New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

Fifty-Eighth Parliament
First Session

Tuesday 18 March 2025

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday 18 March 2025

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome all members back. We have a large program today, so members will come to order. The member for Oatley will come to order. I acknowledge the guests who have joined us here today. Our galleries are full. I extend a very warm welcome to His Excellency Dr Fahad Altaffag, the ambassador for the United Arab Emirates to Australia. I also welcome to the Chamber Dr George Marano, a guest of the member for Fairfield. I welcome volunteers and clients of MWP Community Care, guests of the member for Wakehurst. I acknowledge Amelia Carolan, Sandra Magann, Darrell Tiemens, Anne Weekes, Ethan Towns, Kerry and Merre Watts, Roxanne Whitton and Carmel Schwager, guests of the member for Barwon. I also acknowledge Stuart Spencer, Ann Spencer and Nicola Spencer, guests of the member for Orange. I welcome guests of the member for Murray: Margie Groat, the member's sister; Lee Groat; and Tim and Helen Curtis.

I acknowledge Robert Dwyer, whom I met this morning, a guest of the member for Cronulla and the presumptive member-elect for Port Macquarie. I look forward to welcoming the member to the Chamber. I acknowledge Lake Macquarie residents from Coal Point and members from Cardiff Probus Club, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I welcome teachers and students from Bethany College from the Kogarah electorate and from St Joseph's Catholic College, Aberdeen, from the Upper Hunter electorate. Finally, I acknowledge attendees of the Introduction to the Legislative Assembly public sector seminar, who are in the upper gallery to watch question time. I met them earlier this morning. I hope their day has been productive so far and that they are enjoying themselves. I also acknowledge the newly nuptialled member for Drummoyne. I congratulate her and her husband, Andrew, on their marriage.

Members

ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF PORT MACQUARIE

Return of Writ

The SPEAKER: I inform the House that, in accordance with section 76 of the Electoral Act 2017, I issued a writ on 21 February 2025 for the election of a member to serve in place of Leslie Gladys Williams, resigned, with the following particulars:

Nomination day	Thursday 27 February 2025
Polling day	Saturday 15 March 2025
Return of Writ	Tuesday 22 April 2025

MINISTRY

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

(1) On 17 March 2025, Her Excellency the Governor accepted the resignations of the following Ministers:

- (a) The Hon. John Graham, MLC, as Minister for Roads, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism;
- (b) The Hon. Stephen Kamper, MP, as Minister for Small Business;
- (c) The Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC, as Minister for the North Coast; and
- (d) The Hon. Jennifer Kathleen Aitchison, MP, as Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

(2) On 17 March 2025, Her Excellency the Governor made the following appointments:

- (a) The Hon. Stephen Kamper, MP, as Minister for Jobs and Tourism;
- (b) The Hon. Jennifer Kathleen Aitchison, MP, as Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport; and
- (c) The Hon. Janelle Anne Saffin, MP, as a member of the Executive Council and as Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast.

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House of the following changes in the representation of Legislative Council Ministers in the Assembly:

(a) The Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport to represent the Special Minister of State, Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy; and

(b) The Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast to represent the Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, and Minister for Youth.

DEPUTY GOVERNMENT WHIP

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I inform the House of the appointment this day of Ms Liesl Tesch as Deputy Government Whip. I also inform the House that in her absence between 18 and 28 March 2025, Mr Edmond Atalla will be Acting Deputy Government Whip.

The SPEAKER: I congratulate all Ministers on their new appointments, particularly the member for Lismore.

Bills

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

HOUSING AMENDMENT BILL 2025

CREATIVE STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT BILL 2025

SOUND NSW ADVISORY BOARD BILL 2025

MENTAL HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

CRIMES (ADMINISTRATION OF SENTENCES) AMENDMENT BILL 2024

INSPECTOR OF CUSTODIAL SERVICES AMENDMENT BILL 2024

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT BILL 2025

CRIMES AMENDMENT (INCITING RACIAL HATRED) BILL 2025

CRIMES AMENDMENT (PLACES OF WORSHIP) BILL 2025

CRIMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS HATRED) BILL 2025

MARINE SAFETY AMENDMENT BILL 2024

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (CIVIL) BILL 2024

STRATA SCHEMES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

JUSTICE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2024

Assent

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

Question Time

DURAL CARAVAN INCIDENT

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:11): My question is directed to the Premier. On what date was the Premier first briefed that the Dural caravan incident could be a fake terrorism plot?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:11): As the deputy commissioner made clear in budget estimates, 21 February was the date that the NSW Police Force ruled out that the incident was what it would term a "legitimate terrorist threat". However, as we have said many times in the media over the past few weeks, we were briefed early on that the incident could be something other than terrorism, as it is classically defined, and that no line of inquiry was being ruled out by the New South Wales police. That was early on after I had been briefed. But it was not that organised crime's potential or alleged involvement in the caravan plot that was the subject of the inquiry, as was the potential for it to be terrorism in the community, as were other lines of investigation and inquiry. That is, generally speaking, how police investigations begin. They begin with a broad

range of suspects and not closing off any lines of inquiry, and they end with police laying charges and making a determination about what they believed had happened in these circumstances.

However, I make it clear that despite the incident not being terrorism as it is defined, it did instil terror into members of our community. It was designed to stoke fear among large segments of the New South Wales population, and the threat was real. Police will allege in court that individuals tried to firebomb and destroy property in the eastern suburbs of Sydney owned by members of the Jewish community. A childcare centre adjacent to a synagogue in Maroubra was burned to the ground as part of the alleged plot. There were several other attempts in New South Wales by those named and charged by police to instil fear and intimidation into the community. That needed to be met with a comprehensive police response. In addition to the operations of Kissinger—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —the New South Wales Government has pursued hate speech laws in this State.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order.

Mr Mark Speakman: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 127, relevance. The question was not about hate speech laws. I asked the Premier for a date. The Premier has not given a date. I have asked for a date. When?

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The Premier is being relevant to the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Government introduced hate speech laws directly to confront antisemitism in our community. Setting aside the operations of Kissinger and those who are alleged to be part of this organised crime gang, there has inarguably been a rise of antisemitic racist attacks in New South Wales over the summer, and that needed to be met with comprehensive hate speech laws. We have not heard from the Opposition whether it will join crossbenchers in the upper House to repeal the laws.

Mr Mark Speakman: No, we will not.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The first time you were asked, you would not answer. I swear I have seen the Leader of the Opposition slide under a closed door. Neither he nor anyone else has any backbone when it comes to these issues. We will not repeal the laws; they are too important for New South Wales.

TROPICAL CYCLONE ALFRED RECOVERY

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (12:14): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on the New South Wales Government's response to Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:15): I thank the member for his question. The New South Wales Government, and I suspect the entire Parliament, owes a huge debt of gratitude to the volunteers, the emergency service workers and those who spent time away from their family and friends to keep the public safe during Alfred's descent along the eastern seaboard. It was a massive operation organised and controlled by the SES but a huge demonstration of what volunteers are able to do when a fellow Australian is in need of help. We had 3,500 SES volunteers positioned in the New South Wales Northern Rivers ready to help the community in the event of a comprehensive disaster.

The organisation was humble enough to learn lessons from 2022, get extra resources in and deploy in a short space of time. I say to every single individual—some from as far away as Eurobodalla, Bega, Wagga, Albury and Kogarah—who spent time away from their family and friends to help complete strangers in the Northern Rivers that it was an amazing example of community service and public spiritedness. It was fantastic to see, and the SES got a big shot of confidence as a result of their deployment due to the impending threat of cyclone Alfred. I got it right; I was calling it Albert at one point, but it is definitely Alfred.

The Government was able to rely on a huge amount of communication, public messaging, as well as information from many elected representatives in the Northern Rivers, including our colleagues the Minister for the North Coast and the member for Ballina. I was able to spend time with the member for Tweed, who worked around the clock to keep his community safe throughout the entire period. He worked hard on behalf of his local constituents and spoke to us directly, not with a megaphone in the media, when different parts of his community needed immediate help, and we were able to deploy those resources. We genuinely thank him for that. It was a fantastic example of leadership.

I also acknowledge the Federal member for Richmond and the Federal member for Page, Justine Elliot and Kevin Hogan, who in the midst of an election campaign put down their spears and focused on the local community.

That is what every taxpayer across New South Wales, but particularly in the Northern Rivers, would expect. The local mayors are the first line of public inquiry and they are often the first to be criticised, but they were also the first on the front line for all of their communities. The mayors of Tweed, Lismore and Ballina, and Steve in Lismore, were absolutely fantastic. [*Extension of time*]

Mr Jihad Dib: Richmond Valley.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Richmond Valley as well. I got them all.

Ms Tamara Smith: Byron.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Byron as well. The member for Clarence was helpful throughout as well.

The SPEAKER: Order! The member for Clarence should not get too excited or he will be called to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The SES reported 7,717 incidents over that four-day period, including 90 flood rescues. Even when the cyclone made landfall and was downgraded into a pressure system rather than a tropical cyclone, the damage was real and the threat to lives and property was real as well. The SES crews deployed flood rescue resources—rescue management did an amazing job. The Minister for Emergency Services, the responsible Minister, also did an amazing job. At one point, having deployed those crews to learn the art of rescuing in floodwater, they dunked him in the Georges River and rescued him to test their skills.

The response was comprehensive, and it was obviously supported by the local community. But there are two hugely important points. The first is that we now need to focus on the recovery. There have been tens of thousands of responses from the local community asking for emergency grants to make themselves whole and to get them back on their feet as soon as possible. The second point—and this is crucial, considering that New South Wales and Australian communities will face more natural disasters, not less—is that we had warning of Alfred. We were able to pre-position SES and emergency crews in the Northern Rivers as the storm approached. That may not always be the case, but I assure the people of New South Wales that the SES is ready in the event of a natural disaster in this State.

DURAL CARAVAN INCIDENT

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:20): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. On what date was the Minister first briefed that the Dural caravan incident could be a fake terrorism plot?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:20): I answered this question time and time again in budget estimates.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. It is very early in the Minister's answer.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I have said, and I will say it again here, that I will not reveal the contents of confidential police briefings. I also add that all lines of inquiry were being investigated by the Joint Counter Terrorism Team, which comprises the New South Wales police, the Australian Federal Police, the NSW Crime Commission and ASIO. These decisions were not taken lightly. For the benefit of the House, I advise that there is an ongoing investigation, and that investigation will continue—as it should. I make it clear that I have answered the question.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: What is really important is that over summer New South Wales experienced abhorrent scenes of antisemitism on our streets. The New South Wales police set up Operation Shelter and Strike Force Pearl. I advise the House of the great work the police have done.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume her seat. The member for Dubbo rises on a point of order.

Mr Dugald Saunders: With all due respect, it is about relevance. The date is the specific thing that was asked for. The Minister is nowhere near that.

The SPEAKER: The Minister is being directly relevant to the question. Members can ask a question, but they cannot prescribe how it is answered.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Members opposite do not understand that all lines of inquiry were being investigated. That speaks for itself. Strike Force Pearl was established in December 2024 by officers attached to the Counter Terrorism and Special Tactics Command, with support provided by the Central Metropolitan Region. The police put so many resources into those operations because of the fear that people in our community were

feeling. That fear is real because cars were being firebombed, a childcare centre was burnt to the ground, and racist slurs were painted across buildings and cars.

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

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: That is why the New South Wales police took this incident so seriously. I ask members to join me in thanking the New South Wales police for the work they have done and to stop bagging them.

BETTER AND FAIRER SCHOOLS AGREEMENT

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:23): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the House on the historic agreement to deliver full and fair funding for all New South Wales schools and outline what it will mean for New South Wales students?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:24): I thank the member for Auburn for her question. The member is a tireless advocate for public schools in her electorate, always knocking down my door for more for her schools—which is the right of every member of Parliament. I commend her for that. I am pleased to inform the House that teacher vacancies in Auburn are down 50 per cent since Labor came to government. We are making a difference in schools in her community and across New South Wales. I have spoken in this place many times about the negotiation with the Commonwealth Government on the Better and Fairer Schools Agreement, and I am pleased to tell members that this agreement has finally been reached. We held out until the very last moment to get the best deal for New South Wales public school students.

For decades, since David Gonski first handed down his historic report about needs-based funding for school students across Australia, thousands of people across the country have been fighting for students to receive full and fair funding. I am very proud that, in conjunction with the Albanese Labor Government, this Government has signed up to ensure that, once and for all, New South Wales public school students will finally get full and fair funding over the next 10 years. This will mean an extra $4.8 billion from the Commonwealth, which is not money to be sneezed at. We are most proud of the fact that this money will go to real, evidence-based ways of making a difference in children's lives. The money will go straight to things that the Government has been doing since its election, but now we have the ability to do them across one of the biggest public school systems in the world: the New South Wales public education system.

Doing anything across 2,216 schools, and growing, is a mammoth effort. The funding will ensure things like basic phonics and numeracy checks in the early years of primary school. That matters because, as members know, NAPLAN starts in year 3, when often it is too late if a student is already behind the eight ball and behind age and stage in literacy and numeracy. Those key skills open the doors of opportunity for every child. [*Extension of time*]

Numeracy checks in year 1 are already being trialled in 150 schools, starting next term, term two, in a couple of weeks. We are already doing it in phonics. To its credit, the previous Government—and I do not give it any other credit in education—started phonics checks in year 1, which this Government is continuing to roll out. The year 1 numeracy checks allow teachers in the classroom to test where students are up to at that critical time. Year 1 is pretty much the first time that students can be assessed with meaning, because they are able to follow instructions at that very young age. It is pretty hard to test in kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers are magic—as the member for Blue Mountains, a former kindergarten teacher, knows—but year 1 is the prime time to start testing. The Government will be able to roll out wellbeing support to all schools in New South Wales. We know mental health is a significant challenge for all students across the country.

We will also be able to roll out evidence-based, explicit teaching, which we know works to improve outcomes for students in our schools. At the end of the day, we talk in big numbers—$4.8 billion here or there—but this funding is about making sure that, no matter where in New South Wales a student goes to school, they start from the same starting line and their opportunities are not limited by how much funding they get from the Government and that, whatever mum and dad do and regardless of the suburb they grow up in or where they go to school, they are only limited by the effort they put in and by the opportunities they seize that are given to them by their amazing public school teachers. The Government can be very proud of delivering that, with the Commonwealth Government.

OVERSEAS MIGRATION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (12:29): My question is directed to the Premier. What is his Government's position in respect of overseas migration into New South Wales? What outcomes has he advanced on this position to the Commonwealth?

The SPEAKER: The Premier has indicated that the question will be taken on notice.

HOUSING DELIVERY AUTHORITY

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:29): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister please update the House on community reaction to the Housing Delivery Authority?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:30): I thank the member for Campbelltown for his question. He understands the need for more well-located housing for young families and key workers in his area, and he is keen to see the Macarthur Gardens North Landcom development come out of the ground in the near future and create more housing just up the street from his office. The Government has made significant reforms to the New South Wales planning system to speed up the delivery of more homes and more affordable homes. We have set about the task of making the New South Wales planning system more certain, more consistent and more efficient.

Recently, the newly formed Housing Delivery Authority met and considered more expressions of interest. As a result, yesterday I declared a further 15 major residential projects that, between them, could deliver more than 7,000 new homes to be State significant developments. If approved, these 15 projects will deliver houses in metropolitan Sydney and in regional New South Wales. For those keeping track, that is a total of 44 projects that have been declared State significant, with the potential to deliver more than 22,000 homes. That is a great indication of the confidence that is coming back into the New South Wales system as a result of our planning reforms. Proponents will now have nine months to submit their detailed plans after a period of assessment, which will include public exhibition, contrary to some misinformation that has been trying to get out there. If those plans are approved, proponents will have 12 months to start construction.

There is a built-in "use it or lose it" clause. If the builds do not substantially commence within two years, they lose their approval. Our planning reforms are seeing more applications lodged and will see more homes built. That is what we are dedicated to. In fact, recent Australian Bureau of Statistics data for the first six months of the housing accord period shows confidence improving in New South Wales, with a 37 per cent increase in the number of development applications lodged compared to the year before. February data from the Planning Portal indicates that 70,000 homes are currently under assessment. That adds to the more than 72,000 homes that are under construction right now, and the more than 14,000 homes that have been approved but on which construction is yet to start.

There are some misconceptions, as the member for Campbelltown has said, about the Housing Delivery Authority. Let me be clear: The Housing Delivery Authority does not assess and approve housing proposals. It does not do the full development applications, nor does it grant an approval of a project. It considers expressions of interest for those new homes, and they are then subject to the industry standard assessment against a range of criteria. Projects must deliver a high yield of new homes. They must be well located. They should include affordable housing. [*Extension of time*]

The process is totally transparent. It maintains all the requirements for a stringent merit-based selection. It does not replace councils. It is an opt-in process. People can still lodge the exact same development proposal with a council if they wish. Those are some key facts that were missed by the Lord Mayor of Sydney in her lord mayoral minute. I am glad to see that the Labor councillors on the City of Sydney were the sole voice of reason, arguing for the need to provide more homes for their generation. In fact, the lord mayor called the Housing Delivery Authority "a step backwards" when it is anything but a step backwards. It is about getting the system in New South Wales moving so we do not keep losing young people to other States as we have been doing time and again. The editorial in *The Sydney Morning Herald* yesterday contained a very interesting quote that I am sure members would have read, but I will refresh their memories. It reads:

> … it is a bit rich to whinge about new approaches when those new approaches have only materialised because councils have comprehensively failed to approve enough new housing.

Tackling the housing challenge should be a multi-partisan effort. I have been heartened by recent expressions of support by members of this place for more planning system reform. Members talk a big game about the need to tackle the housing challenge, but that rhetoric should be matched by their votes, like the one on the bill the Government introduced last sitting week that will improve certainty, increase consistency and improve the efficiency of the planning system.

I look forward to all members of this place supporting the sensible reforms that have been introduced and continuing to support sensible reforms in the interests of everyone in New South Wales. I look forward to members also encouraging their fellow party members at other levels of government to do exactly the same and back sensible planning reform, because that is what is needed in New South Wales. The Housing Delivery Authority,

along with our other initiatives such as transport oriented development and low- and mid-rise housing reforms, will deliver more housing for New South Wales.

KNIFE CRIME

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:35): My question is directed to the Premier. Police have confiscated 90 weapons under his new wanding laws. Given the high level of illegal knife possession that has been revealed, is it not time his Government adopted the Opposition's position to allow the police to wand anytime, anywhere?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:36): No. I believe we have got the balance right. I think that Jack's law as it was introduced in Queensland was the right model for New South Wales. We acknowledge that it is an intrusion to stop individual citizens in a random way in the street and demand that they be searched. To do that broadly across every jurisdiction, every street and every community all the time would be, in my estimation, a bridge too far. I believe that we need to put safeguards in place. We have not done it blindly. We have looked at the jurisdiction to the north of us that has Jack's law in place and introduced its definition of what those parameters will be. We are not the only jurisdiction to do this. Western Australia either has or is about to introduce the same legislation with the same parameters.

I think it is reasonable for the Government to say that it is tackling knife crime. We are doing it not just with Jack's law but also by doubling penalties for people who are caught with a knife and by banning the sale of knives to young people. We are making a concerted effort, in the judicial system and in police operations, to drive down knife crime in New South Wales. Contrast that with the actions of the previous Government that did absolutely nothing. They expect us to believe in Parliament today that they had some tough on crime proposal when nothing was done on these matters. Jack's law was in place in Queensland for years before the New South Wales Government adopted it. It was talked about by the advocates of that change to law whilst the current Leader of the Opposition was the previous Attorney General, and he did absolutely nothing about it.

It was the same in relation to section 22C, the same in relation to domestic violence laws, the same in relation to changes to bail and the same in relation to knife laws. Members will forgive us for not listening to a lecture from the Opposition about how to confront crime in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Tamworth to order for the first time. Members will come to order.

ANTISEMITISM LEGISLATION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:38): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General please update the House on the importance of the Minns Labor Government's legislation to outlaw inciting hated towards another person or group based on race?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:38): I thank the member for Coogee for the question. I congratulate her and thank her on behalf of our local communities for the leadership that she has shown in supporting the Jewish community that was genuinely fearful over the past few months. Last sitting fortnight this Government took decisive and considered action against hatred, against antisemitism and against division in our community. The Parliament passed three pieces of legislation introduced by our Government that sought to ensure that people in our State can worship at their churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and other places of worship free from intimidation and harassment.

The legislation imposed higher penalties for the disgraceful conduct of displaying Nazi symbols on or near synagogues, Jewish schools or the Sydney Jewish Museum, and for marking graffiti on any place of worship. It introduced an aggravating factor on sentences that will apply for offences partly or wholly motivated by hate and will protect our community from public and intentional racist hate speech. Let me be very clear: The Minns Government does not condone any of that behaviour. We do not support it. We do not apologise for taking steps to combat hatred and for keeping our communities safe.

There has been a lot of discussion about the so-called "caravan incident" and I want people to be truthful about it, both inside and outside of the Parliament. There are people in both Houses who were opposed to those laws—fair play. They spoke vehemently against them and are now fighting a rearguard action, using the caravan as a supposed gotcha moment to suggest that the laws represent a secret agenda and that the Government's intentions are not bone fide. They have no right to make those statements. They are insulting, untrue and lacking in objectivity. I was the Minister who introduced those pieces of legislation. I gave the second reading speeches and shepherded them through this place. I can tell everyone listening in this most public of places that I would not have changed one iota of either the legislation or its timing had there been no caravan, because it is completely and utterly irrelevant.

Anyone who wants to challenge me on that has no evidence to support it. It is objectively untrue. Those people are wilfully ignoring the reality that Sydney experienced a summer of absolutely deplorable antisemitic behaviour. In my own electorate, a childcare centre was firebombed and defaced. I spoke to the mothers of children at Mount Sinai College, and they were worrying about whether it was safe for their children to go to school. I spoke to people in the Jewish community and one of the Jewish leaders said to me, "We think the next escalation might be one of our rabbis or leaders getting a bullet." That was from the heart. That was the truth that they spoke to me about that. [*Extension of time*]

On 11 February the Leader of the Opposition stood in this place and said:

> The New South Wales Opposition joins in condemning the escalating spate of abhorrent antisemitic attacks in Sydney, New South Wales and Australia.
>
> …
>
> Members of our Jewish community should not have to wake up each day and wonder whether they will hear of another antisemitic attack in our suburbs. … All of us must do all we reasonably can to stop those who seek to intimidate and menace the Jewish community.

Hear, hear! They are nice words, but he now has some decisions to make to go along with them. He hid for six days without saying whether he would support or repeal that bill. Only now, when the Premier eyeballed him, did he come clean and say that he will not support the repeal.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. I do not run a one-person dictatorship like what happens on the other side. I run a democratic joint party.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: When Coalition MPs in the other place get into bed with members of The Greens and One Nation, there is a very strong likelihood that a committee will vote to repeal these laws, and then the member for Cronulla will have to show some gumption. He is no leader.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General will resume his seat. The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

Mr Mark Speakman: It is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. I was not asking the Attorney General about Cameron Murphy or Stephen Lawrence.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. He knows that is not a point of order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: All I will say is this—

The SPEAKER: Order! The Attorney General's time has expired.

Mr Michael Daley: People who play politics with community safety are grubs.

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

MINISTERIAL CAR USE

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:44): My question is directed to the Premier. Did anyone in the Premier's Department review the response to the request under the Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] regarding ministerial drivers' logs, which disclosed former Ministers' home addresses, before it was uploaded publicly?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:44): Is the insinuation that the information was released for political ends?

Mr Adam Crouch: No, we just asked whether you knew.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am not aware of the process other than to say, quite genuinely, that the information was released completely inadvertently. Of course we would never release personal or private information through either a GIPAA request or under Standing Order 52—SO 52.

Ms Robyn Preston: But it happened.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I understand that, but I think the insinuation you are trying to make is that someone in my office reviewed it and allowed it to go out.

Mr Paul Scully: And that they took off the black notes.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: And took off the black notes. That is ridiculous.

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Premier will resume his seat. This is an extremely serious matter. The Premier is answering the question, and I am sure that members have an interest in this issue. The member for Hawkesbury rises on a point of order.

Ms Robyn Preston: My point of order is on specific relevance under Standing Order 129. Did anyone in the Premier's office review the GIPAA response? That is the question.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will be directly relevant to the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I said that I do not know. I cannot answer that other than to say that the Government would never have released information—

Ms Robyn Preston: You don't know?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Just to put this in context, 10,000 pages were released in response to the GIPAA request. The member expects someone in my office to go through every individual page, but there are not enough hours in the day to do that.

Mr Adam Crouch: You've got all the resources of the Government.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Opposition members ask questions but hate the answers we give. I cannot give a guarantee. I am unaware of the circumstances of the GIPAA release, other than to say we would never under any circumstances have released personal or private information about a private citizen or a member of Parliament. The Premier's Department is under enormous pressure to release a growing list of information demanded by the other place—you would be aware of this, Mr Speaker, because you put a flag in the sand in relation to that matter—as well as GIPAA requests.

I promise the House that in all circumstances, the Government acts to ensure that private information is redacted. But the volume of information that has been requested by the Legislative Council and the small amount of time that has been designated put that at risk. The truth of the matter is that our colleagues in the other place have repeatedly warned the Legislative Council that the vast amounts of information and the time frames they provide mean that there is a risk associated with the information that is being released. I ask members in the other place to reflect on that when they vote for SO 52s.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:47): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is ensuring that we continue to invest in frontline services?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:48): I thank the member for Blacktown, whose electorate has a very busy hospital. He helps the hospital with a lot of fundraising initiatives and has a very close relationship with Brad Ceely, the general manager of Blacktown hospital, as do others in that part of the world. There may be some nurses in the public gallery, as there often have been over the past few months. In the past week the Queensland Government announced its pay offer for frontline workers, including for nurses, of 3 per cent, 2.5 per cent and 2.5 per cent. That is 2.5 per cent lower than what the New South Wales Government has offered. We understand that after 12 years of wage suppression, caused by a wages cap that was in place for over a decade, the gap will start to get bigger between our frontline workers and those in other States that did not have a cap. We understand that. But it is very interesting that the alternative government in New South Wales is now committed to bringing back the wages cap.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Hawkesbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the first time. I call the member for Wahroonga to order for the first time. I call the member for Wollongong to order for the first time. I call the member for Coffs Harbour to order for the second time. Members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr RYAN PARK: I know the Opposition is committed because the shadow Treasurer—the alternative Treasurer of New South Wales—said during estimates recently that it was a good decision for healthcare workers, including nurses, to get a zero per cent wage increase during the worst pandemic the country has ever faced.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

Mr RYAN PARK: And that that was a good decision.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The Minister is not being relevant to the question. The question was directed to what the Minns Government is doing; the Minister seems to be fixated on some hypothetical matter about what the Opposition's policy may be.

The SPEAKER: I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister has been relevant, and he is now extrapolating further.

Mr Stephen Bali: I seek further information.

The SPEAKER: An additional two minutes is granted.

