling journey, including Dylan Kuzma who has embarked on an exciting new chapter of her life as she commenced Kindergarten at Surveyors Creek Public School this year. In doing so, Dylan follows in the footsteps of her three older brothers who previously attended the school, with two of them now in high school, whilst the third is currently in Year 4. Kindergarten marks the beginning of an important 13-year journey and I wish these young students the very best in this new chapter of their lives.

#### **COUNTRYSIDE PLUMBING**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I commend and congratulate Glenmore Park local Nicholas McLeod on the growth and success of his plumbing business 'Countryside Plumbing'. Countryside Plumbing is a great asset to our community through their professionalism, quality and distinguished service. They are a great benefit to the economy and this extends to supporting employment, with Nicholas leading a team of seven. The company specialises in maintenance plumbing, gas fitting, commercial maintenance, renovations and new builds. I extend my commendations and congratulations to Nicholas' wife Jaime, who works alongside Nicholas managing the office. I also thank Nicholas for his support of local charities and his initiative of driving to regional Australia to provide free plumbing services for people in need. Nicholas and Jaime are an incredible asset to our

community and on behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek I thank them and wish them continued success in their endeavours.

#### CHRISTINE ELLIOTT

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Christine Elliott has recently retired from the Wilcannia News after twenty years of service. This dedicated lady has been one of a few volunteers who produce an independent local newspaper serving the Wilcannia community. Its mission statement is to "Inform, Connect and Unite" and Chris has been at the forefront of gathering stories and writing about community events for two decades. Chances are, if you were attending a meeting or social event in Wilcannia, Chris would be in attendance with her trusty notebook and pen. She has made a huge contribution to Wilcannia by publishing positive news and creating a local archive for generations of families to use. I want to thank Chris for her enthusiasm and drive to record and publish the news for Wilcannia.

#### MAX JACKSON

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Coonamble born; Max Jackson was awarded two Golden Guitars at the 2025 Tamworth Country Music Festival. Max is a singer song writer and was awarded Female Artist of the year and Single of the year for her song "Little more Country" at the 53rd Golden Guitar Awards. I congratulate Max on receiving these awards at the Tamworth Country Music Festival. You should be proud of your recognised talent.

#### VALE COUNCILLOR ANGELO PIPPOS

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Councillor Angelo was a dedicated member of the Brewarrina Shire council and community. He served as a Councillor for more than 48 years. Angelo's proudest achievement was the world-famous Café Deluxe, first opened by his father in 1927. It was the centre piece of Brewarrina main street for almost nine decades, where Angelo kept the wood fired stove burning until 2014. Angelo was committed to the Brewarrina community right to the very end when he sadly passed away December 13, 2024. Angelo's dedication to the community and the council was appreciated by all and he will be missed by many. My thoughts are with Councillor Angelo's family. May he now rest in peace.

#### BAYSIDE COUNCIL'S LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATIONS

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Bayside Council on their spectacular Lunar New Year Celebrations. Thousands of people in the community came to the inaugural Lunar New Year festival at Cahill Park in Wolli Creek where there was an array of family friendly activities to enjoy. From 5-10 PM, residents were able to enjoy fun festivities such as food trucks serving delicious meals, a wide selection of market stalls, and various cultural and traditional performances all on a warm summer night. When festival goers witnessed the Tai Chi Fung Fu Fan Dance and the Eye-Dotting ceremony to awaken the dragon, followed by the traditional lion dance to drive away evil spirit, they were able to both enjoy a fun evening with the family and learn more about our Chinese Community's culture. I also acknowledge the Chinese and Korean music presented at St Magdalenes Chapel and the series of cultural craft workshops. Our community is strong when we embrace our multiculturalism and is more vibrant with festivals, and I commend Bayside Council for doing both this Lunar New Year.

#### MUMS AND DAUGHTERS SELF PROTECTION WORKSHOP

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport)**—I acknowledge and commend the Mums and Daughters Self Protection Workshop organised by Bayside Council and the women's domestic violence prevention organisation KYUP!. On Thursday December 5th at the Arncliffe Youth Centre, Award-winning martial artist Mel Thomas hosted a free to attend event where both mothers and their daughters were able to learn personal safety tips and simple self-defence techniques. Mel Thomas has had a working relationship with NSW Government, and PCYCs to help break the cycle of family and domestic violence for women across NSW. I am so incredibly proud to have this event hosted in my electorate as we strive to end domestic violence in this state which has taken countless lives and is one of the leading causes of preventable death for women aged 18-44. I praise the innovative methods of teaching relatable examples of real-life scenarios like public places, transport and parties. As a proud husband and father, I could not be happier to have this effort happen in my community and extend my most sincere appreciation to both Bayside Council and KYUP! for hosting this important event.

#### MAX HANDLEY

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge sixteen-year-old Max Handley who has just been named the Australian Under 18 Snooker Champion. First picking up the cue around

three and a half years ago after tagging along with his father Nick, he became hooked straight away! From that moment, his passion for the game took off and he has never looked back! Despite his young age and the need to be always accompanied by a responsible adult during practice and play, Max's dedication and commitment to the game have never faltered. He is fortunate enough to have the unwavering support of his family and the Dubbo Snooker Club, who have encouraged and nurtured his passion every step of the way. The Australian Junior Billiards and Snooker Championships took place in Albury in January 2025, featuring incredible displays of talent and skill. Max's hard work and hours of practice paid off as he emerged victorious, winning his age championship, and cementing his place as a rising star in the sport. He has also received automatic entry into the World Titles later this year. Congratulations Max, I look forward to following your journey as you continue to excel!

#### **BRIAN SEMMLER**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to take this opportunity to recognise the life of Brian Semmler who passed away on 7 January 2025. A stalwart of the Dubbo community, Brian served as a Councillor on the former Dubbo City Council from 1976 to 1981 and held the role of Deputy Mayor from 1977 to 1980. During his time on Council, he played an active role in various committees, including the Decentralisation and Tourism Committee, Social Welfare Committee, and Finance Committee. Brian was also widely known and respected for his tenure as Chief Executive of Dubbo Base Hospital. A tireless advocate for improved health services in the region, Brian played a key role in numerous committees, including the Dubbo and Orana Regional Dialysis and Diabetes Working Group, Dubbo Medical Oncology Working Group, and the Dubbo Ambulance District Committee. He was also an active member of the Rotary Club of Dubbo West. Brian's incredible commitment and passion for community were recognised with 2008 Dubbo Citizen of the Year Award, and Order of Australia medal in 2009 and a Paul Harris Fellow. Vale Brian Semmler, your legacy will continue to inspire for years to come.

#### **SING AUSTRALIA DUBBO**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Sing Australia Dubbo who have been entertaining the city for twenty-three years! Sing Australia is an Australia wide program with a mission to make it possible for everyone to sing together in a non-judgemental environment, for good health and social well-being. In Dubbo, members meet weekly, and anyone can join – no audition or music reading skills required! The group performs a diverse repertoire from classic musical numbers to contemporary hits. An interesting fact about Sing Australia is that all members across the network share the same book, allowing them to seamlessly sing together whenever they gather! Dubbo's Sing Australia frequently host special events, including theme nights, social gatherings, and dinner nights. They are a familiar and cherished presence around Dubbo, creating a wonderful ambiance at events such as the Farmers Markets, Church Street Rotunda, and Christmas carolling. Congratulations on your anniversary and thank you for the joy and harmony you bring to our community.

#### **UALM AWARDS NIGHT**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was honoured to join the United Australian Lebanese Movement [UALM] in celebrating the significant achievements of the Lebanese-Australian Diaspora on 22 January at the Holroyd Centre, Merrylands. The UALM supports Lebanese-Australian academics, journalists, and public figures, celebrates culture through a plethora of artforms & media and promotes a strong partnership between Australia & Lebanon. Lebanese-Australian high-achievers Dr. Wally Ahmar was recognised for his relentless contributions to medicine in fostering community services & Miss Lara Nakhle for her remarkable contributions to the arts through her dedication to music while overcoming significant barriers. As per the community-focused organisations' tradition, the UALM donated \$5,000 to Aspect; an organisation that supports & empowers people on the autism spectrum by delivering evidence-based & personalised solutions to individuals & their families. Thank you to the UALM & all organising partners for the opportunity to celebrate the many invaluable contributions of Lebanese-Australians. Your unwavering commitment to serving the community is truly inspiring!