Mr RYAN PARK: Had those opposite been elected to office at the last election, not only would the cap have been in place but also 1,100 nurses would not have been employed. They would have been gone, out of the system. The rollout of ratios would no longer be a part of the system; 500 paramedics dedicated for the bush would no longer be a part of the system.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: GPs getting hunted down for payroll tax, with no incentive for bulk-billing, is no longer a part of the system. Let us be very clear: It is not only the wages cap; it is also a range of ideological viewpoints that cause the Opposition's distaste for frontline workers. Every single opportunity it has, it tries to crush them. As opposed to that, since being elected we have recruited over 7,000 nurses, commenced the rollout of ratios in our hospitals, recruited more than 125 paramedics as part of the rollout of 500 across the bush and reduced surgical wait times for people seeking important elective surgery. We will continue to focus on the men and women who deliver health services in this community. The last thing New South Wales needs right now is a wages cap and a government focused on doing everything it can to take this State and frontline healthcare workers backwards.

TIMBER INDUSTRY AND GREAT KOALA NATIONAL PARK

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (12:53): My question is directed to the Minister for the North Coast. Thirty-eight timber workers on the North Coast have been stood down indefinitely because of decisions of the Minister's Government relating to a national park. Has the Minister asked the Treasurer to support impacted small businesses and its workers?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (12:54): I thank the member for Clarence for the question. It is an issue that concerns us both, being members representing the North Coast. I am now the Minister for the North Coast. I was contacted last night by the representative, James Jooste. I said I would meet with him today. He is in touch with the Minister responsible, Minister Moriarty. I have also spoken to Andrew Hurford from Hurford Timbers, because they feed into Kyogle dry mill. That mill is very familiar to me, as is the whole timber industry, because it is an important industry in New South Wales and on the North Coast. Pentarch announced it commenced consultation to stand down employers at its operation near Grafton, which is one known to me. The decision impacts 38 workers. Pentarch said that the decision was due to shortfalls in supply and that in the year to date Forestry Corporation of NSW has been able to deliver 63 per cent of contracted log volume.

Forestry Corporation said it has been unable to meet the contracted log volumes for a number of years due to the 2019-20 bushfires, the wet weather flooding and other factors. Those issues are well known to the member for Clarence and me, with all the things we have been through. Lower supply is not a result of any decision regarding the national park or the to-be-announced Great Koala National Park. Pentarch has the largest wood supply agreement on the North Coast with Forestry Corporation of NSW. The wood supply agreement requires them to supply 116 cubic metres of high-quality saw logs and covers four mills. The decision to stand down 38 workers and the closure of the timber mill are very disappointing. We all agree on that, and Pentarch Forestry plays a significant role. The workforce is important to regional communities. In answer to the member for Clarence, James told me last night or in the email this morning that they are in conversation with the Treasury.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Were you?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: And me. I am meeting them.

The SPEAKER: The member for Dubbo will come to order. The Minister will ignore interjections.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: The New South Wales Government is in ongoing discussions with Pentarch. I was told that they are happy with the response from Minister Moriarty. I will meet them sometime today or tomorrow, and I will keep the member for Clarence updated and included.

TROPICAL CYCLONE ALFRED RECOVERY

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:57): My question is addressed to the Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast. Will the Minister update the House on the recovery efforts and the resilience of New South Wales communities following Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (12:57): I thank the member for her question. There are a lot of members in this House who take a big interest in disasters. I thank the member for Cootamundra, who reached out to me when Cyclone Alfred was coming. We were able to share a few laughs, because in 2022 we bonded, we fought and we came together. We had big issues to deal with. It was a very nice phone call early on. I say a big thank you to our communities for their excellent work in preparing for the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Alfred, which became an ex-tropical cyclone. The preparation and response readiness were fantastic. We heard from the Premier earlier that SES was big enough to take on board that things did not go right in 2022, and it stepped up to the plate. It was so well prepared.

Stuart Fisher, who led part of the response, arrived from somewhere in Sydney and, as SES commander on the ground, he was fantastic, as were so many others. I cannot cover all their names today, but what I would say is that the community's resolve, which results in resilience of the community—"resilience" is not my favourite word—was something wonderful. They were ready. They were prepared. They responded to SES warnings and even the early evacuation orders. It was really difficult. Some people were thinking, "Why early?", and it was because we had a cyclone coming.

Northern Rivers people are used to floods and know how to respond. We know when to go and we know what to do, but the approaching cyclone was the unknown. We had to get people out early because, if we did not, their evacuation routes would have been cut off early, and powerlines and trees would have been down. People were ready early. The Deputy Premier and I visited the Lismore South Public School, and the Deputy Premier was quite amazed at the resilience of those kids. They had been through the 2022 floods—one of the captains was talking to the Deputy Premier about how they had been rescued from a roof—and they were absolutely wonderful. [*Extension of time*]

I need an hour to say all of this, but I am sure I will get many opportunities. People commented on the Premier and Minister Dib being on the ground. It was not that they came—a lot of people did, such as all the members from the Northern Rivers, the North Coast and the tablelands. Everybody was active and involved, but they stayed. They did not know what was coming, either. They shared in not only the preparation but also the community's anxiety and apprehension about what might happen, and that was really wonderful. The Premier and Minister Dib visited local shops and saw people in good spirits while preparing. That is hard for small business people because they have to pack everything up, which could mean a week-long downtime. I get that and understand it. It is challenging, particularly in the Northern Rivers where they are just starting to pick themselves up. The Premier and Minister Dib saw it all.

The Reconstruction Authority was also active because we know that recovery starts before impact and that the better the preparation is, the better the recovery will be. They were on the ground. Superintendent Scott Tanner was appointed as a recovery coordinator before the formal recovery took place. He is fantastic. He has been out and about with everyone, meeting and connecting—including with the canegrowers, who were happy this time because of the work that had been done on drains. People who live in my electorate know how important rural and city drains are. In 2022, they became really important. The canegrowers are very happy with the work that has been done and the current response. Superintendent Tanner is in touch with them. I send a big shout-out to everyone involved.

BUS SERVICES

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (13:02): My question is directed to the Premier. Last-minute cancelled bus services, long queues, overcrowding and buses going past full—this is the frustrating daily reality for thousands of northern beaches commuters right now and today is no different. What is the New South Wales Government doing to get more buses on the road and more drivers behind the wheel to fix this mess and provide a bus service we can depend on?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (13:03): That is a very fair question from the member. I know the member for Wakehurst has been an advocate for bus services for a long time. There has been a series of cancelled buses, delayed progress as well as real frustration from northern beaches communities, in particular

with the B-Line, 270, 271, 179, 181X and 154X. In some cases, those communities are literally feeling the squeeze because they are being crammed into ever-smaller spaces as a result of a shortage of buses. I think it is important to ventilate some of the reasons for that. The previous Government had not renewed the bus fleet since 2011. The New South Wales Bus Industry Taskforce uncovered that there had been no replacement for high-capacity buses like the articulated bendy buses since they were procured in 2011. As of October 2024, 83 Volvo articulated buses had to be pulled from the roads for immediate rectification as an emergency measure because they were dangerous and unsafe. This is a warning to all governments that they need to invest in their products. They need to make sure that basic maintenance is done. That is exactly what we are doing.

Mr Michael Regan: What are you investing?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I thank the member for Wakehurst for another Dixer. He is useful and helpful. That is a great question. In answer to his question, I inform the House that on Wednesday the New South Wales Government announced 50 new diesel-powered Euro 6 articulated buses. The pressure will begin to ease as the Government repairs the broken buses that were taken off the roads at the end of last year. We will have the new buses plus the formerly broken buses. Given the Federal election will be soon, I have to say this was brought to us all by the former Minister for Transport, "Offshore" Andrew Constance. Let us not forget that the ferries built in China and Indonesia, buses built in Malaysia, trains built in Korea and China, metros from India and light rail vehicles from France and Spain were all delivered late and over budget—and all at the expense of jobs right here in New South Wales. I know that the people of Gilmore have a choice to make. Don't let Andrew Constance do for Australia what he did to New South Wales.

REGIONAL TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (13:06): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to build better regional communities by investing in roads and regional transport?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (13:06): I appreciate the question asked by the member for Cessnock, who is a fierce advocate for investment in roads and regional transport. As a result of his advocacy and that of members right across this Parliament, particularly on the Government side of the House, we have seen record investment of $3 billion worth of projects in the Hunter. There are also projects in Coffs Harbour, South Coast and Wagga Wagga—the list goes on. There is a little place on the coast that some members may have heard of called Port Macquarie. We have invested a bucketload of money there. We have invested $60 million in Ocean Drive, $20 million in the Oxley Highway-Pacific Highway intersection, and $3.4 million in the Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: This Government also has invested $7 million in the Maria River Road upgrade.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: There was a little event on the weekend while ministers were on the North Coast helping everyone. There were two people who were candidates running—one of them is present in the gallery. Congratulations. I will see them later when they start asking me for stuff and how to go about it because Government members are the party of the bush. If members look at this, it is exactly the same promise as ours for Wrights Road.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: The Minister is using props.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I just want to make the point that it is exactly the same commitment to do something that the former Government had not done for 12 years. The Coalition ran three candidates for Port Macquarie. The first was a Liberal, then the first Nationals became an Independent, and the third was a National. The Coalition's pitch was to fix Wrights Road. This Government is working on it. Transport for NSW is looking for solutions as well as for Houston Mitchell Drive. This Government is doing all the projects that were too hard for members opposite. How did the Nats go on the weekend? A lot of Opposition members have congratulated me, and I congratulated the Liberals for their result in Port Macquarie. They did a great job. It was excellent because the Leader of The Nationals had two chances to come up with a winning candidate, with zero

results. It has gone to the Liberals. The people of the New South Wales regions do not trust the Nats to deliver one thing. They gave them that chance. We had the former member for Port Macquarie running for the hills—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume her seat. I will hear the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

Mr Alister Henskens: It is under Standing Order 74. The Minister is quarrelling across the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Minister will tone down her answer.

Mr Clayton Barr: I seek further information.

The SPEAKER: An additional two minutes is granted. The Minister will be mindful of my previous ruling.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Mr Speaker, I will be a bit softer on the Leader of The Nationals—

The SPEAKER: I am not worried about him; I am worried about me.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: He has got enough people with their knives in his back. *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported:

> A senior Nationals MP, who wished to remain anonymous to speak freely, said the Coalition partners should not have faced off against each other, unnecessarily stretching resources before a federal poll and allowing bad blood to be aired … "The Nats have blown this seat …"

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister will not be surprised to see that the Manger of Opposition Business rises on a point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: I refer to Standing Order 129. The material has nothing to do with the question.

The SPEAKER: I tend to agree, but the Minister was directly relevant earlier in her answer.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Mr Speaker, it is directly relevant because the reality is that they both went to the election with the same pitch, and they failed because no-one trusts them on roads.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order: The Minister has highlighted the Coalition's investment in the Ocean Drive upgrade. What about her investment in Wrights Road?

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Coffs Harbour to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249 (1) until the end of question time.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Was it the member for Coffs Harbour? I am not sure. Was the member for Coffs Harbour the one wanting to speak freely or was it Tooley? It is very hard to know on that side. It is always easy to get excited early on and peak too soon. The member for Dubbo was "very excited" about early polling showing an 18 per cent swing. He was "stoked by the result". I am not sure that lasted.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: I refer again to Standing Order 74. Mr Speaker, the Minister is flouting your ruling and quarrelling across the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: Members are being very helpful, but I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister has the call.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I have to share one more quote from *The Daily Telegraph*, which states:

> There's a lot of anger towards the leadership of the party because if they didn't stuff up the endorsement of the first candidate, we likely would have won.

They are coming after you, Robert.

Documents

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONDUCT COMMISSION

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission Act 2016, I announce receipt of the report of the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission entitled *Review of NSW Police Force*

body-worn video policy and practice, dated March 2025, received on 5 March 2025. I order that the report be printed.

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN

Reports

The SPEAKER: In accordance with the Electoral Act 2017, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the Children's Guardian investigation into child protection declaration made by an elected member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, dated March 2025, received on 17 March 2025. I order that the report be printed.

MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW TRIBUNAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with the Mental Health Act 2007, I announce receipt of the report of the Mental Health Review Tribunal for the year ended 30 June 2024, received out of session on 24 February 2025 and authorised to be printed.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 6/57 of the Committee on Children and Young People, entitled *Child protection and social services system*, dated December 2022, received out of session on 24 February 2025 and authorised to be printed.

Documents

NET ZERO COMMISSION

Government Response

The CLERK: In accordance with the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Act 2023, I announce receipt of the Government response to the annual report of the Net Zero Commission for the year ended 30 June 2024, received out of session on 26 February 2025 and authorised to be printed.

Committees

COMMITTEE ON THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/58 of the Committee on the Independent Commission Against Corruption, entitled *Review of the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Annual Reports of the ICAC and the Inspector of the ICAC*, dated August 2024, received out of session on 3 March 2025 and authorised to be printed.

Documents

OFFICE OF TRANSPORT SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with the Passenger Transport Act 1990, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of Transport Safety Investigations entitled *Coach fire, 5711MO, Kiama – 28 November 2024*, dated November 2024, received out of session on 11 March 2025 and authorised to be printed.

INDEPENDENT PRICING AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

Reports

The CLERK: In accordance with the Sydney Water Act 1994, I announce receipt of the report of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal entitled *Sydney Water compliance report 2023-24 – Report to the Minister*, dated February 2025, received out of session on 12 March 2025 and authorised to be printed.

Committees

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

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1 of the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales entitled *Arts and music education and training in New South Wales*, dated March 2025, received out of session on 12 March 2025 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (PROHIBITING NO GROUNDS EVICTIONS) BILL 2024

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/58 of the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024 entitled *Residential Tenancies Amendment (Prohibiting No Grounds Evictions) Bill 2024*, dated March 2025, received out of session on 17 March 2025 and authorised to be printed.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ROAD SAFETY

Government Response

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 1/58 of the Joint Standing Committee on Road Safety entitled *Electric and hybrid vehicle batteries*, dated March 2025, received out of session on 17 March 2025 and authorised to be printed.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Reports

The CLERK: I announce receipt of report No. 5/58 of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics entitled *Implications of orders for the production of papers pertaining to the office of Speaker*, dated 17 March 2025, received out of session that day and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 26/58*, dated 18 March 2025. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL

Inquiry

Ms TAMARA SMITH: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General has resolved to conduct its seventeenth general meeting with the Valuer General, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Inquiry

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Legislative Assembly Committee on Transport and Infrastructure has resolved to conduct an inquiry into infrastructure for electric and alternative energy source vehicles in New South Wales, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

The CLERK: I announce that the following electronic petition signed by fewer than 500 persons has been lodged for presentation:

Inmate Phone Calls

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to provide free phone calls for inmates, received from **Ms Jenny Leong**.

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

Bathurst Regional Council Cemeteries

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to intervene in Bathurst Regional Council's decision to pause burials in six historical cemeteries, received from **Mr Paul Toole**.

Illawarra and South Coast Drug Court

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to expand the Drug Court of NSW to the Illawarra and South Coast regions, received from **Ms Anna Watson**.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

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

The Hon. Paul Scully—Bella Vista and Kellyville Transport Oriented Development—lodged 11 February 2025 (Mr Ray Williams)

The Hon. Rose Jackson—Homelessness—lodged 11 February 2025 (Ms Jenny Leong)

The Hon. Prue Car—Castle Hill School—lodged 11 February 2025 (Mr Mark Hodges)

The Hon. Prue Car—Music and Drama Syllabuses—lodged 11 February 2025 (Mr Kevin Anderson)

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—Lithgow Locomotive Workshop—lodged 11 February (Ms Trish Doyle)

Business of the House

BUSINESS LAPSED

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 2626 to 2683 have lapsed, and general business notice of motion (for bills) Plastic Reduction and Circular Economy Amendment (Further Chemicals and Products) Bill 2024 will lapse today.

Notices

PRESENTATION

[*During the giving of the notices of motions*]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): Order! The member for Kiama will come to order. His behaviour is outrageous and may prevent a member from giving their notice of motion.

Later,

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

Bills

CLAIM FARMING PRACTICES PROHIBITION BILL 2025

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

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

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Claim Farming Practices Prohibition Bill 2025. The bill will create a new Act to prohibit the practice of claim farming in relation to certain personal injury claims under the Civil Liability Act 2002, as well as personal injury claims arising from intentional torts. Specifically, the bill will prohibit a person from both contacting another person to encourage them to make a relevant claim with the

expectation of receiving a fee or other benefit and from buying or selling a relevant claim referral. The bill will also amend the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014 to impose additional consequences on legal practitioners who engage in the prohibited conduct.

Claim farming refers to the practice of procuring information about a potential claimant and persuading them to make a civil claim. Claim farming can involve a range of problematic conduct, including obtaining a person's personal information without their consent; making unsolicited contact with the person to pressure or harass them to make a claim; presenting as a claims management service, a survivor advocate organisation or similar; selling claims to a lawyer or other claim farming organisation, sometimes without the claimant's knowledge; and making promises about potential legal entitlements which may not be accurate or in the claimant's best interests.

Anecdotally, stakeholders report that claim farmers are paying third parties $50 to $100 for each potential new claimant the third party identifies and selling claims to law practices for between $800 and $10,000. Lawyers may then pass on these costs to claimants through disbursement fees upon the settlement of a claim, which may not be properly understood by claimants. These practices are unethical and can have negative and traumatic impacts on people when they are most vulnerable, particularly where the person targeted is a victim-survivor of historical child abuse. By prohibiting claim farming in personal injury claims under the Civil Liability Act and personal injury claims arising from intentional torts, this bill will protect the community from this kind of exploitative conduct.

The Government has undertaken extensive consultation during the development of the bill. In May 2024 an issues paper to canvass views on potential reform options was distributed to targeted stakeholders. Stakeholder submissions in response to the paper informed the development of a draft bill. In January 2025 a draft bill and accompanying background paper were released for public consultation, including via the Have Your Say website, and 32 stakeholder submissions were received. The non-confidential submissions are published on the Department of Communities and Justice website. I would like to thank all of the stakeholders and members of the community who engaged with the consultation process and provided feedback on the draft bill. The New South Wales Government is confident that the bill as introduced strikes the right balance between protecting members of the community from unethical, predatory and exploitative claim farming practices, while preserving legitimate pathways and practices that facilitate access to justice.

I now turn to the scope of the bill. The bill will apply to certain personal injury claims to which the Civil Liability Act applies, as well as personal injury claims arising from intentional torts. This includes most common law personal injury claims, including those related to child abuse, assault, medical negligence, and public and product liability. Clause 4 (a) of the bill states that the prohibitions apply in relation to claims for "personal injury damages" as that term is defined by section 11 of the Civil Liability Act. That term relates to death or injury and includes prenatal injury, impairment of a person's physical or mental condition, and disease.

The bill also applies to intentional torts—that is, to intentional acts done with intent to cause injury or death, or that are sexual assault or other sexual misconduct. While these claims are generally excluded from the Civil Liability Act by section 3B (1) (a) of that Act, this bill does not adopt that exclusion. Clause 4 (a) does, however, exclude certain personal injury claims from the scope of the bill. These are specified in section 3B (1) (b) to (h) of the Civil Liability Act. These include claims for dust diseases, motor accidents, workers compensation, public transport accidents, victims of crime, sporting injuries compensation and compensation under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. Many of these other claim areas have separate and distinct legislative frameworks, responding to the features of the types of claims they cover.

I now turn to the key features of the bill. The bill will make it an offence to contact a potential claimant to solicit them to make a claim, where the person making contact expects to receive a fee or benefit. Clause 5 (1) and (2) of the bill make it an offence for any person to contact another person to solicit them to make a claim or to refer them to another person to provide a service in relation to a claim if the person making the contact receives, or agrees or expects to receive, consideration because of the contact, or asks for someone else to receive, or agrees to someone else receiving, consideration because of the contact.

The intention of these contact offences is to prohibit the uninvited contacting of a potential claimant in circumstances where the person making the contact has a financial motivation to do so. The contact offences are not intended to prohibit selfless, good faith communication with the victim of a personal injury—for example, by a friend—that makes the victim aware of their potential claim or suggests they explore their legal rights. Under clause 5 (3) it will also be an offence for a person to arrange for someone else to commit the contact offences—for instance, where an employer directs an employee to contact a potential claimant. The contact offences carry a maximum penalty of 500 penalty units, currently equivalent to $55,000, which is very significant.

Clause 5 (4) of the bill contains several key exemptions to the contact offences. These will safeguard access to justice and preserve the proper functioning of the legal services sector. The contact offences will not apply, first, if contact is by way of notification of representative proceedings—that is, a "class action"—second, if a law practice contacts a potential claimant for whom they have previously acted, subject to a reasonable belief that the potential claimant will not object to the contact and, third, if a law practice contacts a potential claimant because they have been asked to do so by a representative of a community legal service or an industrial organisation, and the law practice has confirmed that the representative reasonably believes the potential claimant will not object to the contact.

The term "law practice" includes an "associate" of a law practice as both of those terms are defined in the Legal Profession Uniform Law (NSW). This is a broad term that includes individual legal practitioners, principals, employees and law firms themselves. Clause 5 (5) expressly confirms that the accused—that is, the person making or arranging the contact—bears an evidential burden in relation to the exemptions. The accused will need to point to some evidence that suggests a reasonable possibility that an exemption applies. However, once raised, the prosecution will still bear the legal burden of proving, beyond reasonable doubt, that the exemption does not apply. The bill will also make it an offence to buy or sell a claim referral. Clause 6 (1) and (2) will make it an offence for any person to receive consideration for referring a claim to another person—that is, to sell a claim referral—or to provide consideration to another person for the referral of a claim—that is, to buy a claim referral—or to agree to buy or sell a claim referral, or to arrange for a third party to buy or sell a claim referral.

"Consideration" is defined to mean a fee or benefit. A "claim referral" will include a referral arising from services already provided to a claimant—that is, the sale of work done to date for a claimant, such as the preparation of an evidentiary witness statement—and the disclosure of a claimant's personal details—for example, selling the claimant's contact details so the buyer can contact the claimant to offer their services. The "referral offences" will carry a maximum penalty of 500 penalty units, currently the equivalent of $55,000. Clause 6 (3) of the bill confirms that the prohibitions against buying a claim referral apply regardless of whether it is the buyer or someone else who ultimately provides a service in relation to the claim.

There are important exemptions to the referral offences under clause 6 (4) of the bill. Firstly, the referral offences will not apply where a law practice is acting for a claimant and, as part of that continued legal representation, it refers the claimant to a third party to provide another service in relation to the claim—for example, an expert medico-legal report. Secondly, the referral offences will not apply in relation to the sale of all, or part, of a law practice to a purchasing law practice if the claimant approves the referral and the sale value is not more than the claimant's unbilled legal costs at the time of the sale.

Law practices will be permitted to recover remuneration for work done to date but will be prohibited from profiting from the sale itself beyond the value of the legal work completed. The sale of a "part" of a law practice is undefined, and the intention is that this will include the transfer of any single, or any number of, claims referrals to a purchasing law practice. The evidential burden will be placed on the accused—the alleged claim farmer—to point to some evidence to suggest there is a reasonable possibility that an exemption applies. Once raised, the prosecution will still bear the legal burden of proving, beyond reasonable doubt, that the exemption does not apply. There will also be a general exemption to all of the offences in relation to the general public advertising of legal services. Clause 7 of the bill is included for the avoidance of doubt to confirm that publicly advertising a law practice's services will not be prohibited contact, and payment for advertising services will not be a prohibited claim farm referral, even where the advertising results in a claim.

I turn now to the operational provisions of the bill. Clause 8 provides that the limitation period for all offences in the bill is two years after the alleged commission of the offence or, importantly, two years after the date on which evidence of the alleged offence first came to the attention of a police officer. These are longer than the default summary offence limitation periods of six months under section 179 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. A longer limitation period is required for the following reasons: first, the offending conduct may be difficult to detect until the end of a claim—for example, a disbursement charged for the payment of a claim referral may be identified during costs assessment; second, personal injury claims commonly take up to one to two years to be resolved; and, third, there may often be a delay between the claim farming conduct to identify and onboard a claimant and the commencement of the claim.

Clause 9 of the bill provides that the offences may be dealt with summarily before the Local Court. This is in line with the maximum penalties imposed for the offences and is consistent with the approach taken in Queensland and the approach taken in a bill currently before the South Australian Parliament. Clause 10 requires a statutory review to be commenced as soon as practicable after the period of two years from commencement. The time period for the statutory review is appropriate, noting in particular the matters that I have just referred to that justify the longer limitation period and the time that it takes for criminal charges to proceed through the criminal justice system to finalisation.

Part 2 of schedule 1 contains transitional provisions. The new offences will only apply to conduct that occurs after the Act commences. However, the referral offences under clause 6 of the bill will not be contravened where payment for a claim referral occurs after the Act commences if the referral itself occurred before commencement and a written agreement for that referral was entered into before commencement. Importantly, lawyers will face additional consequences for engaging in claim farming.

Schedule 2 to the bill will amend the Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014. The bill will insert new section 61A into part 6 of that Act, which relates to particular kinds of legal costs. Under the new section, law practices that are convicted of a claim farming offence will not be entitled to charge or recover legal costs in relation to the claim to which the conviction relates, and will be required to immediately refund any legal costs already received in relation to the claim. This will ensure that the fine imposed on a law practice for a conviction will not simply be absorbed as a "cost of doing business".

The bill will also amend section 165B of that Act to specify that conduct by a lawyer that contravenes the new claim farming Act may be unsatisfactory professional conduct or professional misconduct. This means that the NSW Legal Services Commissioner may investigate alleged misconduct by lawyers in connection with these offences, regardless of whether charges have been laid by the NSW Police Force or a conviction has been recorded. This bill, if enacted, will protect members of the community from predatory and exploitative claim farming practices while also preserving legitimate pathways and practices that facilitate access to justice. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (STANDALONE REGULATOR) BILL 2025

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 February 2025.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (14:48): I rise on behalf of the Opposition in debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025. I wish to indicate at the outset that the Liberals and The Nationals are in support of the bill. These are important reforms that stem from the review by the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC, into the State's work health and safety regulator, SafeWork NSW. In October 2022 then Premier Dom Perrottet commissioned retired Supreme Court judge McDougall to inquire into SafeWork NSW's performance and effectiveness and make recommendations for improvement. Mr McDougall is an eminent Australian. The Opposition acknowledges the diligence and deep thought he took in coming to his findings in this inquiry. The McDougall report and the 46 recommendations it makes lay out the significant challenges SafeWork NSW faces and how, indeed, to seek to tackle them. We on this side of the Chamber support that process. Indeed, we instituted that process. We all want a regulator that is fit for purpose, reflecting best practice and delivering on work health and safety outcomes for all workers in all workplaces across our great State.

The Opposition will certainly not be standing in the way of SafeWork NSW's reorganisation to become a standalone regulator nor its separation from the Department of Customer Service. That is what Mr McDougall recommended, and the Opposition supports it. There is, I think, widespread acceptance that the previous model was, as Mr McDougall noted, undesirable and that SafeWork needed to be independent of the department and its competing priorities and whims. I note that the bill supports a separation process that is already ongoing. Since 1 December 2024 SafeWork has operated as a standalone regulator within the Department of Customer Service. I note the Minister's confirmation that on 1 July 2025 it will be established as a public service executive agency through an administrative arrangements order.