#### **KAREN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was honoured to join the Karen community in celebrating the Karen New Year 2764 at the Roselea Community Centre. This vibrant event is a testament to the enduring culture, traditions, and unity of the Karen people, both here in Australia and around the world. The bamboo dance, done dance, and delicious food are wonderful examples of the rich cultural heritage, and the Karen community so proudly preserves them and shares with others. These celebrations bring us together, fostering understanding and solidarity across diverse communities. The Karen New Year is an opportunity to reflect on the values of togetherness, strength, and pride in cultural identity. It brings people of all backgrounds together to celebrate the enduring spirit of the Karen community and its significant contributions to our society. Thank you to the organisers

and the Karen community for sharing this special day with us. I wish everyone a joyous and prosperous Karen New Year!

### **2025 PONGAL FESTIVAL – AUSTRALIAN TAMIL CONGRESS**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—I was delighted to acknowledge and celebrate the vibrant Tamil community here in Sydney for their dedication to preserving and promoting cultural heritage. The 2025 Pongal Festival at Holroyd Gardens, Merrylands is a testament to the rich traditions and enduring values of gratitude, unity, and respect for nature that are integral to Tamil culture. Pongal is not just a celebration of the harvest but also a reminder of the essential contributions of our farmers and the importance of nurturing our environment. It is heartwarming to see the Tamil community sharing these values with all of us and fostering inclusivity and cultural exchange in our diverse city. Thank you to the Australian Tamil Congress, the Tamil Community in Sydney, and all organizing partners for creating this opportunity to come together and celebrate. Your commitment to preserving Tamil heritage is truly inspiring. Happy Pongal to everyone!

### **LIONEL MORGAN**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Indigenous rugby league pioneer Lionel Morgan has been posthumously appointed a Member of the Order of Australia [AM] in the Australia Day 2025 Honours List. Born and raised in the Tweed, Lionel made history by becoming the first Indigenous man to play for Australia, in any code. Lionel, who passed away in 2023, started his rugby league career with the Tweed Seagulls and went on to play for the Tweed All Blacks, Wynnum Manly Seagulls, Queensland and Australia. He helped establish the Indigenous All Stars and was named in the Indigenous Team of the Century and the Brisbane Rugby League Team of the Century. Last year Lionel was inducted into the NRL Hall of Fame. Lionel's significant service to rugby league and the Indigenous community is most deserving of the prestigious recognition as a Member of the Order of Australia [AM].

### **STORM RESPONDERS**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—On Thursday January 23 2025 the Tweed was hit by a ferocious morning storm that some long-term locals have described as the worst they have ever seen. Wind gusts reached more than 100km/hr, damaging homes and businesses. More than 21,000 households were left without power and several major roads, including the M1 were blocked by fallen trees and debris. A giant gum tree fell on a daycare centre and car in Tweed Heads, thankfully no-one was injured. It was through the efforts of SES volunteers, the Rural Fire Service, Tweed Shire Council workers, Essential Energy staff and the selfless work of Tweed Electorate residents that fallen trees were cleared, electricity supply restored and the significant clean up undertaken. Thank you to everyone who helped the Tweed recover from this monster storm – it was another example of how well the Tweed comes together to support those affected by a severe weather event.

### **SUPERTEES DONATION**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—Tweed Valley Hospital has received a generous donation of 96 Supertees from Tweed Heads Club Twin Towns, improving the hospital stay for many local children. Supertees are specially designed T-shirts disguised as costumes of Marvel characters, Captain America and Captain Marvel. Supertees enable easy access for thermometer checks and have small press studs on the sides for organising and bypassing IV drops, central lines, feeding tubes and monitor cables. They are also MRI and PET scan friendly. Thank you to Twin Towns for providing these Supertees to Tweed Valley Hospital and for making a small yet mighty difference to children facing a lengthy stay in hospital and serious medical conditions.

### **VONI MULLER**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and congratulate Voni Muller, Shoalhaven's queen of cooking, who celebrated her remarkable milestone of 100 years on December 30. Born in Nowra and raised at Upper Kangaroo River, Voni grew up in the talented Walsh family, surrounded by music and community spirit. Her journey led her to Far Meadow, where she met and married Albert Muller in 1948, creating a legacy of love and dedication that has enriched countless lives. Voni and Albert's home, Pomona, became renowned for its expansive orchard, filled with exotic fruit trees, inspiring many of Voni's famous recipes. Her passion for cooking culminated in the publication of My Favourite Recipes at age 91, with proceeds supporting St Vincent de Paul. Voni baked scones for Catholic priests every Sunday, cooked their Christmas lunch, and crafted cakes for weddings and fundraisers. Voni excelled in CWA competitions, hospital fetes, and won awards at local and Royal Easter Shows. As a mother of seven, grandmother to 23, and great-grandmother to 30, Voni's legacy continues through her family. Voni's contributions and kindness to the community have left an indelible mark on the Shoalhaven.



### NOWRA SHOW SOCIETY

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to congratulate the Nowra Show Society on another wonderful show. The annual Nowra Show, held on Friday and Saturday, February 7 and 8, is a much-loved tradition that brings our community together to celebrate the best of our region. This year's event marks the 151st anniversary and the 148th show, a milestone that speaks to its enduring significance. Held at the Nowra Showground, the show continues to be a major gathering point, showcasing rural traditions, entertainment, and community spirit. A huge thank you to the volunteers and committee members who work tirelessly to ensure the event's success. Their dedication makes it all possible. This year's show offered an exciting lineup of events, including the demolition derby, freestyle motocross, and emergency services demonstrating lifesaving skills during a simulated motor vehicle accident. The beloved dog high jump, along with a thrilling rodeo and many agricultural displays, highlighted life on the land. I was especially honoured to sponsor the Young Farmers event which was great fun and wonderful to see our young farmers showing of their skills. Congratulations to all involved in making this year's show another great success!

### CHARLESTOWN DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Although recent rains had left the ground too wet for any cricket to be played on Sunday, 19 January, it was my absolute pleasure to join a local community sporting mainstay, the Charlestown District Cricket Club, for their NRMA Community Cricket Day. The day was in celebration of Charlestown District Cricket Club being the successful recipient of a 2024 NRMA Community Cricket Club Grant. The grant will help the club to support a team of young cricketers, who are refugees from Afghanistan. My thanks to club president Chris Oliver and secretary Andrew Standing on their leadership, and my congratulations to them for successfully securing this grant. I am so glad that this funding will help new members of our Charlestown electorate family find and build community moving forward. Well done, Charlestown District Cricket Club. Your support of the community over more than fifty years is truly inspiring.

### CHARLOTTE AND HARRISON JAMES

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It was absolutely fantastic to meet two incredible young athletes from the Charlestown electorate today: sibling dynamos Charlotte and Harrison James. I welcomed Charlotte, Harrison and their very proud parents to my electorate office in order to present these phenomenal youngsters with State Representative Awards. Charlotte received two awards, for the 1500m and Medley Relay at the Track and Field Championships and Football Championships, while Harrison was recognised for the Cross Country Championships. Charlotte is already smashing records—she is one of the fastest girls in the history of NSW! Understandably, she has the 2032 Brisbane Olympics in her sights. Not to be outdone, Harrison was quick to point out he'd be hot on her heels. Both Charlotte and Harrison told me all about their training regimens, and I was in awe. The two are alumni of the wonderful Charlestown South Public School. Harrison is starting high school this year, while Charlotte continues on at Hunter Sports High. Congratulations to you both, I can't wait to see what comes next!

### WINDALE MEN'S SHED

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—There are so many wonderful community organisations in the Charlestown electorate but I have a particular appreciation for the Windale Men's Shed. The Men's Shed has been operating since 2006, and is such an important part of the local community, available to all those who can donate time and use their skills, knowledge and personal experience for the benefit of the Shed and the broader community. In January, I got the chance to catch up with the members and management of the Men's Shed. It was great to hear about the services they offer their members, including free hearing tests and information about staying healthy, and how the Shed provides a space where men can develop new skills and friendships. The Windale Men's Shed brings such wonderful benefits to Windale, the broader Charlestown electorate community and beyond. My thanks to Men's Shed President Roger Greenam OAM, for his many years of service to the community; to secretary Carole Lawrence for showing me around, and to Garry, Steve, Grahame, another Garry, Michael, Tony, Peter, and Robert for morning tea and a chat!

### FERNANDO FLORES

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to Lockhart Shire Council's Citizen of the Year, Fernando Flores. Mr Flores, who hails from Chile, began his career as a sailor and his travels took him all over the world – but when he and his wife, Portuguese born Idalina, found their way to Yerong Creek they knew they'd found their forever home. Mr Flores has become an icon of his community which is not surprising, given his

enormous contribution. A Rural Fire Service member for 19 years, he has received awards for his services to his brigade and to the community during the 2019-2020 fire emergency. He is a stalwart of the Yerong Creek Bowling Club, a member of the Yerong Creek Hall Committee, has volunteered with Meals on Wheels and has raised more than \$8,000 for local charities by recycling bottles and cans. And he still finds time to volunteer as caretaker of the town's recreation ground. Mr Flores says it's the "the people" who make his adopted home so special! It was moving that the Chilean-born Mr Flores received his award from the Ukrainian-born Australia Day Ambassador Viktor Kovalenko – testament to the positive multicultural nature of our country.

### **BRAVERY AWARDS**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—For emergency service workers, courage is part of the job – and sadly, sometimes so too is tragedy. There can be few better examples of courage in a heartbreaking situation than the actions of former Snowy Valleys Fire and Rescue firefighters Jason O'Neill and Robert Christian at a house fire in Batlow in 2020. When Mr O'Neill from Tumut and Mr Christian of Batlow arrived, the home was 80 per cent alight. Upon learning two children were trapped inside, they searched the burning home and in horrifying circumstances, found the three-year-old sisters in a bedroom. They carried the girls from the house but tragically, both children lost their lives. In recognition of their bravery and determination, the two firefighters have been awarded Bronze Bravery Medals by NSW Governor Margaret Beazley. This followed the presentation of Individual Commendations from NSW Fire and Rescue in May, and a Commendation for Meritorious Service to Batlow Fire and Rescue 218. While the men were unable to save the girls, their actions on that terrible day are a credit to them and their brigades. Congratulations to both firefighters and thank you for your bravery in unimaginable circumstances. Your community is proud of you.

### **KATHYRN BREDIN**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—For the aged, loneliness can be a constant and unwelcome companion, but as Wagga Wagga's Kathryn Bredin has shown, advanced years do not have to mean isolation and sadness. Mrs Bredin, who co-ordinates the Aged Care Volunteer Visitors Scheme in Wagga and surrounds, is the deserving recipient of the Centre for Volunteering's NSW Volunteer Leader of the Year Award for her work to ensure the region's older people get valuable companionship to brighten their twilight years. Mrs Bredin matches some 60 volunteers with clients to arrange visits to homes and nursing homes, providing companionship and support and in many cases, developing friendships that change the lives of both visitors and clients. Servicing six communities, including Wagga, Tumut and The Rock, the volunteers range in age from young university students to retirees in their eighties, but all share a passion for bringing a little light into the lives of the isolated and lonely. Humbled by the award, Mrs Bredin says watching friendships bloom and knowing her team has eased the burden of isolation for clients makes her work a joy. On behalf of a grateful community, congratulations and thank you to Mrs Bredin and her team of big-hearted volunteers.

### **SIENNA HANSEN**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 29th November 2024, I was pleased to meet with an outstanding member of our community, Miss Sienna Hansen. A remarkable young person, Sienna is a model of compassion and care. During her visit, Sienna's mother proudly shared that Sienna was a recipient of the Dame Marie Bashir Peace Award and the Youth Community Service Award by the Order of Australia Association. These Awards recognise social justice within the community. As a student, Sienna went above and beyond for our community. Sienna worked actively to promote the safety of women through a street lighting program and organising drives to provide essentials for women's refuges. She volunteered at the Cardinal Gilroy Nursing Home, escorting residents to Mass. As a young adult, Sienna continues to live altruistically. She is a passionate advocate for young people, raising awareness for youth mental health, leading forums at Youth4Youth, serving as a Youth Ambassador for Cumberland City Council and supporting local students as a SSLO. After completing her university studies, I have no doubt, Sienna will continue to use her skills to support our Western Sydney community. Congratulations Sienna on these outstanding achievements, and thank you for your commitment to our community.

### **FR DENAI PENOLLAR – MARY IMMACULATE PARISH, BOSSLEY PARK**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Saturday 7th December, I was pleased to join our local Western Sydney community to celebrate the Solemn Mass of Installation for new Parish Priest, Fr Denai Penollar at Mary Immaculate Parish, Bossley Park. On the day, the Mass was celebrated by Most Rev. Richard Umbers, Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, and the Installation Mass coincided with the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The Installation and Feast marked a double celebration and the biggest gathering of the year for this vibrant and historic Western Sydney parish. It was great to be joined by my Parliamentary colleague Tri Vo MP for the Church service, which was followed with a multicultural feast, performances by our local students and even a fireworks display. I also joined clergy and parishioners along the procession of The Statue of the Immaculate Conception

through the primary school grounds. My warm congratulations go out to Fr Danai on your installation, and to all our local parishioners at Mary Immaculate Bossley Park on a wonderful celebration of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. May the Blessed Mother protect our local Western Sydney community and guide us through the 2025 calendar year.

#### **TOONGABBIE LEGAL CENTRE – COERCIVE CONTROL FORUM**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 2nd November 2024, I was pleased to attend the Toongabbie Legal Centre CALD Communities Coercive Control Forum in Granville. The Toongabbie Legal Centre [TLC] Forum connected our diverse Western Sydney community with legal practitioners and domestic violence experts to better understand new coercive control laws. This Forum encouraged our community to assess the broad and dangerous scope of coercive control, whilst examining cultural expectations about domestic and family violence. Along with Sargent Emily Bonnici, Domestic Violence Team Leader of the Cumberland Police Area Command, Manus Chauhan, Assistant Director of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission and Alicia Rodriguez, Advocate from the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association of NSW, we helped navigate this offence, within the context of multicultural communities and entrenched cultural norms. Community organisations like TLC are cornerstones of our community. The affordable, culturally considerate services they offer drive representative solutions, increase confidence in legal processes and help people develop skills to be their own advocates. This Forum is another example of their dedication to supporting our Western Sydney community. Thank you to TLC Principal Solicitor Susai Benjamin OAM and Jay Iyer for your initiative and efforts to facilitate such an important forum.

#### **PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND BEYOND - PBB MEDIA**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the excellent work carried out by PBB Media and congratulate it on its decade of service to the local community. In that time the volunteer-run and not-for-profit community media project has delivered sensible and useful information to countless parents and families on matters relating to pregnancy, childbirth, and parenting. Its goal is simply to help provide the best possible maternity and healthcare information to families. Utilising a strong resource base that includes the real-life stories of parents, community members, healthcare providers, experts and the latest evidence-based science, PBB Media has taken a fresh look at long-standing traditions, as well as new and emerging ideas. Its ground-level work includes running a free weekly community 'hub' where parents can drop in for a chat, cuppa, and support. The organisation fills a vital community need for parents at a time when they need it most and I wish them well for the next 10 years.

#### **JUDY BAKER**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the incredible contribution to Bangalow village life made by Judy Baker upon her recent retirement after 20 years of service to the Bangalow Herald and other community ventures. A microbiologist by training, with a PhD on detecting toxicity in blue-green algae, Judy joined the volunteer team of the then Bangalow Heartbeat when she came to the area in 2005, beginning with a regular column called Nature. She soon added the roles of proof-reader and magazine photographer to her resume, skills she also contributed to the Bangalow Garden Club. Judy and her husband, Brian Sundstrom, also hosted the monthly magazine team meetings and handled aspects of the distribution of Heartbeat, which later became the Bangalow Herald, mailing copies to Byron Shire councillors, libraries and readers who had moved away. For many years, the couple worked as auditors for the Northern Rivers Farmers Markets, inspecting farms of more than 70 stallholders to verify that their produce was locally grown and organic where it claimed to be. Judy's warmth, willingness and generosity were well-known in the village, and will be long remembered by the Herald team. I wish her all the best in her retirement.

#### **63RD PARLIAMENTARY BOWLING CARNIVAL, CHATSWOOD BOWLING CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The 63rd Parliament Bowling Carnival was proudly hosted at Chatswood Bowling Club in January 2025. I was very proud that Chatswood Bowling Club was the Carnival host for 2025. Dating back to 1900, this Club is a much-loved local icon, prized for its dignified and impressive club house, top-class bowling green and welcoming patrons. At this carnival, current and former Members of Parliament from across Australia come together to play bowls for a few days. It was a pleasure to bowl with them all and I was naturally barracking for the best team, NSW, to win! It is interesting to note that our Parliament of NSW has a proud bowling history and even had its own bowling green until 1975. I would like to thank the Carnival Chairman and former Member of this House, the Hon Richard Amery, and Club President, Gary Henderson, for kindly hosting me.