I will briefly provide some comment on the bill's main provisions. Of most consequence, schedule 1 [5] provides that the new SafeWork Commissioner is the regulator under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, replacing the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service. The Opposition welcomes this change, which is necessary if SafeWork NSW is to be a standalone body and is to be empowered with the powers of the regulator. We await an announcement from the Minister on the appointment of the new SafeWork Commissioner. The bill also establishes and lays out the governance arrangements for the new SafeWork Advisory Council. The council will provide advice that the SafeWork Commissioner must have regard to on the strategic direction and priorities of SafeWork NSW. It will also provide advice on any matter referred to it by the commissioner or the Minister. The advisory council will consist of the commissioner and between eight and 12 other members, including three nominated by employer bodies; three nominated by Unions NSW; at least one expert in work health and safety; and at least one representative of a work health and safety support, advocacy or awareness group, or a person who has lived experience of workplace injury or death.

We welcome those arrangements and in particular support the inclusion, beyond the existing tripartite arrangements, of a voice for those with lived experiences. Indeed, Mr McDougall recommended it, and we are

pleased to see that realised. I acknowledge all those who have experienced injury in the workplace and the families and loved ones of those who have tragically lost their lives at work also. Their experience is valuable and meaningful, and we welcome it. Through the advisory council process, it will inform making the work health and safety of New South Wales the best it can be. We also support the need for a statutory review provision. That is a significant new governance structure for the regulator, and in three years time there will be the opportunity to review whether that is functioning as intended.

Mr McDougall made 46 recommendations going to how SafeWork NSW can better perform its functions as a regulator, including its compliance and enforcement functions, its education function, and its governance and culture. We on this side of the Chamber hope that the new governance arrangements will create a SafeWork NSW that is best placed to fully address the review's findings. I note that a standalone SafeWork has the support of unions and, indeed, key business groups across New South Wales. I thank them all for their engagement. There is a want to get this right and working for all. Safety at work matters immensely. All workers have the right to go to work and to return home safely. We all share that determination. I acknowledge the many dedicated staff at SafeWork NSW. They are capable and dedicated. They are there doing this critical work because they understand the real importance and difference that work health and safety makes to the lives and careers of workers across our State. I thank the Minister and her staff for their engagement of the Opposition in respect of this bill. The Opposition wants to see these new governance arrangements work and succeed. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:53): I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025. The bill is a step forward in ensuring that workplace safety in New South Wales remains a top priority. Every worker in this State has the fundamental right to a safe working environment and to return home to their loved ones at the end of each day. That principle is at the core of the Minns Government's commitment to strengthening work health and safety protections and ensuring robust enforcement of those laws. The Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025 seeks to amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 [WHS Act] by establishing the SafeWork Commissioner as the primary regulator under the WHS Act. It also creates the SafeWork Advisory Council, a vital body designed to provide necessary oversight and stakeholder representation, promoting greater transparency and accountability within the regulator. Additionally, the bill mandates a review of the amendments, three years after implementation, to ensure the model is operating effectively.

The bill is a direct response to the findings of the Independent Review of SafeWork NSW conducted by the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC, in 2023. The McDougall review highlighted serious structural and governance shortcomings that hindered SafeWork NSW's ability to function as an effective, independent regulator. The review made clear that public confidence in SafeWork NSW had been eroded, with stakeholders expressing concerns about its accessibility, decision-making processes and overall effectiveness. By establishing SafeWork NSW as a standalone public service executive agency, the bill seeks to address those concerns and to restore faith in our State's workplace safety enforcement body.

Every worker in this State deserves a strong work health and safety regulator that acts as a cop on the beat to ensure employers fulfill their legal obligations. Workers must have confidence that, if an employer is failing in its duty and putting lives at risk, the regulator will intervene decisively. Likewise, unions must trust that when they raise legitimate safety concerns, they will be taken seriously and acted upon. Employers also need a regulator that not only enforces compliance but also serves as a source of guidance, training and support to help them maintain safe workplaces.

The bill is about ensuring SafeWork NSW has the structural independence and leadership necessary to fulfill those critical functions effectively. When this Government was elected nearly two years ago, it inherited a workplace regulator that had been buried within a mega-agency, with its powers diluted and its purpose weakened. SafeWork NSW had been relegated to an afterthought and treated as mere red tape rather than a crucial safeguard for worker safety. When in opposition, Labor repeatedly raised concerns about the erosion of SafeWork NSW's functions and pushed the former Government to commission an independent review. Though reluctant, it eventually did so, and the McDougall review validated the concerns Labor had been raising for years. This bill is the direct result of that independent review and represents Labor's commitment to reversing the damage done by previous governments.

Since coming into office, the Minns Government has taken a series of bold and decisive steps to strengthen workplace safety. We increased penalties for serious WHS breaches, introduced 88 new penalty notices and significantly raised fines for regulatory breaches. We closed loopholes that allowed businesses to insure against WHS fines, which has ensured that safety violations are treated with the gravity they deserve. We introduced industrial manslaughter laws, making New South Wales the jurisdiction with the highest penalties for corporations

in Australia. We also led the push for a national ban on engineered stone, securing unanimous support from work health and safety Ministers across the country.

The bill's most critical structural reform is the establishment of the SafeWork Commissioner as the regulator. From 1 July 2025, SafeWork NSW will operate as a separate executive agency, independent from the Department of Customer Service bureaucracy. That will give the regulator the necessary autonomy to enforce WHS laws effectively, free from political or bureaucratic interference. Importantly, the bill establishes a SafeWork Advisory Council, ensuring key stakeholders, including unions, employer groups, work health and safety experts and representatives of injured workers and their families, have a direct voice in shaping SafeWork NSW's strategic direction. The advisory council will monitor emerging WHS risks, provide advice on regulatory priorities and help guide policy decisions. The inclusion of workers with lived experience of workplace injury or fatality in the advisory council is particularly significant. Their insights will be invaluable in shaping policies that prevent further tragedies and improve protections for all workers.

In addition, the bill mandates a statutory review of these reforms three years after implementation, ensuring ongoing oversight and accountability. This will allow Parliament to assess whether the new governance model is delivering the intended improvements and to make any necessary refinements based on real-world outcomes. The New South Wales Government takes worker safety seriously. This bill is a crucial step in ensuring our WHS regulator is strong, responsive and independent. It will enhance public confidence in SafeWork NSW, improve transparency and accountability, and ensure that workplace safety remains a top priority in our State. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (15:01): I am delighted to contribute to debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025. I acknowledge the Minister and all parties involved in the very important reforms. All legislative change is important, but there is no more important legislation than the one that looks after workers, which makes changes to a system to ensure that they get home in the same condition they go to work in. Workers are all too often overlooked by some members in this House. Our industries and workforce are vital to drive our economy, so we must work for them.

The Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025 amends the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to establish a SafeWork Commissioner as a regulator under the Work Health and Safety Act and a dedicated SafeWork Advisory Council. As mentioned previously in this debate, the independent review of SafeWork by the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC, in 2023 highlighted the need for structural and governance reforms to increase public confidence in, and access to, SafeWork NSW, to allow for appropriate stakeholder representation and voice, and to promote transparency and accountability for the State's work health and safety regulator.

An administrative arrangements order will be progressed concurrently with this bill to establish SafeWork NSW as a public service executive agency related to the Department of Customer Service from 1 July 2025, with the SafeWork Commissioner as the head of the agency. The legislation amends the Work Health and Safety Act to, firstly, establish the SafeWork Commissioner as a regulator under the Work Health and Safety Act; secondly, establish a SafeWork Advisory Council and outline its functions, the necessary provisions of membership, the appointment of members and procedures of the advisory council; and, thirdly, require a review of the amendments three years after the commencement date to ensure the new model is operating as intended.

The bill has been informed by consultation with SafeWork NSW, the Cabinet Office and the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, as well as important stakeholders in the unions and business groups. The system that was in place was inadequate and the former Government did not give it enough attention. That is why this Government began the long journey of reforming work health and safety in New South Wales. After years of inadequate support, it is clear to us that this bill is necessary not just to ensure the safety of our workers, which is paramount, but also because its amendments should have occurred a long time ago. That is why the Government is introducing a bill to reform SafeWork to be a tough and effective regulator.

The Government has taken SafeWork out of the Better Regulation Division. Previous governments saw work health and safety as red tape and not as an essential right that all workers deserve. Every worker has the right to go home in the same condition they went to work in. I do not know the exact figures of workers dying on site, on the shop floor, or wherever they may be, but I do know it is still way too high. My son Bailey is an electrician. He finished his electrical apprenticeship last year and now works at Western Sydney airport. He has worked at a number of places with the company that employs him. Some of the worksites have adequate safety measures in place, but it is still very dangerous work. We must never forget that. We can have all the laws and safety provisions in place, but many workplaces are very dangerous.

Many members would be aware that in a previous life I drove coal trucks for a few years while I began my studies and had my young family. I would drive up and down Appin Road, or up to Denman or wherever else

I had to go. That was before there was a campaign by the Transport Workers' Union [TWU], of which I am a proud member, called Safe Rates. That campaign was started by the then general secretary of the TWU, my good mate the late Steve Hutchins who went on to become a Federal Senator. Another good mate Tony Sheldon took over his role and he now is in the Federal Senate doing wonderful work. That Safe Rates campaign was important to ensure that truckies have a safe workplace. That industry remains a very risky and dangerous one, despite the legislative reform over time.

The Government has introduced the bill to ensure that workers have safe workplaces so they can return home in the same condition they went to work in. I have no doubt that Minister Cotsis, a very diligent, hardworking and worker-sympathetic Minister, who is from the shop floor, will continue to review legislation. Where amendments are required, that is precisely what she will do. After the passage of the bill, SafeWork will become a standalone regulator in the form of an executive agency, with a dedicated SafeWork Commissioner at its head, which I referred to in my opening remarks. Two reviews—one by the Hon. Robert McDougall and another by the Audit Office—condemned how SafeWork functioned under the former Government.

Members on this side of the House, and indeed all my Labor colleagues, always have been, and always will be, friends of the worker. In the last term of Parliament, and in years gone by, we heard statements made in this House by members opposite that propagandised being friends of the worker. When they are in this place they may say they are friends of the worker, but when it comes to legislative reform and providing a safe workplace, they are absent. It is only the Labor Party that always has and always will prioritise the safety of workers. That said, I know a number of Opposition members are passionate about making sure that provisions for safe work are in place. I note the contribution of the shadow Minister and thank him and Opposition members for their support. When I refer to members opposite, I am referring to members of the previous Government. The shadow Minister's passion to see reform in this area is deeply appreciated. [*Extension of time*]

The functions of the executive agency will be the same as the functions of the regulator, which are outlined in part 8 of the Work Health and Safety Act. The Minister for Work Health and Safety will be able to exercise direction and control over the agency, except in relation to the contents of advice and decisions relating to proceedings for offences under the Work Health and Safety Act or a work health and safety undertaking. Those restrictions on ministerial direction and control already exist in the Act. The bill also establishes a SafeWork Advisory Council and sets out its functions. The board will be comprised of representatives from business and unions, at least one expert in the field of workplace health and safety, and a representative from an organisation representing families of injured workers. The primary role and priority of the advisory council will be to monitor emerging risks and trends in the field of work health and safety whilst providing advice to the commissioner on strategic direction and priorities for SafeWork NSW, as well as to advise the commissioner on the effectiveness of SafeWork NSW's operations.

When in opposition, Labor fought tooth and nail to change SafeWork. Now in government, it has followed through and is doing what is necessary to ensure that SafeWork is the most effective regulator it can be. This is yet another example of this Government saying what it means and meaning what it says. From the Premier down to each and every one of my colleagues, if we give an undertaking to do something then we do it. Can we do everything right now? No, we cannot. But we are pragmatic and honest with the people of New South Wales. Realistically, no government can be everything to everyone all the time. But we can be honest with the people of New South Wales all the time, respect our unions and business community, and collaborate with them, because members on this side of the House know that the best outcomes are achieved by working together. Every worker in this State has an indisputable right to return home safely to their families every day.

Earlier I referred to driving coal trucks. I did the tar cutter turnaround down the Hume for a bit. When I finished my studies, I went on to be an allocator and an operations manager. I was blessed and fortunate to move up into leadership roles. I have sustained good relationships with my union brothers and sisters from the Transport Workers' Union and the Australian Workers' Union, for whom I have the deepest respect. It is very easy for people to be critical of our unions, but since this great nation's Federation the mighty trade union movement has been a bastion of fighting to ensure that workers get home safely. They must be credited for that. No-one can take that away from them.

Can we do everything for all workers all the time? No, we cannot. Will we forever try to? Yes, we will. This bill brings us one step closer. I have faith that my good friend the Minister will continue to review legislation and consult with the union movement, industry and business, and where reforms are required that is precisely what she will do. This Government and the Minister deeply care about the safety of workers whilst driving our State's economy, ensuring that industry remains progressive, profitable and prosperous into the future. To conclude, I have mentioned that this Government is honest with the people of New South Wales. We cannot do everything all the time. But what we can do all the time is our best.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:16): I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025. In doing so, I direct my remarks mainly to the way the Government has decided to implement the recommendation of the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC. Firstly, I congratulate the Government on introducing the bill. It gives effect to an important commitment made by Labor when in opposition, as we watched the work health and safety regulation being broken up, diluted and hidden within the Better Regulation Division of the Department of Customer Service mega department. It was alarming to say the least to see how diminished the role of workplace safety became. The worst aspect to this was the way in which safety regulation was treated as red tape. I say clearly that workplace safety is not red tape.

From opposition we watched as the SafeWork presence became diminished and largely irrelevant. The current Minister and Treasurer pursued this issue doggedly from opposition. In the dying days of the last Government, they got the Minister at the time to agree to an independent inquiry, to be conducted by the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC. After the Minns Labor Government was elected, in a sign that work health and safety would be central to our Government's work and priorities, the Premier appointed my colleague and good friend the member for Canterbury as the Minister for Work Health and Safety, a title that had not existed in this place for many years. This Government is unwavering in its commitment, as is the good Minister, to ensuring that workers are protected by robust laws and a tough regulator, which is why this bill is before the House.

As has been mentioned by other members, being safe is the absolute right of every person who enters a workplace. Every single person in this State should return home safely at the end of their working day and every employer has a legal obligation to provide a safe workplace. The State's regulator needs to be the tough cop on the beat. Empowered with the responsibility to enforce workplace safety, it needs to be strong and supported by the Government. At the same time as being accountable to the people, it also needs to stand alone. The Hon. Robert McDougall made this recommendation when he handed down his report. The Government carefully considered the model recommended by the review alongside other options to address the core objectives of the reform, including enhancing the identity, independence, accountability and stakeholder representation of SafeWork NSW.

The changes contained in the bill will strengthen the identity of SafeWork NSW and restore public confidence in the State's work health and safety regulator by establishing the SafeWork Commissioner as the regulator under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, which will report directly to the Minister for Work Health and Safety. The SafeWork Commissioner will lead the agency and have clear authority to enforce compliance, promote best practices and engage meaningfully with workers, unions, people with lived experience and businesses across all industries in New South Wales. The bill will also establish the SafeWork Advisory Council to provide advice to both the Minister for Work Health and Safety and SafeWork NSW on how they can best support workers and businesses in creating the safest possible workplaces. The council will be made up of representatives from employer organisations and unions, a member with work health and safety expertise and a member representing the interests of injured workers and their families. It will support decision-making and ensure greater transparency and accountability.

These changes align with the recommendations made in the Hon. Robert McDougall's review to increase the independence of SafeWork NSW and ensure that the agency is guided by a body comprising of key stakeholder representatives. The new structure will provide the necessary separation and governance for SafeWork NSW to effectively carry out its functions free from departmental control. The New South Wales Parliament and the public will also have greater oversight of decision-making, resource use and performance. SafeWork NSW will be established as an executive agency by way of an administrative order, and it will be required to provide annual reports separately to the Department of Customer Service.

To assess whether this new model that makes SafeWork NSW a standalone executive agency is operating effectively and meeting the objectives of the reformed provisions, the bill also requires a statutory review of the legislation after three years of operation. Establishing SafeWork NSW as an executive agency will allow the Government to address the key issues raised in the review with the simplicity of an administrative order made within the existing framework provided by the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. Similarly, the formation of the advisory council responds to the recommendation to establish a governing body but modifies the role to allow the commissioner and Minister to benefit from its advice and expertise.

This composition will still ensure there is a formal mechanism for insights and expertise from key stakeholder groups to inform work health and safety regulation in New South Wales, because the SafeWork Commissioner is required to consider the council's advice when determining the strategic direction and priorities of SafeWork NSW. This bill implements the intent of the recommendations from the independent review in a simple, elegant and effective way. It is fantastic that the Minister is in the Chamber, as she always is, to see through the passage of this important reform. She is interested in what employers and workers from across this State need from us. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (15:23): I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025. I thank the Minister for bringing this bill to the House. This bill is a milestone in the long overdue reform of our State's work health and safety regulator, SafeWork NSW. I echo the words of the member for Campbelltown who spoke about his son working in the construction industry as an electrician. I also have a son who works as a plumber on some very large construction sites. I have had many wake-up calls after hearing some of his stories about how things are operating out there. Thankfully he has worked for very safe employers that stuck to the rules and gave the appropriate training and equipment to its workers. But they are not the norm; there are some very rogue operators.

It is so important that this bill reinstitutes SafeWork NSW as the critical organisation for the safety of workers in this State. It has been well ventilated in this place that under the previous Government, SafeWork NSW was ignored and all but dismantled. It subsequently became less effective than it could or should have been. That is not the fault of the good men and women in SafeWork NSW who inspect workplaces every day and investigate some truly dreadful workplace accidents. One workplace fatality is too many. I was heartbroken when I looked up some of the stats. In 2022, there were 51 workers in New South Wales that never made it home from work. That is 51 families who went through the grief of not having their loved one return home. In 2023, it was 60 workers. These are more than just statistics. We need to remember that we are dealing with people's lives.

Every year almost one worker per week is killed in the course of their work. That has to change. We need to do better. While there may be no simple solutions, the one thing we can and must do is to have a safety regulator that is strong, fearless and supported by the Government to enforce compliance with workplace safety laws and, where necessary, to actively prosecute businesses that do the wrong thing. That certainly was not the practise of the previous Coalition Government. In the two years since the 2023 election, there has been a lot of re-education work done by the Minns Labor Government and this Minister about the importance of work health and safety. Creating a dedicated Minister for Work Health and Safety was the first in a series of important decisions by the Minns Government to send a clear message that work health and safety would be at the centre of its priorities when it comes to the welfare of the workers of our great State. I will remind members of some of the other actions taken by the Minns Government and the Minister in addition to the decision to restore SafeWork NSW as a standalone regulator, which we are debating today.

The Government has increased penalties for serious work health and safety breaches; closed loopholes that allow businesses to insure against work health and safety fines as a cost of doing business; led a national ban on engineered stone to tackle the scourge of silicosis; committed an additional $2.5 million in the 2024-25 budget to support the enforcement of industry compliance with the ban and stronger regulations, including the creation of a specialist silica inspector and adviser team; introduced new regulations to provide for stronger regulation of the processing of materials containing crystalline silica across all industries, particularly in relation to processing that is assessed as high risk; passed legislation to establish a silica worker register, with work underway to implement it; and committed $5 million to the Asbestos and Dust Diseases Research Institute to fund silicosis research and support for individuals exposed to silica dust and their families.

The Government has also launched the workplace Psychological Health and Safety Strategy; established the Respect at Work Advisory Group, adopted the model code of practice relating to sexual and gender-based harassment and begun the rollout of the four-year Respect at Work Strategy; introduced compulsory audiometric testing to protect workers from the risk of hearing loss associated with noise that exceeds the exposure standards; established a new expert taskforce to oversee and help address silica-related health risks for workers in tunnelling projects; and implemented a recruitment drive that will see over 400 inspectors employed by SafeWork NSW.

Through a restructure of SafeWork, the Government has created 48 new inspector positions that will focus on recruits from a wide range of backgrounds and across a broad range of specialties, including both physical and psychological, to meet community expectations. It boosts the total number of inspectors to 418. The Government has also surged additional staff into the silica taskforce, which is undertaking compliance activities in all tunnels under construction in New South Wales, including eight inspectors from the taskforce to undertake those regular visits. It has renewed the commitment to protect workers from dust diseases by unveiling a new $2.5 million state-of-the-art lung health mobile clinic, which will provide lung health checks to thousands of people across New South Wales.

Given that impressive list of achievements to date, I am pleased to support the bill. It will establish the separation of SafeWork NSW from the Department of Customer Service; increase its visibility amongst not only the public but also, more importantly, the workers; and foster stronger stakeholder relationships. Establishing SafeWork NSW as an executive agency by administrative order maintains the intent of providing the State's work health and safety regulator with independence, while allowing the new structure to operate efficiently within the existing framework of the Government Sector Employment Act 2013. The bill moves the powers and functions under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 from the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service to a

dedicated SafeWork Commissioner, who will be the regulator. That is as it should be. That will strengthen the regulator's identity and give the commissioner all necessary powers and functions to effectively fulfil the role.

Establishing an executive agency with the SafeWork Commissioner as the agency head from 1 July 2025 will mean that there is a standalone regulator for work health and safety regulation in New South Wales. I also support the establishment in legislation of the advisory council, which will provide expert advice to the SafeWork Commissioner and, in turn, the Government. The advisory council will play a key role in setting regulatory priorities, monitoring trends and providing direction to the commissioner. The make-up of the advisory council—with representatives from unions, business, and seriously or fatally injured workers, as well as work health and safety experts—will ensure that all voices are heard and listened to. I commend the bill to the House.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:33): I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025. I reflect upon the contributions of others in this place regarding safety at work. I have a very strong retail background and come from a long line of retail workers. I was very proud to work in that area. As we come up to the one-year anniversary of the Westfield incident, it would be remiss of me not to reflect on the psychosocial hazards that many people face while working. Often when we think about unsafe workplace practices, our mind goes to construction sites and heavy work, but significant psychosocial risks and damages happen in the retail space. I note the Minister is in the Chamber, and I commend her work in that space.

I do not give a massive shout-out to bosses and corporations very often, but I take this moment to commend Woolworths for how it supported its retail staff during a really traumatic incident. It has huge systems in place to support all staff when an injury occurs, regardless of whether it is a physical injury or a psychosocial injury. But not all bosses or businesses are the same, which is why we need laws like this bill. We need to continuously review them. Psychosocial injuries are among the most common and fastest growing types of workplace injury, and they continue to happen. It is important that we continue to modernise our industrial relations and WHS systems to stay up to date.

The Minns Labor Government has made significant changes to industrial relations in workplaces for our retail workers, acknowledging the significant and real risks that those frontline workers are faced with every day. At the heart of the bill is a very simple belief: that every worker has a fundamental right to be safe at work. We believe that every person should have a right to return home at the end of the day. No job is worth a life, and no family should have to endure the devastation of losing a loved one due to unsafe working conditions. I have spent my whole life, since long before I was in this place, living and breathing the industrial relations system. I witnessed what the previous Government did to that system in New South Wales over 12 years, which saw the absolute decay and destruction of that system.

The Government has now started a very long journey of reforming our industrial relations and WHS systems to make sure that they are fit for purpose for all workers. For too long our current system has failed to effectively uphold the right to safety at work. There have been gaps in enforcement, delays in responses and conflicts of interest, which have left workers vulnerable. The bill changes that by establishing an independent and standalone regulator, the SafeWork Commissioner, and re-establishing the SafeWork Advisory Council. That council is solely focused on ensuring that workplaces are safe, that employers meet their responsibilities and that workers are protected. At the core, we have taken SafeWork out of the Better Regulation Division. That is emblematic of what the previous Government did. It whacked it in with a whole bunch of other stuff because it did not care about SafeWork. It did not see the importance of it and wrapped it up in red tape. Again, at the core, those opposite do not see that it is an essential right of all workers to be safe.

The reality is that for far too long workers in New South Wales have faced unnecessary risks every day. As I said, whether it is on a retail shop floor, on a construction site, or in a factory or hospital, no worker should ever fear that they will not make it home to their family. Sadly, the numbers speak for themselves; I do not need to repeat them. Every year hundreds of workers in our State suffer serious injuries at work, both physical and psychosocial. Those injuries often leave people permanently disabled and unable to return to their job. In the worst cases, we are talking about death. Those are not just statistics; they are fathers, mothers, sons and daughters, their lives cut short simply because the system that is meant to protect them falls short. Our regulatory system has been caught up, not able to do what it needs to and leaving people behind.

We owe it to every family and every community to ensure that workplaces are safe and that work safety is enforced with the utmost seriousness it deserves. That is why SafeWork deserves to be a standalone agency. It is serious; this is real stuff. Having a standalone, independent regulator that can hold employers accountable will ensure that no worker's safety is treated as an afterthought. By re-establishing SafeWork NSW as an executive agency, a dedicated SafeWork Commissioner will allow the regulator a greater level of autonomy and address the criticisms around SafeWork NSW's loss of independence and public identity.

This bill is not about policies. It is not about regulation. It is about people. It is about ensuring that workers have rights and are protected. It is about the right of every worker, in every industry, to come home safely at the end of the day. It is about making sure that no worker has to choose between keeping their job and speaking up about unsafe working conditions. Currently, workplace safety oversight is tied in with broader government functions. This creates inefficiencies and conflicts of interest. When work safety is just one concern among many, it is workers who pay the price.

We need a system where safety comes first, always. Members on this side of the House believe that every worker in New South Wales has an indisputable right to return home safely every single day. The bill will deliver that by creating a dedicated, independent regulator with the authority, resources and focus needed to protect workers' rights. It will ensure that breaches will be investigated swiftly and fairly. The bill will mean stronger enforcement of safety laws, better education for employers, and a culture where safety is the priority, not an afterthought.

The establishment of an independent regulator is an investment in people's lives. It is a necessary step to ensure that no worker is put at unnecessary risk and no family suffers the absolutely unbearable loss of a loved one due to workplace negligence. As I continue to say, every worker has the right to be safe. Every family has the right to expect their loved ones to return home at the end of a shift or at the end of the day. The bill makes it clear that workplace safety is non-negotiable. It makes it clear that no job should come at the expense of a worker's wellbeing and that all businesses, no matter how big or small, must take responsibility for protecting their workers. When they fail to do so, they will be held accountable. We fought tooth and nail to change SafeWork NSW and to reform our industrial relations system for the people of New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government is making necessary reforms to ensure that SafeWork is the most effective regulator it can be. We will fix the industrial relations system that was decimated by the previous Government. I commend the Minister for her work. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:42): I am delighted to be able to support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025. My good friend the Minister for Industrial Relations has put a lot of hard work into the bill in consultation with unions and other relevant stakeholders. Prior to coming into this place, I spent all my life around the trade union movement. When my grandparents ran the union rooms is Sussex Street, I hand-painted banners out the back in support of the federated waterside workers. I grew up in a very staunch and strong trade union family. My father was on strike more times than I care to remember. My mother was the worst cook in the world, so it was always great when Dad was on strike because he was a good cook and we got well fed.