### ACY SECURITIES LUNAR NEW YEAR LION DANCE CEREMONY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Lunar New Year is always a significant occasion for my community of Willoughby and on 23 January 2025, I was honoured to be a guest at the ACY Securities Lunar New Year Lion Dance Ceremony in Chatswood. Located in one of our great business hubs, ACY Securities is a leading broker dedicated to providing cutting-edge technology to assist traders navigate the global financial markets. In addition to serving the financial sector, ACY Securities is committed to fostering the rich cultural life of the Willoughby community and has been a major sponsor of the annual Chatswood Lunar New Year Festival for the fourth consecutive year. To celebrate each Lunar New Year, ACY also holds special festivities at its own offices with the New Year Lion Dance Ceremony. For the incoming Year of the Snake, this was a joyful occasion, and I was delighted this year to be joined by the Deputy Mayor of Willoughby, Angelo Rozos. I thank the CEO of ACY Securities, Jimmy Ye, and all of his team at ACY for this special event.

### AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS, CHATSWOOD

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was delighted to join my community of Willoughby in the recent celebrations on Australia Day. The festivities at the Chatswood Concourse celebrated our wonderful country, recognising the three great strands of our national identity: our ancient Indigenous heritage, our formative British foundation, and our vibrant immigrant character. The celebrations included an Acknowledgment to Country by the Diramu Aboriginal Dance and Didgeridoo group and performances by the Willoughby Band and Australian Institute of Performing Arts. Welcoming our newest Australians, the celebrations included a citizenship ceremony where over 100 Willoughby locals from all around the world pledged their allegiance to their new homeland. Together with the Willoughby Mayor, Tanya Taylor, I had the honour of celebrating the best country in the world and greeting our newest Australians. Reflecting the rich cultural diversity of Willoughby, the festivities in Chatswood celebrated Australia at its best, a nation comprised of citizens from every land yet bound together as one family by common values, ideals and aspirations.

### LANE COVE SWIM CLUB

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker - Congratulations to the Lane Cove Swim Club for being awarded Australian Swimming Club of the Year. This prestigious recognition is a testament to the dedication of the club's swimmers, coaches, and volunteers. Lane Cove takes great pride in its strong sporting community, and this achievement highlights the club's commitment to excellence and development in swimming. Such success inspires young athletes and strengthens our local sporting culture. Well done to everyone involved.

### AURORA LANE COVE

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker - I commend the residents of Aurora Lane Cove for their exemplary participation in the Strata Native Garden Program. Their dedication to enhancing our local environment through native flora enhances our community and promotes the proactive spirit of Lane Cove.

### NICK LEWIS

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker - I commend the incredible efforts of Lane Cove local Nick Lewis for his overnight dash across Bali to support underprivileged children. His dedication to raising funds and awareness for those in need exemplifies the strong community spirit that defines Lane Cove. Acts of generosity like this inspire others to contribute to meaningful causes and make a real difference in the lives of others. Nick's journey is a testament to the power of individual initiative in creating positive change. Well done on this remarkable achievement.

### JUNNA GUO

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement is to acknowledge the contributions Junna Guo has made to the Bathurst community through her business Junna's Clothing alterations. Junna's Clothing Alterations in a well-known business in the Bathurst community that is celebrating 20 years in business this month. Junna has made lifelong friends with her customers who use her services from for everyday needs to life's biggest moments. Whether its wedding dresses, graduation suits or your new pair of jeans Junna can mend it to fix just right. Junna has even been track side at Mount Panorama fixing race suits between races for some of the biggest racecar drivers to take on the mount. On 20th February, 2005, Junna opened her doors in Howick Street Bathurst and in 2020 made the move to a new premises located behind the Bathurst RSL. I would like to congratulate Junna on an extremely successful two decades in business, not many can say they have achieved that. The bathurst community and I thank you for your service and look forward to see where your business goes next.

**MR JOHN MASON OAM**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—I would like to congratulate Mr John Mason of Millthorpe on receiving an OAM. John Mason has demonstrated unwavering service to his community and has had a long-lasting impact on Millthorpe through his involvement in community groups and his willingness to assist those in need. John has dedicated and committed endless hours to the community being instrumental in the establishment of the Millthorpe Men's Group and Walking Group, a member of the Rural Fire Brigade, the Social Housing Working Group, the Village Committee and the Millthorpe Museum. As the 2018 Citizen of the Year, John made a significant contribution to the 'No Base' Central Tablelands Committee and for over two decades worked tirelessly to restore a train stop at Millthorpe. Following an extensive period of advocacy the train stop is now an enhancement to community capacity and opportunity to access vital and essential services. John is also involved with 'The Elves' – a group of men who help set up for community events through gardening and mowing lawns. John Mason is a reflection of a model citizen and I congratulate him on his outstanding service and his Award of an Order of Australia Medal.

**BATHURST HALL OF FAME EVENT OF THE YEAR MOUNT PANORAMA PUNISH**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—I congratulate the Mount Panorama Punish as an Event which has now been inducted into the Bathurst Hall of Fame following three previous years of recognition as the Event of the Year. This honour reflects the tireless commitment, creativity, and passion to deliver an outstanding event that very much enriches the Bathurst Region. The level of dedication and planning requires endless hours of contribution by volunteers to ensure the delivery of an outstanding event. Staged at the iconic Mt Panorama 'The Punish' is one hot lap, a foot race or running race around the Mount and attracts runners from all over Australia. Attracting a much broader audience than just motoring fans, once again the challenge of the Mount through the 'Punish' highlights the trials and contests encountered at the famous sporting circuit from a different perspective. I congratulate the group involved who undertake to organise this outstanding community event and on their inclusion and recognition in the Bathurst Hall of Fame.

**ROBERT JACKMAN OAM**

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)**—I congratulate and commend Robert Jackman OAM for receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of his exceptional contribution to competitive Scrabble. For many of us, Scrabble is a fun way to pass time with family and friends. But for competitive Scrabblers, it is a test and demonstration of their memory, patience, and commitment. Robert is the current President of the NSW Scrabble Club. He has organised 150 competitions over the years, helping to establish Scrabble as an enriching social activity in the Hornsby community and across our state. Since he started playing competitive Scrabble in the 1990s, Robert has played over 10,000 games across both local and national tournaments. His dedication to the game is inspired by his passion for learning. Robert is a role model to his community, from the youngest Scrabblers to the older generation who have been playing for decades. Through Robert's commitment to, and enthusiasm for, competitive Scrabble, he continually demonstrates that learning is a rewarding and lifelong journey for everyone. Congratulations Robert, and I hope you will continue to foster and strengthen our community through your passion of competitive Scrabble.

**HON. PAUL FLETCHER MP, MEMBER FOR BRADFIELD 2009 TO 2025**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise the contribution of the Hon. Paul Fletcher MP, the Federal Member for Bradfield from 2009 to 2025. Paul is retiring after 15 years of distinguished public service to our community. He served at the highest levels of government, as a parliamentary secretary, minister and Cabinet minister. I often remark that Paul brought Bradfield and its voices to the decision-making table of the Australian Cabinet. He has made our community proud. We are proud of Paul. In particular, Paul has a zest and passion for good public policy, stating in his first and last parliamentary speeches that he wants to be, "a voice for rational policymaking which recognises some basic realities". I share this zest, that embraces our timeless Liberal values whilst recognising the times we live in. I recognise the support given to Paul by his wonderful family, particularly Manuela, Gabriel and Hugo. Gessika and I cherish the friendship and mentorship we have with you, as do many members of our community. As you finished your valedictory speech, "Thank you. It has been great. Keep in touch". I too look forward to keeping in touch with you.

**83RD COMMEMORATION OF GEMAS DAY**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Sunday 12 January 2024, I attended the commemoration of the 83rd anniversary of the Battle of Gemas at the Suakin Barracks of the 2/17 Infantry Battalion in Pymble. The Battle of Gemas was fought by B Company of the 2/30th Infantry Battalion against the Japanese forces on the Malayan Peninsula on 14 and 15 January 1942, in the first Australian Imperial Force [AIF] attack against the Japanese. The cost of their victory was 20 dead or missing and 58 wounded, with over 1,000 Japanese casualties. A memorial

built by the 2/30 Association in Gemas honours those who fought. I recognise Kerry Gilbert and John Balfour OAM for their work in organising the commemoration. I also recognise Major Frank Woodhams of the NSW Scottish Regiment, Brigadier Neil Turner AM RFD (Retd) and John Zeller of Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch, together with members of the 2/30 Battalion and the 2/15, 2/17 and 2/19 Battalion AIF who participated in the commemoration. It was an honour to attend the Battle of Gemas 83rd Anniversary commemoration and lay a wreath on behalf of the people of the Davidson electorate, who I proudly represent in the Parliament of NSW.