I grew up with a strong understanding from an early age of the importance of collective bargaining and more so the importance of work health and safety. I heard stories from my father, my uncles and both of my grandfathers about awful accidents down on the waterfront where they all worked that could have been avoided. Some workers were killed by not getting out of the way of huge steel hooks quick enough, or by falling into holes in ships. I grew up with those stories. As a kid I went to funerals when we lost loved ones and friends as a result of employers and dodgy bosses not giving a crumpet about the safe work practices of their organisations or employees.

The bill also goes to what is happening in my electorate with alleged very serious bullying and sexual harassment allegations at Shellharbour City Council. It also comes with a cover-up, which is sometimes even worse than the actual incident itself and another work health and safety issue that is not taken seriously. The current incident is quite disturbing. For many months, I have received anonymous letters to my office begging me to help women in the council to overcome workplace bullying and harassment from two of the most senior officials in that building. I still have grave concerns for those women because I fear that at risk is not only their safety but also their psyche. It would be affecting their families and loved ones at home. Their children would feel the anxiousness and irritability in the household. That is a direct result of what they are enduring at the council. I will have more to say about that in the future.

I commend the Minister for bringing this important bill to this place. I remember sitting on the Opposition side of the Chamber at about two o'clock in the morning when the Liberal-Nationals Government changed our workers compensation laws in 2012. It was one of the darkest days in the history of New South Wales Parliament. It has taken us 12 years to win back government so we can right the wrongs done leading up to the 2023 election. Slowly but surely, we are righting those wrongs. Workers in New South Wales, whether they are union members or not, know that a Labor government will always back in work health and safety first to make sure that they return home in the same condition that they left. That is very important for families, and members on this side of the Chamber hold it close to our hearts. We take it seriously while knowing that members opposite never, ever did. That was a night in this place that I will never forget.

The bill will introduce a standalone regulator, and I could not be happier than to discuss this in the House. Minns Labor Government members started a long journey to reform work health and safety in New South Wales the minute we were elected. It was a commitment of the Premier and our caucus to make sure that we fixed up the previous Government's mess. It was clear that after painful years of Liberal government SafeWork NSW had just become a brand. That is all it was, rather than an effective regulator of work health and safety.

I give a shout-out to SafeWork NSW employees for the great work that they do. Ian Lancaster, from the South Coast, is a fair and balanced team member of SafeWork. I run into him quite a bit—probably more than I would like—but he is a thoroughly decent human being who takes his job very seriously. He does a great job. When employees on the South Coast see Ian Lancaster, they feel a sense of safety. They know they are believed. They know he will act. They know they will be safe, which is everything when employees go into a workplace.

Today the Minns Labor Government has introduced this bill to reform and transform SafeWork into a tough and effective regulator, which has been needed for a very long time. We have taken SafeWork out of the Better Regulation Division, which is how the Liberals and The Nationals viewed workplace health and safety—as being all about red tape, but not an essential right that all workers deserve. That is just how they roll. After the passage of this bill, SafeWork will become a standalone regulator in the form of an executive agency with a dedicated SafeWork Commissioner at its head, which is appropriate. Two reviews, one by the Hon. Justice McDougall and another by the Audit Office, condemned how SafeWork functioned under the former Government.

Establishing SafeWork NSW as an executive agency and moving powers away from the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service to a dedicated SafeWork Commissioner will allow the regulator a greater level of autonomy and will address the criticism around SafeWork NSW's loss of independence and public identity. The functions of the executive agency will be the same as the functions of the regulator outlined in part 8 of the Work Health and Safety Act. The Minister for Work Health and Safety will be able to exercise direction and control over the agency, except in relation to the contents of advice and decisions relating to proceedings for offences under the Work Health and Safety Act or a work health and safety undertaking. These restrictions on ministerial direction and control already exist in the Work Health and Safety Act.

The bill will also establish the SafeWork Advisory Council and set out its functions. The board will comprise representatives of business, unions, at least one expert in the field of workplace health and safety, and a representative from an organisation representing families of injured workers. For me, that provision is like going back in time to when I was a union official and a member of a work health and safety board. That board met weekly to discuss what needed to be fixed, regulated and reported back to the government of the day. The primary role of the advisory council will be to monitor emerging risks and trends in the field of work health and safety, and provide advice to the commissioner on strategic direction and priorities for SafeWork NSW as well as monitoring and advising the commissioner on the effectiveness of SafeWork NSW's operations.

When Labor was in opposition, we fought tooth and nail to change SafeWork, and now the Government will follow through and do what is absolutely necessary to ensure that SafeWork is the most effective regulator it can be. As a former trade unionist, I have seen way too many workplace accidents that just did not need to happen. I take health and safety seriously. In the time that remains for my speech, I give a shout-out to all the trade unionists right across New South Wales who have dedicated their working lives to fighting for employees. Some I know have been in the trade union movement for 40 years and are still fighting for work health and safety. In 2025 it will take a Minns Labor Government to fix it. It also will take a Minns Labor Government to ensure that when men and women go to work, they return home in one piece and their mental and physical health is protected.

Business interrupted.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (15:53): I move:

> That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 20 March 2025 to provide that when the House proceeds to general business notices of motions or orders of the day (not being bills) general business notice of motion No. 2887 standing in the name of the member for Balmain shall have precedence.

The notice of motion standing in the name of the member for Balmain is a condolence motion in respect of the late former Mayor of Leichhardt, Rochelle Porteus, who passed away relatively recently. The late mayor's family is being invited to attend at 2.30 p.m. on Thursday, when the House will consider the motion. I have given the reason for its being brought forward. Notice of this was given to the Opposition approximately an hour ago.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (15:54): The Opposition supports the motion.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (STANDALONE REGULATOR) BILL 2025

Second Reading Debate

Business resumed.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (15:55): I support the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025, which will amend the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to establish the SafeWork Commissioner as the regulator under the Work Health and Safety Act and establish a dedicated SafeWork Advisory Council. There have been a couple of independent reviews of SafeWork NSW, one in 2023 by the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC, which is colloquially known as the McDougall review. The review highlighted the need for significant structural and governance reforms to increase public confidence in SafeWork, allow appropriate stakeholder representation and voice, and provide transparency and accountability for the State's work health and safety regulator.

In my opinion, there are not many things more important in the State's jurisdiction than workers' health and safety. I commend the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety, who is in the Chamber, for the important work and the amount of work she has been able to get through in just under two years. Labor came to government on a platform of fixing education and health, backing frontline workers and fixing a broken industrial relations system. In two short years, the Government has introduced very significant reforms. Should this bill pass, another significant reform will be established relating to industrial relations and safe work environments in the great State of New South Wales.

The bill will establish a SafeWork Commissioner as the regulator under the Work Health and Safety Act as well as a SafeWork Advisory Council. The bill outlines the functions of the advisory council and the appointment of members, which I will address in more detail later. Effectively, the council will act as a board and provide strategic advice and feedback. The bill also provides for a review of this amending bill in three years from its commencement date to ensure that the new model is operating as intended. It is important to continue to review and reform this important part of industrial relations because we know that the workplace, the nature of work and the nature of work health and safety are changing. One of the primary roles of the advisory council will be to review.

In addition to providing strategic advice and direction to the commissioner, as well as monitoring and advising the commissioner, the council will consider risks and trends in work health and safety. We know the workplace is changing rapidly and is very different from what it was five or 10 years ago, and the workplace of five or 10 years ago is very different from the workplace of 10 or 20 years before that. Some of the issues facing work health and safety are artificial intelligence [AI], automation and related technologies. There have been a lot of bold pronouncements about generative AI, its potential uses and whether it will replace lawyers. I will not comment on whether replacing lawyers is a good or a bad thing, but that is one potential use of AI. Advanced technology imports risks and downsides for workers and safety in the workplace. For example, AI could replace manual tasks and could do away with ailments such as repetitive strain injuries.

We also have to monitor for new risks as it becomes more prevalent, such as psychosocial hazards from more complex interpersonal relationships and the like. Technology also brings new types of work. We see new industries coming up, like delivery riders, which will be a topic for discussion at some point in the next week or two. As new industries arise, new risks arise. For example, we have seen some terrible things, especially in my neck of the woods, with young students from overseas who are doing part-time work as delivery riders being hit and killed in accidents. That is a tragedy both for people here and for their families back home. The advisory council will look at and advise on those trends.

We cannot forget COVID-19 and the rise of hybrid work. I remember when I was working in IT prior to COVID-19 being told that technology to allow people to work from home would be a two-year project and that it would cost millions of dollars. Then, during the pandemic, we saw those same IT departments implement technology in two or three short weeks. That has changed the nature of work. People working from home using their own furniture—their own chairs and desks—means less oversight of ergonomics and increased risk to the employee. Those are the kinds of things that I am hopeful the advisory council will look into and advise the commissioner on.

Labor in opposition fought tooth and nail to change SafeWork. This Government will now follow through and do what is necessary to ensure SafeWork is a strong, effective regulator able to do its important work with a

high level of independence and rigour. The outcome will be that every worker in New South Wales has greater security and comfort knowing that they will be looked after. Every worker has a right to return home safely every day. We all have heard stories of friends, family and constituents where that sadly was not the case. We should do everything in our power in this place to prevent workplace injuries and deaths. I hope that members opposite will see the error of what they have done to SafeWork and that they will support the bill. I commend the bill to the House. I commend the Minister for her important work in bringing this legislation to the House.

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:02): I speak in support of the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025. The bill is another example of the Minns Labor Government taking action to fulfill an election commitment. It is a core part of the Labor Party's mission statement to ensure that workers are safe at work. The State's work health and safety regulator needs to be effective at ensuring that, when workers leave home to go to work, they know that they will return home safely at the end of their day. It was clear to us that, after 12 years of the former Liberal-Nationals Government, SafeWork had become a brand rather than an effective regulator of work health and safety. SafeWork NSW was hidden within the Department of Customer Service and unable to completely fulfil its required functions as the State's work health and safety regulator.

On the surface, the bill seems simple. It removes the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service as the regulator for the purpose of the Work Health and Safety Act, and establishes a new role of the SafeWork Commissioner, who will become the regulator for the purposes of the Act. That will transform SafeWork into a tough and effective regulator, and continue its commitment to preventing workplace deaths, injuries and illnesses. We have taken SafeWork out of the Better Regulation Division, which was how the Liberals and Nationals saw WHS: red tape; not an essential right that all workers deserve.

Two reviews, one by His Honour Justice McDougall and another by the Audit Office, condemned how SafeWork functioned under the former Government. Establishing SafeWork NSW as an executive agency and moving powers away from the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service to a dedicated SafeWork Commissioner will allow the regulator a greater level of autonomy and address the criticism around SafeWork NSW's loss of independence and public identity. The functions of the executive agency will be the same as the functions of the regulator outlined in part 8 of the Work Health and Safety Act. The Minister for Work Health and Safety will be able to exercise direction and control over the agency, except in relation to the contents of advice and decisions relating to proceedings for offences under the Work Health and Safety Act or a work health and safety undertaking. Those restrictions on ministerial direction and control already exist in the Work Health and Safety Act.

The bill also establishes an advisory council comprised of union representatives, business representatives, someone with lived experience of a workplace injury or fatality, and experts in work health and safety. The primary role of the advisory council will be to monitor emerging risks and trends in the field of work health and safety, provide advice to the commissioner on strategic direction and priorities for SafeWork NSW, as well as monitoring and advising the commissioner on the effectiveness of SafeWork NSW's operations. The advisory council will also provide advice to the Minister for Work Health and Safety and SafeWork NSW on how it can best support both workers and businesses in creating the safest possible workplaces.

The current regulatory priorities of SafeWork NSW are falls from heights; harms to workers in the healthcare and social assistance sector, with a focus on the disability sector; managing psychosocial risks at work, including the risk of sexual harassment; exposure to hazardous substances including silica, asbestos, hazardous chemicals and carcinogens; and being injured by mobile plants, fixed machinery or vehicles in the workplace. Compliance with those priorities is very important to the community I represent. In Parramatta, our skyline is dotted with cranes—the signs of new construction. In 2025 falls from heights remain a major risk on construction sites and are a leading cause of injury onsite. That is not acceptable. The Parramatta electorate is also home to a large number of health, social and disability care workers. It is well known that those workers are at particular risk of psychological and physical injury in the workplace—as we saw recently at Westmead Hospital.

The changes proposed in the bill will enable the SafeWork Commissioner to lead the agency with clear authority to enforce compliance, promote best practices and engage meaningfully with workers, unions and businesses across all industries in New South Wales. Labor in opposition fought hard to change SafeWork to no avail. Now, in government, we will follow through and do what we see is necessary to ensure SafeWork is the most effective regulator it can be. The new structure will ensure SafeWork NSW will become a strong, robust and fit-for-purpose regulator that is more than capable of effectively securing safer and healthier workplaces right across New South Wales. Every worker across our State has an indisputable right to return home safely every single day. The bill brings us one step closer to that reality.

It is important to note that the bill is not the end of the Minns Labor Government's work health and safety agenda, and it certainly does not stand alone. Last year we saw the Government pass a bill to make industrial manslaughter an offence. We also saw an increase in penalties for other work health and safety offences.

I acknowledge the Minister, the staff in her office and stakeholders, in particular the unions, for their contributions to this significant reform and for the fight that they have been having for as long as Labor. The bill continues this Government's mission to make New South Wales the safest place to work in Australia. I am proud to be part of a government that has acted so strongly and swiftly to protect the rights of workers at work. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (16:09): I contribute to debate on the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025, introduced by Minister Sophie Cotsis. She works hard and is dedicated. If one looks back at the past two years and all the different work that she has done, as well as all the work that she did before she came to Parliament, she is probably one of the most productive Ministers for work health and safety we have had. The member for Penrith listed the vast majority of work that the Minister has done; it has been a whirlwind tour in the two years since we were elected. I can understand her passion and her love for work health and safety. She was originally a hospitality worker at Sydney Airport. She then worked for Unions NSW, which was called the Labor Council back in those days—we are both showing our age now—and the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union, which has also had a name change. Her long understanding of safety issues is paramount. I thank the Minister and her staff, who have worked hard on the important aspects of this legislation so that it could be presented to the Parliament today.

The key purpose of the bill is to establish a new governance model for SafeWork NSW, which includes establishing the SafeWork Advisory Council and setting out its functions, including advising the SafeWork Commissioner on the strategic direction and priorities of SafeWork NSW, which the SafeWork Commissioner must take into account; requiring the Minister to review the operation as soon as practicable after 1 July 2028; providing for the procedures and membership of the advisory council; and establishing the SafeWork Commissioner as the regulator for the Act.

The Government does not want to overly politicise this bill, but history is important. During the 12 years the former Liberal-Nationals Government was in power there were substantial and massive changes, which we are correcting at the moment. Over those 12 years workers were seen as a cost centre for a business. Injured workers who could not perform at their optimal best needed to be terminated. The introduction of the six-month rule allowed an employer to terminate an injured worker and throw them into the insurance scheme on the spot at the six-month mark. It was seen, as other speakers talked about, that workplace safety was more a brand of red tape. The red tape was so bad that the actual inspectors were also tied up in it; they could hardly do anything.

We saw that in 2011 with the election of the O'Farrell Government when massive reforms were introduced that stopped unions from undertaking workplace prosecutions. In 2009, and previously, there were many instances of workplace injuries, but unions did not make workplace prosecutions a first call. It was usually a last resort because it was obviously an expensive process. But where there was failure in the system, the unions would step in. In those 12 years there was a substantial reduction of prosecutions for workplace injuries and death, which in the end left lenient penalties or, in some instances, none at all.

I refer to one case that I was personally involved in while I was at the Australian Workers' Union [AWU]. Colin David Fuller was crushed to death at the Cement Australia (Kandos) plant, which has since closed, on 13 September 2009. He was on nightshift and working on his own. He was in a back room working on a conveyor belt when he was crushed to death between two hydraulic rams. When I arrived on the worksite I worked with the management, employees and union reps to try to work out what had gone wrong. Yossi Berger, God rest his soul, was an AWU national safety director. He had a long association with the union movement. Yossi was a fountain of strength for everyone there when he attended the site a few times to provide advice to workers.

In 2013 the NSW Industrial Relations Commission found that Cement Australia had failed to install fixed guarding along the entire length of a feeder and conveyor system as required by the Australian safety standards and had failed also to provide adequate supervision and instruction to Mr Fuller. Cement Australia and its subsidiary, Cement Australia (Kandos), were fined a total of $190,000 for causing the death of a worker despite their complete disregard for safety, standards and enforcement. There were numerous breaches. It was an organisation that was a subsidiary of a $30 billion multinational company that copped a fine of only $190,000. It left the small country town of Kandos devasted, with family and friends suffering a lifetime loss.

We undertook a number of investigations when we went out there. It was a cement factory and it brought in rocks to be crushed. It was during that process that Colin unfortunately died. When we went there—don't forget, it was 2009—there were those old push-button phones. There was no mobile phone reception and mobile phones were not super important back in those days. Colin was on his own, unsupervised, working in a dangerous area. There were not even two workers there overnight. Even if there had been a second worker rushing to report an incident, the numbers on the emergency phone could not be pressed. I think the emergency phone number was 199 but those three numbers were not working. It did not matter how many times you pressed. With all the problems and challenges at that site, it was only fined $190,000, the cost for a life.

We can talk here, as many members have, about instances in the construction and other industries where people have died. Joel Exner, a 16-year-old apprentice in the Blacktown area, died on his second day of work after falling off a roof, unharnessed and unsupported. It left his family devastated. Those people need to be prosecuted for doing the wrong thing. Again, I thank Minister Sophie Cotsis for introducing, through the Minns Labor Government, the industrial manslaughter laws because such acts should not go unpunished.

The Minister noted that the proposed amendments in the bill aim to foster greater trust and confidence in the regulator, and to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of work health and safety regulation in New South Wales. An independent review of SafeWork NSW was undertaken by the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC, which highlighted the need for structural and governance reforms to increase public confidence in and access to SafeWork NSW, to promote transparency and accountability for the State's health and safety regulator and to allow appropriate stakeholder representation and voices. There were 46 recommendations in total. Unfortunately more needs to happen, even today. There needs to be a cultural change with some of the inspectors, I am sorry to say, Minister.

I just had a crack at businesses that do the wrong thing, but I know of other businesses in my area and surrounding areas in production, of which manufacturing is such an important aspect, where there could have been a changeover in management. At one particular business, the new management identified the problem of dust and other elements in the workplace. Over a nine-month period, they went out of their way to make massive changes. Members should not forget that small-to-medium businesses cannot afford to bring in consultants or to have a person specifically employed to manage change but this business, together with the workers, looked at different ways of improving and they made considerable change. [*Extension of time*]

Suddenly a SafeWork inspector appeared on site—I will not name the person. I have tried to de-identify the company as much as possible. Instead of looking at the history of the site and the commitment of the management and the workers, all that person did was to identify that there was a dangerous location, issue multiple fines and then walked away. It was such a dangerous location that the person should have shut the site down. As simple as that. The inspector then brought out experts, who all said that what the employer was doing was heading in the right direction. They said, "Yes, there is more to be done"—it sounds like a Labor Party election slogan from that era—but essentially they found that people were working hard to achieve improvement. They wanted the factory to continue, and the employer was reaching out, begging for advice and support and asking what changes needed to be made. All they got in return for that was further fines, of which at least two have since been withdrawn.

I do not know how it could be implemented, but we need the ability to look at cultural change. Workplace inspectors should be there in a conciliatory process in the first instance to work through the issues. Is the employer prepared to make changes? That needs to be the first aspect. Are they just resisting and freaking out, or are they saying, "All right. What do we need to do to improve it?" I recall prior to 2011 when all amendments were made that when SafeWork inspectors visited a site they would ask the employer if it was a unionised site. If it was, they would ask who was the delegate and who was the union official and then notify the union to be there at the same time. If we can work collaboratively between the union, the workplace, the inspectors and the management we will get better results. Instead of being in an adversarial type of situation, we can work together and maintain the improvements over time. We need to improve the cultural aspect of some inspectors—not all, I dare to say. I am sure there are many good inspectors but, once again, during the 12 years of the 2011 to 2023 era many good inspectors left the workplace. We lost so much knowledge at SafeWork that the new generation of workers need.

I note that the Minister is employing hundreds of new inspectors, but maybe the title needs to be changed. They are inspecting the situation, but they are actually there to help improve it before issuing massive fines. If a person is doing the wrong thing, they need to be brought to account, but the whole idea is to help businesses to seek advice and to support workers through safety awareness programs. If required, penalties may be issued for those employers who do not want to do the right thing, including prosecution for industrial manslaughter in the worst-case scenarios. Creating the SafeWork Commissioner means that we will have a standalone regulator. The commissioner is an important person focused in an impartial way on how safe workplaces ought to operate.

Finally, I know that for many years the Minister has attended International Workers' Memorial Day events, which is coming up on Monday 28 April. One of my proud achievements when I was Mayor of Blacktown was in 2015 when we established a commemoration boardwalk around the wetlands at the Workers Memorial precinct at Blacktown Showground. This is its tenth anniversary, and we have expanded it since with a beautiful sculpture as well as a 1906 Sunshine Harvester. Members might be wondering why we have a harvester from 1906 in the middle of Blacktown. The Harvester case was the industrial relations case that created the minimum wage. It went through appeal a few times and probably lost, but the Labor governments of the 1900s then introduced the minimum wage. The Minister also attends a memorial conducted by Unions NSW at Darling Harbour. I thank the Minister for her two years of hard work that have delivered achievements such as silicosis legislation amendments,

asbestos research, improvements to auditory assessments and the Lung Health Mobile Clinic. I thank the Minister and all her staff for their dedication and commitment. I am proud to support the bill.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (16:24): In reply: Today is an important day for worker safety in New South Wales. As a member of the Minns Labor Government, I am proud that we have debated the Work Health and Safety Amendment (Standalone Regulator) Bill 2025, which will deliver on an important commitment to repair the State's work health and safety regulator. I thank members for their contributions, including the member for Willoughby, and shadow Minister for Work Health and Safety; the member for Mount Druitt; the member for Campbelltown; the member for Blue Mountains; the member for Penrith; the member for Coogee; the member for Shellharbour; the member for Parramatta; the member for Leppington; and the member for Blacktown. I will address their important contributions later.

The bill amends the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to implement crucial governance reform that will not only strengthen SafeWork NSW's identity but also restore public confidence in our State's work health and safety regulator. The bill gives effect to some of the key recommendations from the independent review led by the Hon. Robert McDougall, KC, which was completed in December 2023 and delivered 46 recommendations. The New South Wales Government is taking those recommendations seriously as well as the recommendations from the 2024 Audit Office report into SafeWork's performance. I have asked the acting regulator to provide me with an update with respect to implementing both the McDougall recommendations and the Audit Office recommendations. I will provide an update to the Parliament.

The bill is a testament to the commitment of this Government to make sure that we turn things around, in keeping with our commitment to make sure that people go to work safely, work in a safe environment, and come home safely to their family and friends. By implementing these reforms, we are improving the work health and safety regulatory environment and making our State a better place to work, live and thrive. The amendments introduced by the bill are designed to support the transformation of SafeWork NSW into a standalone executive agency. The restructure will take effect on 1 July 2025 by way of administrative order, which aligns with a proposed commencement date of the bill. The SafeWork Commissioner will become head of the agency.

The bill establishes the SafeWork Commissioner as regulator under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 and introduces new governance arrangements to support the commissioner. The advisory council that the bill establishes will consist of three representatives from employer organisations, three representatives from unions, at least one expert in work health and safety, and at least one representative of work health and safety support, advocacy or awareness organisations, or a person who has lived experience of workplace injury or death. The Minister will be able to appoint up to 12 people to the advisory council, including the compulsory members. This structure reflects the Government's tripartite approach to work health and safety.

I inform members that we have an interim committee. It has taken a very long time to get to that point, but we are slowly turning things around. The advisory council will play an important role in advising the SafeWork Commissioner and me—and Ministers of the future—on how SafeWork functions and how it can be more effective. I have had some representations put to me about the power of the advisory council. I have made an assessment with respect to other board-like councils and expert advisory groups and seen how they operate. I put on record that this advisory council will have strong powers that we have outlined in this important bill.

The council will play an important role in providing feedback from the organisations those people represent. SafeWork and the Minister of the day will take that on board as part of this legislation. It will be a very powerful advisory council. There is a difference between an advisory council and a board. Boards have to follow rules and regulations and the board members have various duties, whereas the people who will be appointed to this very important and powerful advisory council will be representatives of their various organisations. They will provide the frank and fearless advice that the Government is looking for. To ensure its ongoing effectiveness, the bill includes a statutory review of the amendments after the first three years of operation.

Additionally, as a public service executive agency, SafeWork will be required to produce annual reports. For the first time in a very long time, SafeWork will be required to produce an annual report that is separate from that of the Department of Customer Service. Those reports will be tabled in Parliament and accessible for the public to scrutinise. The review mechanisms will ensure that this is not a set-and-forget process. We will evaluate the new governance models to guarantee their success. That is really critical. I know that people are watching now and will read the record of this debate. I make it very clear that it is a responsibility of government to review and evaluate the legislation it passes to ensure it is effective and meeting the needs and demands of the community.

I turn to the issues raised in debate on the bill. I acknowledge the shadow Minister, and member for Willoughby, for his thoughtful remarks and for the Opposition's support for the new arrangements, including the composition of the advisory group. Work health and safety should be a bipartisan concern, and I was encouraged

to hear the member restate his commitment to the safety of all workers. I acknowledge that the member is in the Chamber. He has attended a number of events and I know he is very committed to work health and safety and this public policy. We want to ensure that the new work health and safety legislation endures the tests of time and political colours. Regardless of the government elected, whether it be a Labor government or a Coalition government, safety should be a priority. A Coalition government should not cut and forget and leave the legislation entangled in regulation.

It is important for the Labor Government to listen to all feedback. I have heard what members have said. I acknowledge the member for Mount Druitt for his considered contribution. He noted the importance of the bill in ensuring that SafeWork is a tough and effective regulator. Members, workers and unions have raised with me, first as Opposition spokesperson and now as Minister, that SafeWork is not tough enough and has lost its status. I have been told repeatedly that there is no fear of the regulator. I do not blame the people working for the regulator. There are many great people working for SafeWork NSW. I have great admiration for our inspectors, who do incredible work. The Government has worked with the good people in the agency to restructure and do things better. I inform the House that through that restructuring we have been able to turn things around.

We now have capacity for an additional 48 inspector roles. Those roles have not yet been filled, but the recruitment process is underway. That is some of the deep and meaningful work the Government has done to prioritise at the front end, and to be proactive and engaged with workplaces. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Campbelltown regarding his own background in the road transport industry, and about his lovely son Bailey, who is an electrician. That is a tough and dangerous occupation, which is why there are regulatory codes for the wonderful electricians who do that important work. I know that SafeWork has a good relationship with many of the electricians it deals with. The Government is working in a very cooperative way with the union and the industry to get that right.

I also acknowledge the hardworking member for Blue Mountains. All members are hard working, but from the first time she came to this place in 2015 the member for Blue Mountains has worked with me to advocate very strongly for workers' pay and conditions and to ensure that women are aware of their rights in the workplace, particularly around work health and safety. Her contribution to debate emphasised the importance of implementing the recommendations of the McDougall review. I acknowledge the member for Penrith, who spoke about the unacceptable number of fatalities at work. At its core, this bill is about ensuring that does not continue. The member noted that the Minns Government has demonstrated its seriousness by establishing the portfolio of Work Health and Safety.

I also acknowledge the member for Coogee, who reminded us of the significant risk and damage that occurred nearly one year ago in the Bondi Westfield incident, and the enormous trauma and injury experienced by retail workers. As a former retail worker, the member for Coogee provided a uniquely personal view of the impact of that and other traumatic events. I acknowledge her leadership of her community at that time and now. I acknowledge the member for Shellharbour, who is at the table. She gave a personal account of her family's experiences and her upbringing. As a young child, she attended funerals for people who had been killed at work on the waterfront. That would have been very traumatic, as the member has relayed on a number of occasions. It is significant that she is here as part of the Labor Government making this change, which is informed by our own experiences and the experiences of our families.

The member for Shellharbour outlined the terrible working conditions that her dad, grandfather and uncles endured. We should never forget the sacrifices made by men and women 30, 40 and 50 years ago. They sacrificed their bread and butter—money for their families—so that important workplace conditions were improved and people who were progressing infrastructure and the Australian economy were not killed. There were many fatalities on building projects and, from those sacrifices, we are here today to say that one death is too many. That is why we are making these changes. I acknowledge the member for Parramatta, who spoke of the importance of the bill to her electorate and how it will allow SafeWork to better achieve its regulatory priorities, which she outlined. The member for Parramatta is absolutely right.

I acknowledge the member for Leppington. He too is a new member with a large and growing community of itinerant casual workers in insecure work, particularly gig workers. As the local member, he has had to deal with a number of families of gig workers who have been impacted through serious injury and who need strong advocacy. As the member said, the Government will soon bring forward a bill with respect to changes for gig workers. I also acknowledge the member for Blacktown and thank him for his leadership not only as the local member but also as the former Mayor of Blacktown. He has been a strong workplace safety advocate not only for the thousands of council workers in greater Western Sydney but also as a former union official who had to confront fatalities in workplaces and deal with the families and, as he outlined, the paltry fines that were issued to the companies involved. We could talk about this important topic all day, but we have other business to consider.

I am proud of the Minns Labor Government. This bill represents the Government's commitment to building a stronger, more reliable and independent work health and safety regulator. The bill is a culmination of years of work in opposition by members of the Labor caucus, and I acknowledge those members of the caucus who have worked day and night, moving and debating motions at Sydney Town Hall. I thank the many union members who fought strongly and the people whose family members have died. I have mentioned those people in the past. In my second reading speech, I mentioned Dave White. I met him a few years ago. He lost his young son, a young man with his whole life ahead of him. But it is not just him; many young people have died at work. As I said, every death is devastating for families and communities. I pay tribute to all those who have fought for this change.

This reform should be bipartisan. It is about everyone across New South Wales. I thank the Secretary of Unions NSW, Mark Morey, and the union movement. I also thank Business NSW and Elizabeth Greenwood. I thank Marija Polic from the Parliamentary Counsel's Office, who drafted this bill. I understand this is Marija's first bill. I thank her for her work and wish her a long career in the meaningful and important work of drafting the State's legislation. Of course, I thank my incredible, hardworking ministerial staff. We have been working very hard on this. The bill is a culmination of a lot of work over many hours. Of course, I thank our departmental liaison officers as well.

This bill is a significant step forward in the history of work health and safety in this State. At its core is making work health and safety function again in New South Wales. The reason this is so important, as we argued so strongly last year when we passed industrial manslaughter legislation in this place, is that every worker deserves to go to work and return home safely. This bill is another step in that mission. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

Motion agreed to.

BAIL AMENDMENT (EXTENSION OF LIMITATION ON BAIL IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES) BILL 2025

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 19 February 2025.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:45): Although we have seen a large number of short, inconsequential bills come from this Government, the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025 is a short but very important bill. The original bill inserted section 22C into the Bail Act, with a 12-month sunset clause. The second reading speech was given by the Attorney General about 12 months ago, on 12 March 2024. The original bill introduced a new test under section 22C that the bail authority must not grant bail to offenders between the ages of 14 and 18 charged with motor theft or serious break and enter offences committed while on bail for another offence unless the bail authority has a "high degree of confidence" that the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail.

The test of "high degree of confidence" is a test that still has to be developed in terms of what it means, with several Supreme Court judges observing unfavourably that it is a test that is not known to the law. In legal circles, for the judiciary to say something is not known to the law is usually not a flattering observation. In his 2024 second reading speech the Attorney General made it clear that the new bail test for young repeat offenders "has been approached cautiously". The Attorney General said:

> That is why this change is time-limited and specifically targeted at young people who are already alleged to have committed at least one relevant offence whilst on bail for another relevant offence.

In the second reading speech in 2024, the Attorney General said:

> The provision will sunset after 12 months, with an evaluation to take place at the end of that period.

In his 2025 second reading speech on this bill, which seeks to extend the sunset clause of this new bail provision until 4 April 2028, the Attorney General did not suggest what the results of that evaluation have been. There was no reference at all to crime data and the impact of section 22C on the relevant offences, on different localities or on youth crime offending. The closest we got to an evaluation was a concession that section 22C does not appear to have worked as the Government wanted. In his second reading speech on this bill, the Attorney General said:

> … the extension is intended to keep the additional bail test in place and keep the community safe while efforts continue across government to reduce youth crime through therapeutic and community-based solutions that aim to minimise a young person's contact with the criminal justice system over the longer term. Additional funding is being allocated to further develop and expand these programs.

Last year the Opposition sought to amend the 2024 bill to require reporting by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR], which is the New South Wales government criminal data research agency. The Opposition wanted BOCSAR to report data about the operation of section 22C and related matters, including the number of relevant offences committed; the number of offences committed by 10- to 14-year-olds, 14- to 18-year-olds and people under the age of 10; and whether the relevant person or other individuals referred to were on bail at the time the relevant offences were alleged to have been committed. The Opposition wanted all that minute data, which is not generally publicly available, reported in a timely fashion at regular intervals. It is a shame that the provision of that data was not supported by the Government, The Greens and the Independents, as we would have a lot more information about how the statutory changes have operated over the past 12 months.

The Opposition will again seek the provision of government data to the Parliament on how section 22C is operating. We hope that the Government, The Greens and the crossbench will support us as members of Parliament, and the broader community, to provide transparency on how the Government's only youth crime legislative initiative is operating. That was opposed by the Government on the basis that it was said to be only a 12-month provision. However, 12 months later the Government has no data to reveal and is asking for another three years for the provisions to apply. In the Attorney General's second reading speech on the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024, he said that section 22C would:

> … work in tandem with a suite of measures and supports that aim to provide therapeutic and community-based solutions to address offending behaviour and support regional communities so that they can continue to support and care for their young people.

We can all agree that the best youth crime response is to prevent it all together. Unfortunately, the problems of youth crime have continued, notwithstanding section 22C and the wraparound services that have been promised by the Government. I am sure that some of the members of the Opposition will make contributions to this debate on the impact of youth crime in their electorates. It is a shame that Government members are unlikely to do the same. Recently, Daniel McNamara was tragically killed while riding his motorcycle after he was struck by a vehicle allegedly driven by a 14-year-old. One of the passengers in the vehicle was a youth who was on bail. The youth crime occurring around this State is not limited to impacts on the broader community, and the lives of young people are put at risk. In another recent incident, a 17-year-old teenager was killed and the other passengers aged 16, 14 and 13 were seriously injured in a high-speed crash. The vehicle was allegedly stolen. Each of the boys in the vehicle were known to police.

The problems of increasing youth crime since the State election is not limited to just Moree. The problem is happening all over the State. It is happening in metropolitan areas, including in my electorate. A new Instagram page taunts the Ku-ring-gai Police Area Command with post-and-boast crimes, including break and enter offences and videos of young offenders riding in stolen vehicles. One post brags about stabbing an innocent shopper at Hornsby Westfield two weeks ago. The current situation around the State clearly requires constant reviewing and monitoring by this Parliament. It is not a sufficient response for the Government to take scrutiny of its response under section 22C away from Parliament for three years with a sunset clause until April 2028. The Opposition will move amendments to make the sunset clause end on 1 October 2026, about 2½ years after it first came into operation, for evaluation and possible extension by Parliament again. That is an appropriate time to let the Government's wraparound services operate and for us to assess data on the operation of section 22C, if the Government, The Greens and Independents support the provision of that data.

With respect to how the courts are applying the high degree of confidence test for the granting of bail, it is fair to say there has been some unwillingness to apply it and refuse bail in a manner that was, perhaps, not intended by the Government last year. Decisions like *R v TW* [2024] NSWSC 1504, *R v BH* [2024] NSWSC 1577, *R v TB* [2025] NSWSC 38 and *R v JS* [2025] NSWSC 116 show a judicial opposition to the fact that a different and harder test is in place for children between the ages of 14 and 18 than applies to adults, even on a show-cause offence under the Bail Act. The result is that Supreme Court judges are being satisfied on a review of bail that they have a high degree of confidence under section 22C that an indictable offence will not be committed on bail with appropriate conditions. It is a usual condition of bail granted by the Supreme Court decisions if the matter falls under section 22C for there to be either home detention or at least a curfew between the hours of 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. If the courts are going to continue to give bail in circumstances covered by section 22C in a significant number of cases, then the Government should be doing everything it can in the interests of community safety to ensure that the conditions are complied with.

To that end, the Opposition will move amendments to require that, in the event that bail is granted for a section 22C offence because the bail authority has a high degree of confidence that the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence on bail: first, in the interests of community safety, there must be a curfew on

the relevant young person between the hours of 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m.; and, secondly, the young person must be subject to electronic monitoring in relation to the enforcement of the bail condition imposing a curfew in any other relevant bail conditions. It is to be remembered that the Government introduced this legislation for the most serious offences. Therefore, if bail is to be granted to serious offenders, then it is not unreasonable that public safety is protected by the use of ankle monitoring to ensure that the conditions of bail are complied with.

Electronic monitoring of youth offenders is used in many Australian jurisdictions. Electronic monitoring has dramatically reduced re-offending in domestic violence parole cases as measured by BOCSAR, the New South Wales crime data agency. It is reasonable to think that a similar result would be achieved with regard to the re-offending rates by young persons with a history of committing serious break and enter or motor theft offences. Electronic monitoring has more recently been introduced for bail granted in domestic violence offences where the Government followed the private member's bill brought forward by the Opposition. The introduction of electronic monitoring is a further support to judges who grant bail to enforce the conditions that they impose, as the court would no doubt want. Courts do not make orders without them wanting and expecting those orders to be complied with, and conditions of bail fall into that category.

The bail granted under section 22C will be revoked under the proposed Opposition amendments in one of three circumstances: first, the failure to comply with bail conditions; secondly, the young person being charged with another crime; or, thirdly, any interference with the electronic monitoring device. In order to ensure that this revocation operates properly, bail can be granted again if the breach of bail was a very trivial breach, like exceeding the curfew by only a few minutes or if there are other exceptional circumstances. It is a privilege for repeat serious offenders to be granted bail having regard to the seriousness of their offences. By having clear consequences for their reoffending, the Opposition believes that the existing laws, with the Opposition amendments, will be tailored more in favour of community safety.

We have had the opportunity to see how the legislation is being interpreted by the courts, how it is operating in practice and whether there has been an acceptable reduction in crime. The Opposition amendments address what we now know 12 months down the track in order to better protect the community. I hope that my observations are helpful to both Government and crossbench members. I hope they will support these sensible Opposition amendments, which will not change the intent of the Government's legislation but enhance community safety. I expect that other Opposition members will contribute to this important debate.

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

Public Interest Debate

TROPICAL CYCLONE ALFRED

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (17:00): I move:

That this House:

(1) Acknowledges the communities impacted by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

(2) Commends the extraordinary preparation of communities in northern New South Wales who are still recovering from flooding and other disasters in recent years.

(3) Commends the courage, selflessness and service of volunteer organisations the NSW State Emergency Service, NSW Rural Fire Service, Australian Defence Force, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Police Force, Marine Rescue NSW, VRA Rescue NSW, Surf Life Saving NSW, and all emergency services workers and agencies.

I hope this important public interest debate is not a debate but a lovely conversation about some of the extraordinary things that people in the northern part of the State have lived through over the past couple of weeks. It was lovely that on Sunday the last of the flood warnings in northern New South Wales were rescinded. That is an important point, because now we move from the response phase to the recovery phase. Over the course of the past week, the Premier, Minister Saffin and I have spoken about the importance of making sure that transition is seamless.

Members can imagine the things that were running through my mind when I first found out about Tropical Cyclone Alfred. The most important thought was, "What are we going to do about it?" We needed to prepare for the worst and hope for the best. I particularly acknowledge the emergency service organisations for their efforts. I also acknowledge all the local representatives in the north of the State, including the member for Ballina; the member for Tweed; the member for Clarence; the Minister for Recovery and Minister for the North Coast, the member for Lismore; as well as all the local mayors in the area. When I was at Casuarina Beach with the member

for Tweed, he told me about a whale that had washed up. I was not expecting a whale to wash up, but it was that sort of weekend. I was wearing a yellow jacket, which was probably a bit too bright. It did the trick and helped me a great deal when the power went out and there were no lights.

After natural disasters we often talk about the heroic and courageous things that people do, but this Government will also use statistics to review what could have been done better. In a situation when a tropical cyclone is bearing down in a part of the State for the first time since the 1990s, all the stops needed to be pulled out. To that point, as the Premier spoke about earlier today, the SES worked on the pre-deployment. Let us not be under any illusions that the SES has struggled since the 2022 floods, after which there was an incredible rebuild of the organisation. I acknowledge the work of the former Government in that respect. From the moment I became the Minister for Emergency Services I have talked about what could be done with regard to interoperability, using knowledge of our skills and having the courage to do things. Under the leadership of Commissioner Wassing and his predecessors, Acting Commissioner Debbie Platz and Commissioner Carlene York, we have been able to make a difference.

But it is not just about the SES; it is also about all the emergency support agencies that came together. When the Premier first arrived and saw all the work that was being done, we sensed the difference in the level of comfort that people on the ground felt. Let us not forget that they are still recovering from what happened almost three years ago to the day. I am looking at members of affected electorates. People talk about communities in the north of the State being resilient, but they have been through an incredible amount. Last week they saw a government that had their back, where the Premier and Ministers joined local MPs not on party lines but to talk about what they could do for the community, and they worked hard to find good resolutions. I will talk more about that in my speech in reply.

The response included an absolutely staggering 650,000 sandbags, 14,000 calls for assistance, 7,600 incidents and 90 flood rescues. I remember someone rang me and said, "We don't have enough sandbags." I said, "Mate, we've done over half a million sandbags." I saw incredible images of people in the community working together and helping each other by lifting things to a higher level. Etched in the faces of people was a trauma that cannot be described unless it is seen. There was fear and anxiety but also a steely resolve to get through. I saw that no more than when I bought a cup of coffee from the mayor of Lismore's pub. The cup said on it, "Have hope". I think that was one of the last cups of coffee he was able to make before he shut down.

With the indulgence of members, I have to tell one funny story. I am a big fan of camping, so when we went up to the area I went prepared. I took my special flashlight torch and my waterproof jackets. With all respect to the Premier, who showed the most extraordinary leadership during this crisis, I would not necessarily rely on him when camping. He took his little torch and whatever else. When the power went out on the Thursday, we thought we had better get some food. A couple of people went off and found some food. I thought that with no power we might need something to cook on, so I had brought a butane cooker. The Premier and his colleagues laughed at me, but when the power went out I had my head torch and all they had were some candles. Worse still, the candles were gardenia-scented soy-based candles. Apparently they were the only ones they could get. I questioned whether we were trying to stay out of the cyclone or were there for a yoga retreat. I was not 100 per cent sure. I will have more to say about this.

The inspiration of people is what keeps me going. Members come into this place to tell people's stories. We saw the best of people up and down the coast during this disaster. I was in regular contact with colleagues from across the aisle, including the shadow Minister, and all government agencies worked together. This proves that when things hit the fan the Government needs to be there, and we were all there together.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I apologise to soy candle lovers across the State!

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:07): Tropical lows, east coast lows and low pressure systems are not uncommon in northern New South Wales. Most years a few lows develop that drop a couple of hundred millimetres of rain and bring heavy winds. We will see minor to moderate flooding, and probably some flash flooding, but a cyclone is rare. The last time I remember a cyclone crossing the coast of New South Wales I was in high school. The only reason I remember it is because we were sent home from school early. But they are a very rare occurrence.

From late February there were reports that Tropical Cyclone Alfred could make its way to the New South Wales coast. At first it appeared quite unlikely, and a lot of people were criticising the weather forecasters for fearmongering. But as the event got closer, the predictions firmed up and anxiety on the North Coast ratcheted up to levels that I had not seen in quite some time. A big reason for that is that the community is still recovering physically, emotionally and mentally from the 2022 Northern Rivers floods. As the cyclone tracked south through the Coral Sea, it made an abrupt westward turn towards the coast, exactly as predicted. Expected landfall was

originally forecast to be anywhere between Grafton and the Sunshine Coast, but only later did it firm up that it was going to hit around the Brisbane area.

As our communities waited, their anxiety grew. One great thing about the path of the cyclone slowing down was that it gave our community a lot of time to prepare, so that was one silver lining. Landfall was predicted at various stages. Early on it was potentially going to be on Tuesday 4 March, but it did not actually make landfall until Saturday 8 March. The cyclone impacted every community slightly differently. I will let members speak on behalf of their own communities, but I give a special mention to some of the members whom I have worked very closely with.

The member for Tweed spent 48 hours without power but continued to work tirelessly on behalf of his community. The member for Clarence was cut off for days inside his property but worked in support of his community all the way through. The member for Oxley was also cut off in his property but continued to work in support of his community. Some parts of the Coffs Harbour electorate had over one metre of rain in a few days, with Brooklana having the most. Heavy winds knocked over farm sheds before most of the State had even started to feel the impacts of the cyclone. That heavy rain made its way into our river systems, which then caused flooding along the Orara River. Many people were cut off and all schools remained closed for three school days—five days in total. Some parts of my electorate between Arrawarra and Corindi were issued with evacuation alerts as the water rose rapidly on the weekend, and an evacuation centre was stood up for a few days.

The motion is about thanking the thousands of volunteers, emergency service personnel, and Defence Force and government agency staff who worked around the clock to keep our communities safe. Coffs Harbour was a pre-deployment and staging venue for many of the agencies and emergency services, and so we saw firsthand the commitment and bravery of those who were headed into harm's way. It really represents the best of our Australian culture that we can all pull together to help each other through tough times like this. As was said earlier today in the House, the response built on the learnings from the 2022 Northern Rivers floods. There will be many more learnings and refinements to come from this event as well.

There were some important learnings in my community about sandbags. The sandbagging location servicing the Orara Valley was unfortunately in the centre of Coffs Harbour, and people were driving for 25 minutes each way to get sandbags. The mayor and I were able to set up a sandbag point at Nana Glen. I thank the Coffs Harbour SES for providing the sandbags and the City of Coffs Harbour for providing the sand. It is to the immense credit of the council, under the leadership of Mayor Nikki Williams, that it passed a resolution to make more sandbag points and to make improvements to the existing sandbag points. There are also important learnings around the support provided by governments after a natural disaster. The community expects support to be rolled out quickly. That has happened, but some communities have missed out.

For example, I have been working on getting the Coffs Harbour local government area included in many of the supports that are available, including the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment. The local government areas to the north and south are currently included but we are not, despite being on the same river system and suffering the same flood. Those processes need to improve, and the Opposition is willing to work with the Government to streamline them where required. The emergency services could use more volunteers, of all ages and abilities. I thank everyone who volunteered or worked on the North Coast during this emergency from the bottom of my heart, including volunteers from the SES, RFS, Marine Rescue and the Australian Red Cross. I move:

That the motion be amended in paragraph (3) by inserting the words "Australian Red Cross" after "Surf Life Saving NSW".

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:13): First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt thoughts to all the communities across northern New South Wales that have been impacted by, or are expected to be impacted by, Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. There is also pain in expecting to be impacted. Preparing for the devastation caused by weather events can leave lasting physical and emotional scars, and it is crucial that all communities across New South Wales receive the Government's full support as they recover and rebuild from yet another challenge. I also extend my heartfelt acknowledgement to the local members for what they and their communities went through, and in particular the members representing the electorates of Lismore, Ballina, Tweed, Clarence, Coffs Harbour and Oxley. My community is more likely to suffer bushfires, but I know only too well that needing to step up for the community while living on high alert and in a constant state of anxiety takes great courage.

Even when they are absolutely exhausted and do not think they can get their hands on the resources needed, those members still have to pull their shoulders back and hold their heads up to support their communities. Despite the frequent challenges that have plagued communities in the northern New South Wales region in recent years, I am in absolute awe of what the member for Lismore calls their resolve. She and I have difficulty with the word "resilience", which is churned out time and again, but I am in awe of the resolve shown by the people of northern New South Wales. As has been stated, many are still recovering from previous floods and natural disasters, and

yet they continue to demonstrate incredible preparedness and fortitude. The level of community preparedness and the response in dealing with the aftermath has been nothing short of extraordinary. It is a testament to the strength and the spirit of communities when they pull together to face the crises and what comes afterwards.

The purpose of this motion is to acknowledge the bravery and dedication of the volunteers and paid emergency service workers who tirelessly serve our communities. They did so recently and will continue to do so on every such occasion. I acknowledge the work of the State Emergency Service, Rural Fire Service, Australian Defence Force, Fire and Rescue NSW, NSW Police Force and NSW Ambulance. I was getting a few briefings from my son, who was busy in the incident management team of NSW Ambulance. As a former firefighter, he knows only too well the importance of making sure that resources are ready. I also acknowledge the work of Surf Life Saving, Marine Rescue, VRA Rescue and all of the other emergency services and government agency staff. Our thanks cannot be overstated. They show courage, selflessness and a commitment to keeping communities safe and providing information, whether it is the act of rescuing people from floodwaters or just working around the clock to ensure that people have information. Acknowledging their unwavering service is the purpose of the motion.

What did the Government do in response to the cyclone? As the Premier said, we prepared for the worst and hoped for the best. The SES led a multi-agency response, with nearly 3½ thousand volunteers responding to nearly 7½ thousand incidents, including 88 flood rescues. Government agencies, including Homes NSW and lots of local government organisations, set up 25 evacuation centres across the region. Nearly 2,000 people registered for assistance at those centres, and nearly 500 community members were supported with emergency accommodation. The mobile recovery team is still in place, and I extend my thanks to all those who continue to work to support affected communities.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:18): I make a contribution to debate on what I believe is a very important event that occurred. I praise the Minister for Emergency Services for bringing the motion before the Parliament. As we all know, this was a major event. On the Tuesday and Wednesday, the electorate of Tweed was virtually in the crosshairs. The Bureau of Meteorology was saying we could have anything up to 800 millimetres of rain and 150 kilometres per hour winds. In our seas at that time, we recorded waves just over 15 metres tall. It was looking very grim. Having lived through seven of these, the difference now was that we had sufficient warning. We bagged over 6,000 sandbags within the Tweed.

Mr Jihad Dib: You did it by yourself.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Well, I did one. We raided the toilet paper in the supermarket. We raided Dan Murphy's, because that is important in any type of natural disaster.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): Do they sell toilet paper?

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: It is as important as toilet paper. I, too, am in awe of the SES and other government agencies. The big difference with this one was the wind factor. At one stage on the Thursday and Friday, there were around 7,000 home sites without power in the Tweed. Many of those spent five to six days without power. That was a major issue. Unfortunately, a lot of massive trees blew down and took out major powerlines. We are pretty resilient on the North Coast. The member for Ballina, the member for Lismore and I lived through COVID. We lived through the floods in 2022, and now we have lived through the floods in 2025. We put politics aside and we work for the betterment of the local community.

I praise the Premier and the Minister. We had a conga line of Ministers coming through, which was very welcome, including Rose Jackson, the Minister for Roads and so on. It was really good to see the ability of the Premier to relate to the normal people, particularly Jihad, although he kept calling him Ji Ji. That is a nickname I could not get over. We had enough people come. At one stage there were 700 Essential Energy workers. They would start at seven in the morning and finish at seven in the evening. It was an amazing effort from everyone.

Our beaches and our nature got absolutely smashed. There were escarpments of three or four metres washed out to sea with those waves. The Mayor of the Gold Coast put out a claim that he is going to restore the beaches for Easter, for the tourism season. I put out the following claim: We have the excess sand that I have been trying to get dredged out of the Tweed River. I have plenty of sand. Tom Tate can come here and take it back to the Gold Coast. He will pay a fee. I just need the Treasurer to waive the royalty on sand moving across the border. Even my family got involved. My sister-in-law from Nowra—

Ms Liza Butler: Ulladulla.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Sorry, Ulladulla. She is one of the leading lights, with over 40 years in the SES.

Ms Liza Butler: Fifty.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: Fifty. It is my sister-in-law. She was in Grafton. There were other colleagues, including the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Oxley and the member for Clarence. We all rang each other and supported each other. I also thank the Sydney-based colleagues who rang me or sent a message to say, "How are you going?" It is pretty emotional. Always, with these disasters, the next part is the important part. This is the emotional one. The next is like a second tsunami coming; we can see it. We have all the insurance companies, and the rubber meets the road when the hydrologist says that it is not floodwater but rainwater, inundation and so on. The Government did an excellent job of standing behind everyone. We are lucky. Up the road, Springbrook got 1,200 millimetres of rain, when we only got 480. We were lucky this time. I thank everyone. I thank the Government and all the volunteers; we really appreciate their effort.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (17:23): I know only too well what it is like to go through a natural disaster. I also know that how a government responds will determine not only how well a community fares but also how well they will recover. There are three key stages to any natural disaster: preparedness, response and recovery. The SES-led response was exceptional and made me proud to be part of a government that has worked hard to ensure that our response to communities in times of disaster is the absolute best it can be, as we have heard today.

The SES and other agencies were pre-positioned in communities expected to be impacted by the event, and regularly updated communities about the risks in their area, whether it was online, via TV and radio, or on the ground in communities. I take this opportunity to thank Minister Dib, Minister Saffin and the Premier for being on the ground and for all the work that was put in to ensure that the region and the communities affected were so well prepared and supported before, during and after the natural disaster. I also thank all the local MPs, who were also on the ground with their communities under very difficult circumstances.

That was in direct contrast to my experience in December 2019, when communities were not prepared for what was coming and were not supported during the fire, and the recovery was a long, drawn-out process. In fact, when I requested the assistance of other emergency response agencies, I was told, "Stop making a fuss. Community is not our problem." That is the reason I am standing here today. That is why I was so pleased that, in addition to the SES, agencies involved in the response included the RFS, Fire and Rescue, Marine Rescue, Surf Life Saving and VRA Rescue, as well as NSW Ambulance, the NSW Police Force and the Australian Defence Force [ADF]. In total there were 620 personnel from partner agencies and more than 300 ADF personnel supporting the response. I thank everyone who responded and all our volunteers on the ground.