#### VALE DON KENNEDY OAM

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—Don Kennedy OAM passed away peacefully aged 97. Don was a patron and Life Member at Forestville RSL sub-Branch, being one of the last surviving World War II veterans. Don's life was one of service. It began at age 16 in 1944 as a merchant seaman aboard a Norwegian oil tanker, followed by joining the US Army Transportation Corps. He was honourably discharged in 1946. Returning to Sydney, Don served 37 years with the NSW Sheriff's Office, over 50 years as a Justice of the Peace, and 21 years as a volunteer at Royal North Shore Hospital's Cardiac Rehabilitation Program. In 2020, Don's work was recognised when he received a Medal in the Order of Australia for "service to veterans, and to the community". In 2024, he received the Congressional Gold Medal, being one of only 14 awarded to non-US citizens. Don leaves a wonderful legacy to all that knew him. He is survived by a wonderful family too – his wife of 66 of years Wynne; his children Jennifer, Susan, Elizabeth, Caroline and David; and his six grandchildren Jacob, Maisie, Daniel, Nic, Hayden and Sam. Vale Don Kennedy OAM.

#### JOHN SVOBODA

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—Mr. SPEAKER: I commend John Svoboda for his unwavering dedication to public transport advocacy and his remarkable community spirit on the South Coast. John has been a passionate and tireless advocate for improved public transport services, consistently working to ensure that residents have access to safe, efficient, and reliable travel options. John's efforts have brought attention to key transport issues in our region, from accessibility to service frequency, and he has been a strong voice for those who rely on public transport every day. John's deep knowledge, commitment, and ability to engage with stakeholders has made him a respected figure in the community. Beyond his advocacy, John is known for his generosity, kindness, and willingness to assist others. John's passion for making a difference extends beyond transport, reflecting a broader dedication to improving the lives of those around him. I thank John Svoboda for his continued efforts and commend him for his outstanding contributions to our region.

#### ANNAMARIA WOOD OAM

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—I congratulate Ingleburn's Ms Annamaria Wood on being awarded an honorary Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2025 Australia Day honours. Annamaria was the chief executive officer of Disability Macarthur in Minto from 1996 to 2022, where she oversaw support services for disabled adults and children in our community. Annamaria has been a staunch advocate for people with disability since beginning her career as a community nurse more than 46 years ago. It was Annamaria's hard work over the years that helped establish Disability Macarthur as a wonderful community asset. Under Annamaria's exceptional leadership, Disability Macarthur grew considerably to an annual budget of around \$4 million. Always family-focused, Annamaria recognised the importance of lifelong disability support for the whole family. Over the years, Annamaria worked closely with local families and her enduring legacy will be one of the highest care and dedication to the local disability sector. Congratulations Annamaria on your award in recognition of your lifelong commitment to the disability sector. Our community is indebted for your dedicated service.

#### FAYE SAVAGE

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections)**—I pay my respects to long-term Ingleburn resident, Faye Savage, who recently passed away. A much-loved member of the Ingleburn Knitting Group, Faye will be greatly missed. I had the honour of meeting Faye in 2023 and presented her with a certificate from the Australian Red Cross acknowledging her service as a volunteer Trauma Teddy knitter for 15 years. Faye knitted hundreds of trauma teddies, providing comfort for countless children through times of crisis – whether fleeing a bushfire, flood or other emergency; in an ambulance or hospital; or providing a warm welcome for refugee children. Faye's contributions were highly commendable, yet she was forever humble. Not one to enjoy the spotlight, Faye worked quietly and tirelessly to generously help others. A quiet achiever, Faye found immense joy, connection, and friends among the Ingleburn Knitting Group. Faye was loving wife of Frank; mother of two children (one deceased); and

devoted to her four grandsons and eight great-grandchildren. We are grateful for Faye's valuable contributions to our community. May she rest in peace.

#### **MONTESSORI CARE PARTNERSHIP WITH MARONITECARE**

**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 the formal affiliation between Montessori Care and MaroniteCare to assist vulnerable communities. Montessori Care, a leading provider of aged care and disability, proudly announced an exclusive partnership with welfare agency MaroniteCare to provide improved health outcomes across a range of communities. The exclusive partnership will connect Montessori's expertise and skills in aged and disability care with MaroniteCare's community focused mission, creating a strong support system for the elderly and those living with a disability in the community. This collaboration will provide access to personalised care services by connecting vulnerable individuals to Montessori Care's expanding network of health care professionals, including over 100 carers and other qualified health professionals. This collaboration represents a shared vision of providing exceptional care, educational opportunities and services that cater to the diverse needs of individuals in the community focusing on disability and aged care. Both organisations are built around the transformative power of the Montessori principles and their strong faith, and their mission is to provide personalised, independent and empathetic care to families within the community. This is an incredible partnership that is essential to providing aged care and disability support.

#### **MALIK SAID**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to Malik Said from Al Hikma College for his outstanding accomplishment at the World Youth Jiu-Jitsu Championship in November of 2024. Travelling all the way to Abu Dhabi, Malik not only represented his family and school but also his country, facing 18 of the world's best young competitors in his division. Placing 16th in the world, Malik's achievement is particularly impressive as he has been training for Brazilian Jui-Jitsu for less than two years. This form of martial arts teaches more than just physical techniques but also instils discipline, resilience and the values of respect and perseverance in young people. Through Brazilian Jui-Jitsu, Malik has learnt how to overcome challenges both on and off the mat and has developed qualities such as focus and confidence which he has embodied through his journey. Malik's incredible achievements demonstrate his dedication and hard work towards his passion and is an inspiration to other young people who wish to pursue their passions and work towards their own goals. Well done Malik and thank you to your trainers and family for supporting you. I wish you every success in your future endeavours.

#### **SWIM BROTHERS MINI-DOCUMENTARY PREMIERESWIM BROTHERS MINI-DOCUMENTARY PREMIERE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On the 10th of December 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the premiere of the Swim Brothers mini documentary 'The Journey'. The event presented leaders across the local and swimming community a story of change, courage and resilience. The documentary cinematically captures a vision of generational change in the way we engage with safe swim and surf culture in Australia. It aimed to challenge the over-representation of male drowning in culturally diverse backgrounds through a powerful narrative that highlights the importance of access, education and inclusion. I thank Swim Brothers and its founders Omar and Feroz for changing and celebrating the power of swimming across our community. Through their dedication, Omar and Feroz have not only equipped young men with essential swimming and surf survival skills but have also fostered a deeper sense of belonging and cultural connection to Australia's iconic water scenes. Their message goes beyond swimming; it is about confronting barriers of fractured community history to develop healthy experiences of water and human connection. I commend Swim Brothers for their commitment to this cause and for inspiring a movement that will impact generations to come.

#### **GLEBE CHRISTMAS CONCERT**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I'd like to acknowledge the Glebe Christmas Concert, an amazing local event hosted in my community by City of Sydney Council in partnership with the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation. The City of Sydney Glebe Christmas concert is always one of the most entertaining evenings of the season. It's a fun, free event where locals can relax and see some of our favourite children's performers – plus craft, outdoor games, and talented musicians playing all the crowd favourites to wrap up the night with singing and dancing. All performers sang Christmas carols and Santa also made a special guest appearance. Kids enjoyed free craft activities, table tennis, giant Jenga and other games. We had a barbecue fundraiser by Glebe Scouts Group, and we also enjoyed Gelato Messina, Sharon Kwan Kitchen, Souvlaki Wraps, Crazy Potato and Yia Yia's Honey Balls food trucks. It's always a fantastic evening and one of the great ways the

Glebe community comes together at Christmas. Thank you to everyone who played a part in organising the Glebe Christmas Concert, we look forward to another successful event this year.

#### **LA GIARA ITALIAN RESTAURANT**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the significant contribution of La Giara restaurant, a beloved establishment in Leichhardt's Italian Forum that has sadly closed after 25 years of serving the community. Owned by Gina and Mario di Francesco since 1999, and later joined by their daughter Josephine, La Giara became a cherished destination for families. The restaurant embodied old-fashioned Italian hospitality, offering authentic Italian cuisine in a welcoming atmosphere, hosting countless celebrations in our community. La Giara's closure marks the end of an era not just for the owners but for the Leichhardt community itself, as it was the last Italian restaurant operating in the once-vibrant Italian Forum on Norton Street. I am so sad to see La Giara go. It is a stark reminder that we all must work together to make sure our local businesses can flourish. I'd like to thank Gina, Josephine, and the di Francesco family for your decades of dedication to the community and for creating a space where people felt like part of the family. Your legacy will be fondly remembered in Leichhardt.

#### **BALMAIN CHRISTMAS MARKETS**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I bring to the attention of the House the Balmain Christmas Markets held in the St. Andrews Church grounds on 7 December. These markets trace their history back to 1971 with the establishment of the Balmain Association, who hosted an annual Arts & Crafts sale just before Christmas at The Watch House. This evolved into the Balmain Village Fair and by 1976 it had outgrown its venue. In 1977 locals Eve Chapman and Louis Butler approached the church with a proposal to launch a community market in the church grounds. These markets remained a regular feature on the Balmain Christmas calendar for decades. Thanks to a strong community effort they were brought back in 2024. Despite unseasonal heavy rain on the day, many visitors supported stall holders, checked out local artists and enjoyed performances from the Nicholson Street School choir and the Jacobean singers. It was a fabulous day out. Thank you to Trista Rose, Annette Plant and everyone who has helped bring these markets back to our community. I look forward to seeing this wonderful event continue again this Christmas.

#### **CATALOGUE AND CLUBS SPORTS STORE**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—It is with mixed emotions that we acknowledge the closure of a much-loved Newcastle sports store, which has served the community for 50 years. For generations, the store has been a go-to destination for sports enthusiasts, providing quality equipment, expert advice, and fostering a sense of connection among local athletes. While we are saddened by its closure, we celebrate the store's enduring legacy and the invaluable service it has provided to the people of Newcastle. We extend our deepest gratitude to the owners, staff, and customers who have supported the store throughout the years. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours and thank them for their dedication to our community.

#### **SISTER CARMEL HANSON RSJSISTER CARMEL HANSON RSJ**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—I'd like to pay tribute to Newcastle's 2024 Local Woman of the Year, Sister Carmel Hanson RSJ, who sadly passed away last month. In addition to being a wonderful friend, Sister Carmel spent her life championing social justice initiatives for Newcastle. As a founder of and driving force behind House of Hospitality, Sister Carmel provided shelter and support to our community's most vulnerable, including women and children escaping domestic violence, asylum seekers, and women who have completed a detoxification program. Newcastle will miss her dearly. Vale Sister Carmel.

#### **BAILEY MYERS**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—I would like to offer a huge congratulations to this year's Newcastle Citizen of the Year recipient, Bailey Myers. Driven by his passion to empower indigenous communities to communicate and engage effectively in democracy, the proud Worimi man walked 4,500km from Perth to Newcastle last year, raising nearly \$16,000 dollars in donations for the Indigenous Literacy Foundation. Over the duration of his six-month solo trek, Bailey pushed a homemade cart marked with student handprints from his former high school, Callaghan College Waratah, highlighting the importance literacy and cultural connection. At only 23 years old, Bailey's determination and resilience shows true Novocastrian spirit, and I commend his outstanding support for Indigenous voices and education.

#### **HAYDEN CHARLES**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Hayden Charles of Miranda for his work with Headspace Miranda ("Headspace"). Hayden is a truly community-minded individual who was inspired to assist young people by a teacher at Endeavour Sports High School. Having volunteered with Headspace since 2015,



Hayden is an instrumental part of the Miranda team and has been involved in various projects and events that have supported young people. Over the years, Hayden has provided assistance to young people in many ways ranging from help to create resumes to mental health support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hayden was even recognised as Sutherland Shire Young Citizen of the Year in 2019, in part due to his ongoing work with Headspace. It is fitting that Hayden's service to our community was recently recognised with a Certificate of Appreciation from Headspace and through naming one of its group rooms as 'Hayden's Room'. In addition, Headspace Miranda will celebrate the youth member who has shown the most passion each year with the 'Hayden Award of Excellence' in honour of Hayden's distinguished commitment. I thank Hayden for his incredible efforts with Headspace Miranda for a decade and extend my best wishes for the future.

#### **MARK WILSON**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge Mark Wilson of Miranda on being named the AFL NSW/ACT Volunteer of the Year for 2024. The Toyota AFL NSW/ACT Volunteer Awards recognise the outstanding efforts and advocacy of individuals to Australian Football. Nominated by their peers, these individuals have excelled in enhancing the game at their respective clubs, Auskick centres, schools, and communities. Mark, an active member of the Cronulla Sharks Junior Australian Football Club, was recognised for his work as President of the Club and for his efforts as a coach of two teams. As President, Mark has led his club's ground breaking initiative in responding to concussion injuries by facilitating baseline testing for older players with the Sydney Headache and Migraine Centre at Caringbah. Furthermore, this program has since been expanded to allow for a pilot test for children in the under 12s and under 13 categories. I congratulate Mark on being the AFL NSW/ACT Volunteer of the Year Award recipient for 2024 and thank him for his advocacy for safety in grassroots sport for all players.

#### **EDWINA MCDUGALL**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the incredible Edwina McDougall of Sylvania who was recently recognised for her 55 years of service as a teacher in the public education system. By way of background, Edwina started her career as a teacher in 1970. In 1981, she joined the Australian Council for Education Leadership which aims to create a dynamic and collaborative learning community where educators share ideas and work to improve learning quality. During this time, Edwina has also travelled to Beijing in China as a part of an education delegation visiting schools and universities and even undertook a professional training program in Chinese language teaching in 2012. In 2006, Edwina retired from teaching and became a university lecturer. It is her philosophy that teachers should not rely on technology, should always have a plan B and maintain a sense of humour to maintain balance in life. Since then, Edwina has returned to teaching in a casual capacity and was recognised by the Minister for Education and Early Learning in a ceremony late last year. I thank Edwina for her tireless efforts in educating our students, helping them to develop their skills and inspiring them to achieve their goals.

#### **SERBIAN FESTIVAL 9 AUG**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On 9 August, I was delighted to attend the 36th Annual Serbian Folkloric Festival at the Bonnyrigg Sports Club, an incredible celebration of Serbian culture, heritage, and community spirit. Events like this are a testament to the rich multicultural fabric of our area. This event showcased the vibrant traditions of the Serbian community through the captivating folkloric performances from Serbian clubs nationwide. I especially enjoyed the delicious cuisine like the famous cevapi and family-friendly activities on the club grounds. The festival highlighted the strength and pride of the Serbian community which is especially prominent in South Western Sydney. It was wonderful to see so many people come together to celebrate their heritage while sharing it with the broader community. It's gatherings like these that remind us how diversity truly enriches our communities. Congratulations to the organisers, performers, and volunteers for putting on such a fantastic event.

#### **ELAINE GAFFNEY SD RAIDERS FOOTBALL CLUB - LIFE MEMBERSHIP**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I stand to recognise Elaine Gaffney. Elaine's journey with SD Raiders Football Club is one of dedication, passion, and an unwavering commitment to the club's success and community spirit. Recently honoured as the first ever life member of SD Raiders, this recognition reflects her countless contributions and support over the years. Elaine has been a steadfast presence at Ernie Smith Reserve, cheering on the Raiders through highs and lows. Her enthusiasm for the game and her deep connection with the club has made her a cherished member of the SD Raiders family. In 2020, the club celebrated her 81st birthday during a match, showcasing how deeply she is woven into the fabric of their community. Her induction as a life member at the recent club AGM is a testament to her enduring impact. Elaine's efforts have gone beyond the sidelines; she has fostered a sense of unity and pride within the club, inspiring players, staff, and supporters alike.

Her legacy will undoubtedly continue to influence the SD Raiders Football Club for years to come. Congratulations Elaine on your life membership with such a fantastic club!

#### **OXI DAY**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—OXI Day, celebrated annually on October 28, marks Greece's powerful defiance against fascism in 1940, when Prime Minister Ioannis Metaxas declared a resounding 'Oxi' or 'No' in English to Mussolini's demands, propelling Greece into World War II on the side of the Allies. The Macarthur Greek community honoured this momentous day with the inaugural Greek Festival at Campbelltown Showground. Over 300 attendees enjoyed live bouzouki performances by the internationally acclaimed Tommy Tsonis, captivating traditional Greek dances by the renowned Sydney Szimos dancers, and authentic Greek cuisine from local food stalls, including delicious souvlaki wraps. This event wasn't just a celebration of history; it was a tribute to the vibrancy and unity of our Greek-Australian community, showcasing the continuing legacy and contributions of Greek culture within our multicultural society. I'm proud to stand with the Macarthur Greek community, celebrating both the resilience of Greece's past and the strength it brings to our community today.

#### **FRANK FAILLA**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to extend my gratitude and congratulations to Frank Failla for his exceptional leadership and service President of the Canada Bay Club. Over the years, Frank has been a pillar of strength and dedication, guiding the club through many milestones and ensuring its continued success as a central hub for our community. His passion for the Canada Bay Club and his commitment to fostering a warm, inclusive environment for all members has left a proud mark in this chapter. Frank's leadership has been marked by integrity, vision, and a tireless work ethic. His contributions will continue to benefit the club for many years to come. He continues a proud family tradition as his father was also a former Board Member. In 2024, Frank championed the Inaugural President's Ball where over \$100,000 was raised for Open Support, a domestic violence charity. Under his Chairmanship, the Club also committed a great pipeline of grants for local groups and community organisations. On behalf of the entire community, I sincerely thank Frank for his service, and I wish him all the very best always.