Even while we were still in response mode, we were already focused on preparing for recovery. The NSW Reconstruction Authority acted quickly and appointed Superintendent Scott Tanner as the recovery coordinator for the region. His immediate focus is on roads, rubbish and resupplying communities. From Thursday 13 March, four recovery assistance points, or RAPs, opened in the Tweed, Coffs Harbour, Lismore and Ballina. The RAPs will include the Reconstruction Authority and other partner organisations, including Services Australia, Legal Aid and St Vincent de Paul, among others. Additional RAPs are being opened in Maclean and Grafton.

The Minns Government understands that natural disasters—whether bushfires, floods or storms—leave behind more than just physical destruction. Their impact is deeply felt across communities, affecting lives, livelihoods and the environment. Recovery after such events is about not just rebuilding structures but also restoring communities and ensuring resilience for the future. In response, the Government has activated disaster assistance for those hardest impacted. Individuals can apply for a $180 hardship payment, capped at $900 for a family of five or more. The payment can help to cover the cost of food, medicine and clothing lost because of Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. That is real relief for families and individuals who were evacuated or lost power for two days or more. I encourage anyone who wants to apply for that assistance to do so through Service NSW or at one of the recovery assistance points.

The Australian Government has also activated financial support for affected communities through the Disaster Recovery Allowance, which offers up to 13 weeks of income support for workers and sole traders who have lost income due to the cyclone. Additionally, the Australian Government has activated the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment for people located in the local government areas of Ballina, Tweed, Byron and Lismore, as well as the two locations of Yamba and Lillian Rock. That program offers residents a one-off $1,000 grant per eligible adult and $400 per eligible child. Further, the New South Wales and Australian governments have activated $15 million in special funding for northern New South Wales councils. That Community Recovery Support Fund will provide councils with up to $1 million to undertake essential clean-up for assets that are not normally eligible for disaster recovery funding.

Our hearts are with the people of northern New South Wales. In the face of devastation, loss and hardship, their strength and resilience shine through. We recognise that the road to recovery is long, but the New South Wales Government's actions show its commitment to supporting impacted communities to get back on their feet as quickly as possible. The support of neighbours, volunteers, emergency workers and everyday heroes is already

proving that when we stand together, we can rebuild not just our homes but also our lives, our businesses and our sense of hope.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (17:28): I begin my contribution to the Public Interest Debate by acknowledging Government members, all the way from the top down, who were in contact with me more than once over the emergency, and have been in contact with me as we move into recovery. I thank the Minister, who was very genuine in his concern for my community and for my neighbouring communities. The Premier also called me and expressed the same concern. Members from both sides of the House have reached out to me over the past 10 days or so when it was very much a case of prepare for the worst and hope for the best. I say in this House what I also said in my community: I support that action because when we do not prepare, we know the worst will come. That is what happened in 2022. The Parliament, the Government and our communities have learnt a lot in the last couple of years.

My electorate is one of or the most natural disaster declared electorates in Australia. We are ready for emergencies, but recently we were anxious and nervous and some of us were scared. That is a perfectly natural response considering what happened in 2022. The people who had those feelings of course have my full support as we move through the next recovery phase, and I am sure I speak on behalf of this House when I say they have the Parliament's support as well. In addition to the organisations referred to in the Minister's motion, I acknowledge the work of Local Land Services, local government employees, Essential Energy crews, the Salvation Army, the Red Cross and Anglicare North Coast. I too have entered the dangerous area of missing out some people, so I put the catch-all: I thank everybody who helped in my community.

I was very much heartened by the 400,000 sandbags that turned up until I thought, "I'm in trouble if I need them", but at least it was good to know that they were there. As we move through the next phase of recovery, I must point out that, while the major towns were spared, villages and the rural sector in my electorate were not. Just today the last isolated community had its road reopened. The message is that, for those people, the emergency ended only today, which means they need support. It would be remiss of me not to mention the agricultural industry that has taken the brunt of the ex-tropical cyclone. For the sugarcane industry, if it was not the winds, it was the flood that followed. The soybean crop in my electorate has all but been completely wiped out. The macadamia farms that had just started their harvest have lost tonnes and tonnes. The beef industry, the fishing industry and the timber industry have all suffered.

I urge the Government to ensure that those industries are not forgotten in the recovery. They need a handout, a hand up and government support. There will be lessons learnt. By telling this story, I hope we can still improve evacuation centres. They were welcome but were not totally perfect in my electorate. That is not a criticism and I hope it is not taken as one. There is work to be done. The bureau's information and messaging can be improved by including levee heights as well as making major flood predictions. All in all, I congratulate the volunteers. I congratulate the Government on its preparedness and response. Most of all, I thank my community of Clarence for the way they dealt with this emergency.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:33): I contribute to the public interest debate and note The Greens support for the motion moved by the Minister for Emergency Services. I draw to the attention of all my parliamentary colleagues that yet again we saw absolute bipartisanship. As the member for Tweed said, we are becoming quite experienced at bipartisanship. It was interesting that a couple of new representatives displayed a bit of ego, but that soon disappeared as the reality of trying to lead and support communities through disasters hit home. I am grateful that the impact of Tropical Cyclone Alfred was not more significant. As the member for Ballina, I am in awe of my community. Their level of preparedness and stoic commitment not just in protecting themselves and their families but also their neighbours, strangers and visitors was remarkable.

I could tell so many stories of countless acts of kindness, concern and support that occurred not just in my neighbourhood. I felt so proud and at times I became very emotional, not because of the fear—although, as the member for Clarence said, it was a post-traumatic stress disorder feeling—but because of the bitter sweetness of incredible acts of kindness by people in our community. When we talk about resilience, we know from all the evidence around the world that social infrastructure, how we connect and how people are with each other is equidistant to how they thrive and survive in these events. I have said many times that my community believes it is at the front line of global warming impacts and we are adapting in real time. Being at the forefront of welcoming volunteers who came from the regions and other parts of the State, and those who responded as part of combat agencies and emergency responders, I was gobsmacked because everyone went into gear straightaway.

Those procedures are excellent. I thank the relevant Ministers. As soon as the Bureau of Meteorology made it clear that the cyclone would affect our region, I believe everything shifted into gear. It was truly remarkable to see those procedures in place. I thank all of those volunteers. The member for Newtown asked me to give a shout-out specifically to SES volunteers from Marrickville and the City of Sydney, who came up absolute champions. I also thank the Premier for his support, his hands-on approach, for reaching out to me straightaway

and, quite frankly, for his kindness. I thank all the Ministers. Their attention was very welcome and supportive. My colleagues and I felt very supported. I also thank the members who reached out to us because it meant a lot. I do not think I do that enough to my colleagues, so I will try to work on that.

The Reconstruction Authority was incredible and I commend the CEO, Mal Lanyon, and all the teams. This was a litmus test of where they are at and I feel that the test was a huge success. Many people in my community were given evacuation orders. I thank the Mullumbimby RSL, the Ocean Shores Country Club, and the Southern Cross Public School in East Ballina for generously opening their doors as evacuation centres. I also thank the Mullumbimby and District Neighbourhood Centre staff for going above and beyond to ensure that evacuees were fed and cared for. I know that was not easy.

As we know, not everything was perfect, but we have all taken note of what needs to be refined and improved. As mentioned, the evacuation centres already had very high numbers of rough sleepers and we know what that meant for them—for example, they need more security staff. I feel very confident that we can refine that. Essential Energy was absolutely incredible in relation to power outages, but we need to have conversations about long-term power outages as disaster events continue. I am incredibly proud of everyone, but this is the future. We must continue to refine our processes and resource the important work of the Reconstruction Authority in adapting our communities so we can survive and thrive on a warming planet. There is no doubt in the minds of our people that this is what we are in. Hearing little children speaking about going through blackouts made me cry.

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:39): By leave: I contribute to the public interest debate about Tropical Cyclone Alfred and the many positives that came out of it. From the moment the warnings about Alfred came through, our State Emergency Service, New South Wales police, Marine Rescue and all the other emergency agencies began preparing. Their response was nothing short of immaculate. Whether it was pre-deploying personnel and assets, sandbagging to protect properties, doorknocking to ensure that vulnerable residents were informed and safe, setting up evacuation centres or briefing community representatives regularly, those dedicated individuals worked tirelessly day and night to ensure the safety and security of everyone in the affected communities.

A key piece of the response effort was the accurate and timely modelling provided by our local SES and State representatives. Their precise flood predictions, when coupled with local knowledge, gave the accurate information I needed to keep my community informed and prepared. That level of detailed planning and communication is time consuming and rare, but it was a small price to pay for being adequately prepared. I thank the SES Commissioner, Mike Wassing, for coming on a tour of the Macleay Valley during the flooding. It was an opportunity to show him firsthand the challenges our area faces, particularly with regard to gauge outages and the impact that inaccurate or missing data can have on our flood response efforts. With up to 1,400 millimetres of rain at one site in my electorate, inaccurate or missing data can significantly delay evacuations, misdirect resources and leave communities vulnerable to further harm. It is imperative that the Government ensures the operation of our remote predictive flood gauges to prevent dangerous occurrences.

I share a story of a call I got early one morning during the peak of the flooding. It was a local police officer, who said, "Michael, I know you live up in that isolated area. Would you mind checking on someone for me?" I went to the lady's house and yelled out. She was on the floor and could not get up. She was a very unwell person. I rang 000 and explained the situation. I could not do anything. I was able to get her back onto her bed but I had no way of getting her out. The 000 operator told me that the ambulance and SES could not get there. I told them a couple of ways and they kept trying. Eventually they went back and got a specialist high-clearance vehicle and were able to get across two hours before the creek rose again and became too high for the vehicle. The SES crew and I tried to work out what to do. We ended up doing a blanket transfer into my car because the lady could not get into the high-clearance vehicle. I navigated them out through the bush and back up to the top. In the end, we got her out to an ambulance in a couple of hours and to hospital.

That would not have been achievable without the high-clearance vehicle and the SES members who came from the Central Coast. The hairs on the back of my neck are standing up. It would not have been achievable within six hours because the helicopters could not fly and we could not get anyone in. I have to commend the people who travelled from out of area, the SES and the emergency response in general. It shows just how vital it is to have hands-on volunteers and dedicated emergency services who are willing to do whatever it takes to help others. We saw volunteers step up, respond, rescue and resupply. Those volunteers sacrificed their time, energy and safety to ensure that our community was prepared and safe.

While these emergencies test us at the time of threat, our farmers and primary producers are now facing the difficult task of rebuilding after Cyclone Alfred. When it comes to rural communities and primary producers, the support is not yet there. Our farmers are not just dealing with the aftermath of floodwaters; they are confronting washed-out fences, lost crops and damaged infrastructure. At this stage there is no targeted support package to

help them recover, no assistance for fence repair or grants to help them rebuild. It is not about handouts; it is about giving our farmers the tools they need to get back on their feet and keep producing the food, the fibre and the energy that sustain us all.

Despite the best efforts of our agencies like the SES, council and others, the damage to our waterways and creek banks is once again evident. While our State was fortunate that the event was less impactful than predicted, the reality of creek bank erosion is a recurrent, worsening problem that we must address. In New South Wales there is excessive red tape, with over six different government departments involved in riparian repair. This complexity and cost—upwards of $20,000 just to get the approvals—prevent farmers from taking action to protect their land. We need a simple, streamlined process that allows landholders to stabilise and repair their waterways without jumping through multiple bureaucratic hoops.

I have been hearing from Ministers in Queensland and will be researching with other domestic and international government heads to learn how they have successfully supported landholders with post-flood riparian repair. I will bring the lessons learned from my study back to this Parliament. I ask that the Government consider making Special Disaster Grants of up to $75,000 for riverbank and creek repairs. That would ensure a cost-effective, streamlined approval process that empowers farmers to act swiftly and protect the environment around them, and assist farmers with practical support for repairs to fences, infrastructure and riparian areas.

Our communities are resilient, but they can only do so much on their own. The people I represent—farmers, families and small business owners—do not expect the Government to do everything for them, but they do expect timely and fair support when disaster strikes. I again say a massive thank you to the SES crews, both local and out of area, the volunteers and all the other emergency services workers and agencies—I will not try to name them because I will miss one—who all played a vital role in keeping our communities safe.

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (17:44): In reply: I thank members for their contributions. It was inspiring to sit and listen as every one of them spoke about their lived experiences. I really appreciate it. Whether it was the shadow Minister and member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Tweed, the member for South Coast, the member for Clarence, the member for Ballina or the member for Oxley, the same thing rang true: a sense of gratitude for where we have got to. At the outset, I said that I had plenty I could say. We can get into the habit of forgetting and not necessarily thanking people, but I acknowledge Scott Tanner, who acted as a recovery person; Stuart Fisher, who was meant to be there for only a short period with the SES but became the commander; and Mal Lanyon from the NSW Reconstruction Authority.

It would also be remiss of me not to acknowledge the extraordinary leadership of the Premier. I remember saying, "We've got to go" and off we went. Earlier I made light of him not being a camper, but he is a bloody decent human being. He cared, he was compassionate and he is doing everything he possibly can in the recovery. All the points that were raised have been listened to. We made 18 natural disaster declarations for different local government areas. It was an improvement to be able to get natural disaster declarations that quickly to support communities and enable the clean-up. Subsequently, there has been some additional financial support of $180 for individuals or up to $900 for families depending on the local government area and whether there was an evacuation order or a power outage of more than 48 hours. The Federal Government has also offered support and we are obviously still looking at other possibilities.

In terms of numbers, there were 3,500 SES volunteers, over 700 additional emergency service supports, 7,650 incidents, 90 flood rescues and 650,000 sandbags. Usage of the Hazards Near Me app increased by 200 per cent—thank goodness people have started to use it properly. But it is not just about numbers; this is a story about people. It is the triumph of people who stood shoulder to shoulder and supported one another, people who found that their Government was there and that it had learnt from the mistakes of the past, and people who understood what it was like to go through trauma and helped others. It is a story of helping, a story of kindness, a story of people handing out food to others and a story of complete strangers looking after one another.

My most inspiring story is of seeing people come from all parts of the State—up and down the coast and from inland—including Tracy Provest, the sister-in-law of the member for Tweed, who was at Ulladulla High School where I worked many years ago. I saw people from Griffith and Bankstown. We have heard about people coming from the inner west, Marrickville and Newtown. There were people from everywhere and all different walks of life. Like in this debate, we saw incredible compassion and kindness. If we could somehow live our lives in that way, and always be kind, compassionate and caring, we would have a much better world. In conclusion, I thank every single person who put themselves in harm's way to help others. I thank the families and employers who let the volunteers be there. I think we saw the very best of our society, and I hope it inspires us to always be the very best we can be.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): The member for Bankstown has moved a motion, to which the member for Coffs Harbour has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

Community Recognition Statements

MARIJANA NAD

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:49): Communities thrive when dedicated individuals step up, and Marijana Nad is the embodiment of that dedication. As president of the Austral Public School P&C for the past seven years, Marijana has worked tirelessly to support students, teachers and families to ensure the school remains a place of opportunity and growth. Her leadership in the P&C has resulted in tens of thousands of dollars being invested in the school, funding vital resources and securing government grants to improve school grounds and sporting facilities. Beyond fundraising, she plays a crucial role in shaping the school's future by serving on merit selection panels for teachers and executive positions. Marijana's generosity extends far beyond the school gates. She has volunteered at Pink Ribbon fundraisers, contributed to charities like One Meal and continues to support the SWAG Family Sydney. Her selfless service has made a lasting impact, and it is my honour to recognise her as the Leppington Local Woman of the Year for 2025.

I4GIVE FESTIVAL

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:50): The i4Give Festival is a powerful community event inspired by forgiveness. Founded by Danny and Leila Abdallah, the festival grew from a memorial to honour their three children and cousin who lost their lives in a road accident in 2018: Antony, Sienna, Angelina and Veronique. The Abdallah family's incredible act of forgiveness in the face of loss created a movement that has inspired individuals and communities to embrace the power of forgiveness. What began as a tribute to the lives of the Abdallah children has grown into the i4Give Festival. The festival now offers a space for people to come together, reflect on the importance of forgiveness and support one another in times of hardship. We celebrate the strength of Danny, Leila and the Abdallah family, whose message of forgiveness has not only transformed their own lives but also inspired a broader community to embrace peace and understanding. Their story continues to remind us all of the profound impact forgiveness can have on both individuals and communities.

TRIBUTE TO VALERIE KOTLASH

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (17:51): Today I honour and remember Val Kotlash, a woman of strength, determination and unwavering conviction. Val lived life on Val's terms. She never backed down in the face of injustice and left an indelible mark on the world around her. Val was a force to be reckoned with. Val stood up for equality at a time when women's rights were secondary, including in the game of golf. Val refused to accept outdated rules designed to keep women in their place. Val understood the weight of systemic barriers, not only in sports but in every facet of life, from finance to education to health care. Val challenged outdated rules, institutions and those who sought to control women's choices. Fittingly, Val was farewelled by loved ones in Hawaiian shirts and rainbow socks: colourful and full of brightness, just like the life Val lived. Val's legacy reminds us that injustice still exists, and progress must always be defended. The standard you walk past is the standard you accept. In honouring Val, we recommit ourselves to standing up, speaking out and ensuring that future generations inherit a more just and equal world.

JENNY PITHER

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:52): I recognise Forster businesswoman Jenny Pither, who was successful at the Stevie Awards for Women in Business in New York. Jenny, founder of Allied Health Admin and Consulting, brought home two awards: gold for Management Team of the Year at a Women-Owned or -Led Organisation -10 or Less Employees, and silver for Best Female Entrepreneur - Business Services. These awards celebrate the achievements of professionals and organisations globally. Over the years, Jenny has consistently been recognised for her excellence, including being a finalist in the 2021 AusMumpreneur Awards Remote and Rural Business Award, the 2021 VA Institute Virtual Assistant Awards, and the Best Start-Up, MidCoast Business Awards 2018. Jenny is a fantastic example of the talent we have in the Myall Lakes. I congratulate her on her success and representing our community on the world stage.

SHELLHARBOUR ELECTORATE MACEDONIAN COMMUNITY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (17:53): I was deeply saddened to hear of the news yesterday that 59 people had lost their lives in a tragic fire at Club Pulse in Macedonia. This disaster has had an enormous impact on my community as thousands of people from Macedonia and their families currently live in the Illawarra. My entire community stands in solidarity with them in their time of immense grief. My heart goes out to my good friend and Macedonian community leader Councillor Lou Stefanovski, who I have spoken to over the past two days. I have passed on my sympathies and offered my support to all members of the Macedonian community, not only in the Illawarra but also right across Australia. I thank the healthcare workers across Europe who continue to treat the injured. I wish them a speedy recovery. To the families across the world that have lost loved ones, I extend my deepest sympathies on behalf of the Shellharbour community.

LISBETH LAWSEN

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (17:54): Lisbeth Lawsen is an incredible asset to the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter. Having joined the board in 2018, she has demonstrated her compassionate leadership and been integral in pioneering a building that was set for development to be used in the interim as safe and affordable housing for women in need. This sets a blueprint across New South Wales. Lisbeth's commitment to advocating for women's rights, and fostering a sense of community and service, has made a profound impact in our community. Pittwater is deeply grateful for her passion, service and dedication to making a difference.

TRIBUTE TO BARBARA GAUDRY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (17:55): I pay tribute to former City of Newcastle councillor Barbara Gaudry, who sadly passed away earlier this month. Barbara was a wonderful person and a lifelong champion of social justice and equity. Serving as a Labor councillor on the City of Newcastle for nine years, Barbara was unwavering in her commitment to Newcastle. In addition to being one of the driving forces behind the beloved Bathers Way project, Barbara championed compulsory asbestos inspections for all proposed demolitions and alterations to homes and commercial buildings in the city. Barbara, in her professional role at Trades Hall, worked tirelessly for better work health and safety conditions, focusing again on the dangers of asbestos. Following the cancer diagnosis of her late husband Bryce Gaudry, MP, Barbara was also a strong advocate for the need for expanded palliative care services in the Hunter and the legalisation of medicinal cannabis. I will miss her dearly. Newcastle will miss her dearly. Vale, Barbara.

NORA ETMEKDJIAN

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:56): I ask the House to join me in congratulating Nora Etmekdjian on being named the 2025 Ryde Citizen of the Year. Nora has been a driving force behind Ryde's vibrant community spirit for over two decades. As treasurer of the West Ryde Chamber of Commerce, she has transformed the Easter fair into a flagship local event, strengthening connections among businesses and residents alike. Her commitment to service extends even further, whether mobilising volunteers as chair of the Red Shield Appeal or working tirelessly to preserve Ryde's cultural heritage. She has helped make Ryde a more inclusive and connected place through her leadership in civic engagement and safety initiatives. Nora's dedication is not just about the roles she holds but the impact she leaves behind. She inspires all of us who believe in the power of community and giving back. Her efforts embody the very best of Ryde, and this recognition is truly well deserved. I congratulate Nora and thank her for the remarkable service she provides to our local community.

JENNA SMITH

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:57): I ask the House to join me in congratulating Jenna Smith on being named The Entrance Local Woman of the Year for 2025. At just 19 years old, Jenna is already making a remarkable impact on our community. A second-year law student with a passion for animal welfare, she has dedicated years to supporting abandoned and homeless pets on the Central Coast. Through her tireless efforts, Jenna has raised and donated over $100,000 worth of pet food and supplies, providing essential resources to local shelters and rescue organisations. Jenna's commitment to volunteer work extends beyond animal welfare. She also teaches karate to young children, helping them build confidence and resilience, and has fundraised for mental health initiatives, including running over 140 kilometres to support The Black Dog Institute's One Foot Forward campaign. I am sure that the House will join me in congratulating Jenna on her outstanding dedication to the Central Coast community and being worthy to be named The Entrance Local Woman of the Year for 2025.

TEALE KELLY-WRIGHT

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:58): In the face of rising floodwaters in Bellingen, a young voice emerged to serve as a beacon of hope and guidance for the local community. Teale Kelly-Wright, a year 8 student at Bellingen High School, demonstrated extraordinary initiative and compassion during the severe weather events

brought on by Tropical Cyclone Alfred. As floodwaters surged on 6 March, Teale, alongside his father, Anthony, swiftly collected equipment from the 2 Triple B FM community radio station to ensure that vital emergency information was broadcast to those in need. There were nine other presenters who also worked around the clock to keep the community updated and help push the updates out, but Teale, who regularly hosts a good news show about teen culture and activities, stepped up to help his town by broadcasting the critical information from his makeshift bedroom studio. Despite the challenges posed by the floodwaters, including the near flooding of the local bridge, Teale's resilience never faltered. His commitment to keeping his community safe through radio broadcasts was a vital lifeline to residents, as power outages threatened to disrupt other forms of communication. This selfless act shows how one young man's passion for both music and community service converged to make a real difference.

CLARE TAPP

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:59): I congratulate Clare Tapp, our 2025 East Hills Local Woman of the Year. Clare does tremendous work in my electorate of East Hills, volunteering her time to support a variety of great causes. This includes her work with Panania Free Rangers, which offers gardening services to the elderly and teaches local students how to garden and cook with the produce. Clare is also a volunteer for Georges River Life Care, where she helps provide food hampers and community lunches to the most vulnerable in our community, including domestic violence survivors. She also lends her time to local park run events where she assists blind runners to take part. To top it all off, Clare is involved in the local knitting and crochet club, helping to yarn-bomb Panania Library and bring some wonderful colour to our streets. Her generosity also extends to sharing fresh produce and flowers from her garden with her neighbours. I congratulate Clare Tapp, a truly deserving nominee for East Hills Local Woman of the Year.

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY OF NSW CANINE HERO AWARDS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:00): Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Ollie, a much-loved support dog, who has been named the winner of the 2025 Royal Agricultural Society of NSW Canine Hero Awards. This award recognises the exceptional acts of courage, devotion and selflessness performed by dogs across New South Wales. Presented annually at the Sydney Royal Easter Show, the Canine Hero Awards celebrate dogs who make a significant impact. Ollie was recognised under the Companion Dog category, which honours dogs trained for support or assistance work, and pets who have demonstrated the canine-human bond in an extraordinary manner. Adding to this honour, Ollie and his handler, Judi Sandilands-Cincotta, have also been recognised with a regional 2024 Volunteer of the Year Award. Judi spends her days as a therapy dog handler with her five-year-old labrador, Ollie, visiting high schools, courts, libraries and police and ambulance stations. Most importantly, their work provides smiles, support and comfort to those who most need it. Every month Judi and Ollie support Lifeline South Coast, based in Wollongong, extending their work in mental health and crisis support. I congratulate Ollie and handler Judi Sandilands-Cincotta.

CLEAN UP CECIL HILLS DAY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:01): If anyone has ever met someone from Cecil Hills, they will know firsthand the pride that person has in their suburb. The residents of Cecil Hills are also very proactive and hands on in ensuring that their surroundings are well kept, which is showcased through the annual Clean Up Cecil Hills Day, held by community members for community members. For the people of Cecil Hills, this event is about so much more than just picking up litter. It is a chance to connect with neighbours, enjoy the outdoors and take an active role in shaping the health of our natural environment. The camaraderie, teamwork and shared sense of accomplishment make the event feel less like a chore and more like a celebration. I have to say that once we got into the swing of things, the parkland around Cecil Hills Lake looked better than ever. I thank Matthew Bell for organising this yearly event and all who participated. Their passion for the community is infectious and it is because of people like them that Cecil Hills continues to thrive. Here is to another successful Clean Up Cecil Hills Day. I will see everyone again next year.

TRIBUTE TO BRUCE MACCARTHY, FORMER MEMBER FOR STRATHFIELD

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:02): I acknowledge the passing of Bruce MacCarthy on 25 February 2025. Bruce was a former member of this House, serving as the member for Strathfield from the 1996 by-election until 1999. During that time Bruce served with distinction, advocating tirelessly for a range of local matters like upgrades to local schools, bus services and roads. Bruce was an outstanding advocate for his community, serving as secretary of the Concord Family and Childcare Co-operative, treasurer of the Friends of Western Hospital and secretary of Concord church's council. He was a long-serving member of the Liberal Party, holding various positions, including on the State Executive. Bruce's contributions have left a profound impact on both the Strathfield and Drummoyne communities. His leadership and dedication to public service were truly

commendable. My thoughts and prayers are with Bruce's family and his wife, Lee, and his friends and loved ones during this difficult time. Vale, Bruce MacCarthy. May he rest in peace.

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE MARRICKVILLE UNIT

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE ASHFIELD UNIT

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:03): I thank the many volunteers and staff from the Marrickville and Ashfield SES units, who, along with many others, gave up their time, left their families and headed north to help in the preparation and response to Tropical Cyclone Alfred. They attended to many fallen trees and damaged roofs, performed flood rescues and assisted with sandbagging and checking in on members of the community. Whilst the cyclone weakened from our initial predictions, it did cause significant rain and damage to northern New South Wales and over the Queensland border. Recovery efforts will continue for some time through the NSW Reconstruction Authority and other emergency services personnel. We are incredibly grateful to the Marrickville and Ashfield SES volunteers, brilliantly led by commanders Liam Hogan and Sharon Buckley. I thank them for their dedication and selfless service to those in need in our State, both in the northern New South Wales disaster zone and for their ongoing commitment to our local inner west community whenever we are in need.