#### **ANGELO D'ANGELO**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I sincerely congratulate Angelo D'Angelo on being elected as the new President of the Canada Bay Club. This is a significant achievement, and I have no doubt Angelo will bring his passion, dedication, and leadership to further strengthen the Canada Bay Club and its role within our community. As the new President, Angelo will continue the Club's proud tradition of providing a welcoming space for locals to gather, celebrate, and create lasting memories. His commitment to community engagement will undoubtedly see him inspire members and staff. Over the years I have come to know Angelo and I have seen firsthand his passion for the local community. I sincerely congratulate Angelo on his new role. I wish you all the best as you embark on this exciting new chapter at the Canada Bay Club.

#### **CAROL MAZZELLA**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I would like to extend my warm congratulations to Carol Mazzella on the grand opening of her artisan chocolate shop Deliciously Yours in Five Dock. Carol's passion for creating exquisite, high-quality chocolates is evident in every detail of the shop. From the carefully crafted, handmade artisan chocolates to the wonderful aroma, welcoming atmosphere and friendly service, Deliciously Yours is a very welcome addition to our local small business community. Carol first opened Deliciously Yours online, delivering her mouthwatering home-made chocolates directly. Since then, the store has grown to a beautiful storefront, where customers can experience her delicious creations in person. She studied her culinary art in Italy and is always innovating. I recently visited and fell in love with her version of the viral Dubai Chocolate Bar! Congratulations Carol on this wonderful achievement. I wish you all the best as you embark on this exciting new journey in your business - may your dream be filled with much success.

#### **IAN MCMILLAN**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)**—I congratulate Ian McMillan on his recent retirement as CEO and Club Manager of the Graphic Arts Club in Mascot. In has been a key figure in the development of the Graphic Arts Club since its establishment in 2000. Over nearly 25 years, his leadership and dedication have contributed to the club's growth and reputation as a valued community space. Although his tenure came to a close on 19 January 2025, it did so after decades of service. At a recent Christmas gathering, the Club's members acknowledged his contributions with enthusiastic applause, and while he has opted for a low-key departure, his long-standing influence on the club's operations remains evident and worthy of acknowledgement. As the Club transitions under new leadership, concluding a significant chapter in the club's history, I wish Ian all the best for a happy and well-deserved retirement.

### PARRAMATTA CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2025

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to Bhumika Mayur Mhatre, who was awarded the Parramatta Citizen of the Year at the City of Parramatta 2025 Citizen of the Year Awards! The award recognises her efforts in fostering cultural harmony and community support through the Temple of Humanity Inc. Founded in 2019, the Temple of Humanity was established by a group of individuals dedicated to creating a space where people could come together to foster a sense of unity and mutual respect. Since then the organisation has grown into a vibrant community hub, hosting events and initiatives that reflect their shared commitment to humanity and service. Bhumika works to empower domestic violence survivors to rebuild their lives by providing workshops on financial literacy, self-advocacy and job readiness to support resilience and healing while creating a more inclusive and compassionate community in Parramatta. In her own words Bhumika reflects "To me, this is about shining a light on the importance of bringing people together, regardless of their backgrounds, faiths or beliefs and to inspire others to contribute in their own way toward building a stronger, more connected community.

### 10 YEARS OF NETBALL CENTRAL

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to Netball NSW on the tenth anniversary of Netball Central, the home of the NSW Swifts and GIANTS Netball located in Sydney Olympic Park. With an average of 250,000 people of all ages using the facility annually for a range of sports and other recreational activities, Netball Central is the beating heart of the community it serves. Netball Central hosted games in the record-breaking 2015 Netball World Cup and is one of the most sought-after sport hubs in Sydney. As well as being the main training base of the Swifts, GIANTS and occasionally the Australian Diamonds, Netball Central is also home to basketball, volleyball, table tennis, wheelchair rugby, boccia, gymnastics and karate. Schools from across Sydney use it as a base from which to run their netball competitions while the courts are abuzz with activity every weeknight throughout the year thanks to Netball NSW's Premier League, Metro League, Men's Metro League, Summer Series and State Cups.

### CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY – PARRAMATTA

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Citizenship ceremonies are such joyous occasions especially for those who take the oath of citizenship on Australia Day. Amongst our migrant community, there is immense pride in the opportunity to receive citizenship on Australia Day. On 26 January Parramatta welcomed 50 new citizens to the City of Parramatta. New citizens from 16 countries around the globe from Afghanistan to the Philippines and India, Canada to China and the Cook Islands. It was wonderful to welcome these new citizens, some who have lived in Australia for decades while others are more recent arrivals to these lands. Becoming a citizen is a huge step to starting a new life. I had the pleasure of speaking with many of the new citizens who were so excited to take this wonderful, exciting step on their life's journey. We are so fortunate that these new citizens have chosen Parramatta to be their home and I look forward to running into these new citizens at the local shops, at schools and around the electorate. Congratulations to our newest Australian Citizens.

### SURFRIDER FOUNDATION NORTHERN BEACHES

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of our local Surfrider Foundation Northern Beaches branch and their role in stopping the PEP 11 licence. Surfrider Foundation is a sea roots charity dedicated to protecting our ocean, waves and beaches. For the past 7 years they have represented and advocated for our coastal communities, steering a fierce campaign to amplify awareness around the controversial offshore gas licence and put a stop to it forever. Special thanks to Rowan Hanley and Brendan Donohoe for their leadership and persistence. Thousands of community volunteer hours were harnessed during the STOP PEP 11 campaign which resulted in this rare and remarkable victory. As a result our NSW coastline is protected from the destructive impacts of fossil fuel exploration.

### BUSH TO BEACH – SOUTH NARRABEEN SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—I commend South Narrabeen Surf Life Saving Club in marking 20 years of their Bush to Beach program. Bush to Beach allows children from remote First Nations communities in far west NSW, the opportunity to experience beach activities such as snorkelling, surfing, and nippers, as well as to learn water safety skills. This longstanding partnership between the Surf Club and Bush to Beach started thanks to the support of Life Member Mr. Peter Clarke and the then and Life Member President Steve Maxwell. The program continues to this day thanks to the tireless work of Jack Cannons AM, Christopher 'Burra' McHughes, President Duncan Shieb and the Surf Club Committee. I was lucky enough to join in on this year's activities and witness firsthand the positive impact of this program on both the Surf Club community and the Bush to Beach participants. Long may this special partnership continue.

### JACK EVANS

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—It is a great privilege to recognise the lifetime achievements of structural engineer Jack Evans, whose impact on Pittwater is immeasurable. After 42 years and over 6,500 house designs, Jack has recently retired, having shaped the very fabric of our community. With 660 projects in Avalon alone since 1994, his work has transformed countless homes across Pittwater. Jack's dedication to his craft was extraordinary. Working over 60 hours a week, he poured his heart into every project. His first design, a house in Collaroy, marked the start of an exceptional career, one that has left a lasting mark on our community. Jack described his style as 'Avalonders' – Avalon meets the Hamptons with a touch of Queenslander. As Jack enters retirement, I know he will relish the time to pursue his passions, including his old car, tending to his bees, and enjoying the beautiful surroundings of Pittwater. Jack, on behalf of all those who have benefited from your work, I wish you the very best in this next chapter. Your legacy in Pittwater will never be forgotten.

### ASQUITH GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)**—Congratulations to the Asquith Girls Mock Trial team for winning the 2024 Law Society of NSW Mock Trial Competition. The competition has been running for almost 50 years, and gives students the opportunity to get practical advocacy experience. Congratulations to every member of the team – Lottie Cheal, Gemma Mann, Keely Bourke, Lizzie Toynbee, Megan Daniel, Erin Philip, Aiden Aghajani, Faith McNaught, Charlotte Toynbee, Ember Courtney and Marrissa Whiteman. And to their teacher and mentor Phillipa Somerville – well done. The team was undefeated all year. Each of those girls showed an admirable commitment to better understand Australia's legal system. In doing so, they developed their ability to communicate, collaborate, and demonstrate our core Australian values. Our future is dependent on their sharp, young minds, and their passion to uphold justice, equality, and fairness for all Australians. I once again congratulate the Asquith Girls Mock Trial team on their victory and their commitment to such a high standard of excellence and leadership. Their endeavour and success is a positive reflection of the broader Hornsby community, and our community is exceptionally proud of them.