TRIBUTE TO DENIS BENFIELD

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (18:04): This evening I acknowledge and pay tribute to the late Denis Michael Benfield. Denis was a great Australian, a man who served our nation with pride and passion. He was born in 1946 and joined the Royal Australian Navy at 15 years and 11 months in 1962. In 1964 he joined HMAS *Sydney* and later toured Vietnam for the first time. In 1970 he toured for the second time and was discharged as a warrant officer after 20 years of service. Denis moved his family to Grafton and took up a career in hospitality, and later retired there. He was a long-serving member of the Grafton RSL Sub-Branch and spent many hours planning and emceeing Anzac Day and Remembrance Day, and helping out his colleagues at the RSL. To his family, I say that this State and our nation owes Denis a great deal of gratitude. May he rest in peace.

ROTARY CLUB OF FAIRFIELD CITY

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:05): I commend the Rotary Club of Fairfield City, formerly Wetherill Park, for their dedication to our community. Chartered in 1993, the Rotary Club of Fairfield City has run multiple fundraising events to tackle the challenges faced in our community. Through events like the annual Charity Golf Day, Bunnings barbeques and the long-running Carols at Horsley Park, the club has raised over half a million dollars for vital causes, supported by countless volunteers and businesses. The Rotary club's commitment to sponsoring students in vocational and personal development programs is truly commendable. It also honours our local community heroes with the Pride of Workmanship Award and Police Officer of the Year Awards. I thank its president, David Butterfield, and the Rotary's dedicated volunteers—there are so many of them—for the great impact they have in our community.

GEORGIA FELEDY

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:06): Today I congratulate 12-year-old Beacon Hill resident Georgia Feledy, who was selected to perform late last year in *The Nutcracker* at the Sydney Opera House with The Australian Ballet. Georgia, who attends Dance North Academy, was selected two years ago to commence The Australian Ballet training program. It is an intensive program in which she attends The Australian Ballet School in Melbourne one week per year. Georgia also performed in September in the international ballet competition Youth America Grand Prix at Chatswood Concourse. She was successful in winning first place in the pre-competitive age contemporary dance division and has been selected to represent Australia in Florida in April this year. Georgia has also been selected for a position in Queensland Ballet Academy's Guest Academy Program. This program consists of Georgia travelling to Queensland for intensive training for one week each school term. I further congratulate Georgia on completing her primary school education at Beacon Hill Public School last year and wish her the best for her high school years in the dance program at Mackellar Girls high school. We are very proud of her.

MRS THI TUYET MAI BUI

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:07): I congratulate my constituent, Mrs Thi Tuyet Mai Bui, on being named Cabramatta Local Woman of the Year 2025. Mrs Bui's inspiring journey began when she arrived in Sydney as a refugee from Vietnam in 1989. Despite the many challenges of resettlement, she drew strength from her artistic talents and has used them to help others. Mrs Bui volunteers with numerous organisations, including the Asian Women At Work, the Vietnamese Women's Association in NSW and the Vietnamese Community in Australia, NSW Chapter. She conducts painting, pottery and art classes for those organisations. Her work,

particularly in teaching children with disabilities through NDIS programs, truly deserves recognition, as we know that art is a powerful tool for learning, self-expression and building confidence. Her beautiful sculptures have been showcased in exhibitions such as Casula Powerhouse. It is great to see that Mrs Bui's wonderful work has been honoured in such a meaningful way. I extend my warmest congratulations to her on this well-deserved recognition.

WENDY SIMPSON

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (18:08): I formally congratulate Wendy Simpson on being appointed a Member of the Order of Australia at the 2025 Australia Day Honours. Ms Simpson has been recognised for her significant contributions to social welfare, cultural and church organisations, and for her dedication to mentoring. Her extensive service includes her role as chair of Wengeo since 1997. She was the founding chair of SBE Australia and has held directorships at World Vision Australia and the General Sir John Monash Foundation. Ms Simpson serves as a board director for Taste Creative and a mentor for Bus Stop Films. She is currently a council member of Alphacrucis College and is chair of the membership selection committee. Ms Simpson also received the Medal of the Order of Australia, and was inducted into the Australian Businesswomen's Hall of Fame in 2013. On behalf the community, I congratulate Ms Simpson and express our deep gratitude for her dedication and invaluable contributions to our country.

JOUMANA YOUSSEF

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:09): As part of Women's Week 2025, we proudly recognise Joumana Youssef, Principal of Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School, as Granville Local Woman of the Year at the NSW Women of the Year awards. That prestigious award celebrates women who have made exceptional contributions to their communities, and Joumana's dedication to arts and education has set her apart. She is a transformative principal with over 25 years of service to public education. Joumana has championed educational improvement, community empowerment and equity. She has developed mentoring programs for aspiring leaders. As a former head teacher of English, she guided students to achieve State distinctions and top HSC results. Joumana believes in the transformative power of the arts. She leads her school's participation in the annual Our Spectacular event. That event engages over 30 schools and fosters community pride. Additionally, she introduced the first-ever Auslan choir to the concert. I congratulate Joumana. Keep inspiring our creative youth in Granville.

DENILIQUIN RESCUE SQUAD

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:10): I recognise and commend the Deniliquin Rescue Squad—VRA Rescue NSW for its unwavering dedication to community safety over the past 50 years. Established in May 1975 following a tragic drowning, the squad has evolved into a vital component of our emergency response framework. Its commitment to effective emergency management and community education through initiatives like the annual driver education training mock crash is vital and imparts crucial safety lessons to our youth. Under the leadership of President Wes Follett, a member of nearly 35 years, the squad maintains a strong partnership with the NSW Police Force, responding to numerous call-outs and ensuring our community's wellbeing and safety. I congratulate the Deniliquin Rescue Squad on this significant milestone and thank it for its half-century of exemplary service.

ANNA BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:11): Students in my local public schools continue to amaze me. I recently went to beautiful Anna Bay Public School for the opening of its new cultural spaces, the Wakali Room and the yarning circle, which are on Worimi Country. The yarning circle has been aptly named Ngarralbaa, which in Gathang, the language of the Worimi, means "place of learning and knowledge". The project came to life with assistance from funding I was delighted to deliver to the school's P&C under the Community Building Partnership program, and the space is already fulfilling its promise by providing a place for connection, culture and community. The Wakali Room, which was supported by funding from Port Stephens Council, is another space for students to be creative, connect and be amongst community. At the opening of these special spaces, the students shone on the didge, during a smoking ceremony and singing in Gathang—all with big smiles and obvious pride—under the impressive leadership of Mr Isaac Nettle. I congratulate the Anna Bay Public School students, principal Anna Swanson, the P&C and families on leading the way in creating a brighter, more inclusive and respectful future.

MRS BARBARA DALLINGER

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (18:12): I thank and commend Glenmore Park local Mrs Barbara Dallinger for her extraordinary service to the growth and transformation of Glenmore Park Netball Club. The club was formed in 1998 and commenced with just six teams and 55 players. It has since expanded to

25 teams and 236 players. Mrs Dallinger has been crucial to the club's development and success, and has coached multiple teams from 1998 to 2023, securing many grand final victories. Her success includes winning the March Past in 2009 and being runner-up in 2024, receiving the Penrith Netball Association Service Award in 2011 and being named Club of the Year in 2016. Her service has been recognised with a life membership of Glenmore Park Netball Club. On behalf of the Badgerys Creek electorate, I thank Mrs Dallinger for making Glenmore Park Netball Club a very competitive and successful organisation and an important part of our community.

FRANCES WARNER

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:13): Frances Warner has been a dedicated member of the Camden community since she moved to Camden Park with her husband in 1966. Looking back on her lifetime of achievement, it seems that Frances arrived in Camden and dived straight into bettering the community. She spent considerable time volunteering in spaces like the Oxley Cottage information centre, helping tourists, visitors, and residents and working hard to put Camden on the map. She also served as a secretary for the Camden Scouts group, where her husband also volunteered, crunching numbers and organising events. Her most notable achievement, however, might be the 40 years of volunteering she invested with the Narellan Girl Guides association. In her time, Frances was a unit helper, on the parent committee and in charge of uniform at Narellan Girl Guides, as well as the badge secretary for Girl Guides groups across the State. She was also a division leader of Picton, Oakdale, Narellan and Camden Girl Guides, and the Camden district leader—all incredible achievements. Frances's selfless dedication has directly improved the wider community, and her hard work was recognised this month with the Camden Woman of the Year award.

DOLCE TERRA

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:14): I acknowledge beloved local institution Dolce Terra, which is celebrating its fifteenth year of trade in Manly. At the heart of the cafe is Dave Gray, a driving force behind the evolution of Manly's thriving hospitality scene. From opening Cafe Nice and introducing breakfast trade to Manly, to running the legendary Ceruti's restaurant and nightclub, Dave has played a key role in shaping Manly's food and social scene. More than just a cafe, Dolce Terra is a hub for community connection and wellbeing. Every week Dolce Terra plays host to the Morning Club, where Dave provides a fantastic post-run spread, great tunes and a welcoming space for locals to connect as they kickstart their day. As a proud backer of Manly's sporting community, Dolce Terra fuels local athletes as a nutritional partner for gyms and trainers, and it is a huge supporter of the Sea Eagles, the Manly Marlins, the Manly Cricket Club, and the Manly Life Saving Club. Dave has played an instrumental part in hospitality in Manly, and I thank him for his lasting contribution.

JEN MAHE

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:15): I am delighted to inform the House that Jen Mahe from Woolworths in Greystanes has been awarded the annual Grocery Leader award at the Woolworths Team Member of the Year Awards 2025. Jen is an exceptional grocery manager at Greystanes, always willing to lend a hand, support her colleagues and serve our local community. She fosters a positive and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and encouraged to grow. Jen has been recognised as this year's Grocery Leader from over 180,000 Woolworths team members across Australia. She works hard to ensure smooth operations, always seeking solutions to improve morale and productivity. As the member for Prospect and a regular patron at Greystanes Woolies, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Jen on this outstanding achievement. She is a true champion for our community, and a deserving recipient of this award. I look forward to celebrating with Jen in person.

STEVE FORTEY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:16): I pay tribute to Steve Fortey, a true giant in the Avoca Beach community. His passion, dedication and tireless energy have made a lasting impact on the people and place he holds so dear. In 2023, Steve was awarded the Order of Australia medal in recognition of his service to Avoca Beach—a well-deserved honour for a lifetime of contribution. Sadly, due to ill health, Steve has recently stepped down as president of the Avoca Beach Community Association, which was a role he held for eight years. Under his leadership, the association has worked to preserve the unique character of Avoca Beach and enhance community wellbeing. Beyond that, Steve has been the editor of the community newsletter, the driving force behind the Anzac Day dawn ceremony for a decade, a coach at the local rugby club, a surf club volunteer, and president of the Avoca Beach Theatre preservation group. For 25 years he was also a highly respected and much-loved teacher and assistant principal at the outstanding Kincumber High School. I personally thank Steve for his magnificent and sustained contribution to the community of Avoca Beach and wish him the very best for the future.

CRISTAL THUKRAL

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:17): I congratulate Cristal Thukral from Schofields, who raised an impressive $742 through the Super Swim Speedo Challenge. The initiative helps to raise money for children in hospitals across Australia. Cristal, a passionate swimmer, has found a way to combine her love for the sport with a desire to help others in need. Her achievement is a shining example of what can be accomplished when passion and purpose align. Cristal has truly challenged herself, swimming an impressive 14 kilometres. It is also important to recognise the support and encouragement provided by Cristal's parents, Nisha and Mudit, who have guided her to reach this milestone. Cristal's dedication to giving back was first sparked at Galungara Primary School, where she was inspired by the Kirby Changemaker award, which recognises students who create a positive impact. Since then, she has embraced opportunities to help others, setting an incredible example for her peers. Individuals like Cristal make me proud of the community I represent. I know her generosity will inspire many more to find ways to give back.

SYDNEY ADVENTIST HOSPITAL

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:18): I commend the Sydney Adventist Hospital in Wahroonga, the San, for its incredible work and for being ranked the highest for outpatient cancer services. Amongst the many New South Wales metropolitan hospitals in the annual Outpatient Cancer Clinics Survey, the integrated cancer centre at the San was ranked number one for the seventh consecutive year. Patients experiencing outpatient cancer care across New South Wales are independently surveyed every year. This year nearly 10,000 patients from 44 public and private facilities participated in the survey. The San achieved the highest rankings in five key measures, including providing safe, high-quality care from the clinic; attentive health professionals who listen to patients' views and concerns; well organised care; convenient appointment access; and clinic cleanliness. That remarkable achievement would not have been possible without the professionalism and compassionate nature of Brett Goods and all of the health professionals and staff at the San. I congratulate them on their outstanding service to our community.

Private Members' Statements

BELINDA "BEL" MCKINLAY

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:20): We recently celebrated International Women's Day, an opportunity to recognise the strength, dedication and impact of incredible women in our communities. It is my privilege to acknowledge one such extraordinary woman, a true champion of Riverstone and my nomination for Riverstone Local Woman of the Year, Belinda Mckinlay. Belinda, or Bel to those who know and love her, is a passionate volunteer and tireless leader who has dedicated herself to nurturing the next generation through sport. For the past three years she has been the driving force behind the mighty Schofields Crusaders Junior Rugby League Club, a club she co-founded with her husband, Rob, and which played its inaugural season in 2023. Through her unwavering commitment, Bel has built not only a club but also a thriving community that fosters teamwork, resilience and belonging. It is a club which, in the words of Rob, "they started together with nothing but hopes and dreams," and it is now one of the fastest growing rugby league clubs in the State.

Belinda has thrown her heart and soul into the club, something I have witnessed firsthand. Belinda serves as the Crusaders' treasurer, oversees registrations, manages the canteen and is the manager of the under-13 premiership winning team of 2024. Under her leadership, the club has rapidly grown to 18 teams in just its third season, culminating in it being named the Jan Cameron Club Champions of 2024 in the Penrith district. Bel's accolades do not end there. For all of her contributions, Bel was awarded the Ian Robinson Medal for volunteer of the year within Penrith and District Junior Rugby League, but her volunteer work does not stop with the Crusaders. She is also instrumental in her work assisting other clubs with their financial governance and helping them to cope with the massive increase in registrations caused by the explosive population growth in the area.

Beyond the day-to-day operations, she is committed to planning future strategies that ensure the club's long-term success while fostering the personal growth of its members. Under her leadership, players and volunteers alike develop skills that extend far beyond football, equipping them with teamwork and leadership skills. She has achieved all of this while maintaining a successful 15-year career as a data analyst. Riverstone is lucky to have Belinda in its community, and it is a much better place with her at the heart of the Crusaders. Volunteers like Belinda make our communities great places to live. Our most valued community volunteers are often those who go above and beyond. They form the backbone of our communities, giving up their time, channelling their energy and focusing their passion towards creating positive change. Volunteers bring people together, support those in need and strengthen the bonds that make a community thrive. Their selflessness and commitment inspire others, fostering a spirit of generosity and connection. Volunteering is one of the most selfless causes. There is no pay and often little recognition. Only from the goodness of one's heart can this much dedication and passion to a community cause be displayed.

In this place, we often speak about the need for governments to do their part in creating communities instead of just housing. I often speak about the infrastructure needs of my electorate—from roads and public transport to parks and schools. But, really, the heart of any community lies in its people, especially those who foster grassroots connections, adding to the vibrancy of the places we call home. And, more often than not, those people are women whose work is underappreciated and taken for granted. From the Saturday cricket scorers to the mums who bring orange slices to soccer games, they are coaches, managers, treasurers, presidents and much more. Just as importantly, their perspectives on the needs of community are invaluable. Late last year I held a women's forum in conjunction with North West Community Services, and the feedback highlighted some of the differences between males and females. Where men often identify physical assets, women focus on social needs and those of the family.

On Saturday 8 March we celebrated International Women's Day. It is a day to acknowledge and champion the extraordinary contributions of women across all spheres of society. This year's theme, "Accelerate Action", is a reminder that, while progress has been made, there is still more to do in recognising, supporting and empowering women in leadership, sports and community service. Belinda's story is a testament to the impact women have at a grassroots level, shaping not just sporting clubs but also the very fabric of our communities. International Women's Day this year is an opportunity to celebrate women like Belinda, but it is also a time to commit to accelerating action and to ensuring they have the recognition, resources and respect they deserve because, when we uplift women, we uplift our entire community.

WAHROONGA ELECTORATE NSW WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:25): We are incredibly fortunate in the Wahroonga electorate to have an abundance of incredible women who contribute so much to our community. Their dedication and passion enrich the lives of those around them, making our local area a better place to live, work and raise a family. Today I acknowledge two women's contributions to our community. The NSW Women of the Year Awards provide an important opportunity to highlight some of the exceptional women in our State who bring immense value to their local communities through their determination, bravery, skill and passion. I was thrilled to announce Catherine Knox as the 2025 Wahroonga Woman of the Year. That honour recognises Catherine's outstanding contributions and tireless efforts in supporting vulnerable women and children in our community.

Catherine has over 20 years of experience in leadership and women's advocacy. She has a strong passion for ending domestic violence and homelessness, and working to create a safe and supportive environment for those in need. Catherine currently chairs the board of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter, where she collaborates with local people, businesses and community stakeholders to promote understanding of, and provide essential services for, women and children experiencing domestic abuse and homelessness. A few years ago Catherine took over as chair of what was a well-established but relatively new shelter. She has assisted the shelter to expand its reach, ensuring that more women in crisis have access to the support they need to rebuild their lives.

Catherine is a modest person, and she says that she is part of a team whose members all deserve an award. The outstanding work of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter is very much a team effort, but that does not diminish Catherine's personal contribution. Catherine's focus is to ensure the shelter's critical work supporting women in crisis is sustainable, is creating a positive impact and has the capacity to respond to growing needs. Through her efforts, Catherine has supported a strong team of professionals and volunteers at the shelter, ensuring that the organisation operates effectively and efficiently. Catherine's passion stems from a deep belief in equality of access to professional support for all women. She has been instrumental in raising awareness of gendered violence, poor mental health and homelessness—issues that require a whole-of-society response.

Beyond her work at the shelter, Catherine was the inaugural CEO and is a director of Gidget Foundation Australia. In that role, she has implemented innovative maternal mental health initiatives, ensuring that new mothers experiencing violence and abuse receive the support they need. Her work in this field has contributed to a broader understanding of maternal mental health and its connection to domestic violence. Catherine has been a tireless advocate for our community, and the community is no doubt richer for her contributions across the North Shore.

Another woman who has contributed significantly to the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter was also recognised at this year's NSW Women of the Year Awards. Dr Jessica Teoh was the NSW Young Woman of the Year, a statewide award that acknowledges her remarkable advocacy and professional achievements. Jessica is a passionate domestic violence advocate and a 2023 Churchill Fellow, one of only two women under the age of 30 in Australia to receive that honour. That prestigious fellowship has provided her with the opportunity to further her research and advocacy in the field of domestic violence intervention. As part of her Churchill Fellowship, Jessica has travelled to six countries, where she has engaged with experts and organisations focused on domestic violence detection and intervention during pregnancy. Through that work, she has gained invaluable insights that she is now applying in Australia to improve outcomes for women and children facing domestic violence.

In Australia, Jessica is leading the implementation of domestic violence screening in early pregnancy clinics, aiming for policy changes in the New South Wales public healthcare system. Her work has the potential to transform how domestic violence is identified and addressed within the healthcare sector, ensuring that at-risk women receive support at a crucial time. Jessica is training to be an obstetrics and gynaecology specialist doctor at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, where she sees firsthand the impact of domestic violence on pregnant women. Her medical expertise combined with her advocacy efforts makes her a powerful voice for change. Additionally, Jessica has taken part in the grants committee at Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. In that role, she has helped secure $100,000 in grants. I congratulate Catherine and Jessica on their awards and thank them for their great contributions to our community.

MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENTS

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) (18:30): A few weeks ago we celebrated International Women's Day. The annual event held on 8 March reminds us of the need to continue to champion women's voices and women's rights. It is also a timely reminder of the valuable contributions that women make each and every day to our local communities. I also had the honour of announcing the 2025 Local Woman of the Year. I was delighted to bestow that honour on Cheryl Paradella of Macquarie Fields. I will share a little bit about Cheryl, who, despite her enormous contributions, would not want a fuss made about her.

Cheryl is a dedicated volunteer for local mental health charity Beautiful Minds Macarthur and has been its president since 2018. Cheryl is committed to improving the lives of those living with mental illness, and together we hosted a series of mental health forums. The forums enabled people in the local community to hear from speakers with lived experience, connect with local services and foster greater awareness of mental health. In addition to her volunteer work with Beautiful Minds, Cheryl is the community liaison officer at Glenfield Park School and works closely with families across the Hilltop group of schools for special purposes. Cheryl offers invaluable support to families with children of complex needs. She is also a community representative for the South Western Sydney Local Health District, assisting with inpatient and community carer peer support. In that role, Cheryl advocates for carers' rights and acts as a contact between consumers and clinicians in the mental health space.

Cheryl is a passionate advocate for carers. As a mother of three children—a daughter who is undiagnosed, a son diagnosed with autism and Tourette's, and a daughter diagnosed with autism and severe mental illness—Cheryl knows all too well the often difficult and lonely road that many carers travel. As Cheryl can attest, support is invaluable. A qualified foster carer and counsellor, Cheryl has worked in the education sector, both early childhood education and adult education, for over 30 years. Cheryl has contributed enormously to our community, and I commend her advocacy and passion for helping others.

Cheryl is of course joined by many other wonderful women who are all making a difference to our local community. One such woman is Mal Fruean, OAM, a strong advocate for Pasifika communities. I congratulate my dear friend and dedicated community advocate on her recent appointment to the Australian Multicultural Council. Mal is one of only 14 Australians selected to provide insights and advice to the Commonwealth Government. That is a fantastic achievement and I am confident that she will fulfil that role to the highest order. Mal received an Order of the Medal of Australia in 2021 in recognition of her contributions to the New South Wales Pasifika community.

An inspirational and respected leader, Mal champions multiculturalism and community harmony across the education, community and government sectors. Mal has dedicated more than 30 years to community work in south-west Sydney, including 12 years as manager of South West Multicultural and Community Centre in Minto. In that role, Mal oversees programs for women, youth and emerging Pacific leaders. A multi-award recipient and a member of various committees, Mal is committed to community engagement to increase cultural awareness. Mal is also chair of the NSW Council for Pacific Communities, a peak body for collaborative work with government and Pacific communities across New South Wales. My community, and indeed New South Wales and now Australia, is extremely fortunate to have such a strong and passionate advocate for Pasifika communities and for cultural diversity.

I mention one other woman in my electorate, who this year was awarded an honorary Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2025 Australia Day honours. Annamaria Wood of Ingleburn was recognised for her long-term commitment to the local disability sector. Annamaria was chief executive officer of Disability Macarthur in Minto from 1996 to 2022, where she oversaw support services for disabled adults and children in the local community. A staunch advocate for people with disability, Annamaria's hard work helped establish Disability Macarthur as a wonderful community asset. Always family focused, Annamaria recognised the importance of lifelong disability support for the whole family. Our community is certainly indebted to Annamaria's dedication and care. Finally,

I acknowledge all the women in my community, and in all communities across New South Wales, who are helping to make a positive difference, big or small. Our community is all the better for those wonderful women in our local areas.

COST OF LIVING

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (18:35): As we approach the second anniversary of this failing New South Wales Labor Government, I reflect on how this failed Labor Government has let down my community of Badgerys Creek and, more broadly, the wider New South Wales community. Individuals, families and businesses across Badgerys Creek and New South Wales are being abandoned and left behind during a time when they should be supported by their government. I am constantly speaking with families, pensioners and small business owners in my electorate who keep sharing with me that they are struggling to make ends meet amid increasing inflation and the continued downturn in the wider economy.

After two years of the Minns Labor Government, people are worse off. The cost of living has skyrocketed, housing affordability is the worst ever for renters and buyers, health and education investment has been slashed, and the Government is running out of our infrastructure projects to open. Industrial relations are in chaos and small businesses have had no help. Last week I ran into a couple from my community in Badgerys Creek in the local shopping centre who had run a successful business across Western Sydney for more than 20 years. Sadly, they told me that their business had to go into liquidation. They indicated that this change was evident just one month after the last State election.

The New South Wales Labor Government axed the Liberals' Back to School voucher, which was a cost-of-living assistance package that provided all parents with a $150 voucher per child to help with the cost of school supplies, uniforms and technology. Following outrage from my local community, I circulated a petition and wrote to the Premier, calling on him to reinstate the program. Unfortunately, the Labor Government refused to continue the support started by the Liberals and The Nationals and turned its back on needy families across Western Sydney, who are feeling the cost-of-living pinch the hardest. The New South Wales Labor Government has also slashed the vital cost-of-living support measures of Active Kids, Creative Kids and First Lap vouchers.

With New South Wales Labor's absence of vision for our collective future, the dream of home ownership has never been harder. Home ownership is the major method most people use to become independent of government and build personal wealth. This Labor Government prefers that large swathes of the community remain dependent on the government rather than independent and self-sufficient. Under Labor, the highest taxes on new homes are in New South Wales. In 2024, Labor's $12,000 housing tax was introduced on every new home in Greater Sydney. By making it more expensive to build new homes, fewer new homes will be built, driving up the cost of purchasing a home and also renting a home. The first housing accord report card shows that the Minns Labor Government is falling 40 per cent short of its housing targets.

In stark contrast, the former New South Wales Coalition Government's strong economic management delivered great benefits to Western Sydney and allowed us to commit to, for example, investing $65 million to transform the former private Fernhill Estate into a 423-hectare public park. This was our vision of recreation for Western Sydney, located in my own electorate, but that funding was subsequently cut by this Labor Government. More broadly, budget estimates revealed that the NSW Police Force is 4,690 officers understrength, yet the Labor Government has reduced the number of training classes per year.

Our community may suffer even more financial strain, with the Government's so-called toll review having so far delivered nothing for drivers other than wasteful spending and the exploration of new tolls and longer contracts, meaning motorists from my electorate—those travelling the furthest in Greater Sydney—will be paying more for longer. Some $5.4 million has been wasted on a review with no outcome. Traffic modelling shows some drivers could be hit with toll increases up to nine times higher with the exploration of new tolls on the M5 West, M5 East, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Sydney Harbour Tunnel and the Eastern Distributor. Whilst tolls and licence fees increase under Labor, the investment in our infrastructure and services decreases. This is the inevitable outcome of a Labor government that is fixated on looking after its union masters at the expense of my community and the wider State of New South Wales.

SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:40): There is currently a very serious scandal evolving at Shellharbour City Council that is putting the health and safety of numerous staff at risk. I will not repeat the substance of the allegations in this Chamber, as they have been well covered in the media, particularly the *Illawarra Mercury*. Instead, I will focus on my fears for the whistleblowers currently navigating the horrors of working in the same building as a mayor who has attempted to silence them and cover up serious wrongdoing at council. Mayor Chris Homer was rightly tasked with determining the appropriate course of action following an

initial internal investigation into the actions of the CEO at last year's Christmas party. The mayor of any council has an important role in ensuring that any complaints about the CEO are taken seriously. The mayor must act impartially, regardless of how close their relationship is with that CEO. It is clear that this has not happened at Shellharbour City Council and that the mayor has not fulfilled his obligations.