### GARRY REARDON AFSM

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I acknowledge and congratulate Garry Reardon of Junction Hill on being awarded the prestigious Australian Fire Service Medal [AFSM] for his exceptional service to Fire and Rescue NSW [FRNSW] and the community over the past 33 years. Garry has been a steadfast leader at Grafton Fire Station, mentoring and developing firefighters to ensure a rapid and professional emergency response 24/7. His expertise extends beyond fire response to include hazardous materials management and, since 2022, remote pilot aircraft systems (drones), enhancing emergency operations across the region. Garry has led his teams through some of the most significant disasters to impact the community, including the Clarence River floods of 2009, 2011, and 2013, Tropical Cyclone Debbie, the 2019-2020 bushfires, and the devastating 2022 Lismore floods. His leadership in deploying drone mapping flights helped cane growers safely harvest crops and remove flood debris, demonstrating innovation and commitment beyond the frontline. Highly respected by his peers and the broader emergency services network, Garry Reardon's dedication to public safety and resilience has made a lasting impact. I commend him on this well-deserved recognition and thank him for his service.

### SCOTT CAMPBELL AFSM

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I congratulate Scott Campbell of Lawrence on receiving the prestigious Australian Fire Service Medal [AFSM] for his distinguished service to the NSW Rural Fire Service [NSW RFS] and his community. Since joining the Lawrence Rural Fire Brigade in 2007, Scott has been a dedicated and highly respected leader. He has held numerous roles, including captain, training officer, and community engagement officer, demonstrating unwavering commitment to both firefighting operations and community safety. His dedication to training has been instrumental in developing firefighters across the Clarence Valley and beyond. Scott's leadership extends to youth engagement, where he has championed the Secondary Schools Cadet Program, inspiring young people to join their local brigades. As a strike team leader and divisional commander, he has served on multiple deployments across NSW, Victoria, Tasmania, and Queensland, providing critical support in some of Australia's most challenging fire conditions, including the devastating 2019-2020 bushfire season. Beyond his operational duties, Scott has been a pioneer in firefighter well-being through the 'Your Health Matters' initiative and currently serves as President of the NSW Rural Fire Service Association. His dedication, leadership, and service are truly commendable, and I congratulate him on this well-earned honour.

### CITIZEN OF THE YEAR – NEIL BURNETT

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to Neil Burnett, Richmond Valley's Citizen of the Year. For over four decades, Neil has made continuous and impactful contributions to the Rappville

community. Neil has been an active member of the Rappville RFS since joining in 1980. Over the time, Neil has been elected as Equipment Officer, Deputy Captain, Senior Deputy Captain and Captain, showcasing his continual commitment. In addition to inspecting and maintaining the firefighting equipment, Neil voluntarily maintains the brigade station grounds. In 2011, Neil received an RFS 30 years long service medal and has now served over 40 years. Since 1991, Neil has served on the Rappville Hall Committee. For three years, he oversaw the upkeep of the original hall and its grounds and still volunteers his time in a shared caretaking position. Until recently, Neil was caretaker of the Rappville Tennis Courts. Neil's community dedication also extends to disaster recovery, acting as a member of the Rappville Advisory Group. Neil's efforts have been poignant in Rappville's recovery and rebuilding after the 2019 bushfires and 2022 floods, and he was presented with a Premiers Award after his remarkable efforts during the 19/20 fire season. Thank you and congratulations Neil.

#### **61ST ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION SERVICE - HMAS VOYAGER**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It was a great honour to attend the 61st Anniversary Commemoration Service for HMAS Voyager over the weekend—a solemn occasion to remember the 82 brave souls who lost their lives in one of the Royal Australian Navy's worst peacetime disasters. I had the privilege of meeting the son and daughter of Chief Petty Officer Jonathan Rogers GC DSM, whose bravery and sacrifice alongside his 81 shipmates will never be forgotten. Their presence was a powerful reminder of the personal impact this tragedy has had on so many families and the enduring legacy of those who served. A heartfelt thank you to the Central Coast Sub Section of the Naval Association of Australia for organising a brilliant commemoration service. The re-dedication of the memorial at Rogers Park, unveiled just last year, ensures that the memory of Chief Petty Officer Rogers and the HMAS Voyager will live on for generations to come. The collision between HMAS Melbourne and HMAS Voyager in 1964 was a moment that shook the nation. Today, we continue to honour the courage, service, and sacrifice of those who lost their lives. Lest we forget.

#### **MOSMAN ANNUAL ART WALK**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to acknowledge the return of the Mosman Art Walk for its fifth year, which is a vibrant celebration of local talent that runs for three weeks from February to March. This annual event showcases the remarkable creativity within our community. I thank members of the Mosman High School Art Committee and Mosman Council for their efforts in organising this event. This year, over 40 distinguished artists will have their works displayed in the windows of retailers across Mosman Village. The Art Walk invites visitors to explore a rich array of paintings, prints, sculptures, and ceramics, all available for purchase; a fantastic initiative supporting our local creatives. Not only does the event support businesses and artists, but it also raises crucial funds for Mosman High School's art program, with 30% of the proceeds benefiting the school and 70% going directly to the artists. I am excited to witness the incredible talent on display for the fifth consecutive year. I thank all those involved in the running of the event, and I look forward to seeing it flourish once again this year, and into the future.

#### **MOSMAN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to congratulate Susie Agoston, who was named the 2025 Mosman Citizen of the Year at this year's Mosman Council Australia Day Citizenship ceremony. The Australia Day Citizenship ceremony will always hold a special place in my heart. It is fantastic to watch as our newest citizens celebrate being an Australian for the first time on this national day. Unfortunately, Susie was unable to attend the ceremony, but thankfully her son was there to receive her accolade in her absence. As a long time Mosman resident, Susie has been recognised for her contributions across the arts, sports, education, and philanthropy. Through her continuous efforts in curating exhibitions for Indigenous artists, leading bush regenerations, and coaching local netball teams, Susie has had such a tangible and positive impact on the Mosman community. She makes such a difference in the lives of locals by fostering cultural awareness, supporting Indigenous communities, and showing environmental stewardship. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Susie for being awarded the 2025 Mosman Citizen of the Year. We are so fortunate to have someone like Susie in our community who has spearheaded so many fantastic initiatives. Congratulations Susie on this outstanding achievement.

#### **ST ALOYSIUS MODEL SOLAR CHALLENGE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to acknowledge the efforts of two St Aloysius College students who have excelled in their extra-curricular interests. In December last year, two year 10 students from Aloysius were invited to compete in the Australian International Model Solar Challenge; a fantastic opportunity for both boys. Luca and Timothy attended the event at the University of New South Wales after having finished fifth at the annual Sunsprint Solar Car Competition in October last year. The Australian International Model Solar Challenge hosts the best solar cars from high school teams from around Australia and across the world. Luca and Timothy qualified for the final rounds, where unfortunately their car proved a little too fast in direct sunlight, and

took flight on the last turn of the 100m track, crashing into the team from Taiwan. Although the boys did not place, I want to congratulate them both on their commendable efforts and outstanding achievement in qualifying for such a prestigious competition. I look forward to seeing what they achieve in future.

### **18 FOOTERS CLUB – 90TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to congratulate the Australian 18 Footers League on their 90th Anniversary. In 1935, the NSW 18 Footers League, now known as the Australian 18 Footers League, staged its first race on Sydney Harbour on Sunday, 3 February. Over the course of the weekend the club hosted the Skiff Sydney Harbour Marathon and the traditional Queen of Harbour. All past, living Club Championship-winning skippers were invited to join the celebration. For a small, historic club located on the harbour foreshore in Double Bay, they should be incredibly proud of their 90-year history. Congratulations on this momentous occasion.

### **100 YEARS OF CORRIMAL FIRE BRIGADE'S SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—Fire and Rescue NSW recently celebrated the milestone of the Corrimal Fire Brigade's centenary of service to the local community. Corrimal Fire Brigade started on January 1st, 1925, with a compliment of a Captain and five firefighters and was housed in a shed at the back of a Draper's Shop in the main street of Corrimal from 1925-1929. They moved into their new station (the current location on the Princes Highway) in 1929. A heartfelt thank you to our firefighters for their tireless dedication and bravery in keeping us safe. Whether responding to emergencies, battling fires, or offering support during crises, they show extraordinary courage every day. I would also like to recognise and thank the families behind the firefighters—those who stand by them as they rush off to calls the moment the bells ring. Their unwavering support and sacrifice over the years have been vital, and we are so grateful for their strength and dedication. Congratulations to the 269 Corrimal Crew and Captain Paul Dorin.

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