When serious allegations were made by numerous witnesses, Mayor Chris Homer did everything possible to ensure that an investigation into his CEO mate went nowhere. He has attempted to cover up complaints of sexual harassment by the CEO without any proper investigation. Chris Homer knew that what he was doing was wrong. The cover-up was deliberate, and he had every intention of sweeping the allegations under the rug. Even after he got busted and the allegations came to light, Chris Homer continued to protect the CEO. He was the only councillor to vote against a motion to suspend the CEO. It is unbelievable.

It is only the actions of brave witnesses and whistleblowers within the council that have ensured the cover-up has now come to light. I commend those brave staff members and offer my support during these difficult times. I know they must be frightened of retribution from Chris Homer. He is a large man with anger management issues, and I know that he can be scary. Indeed, Mayor Chris Homer is a misogynist. I have personally been subjected to his unhinged, angry outbursts. I have been sworn at and manhandled by him since he became mayor. I have seen him lose his cool and push and shove people, including me. I have received numerous complaints about him intimidating other people who have disagreed with him.

Unfortunately, if I was a staff member at Shellharbour City Council who was considering making a complaint about the CEO or the mayor—both powerful men—I would be scared as well. Actually, I would be terrified. I would be scared for my mental health and physical wellbeing. I would be scared for my job, my career and the financial security of my family. Witnesses have reported to me that the mayor was desperate to ensure that the CEO was not suspended so he could remain in the building while the investigation took place. That is beyond ridiculous and shows how little the mayor cares for the staff at Shellharbour City Council.

I call on those councillors who supported Chris Homer during the last election to take a stand against his behaviour. It is time for those people to put politics aside and admit that they helped put the mayoral chains around the neck of man so grossly unfit to be mayor that the health and wellbeing of numerous staff members are now at serious risk. Enough is enough—the staff deserve to feel safe at work and the residents of Shellharbour deserve a mayor who does not cover up for his dodgy CEO mate. To all of the staff at Shellharbour City Council, I promise to do whatever it takes to ensure their pain and suffering is acknowledged and that all actions are taken to expose those who enabled that behaviour and covered it up for self-interest and power. I encourage any staff member who feels scared to speak out against serious wrongdoing at Shellharbour City Council to please make direct contact with me. I will assist them in every way that I can.

CENSUS POPULATION DATA

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:45): I will talk about something that is not particularly sexy or exciting but is quite important: census population data. If members look at the Australian Bureau of Statistics QuickStats for each of the towns in my electorate—I have about a hundred—there are places where we know have had growth, but the data is still stuck on 2021 census data. State and Federal governments both use census data for planning, resourcing and determining budgets for an area. That means that the resourcing for things like police, education, roads and all those bread-and-butter things that are really important to us is based on inaccurate data.

The 2021 census was a dog's breakfast, which is probably being complimentary. There were people who did not get the forms at all and people who got the forms twice. There was no way to fix it, so the data is locked in for five years until the next census. We will have massive population growth in the workforce—5,000 people at its peak—for projects like the renewable energy zones. We will have another 250 jobs coming online in Cobar shortly, but the census did not incorporate that data, so we are not planning for that adequately. There is lots of data we do not use that gives an indication of population shifts and growth. Some examples are a tighter rental market, or an increase in car registrations, school enrolments, and water and electricity connections. There is plenty of postcode-based information that we could use, as most people use their postcode as an identifier, but we do not use it. We do not harvest or analyse that data to give us a more accurate snapshot between census periods.

Another dataset that can be harvested in real time is how many mobile phones are connected to towers in an area at a given time. By collecting that information from across a large area while there is a big event on, we can get a much better idea of a percentage-based increase in population. I am not talking about personal information, just the macro data. It is a good indication for planning purposes and resourcing. But we are just not responsive and agile enough to deal with that new data, which is a variable and moving number. Another dataset we do not use is accommodation data such as hotel bookings and short-term rentals, which tell us in advance that we will have a busy time in a community. Fuel is another category that can give us an indication of where people

are travelling. We know that when we have big events on, if there is a huge volume of fuel, we will have a lot more people.

I am not talking here about cities, which can easily absorb a few thousand people. Sydney would not even notice if 2,000 extra people were in town; it would not even be a drop in the ocean. But even 20 people coming into a small community can put a huge strain on available personnel, resources and infrastructure. I am also not talking about larger regional centres that have critical mass, like Dubbo. It has good health services and much better infrastructure, and a temporary increase in population in Dubbo can be much more easily absorbed than in a smaller community. We see this with seasonal or event-based tourism. NSW Ambulance policies are not flexible enough to deal with swelling populations when there are big events on. I met recently with ambulance officers in Broken Hill, who talked about the impacts of one Broken Hill's biggest events, the St Pat's races—which is a great event and one I recommend everyone goes to.

There was no adjustment made to the available resources for the big event, especially given the heat at this time of year; it was around 39 to 40 degrees that day. For events like New Year's Eve in Sydney, ambulances have lots of options when taking patients to a hospital. They can drive five or 10 kays up the road and go to another hospital, but in my electorate that is just not the case. In a small town we may only have one health facility—or none—with one police officer on patrol and one paramedic. Even a few hundred extra people can be a big strain in those events. It follows from logic and statistics that more people will mean more services are required.

Distance is a huge issue in the west. An ambulance may have to travel for hours to take a patient for medical care. Police can quickly respond to a call from a nearby suburb in Sydney, but an emergency in a place like Tibooburra can mean a six-hour return trip from Broken Hill if there is no-one backfilling that role in Tibooburra. Prisoner transport is another responsibility that falls on police and can lead to them driving huge distances across western New South Wales. This is not the first time I have spoken in this House about tracking population and census data. I am talking about it again because we have not done anything differently and we have not changed anything.

We need to get much better at using the available data, and the other datasets, to give us an indication of what is going on. We need to get better at measuring population, anticipating the changes in population and applying the resources where they are needed. We need flexibility in policy, not cookie-cutter policies that are out of Sydney. We cannot wait five years between the census for updated data, which is probably not going to result in any change for the electorate.

TRAILER REGISTRATION FEES

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:50): When it comes to registering a towed trailer for road use in Australia, the cost can vary significantly depending upon the State. It is not uncommon for working families in The Entrance electorate to have a trailer in the backyard that is useful but rarely used. I make full disclosure that I own an ex-army box trailer—the famous No. 5 half-tonne trailer, which I purchased to complement my ex-army Land Rover. I use the Land Rover a lot but, in common with many of my constituents, I rarely use the trailer. This leads to a common complaint that I receive that the annual cost to register a trailer is high compared with other States, but we need to keep it registered each year just in case we need to use that trailer on the road. In my view, New South Wales can do better when compared with other States.

Comparisons between different States can be challenging but, on my assessment, the cost of registering a standard towed trailer for road use is low in New South Wales, currently $79 per year. Comprehensive third party [CTP] insurance is not required. However, there is a motor vehicle tax, which can be the costly thing. It is based on the tare weight, which is the unladen weight of the trailer. For a light trailer below 245 kilograms, which is rare, there is no tax. For trailers weighing between 255 kilograms and 975 kilograms, the tax is $148. Between 765 kilograms and 975 kilograms the tax is $266. That would cover most small trailers in my electorate and in the State. A registration inspection check is also required on annual registration renewal, which is not a large cost but is significant in a time of tight budgets. It is significant for just-in-case use, which is the reason that most of my constituents who own a trailer keep their trailer.

In Victoria the cost of registration is $66.70 for a standard light trailer. No inspection, CTP or motor vehicle duty checks are required. In Queensland, apart from a small traffic improvement fee of $50.30, there is no other fee for a light trailer and no inspection requirement. I will not go through all the other States and Territories. New South Wales is not the most expensive. That honour falls to the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. Most people in my community would expect, particularly for vehicles that are over a certain age, that an annual safety inspection is good practice. That fee these days is usually about $40. Compared with some of our other neighbours, the cost of registering a trailer in New South Wales is certainly said to be high. It is higher than Queensland and Victoria.

In this State, we have applied a 40 per cent reduction to the motor vehicle tax on the registration of caravans and camper trailers, which has the perverse effect of making it cheaper in many cases to register a caravan or a camper trailer than it is to keep a small box trailer in a person's backyard that they do not use very often. We can do better; I will be writing to the new transport Minister to put that to him. Not an insignificant number of my constituents come to me at my mobile offices to make that simple complaint. It is a small cost that working people do not usually plan for. They do not want to get rid of the trailer. They want to do the right thing, but it really stretches the budget, particularly at a time when cost of living is causing household budgets to be tighter than ever before. Having a higher than needed cost for registration of items like trailers can lead to people not registering their trailer and attempting to use it anyway, which is a safety problem. We can reduce that safety problem with lower registration costs for trailers in New South Wales. It will be welcomed across the State by people who have a trailer in the backyard, just in case. It is an Australian tradition. We can do better in this State.

TROPICAL CYCLONE ALFRED RECOVERY

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (18:55): When Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred dumped over 1,000 millimetres of rain on the Dorrigo Plateau in just four or five days and left communities all over the Mid North Coast isolated, the region braced for yet another flood emergency. We have seen these events before. We know the damage they cause. But what stood out this time was the immaculate work of our State Emergency Service crews and their multi-agency partners. From the moment the warnings went out, our SES crews and countless volunteers worked around the clock—pre-positioning equipment and personnel, sandbagging, door-knocking, setting up evacuation centres and briefing community representatives regularly. I commend them for their precise flood modelling and clear, timely communication, which gave our communities the information they needed and adequate warning to prepare effectively.

Over 15 days 3,300 SES volunteers responded to 7,650 incidents, conducted 90 flood rescues and resupplied 70 isolated communities via helicopter. The dedication and selflessness of these volunteers does not go unnoticed, and we cannot thank them enough for their service. I take this moment to honour the life of a 61-year-old man, Tom Cook, who lived with his dog in Megan, north-east of Dorrigo. Tom's ute was swept off Wild Cattle Creek bridge. He managed to climb onto a tree near the riverbank but, tragically, emergency crews could not reach him in time. He was swept away by floodwaters. The news of his death struck through our community. I share my deepest condolences with his family and friends for their devastating loss.

While we are now in the recovery phase, the reality for our farmers and primary producers is only just beginning. It is a typical sight to see the Minns Labor Government treating our primary producers as an afterthought. They are the ones who feed this State, who power this State and who produce the fibre and minerals this State consumes. Our farmers are not just battling floodwaters. They are facing washed-out fences, lost crops, damaged infrastructure and the enormous financial burden that comes with moving and feeding livestock during such events. There is no targeted support package to help them recover, no assistance for flood repair, no support for debris removal and no grants to help them get back on their feet. That is unacceptable. I am calling on the Government to immediately introduce small- to medium-farm recovery grants to assist with practical, on-the-ground support that allows farmers to rebuild their land and keep producing the food that sustains us all. This is not about handouts; it is about giving our farmers the tools they need to get back on their feet and keep producing the food, the energy and the material and fibre that sustain us all.

In the aftermath of Cyclone Alfred, we often hear of "building back better", but what does that actually look like for our primary producers and rural communities? It looks like repairing creek banks, stabilising erosion and restoring our waterways, so that when the next flood event comes our land can better absorb and manage that water. It can be more resilient and suffer less future damage. While Oxley was fortunate that Cyclone Alfred did not quite reach the catastrophic levels of previous disasters, we saw once again the devastating impact of creek bank erosion and damaged waterways.

The Government must stop ignoring one of the most critical issues facing rural communities after floods: the need for effective riparian repair. The reality is, in New South Wales, this process is nearly impossible for the average farmer. There are more than six different government departments involved in riparian repair, creating endless red tape and costs upwards of $20,000 just to get the approvals needed to stabilise a creek bank. The result is that nothing gets done. Farmers simply cannot afford it; it is too complicated. When the next heavy rain event comes, we see the same erosion—worsened—the same loss of productive farmland and the same continuing damage to our river systems. It does not need to be this difficult.

Other States and countries have far more streamlined systems that allow landholders to proactively repair and stabilise their waterways without jumping through ridiculous bureaucratic hoops. I have already begun working with Ministers in Queensland, and I plan to meet with other domestic and international government heads to discuss how they have successfully supported riparian landholders in post-flood repair. My goal is to bring

those solutions back to New South Wales and push for a simple, low-cost approval system that allows farmers to get on with the job of protecting their land from future floods.

The communities I represent are tough and resilient. We do not ask for much. We do not expect the Government to do everything for us. But what we do expect is fair, timely support when disaster strikes. It is not about politics. It is about the people who work the land to feed the State. I thank Premier Minns for the current level of support he has brought about for individuals, and I urge him to listen to the voices of those on the ground, to understand the challenges facing rural communities and to act now with real, practical solutions. Once again, I extend my deepest thanks to our SES crews and all the volunteers who stepped up during Tropical Cyclone Alfred. The efforts we witnessed were outstanding, and I have no doubt that when another disaster hits, our communities will be even more prepared.

GENDER EQUALITY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (19:00): Each year, NSW Women's Week and International Women's Day provides an opportunity for us to celebrate the incredible women in our communities and challenge systemic barriers perpetuating gender inequality. This year I had the privilege of recognising proud Awabakal woman and Newcastle Pride founder Lee-Anne McDougall as Newcastle's Local Woman of the Year for 2025 for her decades of unwavering dedication and advocacy for the betterment of the LGBTQIA+ community in Newcastle and the Hunter.

After noticing a severe lack of safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQIA+ communities in the area, Lee-Anne co-founded not-for-profit Newcastle Pride in 2018 to celebrate and support intersectional communities across the Hunter region. Newcastle Pride formalises the culmination of two decades of work from Lee-Anne, including six years as a Rainbow Visions committee member. In her capacity as Newcastle Pride president, Lee-Anne has inspired and led a team of passionate volunteers to conceive, create and deliver some of Newcastle's most successful festivals and community events, including the inaugural Newcastle Pride Festival. As such, Newcastle Pride has become instrumental as a guiding force for positive change, transforming our city into a much more inclusive, diverse and vibrant place to be.

Novocastrian Ennia Jones was also recognised as a finalist for the NSW Community Hero awards for outstanding commitment to our community. A passionate water safety advocate, Ennia founded A Splash of Colour to address the mental, financial and cultural barriers to swimming for Novocastrians from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. This transformative not-for-profit program has empowered hundreds of Novocastrians with the skills and confidence to swim safely at our pools and beaches. Due to strong community demand, the program has extended beyond Newcastle to other regions, including Lake Macquarie and Maitland, and will undoubtedly continue to grow over the coming years.

Whilst some steps have been taken in recent years to promote gender equality, we must acknowledge the systemic barriers and biases that women continue to face in professional and personal spaces even today, in 2025. The rise of conservative governments globally has led to a trend of stripping women of their own bodily and economic autonomy. According to data from the World Economic Forum, it will take until 2158—which is roughly five generations from now—to reach full gender parity. It is essential that we continue to provide spaces for these conversations and take swift and collective steps towards reducing gender inequality.

I am proud to be a part of a government that not only champions gender equality but has also taken active steps across a range of domains to reduce the complex structural barriers that women face across New South Wales. Recognising the significant lack of opportunities for women in leadership roles, the Minns Labor Government has become the first Cabinet in New South Wales history to comprise 50 per cent women, with female Ministers for the first time being responsible for the Energy, Police, Regional NSW, Finance and Regional Transport portfolios.

Further, the Minns Government's whole-of-government strategy to address structural barriers for women in New South Wales has seen significant economic and social advancements for women, including the first standalone Women's Safety Commissioner to prioritise women's safety, increasing access to women's health services, and a historic $484.3 million investment for housing and specialist supports for women and their children experiencing domestic and family violence. It is not lost on me that I am a man standing before the House talking about issues impacting women. However, it is important that we all, men included, address and call out gender disparity 365 days a year. We must continue. All women in New South Wales have the right to feel safe and respected, whether they are at work, at home or in public spaces.

TROPICAL CYCLONE ALFRED RECOVERY

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (19:05): Alfred is a name that we are well aware of now. He decided to bring himself to the coastlines of northern New South Wales and southern Gold Coast earlier this month. It was

initially anticipated that Tropical Cyclone Alfred would cross the coast on Thursday evening as a category 2, but by the time it had made landfall on Saturday it was downgraded to a tropical low. That did not mean that in the days prior we were not seeing the effects of the damage that a cyclone can bring, such as heavy rainfall and destructive winds.

By Friday, approximately 16,200 people across northern New South Wales were told to evacuate, with approximately 31,400 dwellings subject to warnings as a result of flooding, including watch and act and emergency warnings. Moderate to major flooding was expected along the Tweed River at Tumbulgum and Chinderah, with low-lying coastal areas also put on notice to monitor local creek levels because they were expected to rise from the forecasted high tides. Those areas were already on edge, following the devastating floods of 2022. It was pleasing to see everyone took the warnings seriously, prepared their homes, got supplies and stayed home. Businesses closed so staff could be at home with their families. Thousands of people filled sandbags to protect their homes and property. Evacuation centres were set up early and notice was given to many vulnerable areas, including 200 people who were taking shelter by Saturday. Unfortunately, power and access to water was lost to much of the electorate for days.

Our volunteers of Tweed District VRA, Tweed Coast SES, Tweed Heads SES, Tweed Coast RFS and Cudgen RFS all left their families and went out in the horrendous conditions to make sure we were all safe. Over the 15-day period, NSW SES volunteers responded to 7,650 incidents, received 13,969 calls for assistance and completed 90 flood rescues—a timely reminder: If it is flooded, forget it. A massive number of trees fell down across the electorate. A lot of water hindered restoration efforts, but the rescue teams were out there trying to get the job done. Our local police, firies, Essential Energy and councils worked around the clock to get the electorate back up and running. Recovery assistance points are set up to assist residents and businesses with accessing essential government services to aid in the recovery. Supermarkets are starting to get their stock back in line, and the sun is now shining.

I thank the Premier, the member for Lismore; the Minister for Emergency Services; the Minister for Roads; the Minister for Homelessness, and Minister for Mental Health; and the Minister for Energy. I also thank the Prime Minister, who came to the electorate with Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles. I had the pleasure to meet Mr Anthony Albanese. We stood beside the SES barbeque, and I said, "Prime Minister, for goodness sake, please take a sausage sandwich and eat it," because there was a previous Prime Minister who chose not to.

Ms Kate Washington: Chose the onion.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: I think when Malcolm Turnbull was in Lismore he also said he would not eat it. Anthony said, "Really?" Richard Marles quickly jumped in and said, "Yes, Anthony, eat the sausage." He said, "I like sausages," and I said, "Well, I do too. We are going to get on famously." That was really good. I also compliment the member for Oxley for his statements about the agricultural industry. Our macadamia industry has been devastated and 80 per cent of our soybeans have been destroyed. Soybeans are very important. Apart from being a yield, they also put nitrogen back in the soil. That means extra fertiliser has to be put in the soil next year for it to grow. Forty per cent of our cane for next year was also destroyed. Currently, there is no government assistance for those farmers.

This disaster has been devastating. Most farmers have lost 50 per cent to 80 per cent of their crops, and those figures are continuing to grow. But I am hopeful. I was with the new Minister—I call her "Minister for Disaster", master of disaster. I am sure there will be a positive outcome. It was a devastating and emotional experience. There is still a lot of fear among the communities up there. Finally, there is going to be an issue with powerlines. My council is fairly environmentally friendly. We have a lot of trees around powerlines, and there has always been an issue with pruning them. In fact, most of them fell over and brought down 33,000-volt powerlines, placing houses without power for up to six, eight or even nine days. Imagine being in a house with teenage kids when they cannot play on their iPad or games on the TV.

Ms Kate Washington: Now there's a disaster.

Mr GEOFF PROVEST: It would be a disaster. I commend my private member's statement to the House.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (19:10): Students of all ages have returned to schools in the Charlestown electorate and elsewhere across the State after what I am sure was a fun and relaxing summer break. Going back to school is an exciting time, but it can also be a challenging one for parents as well as students. Starting primary school is a big milestone for children and their families, and the transition from primary school to high school can be an even bigger one. I can say from experience that as stressful as these periods of transition

can be, they are also wonderful, made easier by strong, supportive school communities, where learning is fun and engaging. There is so much of that in the Charlestown electorate.

I am so proud of my local schools. Every day I hear about how school communities are overcoming challenges, embracing new methods of learning, and supporting students and their families to achieve. Hunter Sports High School in Gateshead's fantastic results in NAPLAN testing; Windale Public School's embracing of First Nations history and culture through artwork and learning experiences; and Wiripaang Public School's engagement with the Big Buzz initiative, which has seen the school community adopt a beehive and produce small-batch honey for sale, are just three examples of the ways that schools in the Charlestown electorate are lifting up their students with the help of the Minns Labor Government.

In the 12 months to November 2024 the number of merged and cancelled classes across the State has almost halved. The Lake Macquarie North Principal Network is ahead of the curve, achieving a 58 per cent reduction. The Government is also reducing teacher vacancies, which had reached a record high before the last election. This ensures that students in my electorate and across the State receive quality face-to-face education. In the Regional North Directorate, which covers the lower Hunter, teacher vacancies have dropped by 53 per cent since 2023. The Minns Labor Government is prioritising quality education in the early years of a child's life. The 2024-25 budget invested $1.82 billion in early education and care to ensure that as many children as possible get access to early education during those vitally important formative years. Charlestown electorate families can now receive up to $4,347 a year for three- to five-year-olds attending community and mobile preschools, up to $515 a year for three-year-olds and $2,174 a year for children aged four and over attending preschool programs in long day care services.

The Government is also getting on with addressing the maintenance backlog that has afflicted too many of our schools for far too long. In the 2024-25 financial year alone we funded pavement repairs at Windale Public School; new flooring at Cardiff Public School; ceiling repairs at Warners Bay High School; resurfaced sports courts at Mount Hutton Public School; new carpet and a retaining wall replacement at New Lambton Public School; termite damage repairs at Charlestown East Public School; repairs to the block A and covered outdoor learning area steel structures at Hillsborough Public School; the replacement of synthetic turf as well as repairs to play equipment at Charlestown Public School; roof and guttering repairs at Newcastle Junior School; new flooring and a refurbished food tech block at Cardiff High School; and a building redevelopment and extension at Kotara High School, where my two kids went. Those repairs, extensions and rebuilds are important in ensuring that the students have safe and comfortable spaces in which to learn.

I am proud of my local schools. I am also proud to be part of a government that is supporting schools all across the State by partnering with the Federal Labor Government to fully fund schools according to Gonski funding. I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to ensure that every student in my electorate—and, indeed, every student around the State—has access to the quality education they deserve. I wish every student, teacher and school staff member in the Charlestown electorate all the best for this school year. I look forward to hearing about all their successes. Even though those successes are important, their education is what starts them on the most important trajectory in life.

NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (19:15): I cannot be clearer when I say the perception of Northern Beaches Hospital is that it is failing the people of the northern beaches. Family after family have told me that if they are in trouble, they will move on from Northern Beaches Hospital and go directly to Royal North Shore Hospital instead. The hospital is a public-private partnership that has an inherent conflict—a for-profit entity delivering public health services. Recent devastating stories covered in the media of parents who have lost their children during treatment at Northern Beaches Hospital include Elouise and Danny Massa, who lost their beautiful baby boy, Joe, when he was two years old; and Leah Pitman and Dustin Atkinson, who only a couple of weeks ago lost their baby girl, Harper. These families want accountability to make sure that tragedies like this never happen again.

Those stories being covered in the media have triggered an outpouring of others sharing their stories with my office, on social media and throughout the community about how they feel the Northern Beaches Hospital has also failed them. This outpouring has prompted me and other Independents, including the member for Wakehurst and Federal MPs, to call for more to be done. I thank the Government for acknowledging what is going on at the Northern Beaches Hospital and for announcing last Friday it would hold a public inquiry. I acknowledge the people who have contacted me to tell me their stories and concerns about the hospital and how they want action from this public inquiry. I heard from a lady whose husband attended emergency after fracturing seven ribs, his collarbone and shoulder blade in a cycling accident. He was left without food for over 50 hours and experienced significant delays in surgery and poor communication.

I also heard from an 80-year-old woman with deep vein thrombosis who had to wait seven hours to see a doctor and had delays in her surgery. I heard from parents of another two-year-old who presented at emergency with constipation, urine retention and severe lethargy. They waited 36 hours to see the head of paediatrics despite their child having a dangerously overexpanded bladder, and other treatments that were needed also delayed. A 67-year-old lady had to wait 9½ hours in emergency with atrial fibrillation. The people of the northern beaches are telling me that they do not have trust in the Northern Beaches Hospital and that is simply not good enough.

I have also heard from health practitioners and experienced nurses and midwives who are telling me that their colleagues are leaving the Northern Beaches Hospital. They have provided examples of how cost cutting is impacting patient care. I commend them for their outstanding work. I also acknowledge that Healthscope is not adhering to the nurse ratios that are implemented in other public hospitals. For example, at the postnatal maternity ward at Royal North Shore Hospital the ratio is one nurse to three mothers and babies. However, this ratio is not followed at the Northern Beaches Hospital.

At the time of writing this speech, I also looked into New South Wales Department of Health wait times. Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital had three patients assessed by a triage nurse while waiting for treatment. Royal North Shore Hospital had 10 and Canterbury Hospital had nine, but Northern Beaches Hospital had 19. I acknowledge the prior work of the member for Wakehurst, along with Dr Sophie Scamps and Zali Steggall, in calling for the New South Wales Auditor-General to conduct an audit into the hospital. However, the terms of reference are limited to looking particularly at the contracts and management of the hospital. I commend the Government for acknowledging that a public inquiry is now appropriate and will give an opportunity for people from my community to tell their stories about the hospital.

The onus will be on me and other members to make sure that people in the community know they have this opportunity to have their voices heard. To be clear, the Northern Beaches Hospital is a failure of the former Liberal Government policy to privatise public services. Our community was promised that the Northern Beaches Hospital would provide state-of-the-art services when it opened. The reality has been anything but. It has already been subject to a previous parliamentary inquiry in 2019, and we are still seeing the issues of the inherent conflict in a public-private partnership. There are also concerns over the financial viability of Healthscope. The ability to deliver top healthcare services is brought into question when a for-profit company is attempting to run a not-for-profit service.

INNER WEST PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (19:20): Access to affordable, safe and reliable public transport is a key determinant in creating opportunities for work and education and in improving the quality of life for people across our State. I am proud to have played a part in building a better public transport network for New South Wales, and I will always be a fierce advocate for public transport in my electorate of Summer Hill and for Sydney's inner west community. The conversion of the T3 line to metro will transform the inner west community and our city as a whole. It will continue to propel us forward as a mature, connected, great global city. Patronage on the M1 metro line, from Tallawong though the city to Sydenham, continues to grow because it provides a reliable and efficient service to millions of Sydneysiders.

Metro magic is real, and patronage is far greater than expected. While the conversion of the Sydenham to Bankstown section of the metro will take a little longer than we had hoped, the Minns Labor Government is committed to delivering this landmark project for the people of south-west Sydney, unlike the former Government, which intended to cancel it. Our Government knows that the end result will transform communities and will attract the same level of popularity as other sections of the metro. In the meantime, I am working hard to ensure that the replacement Southwest Link pink buses are reliable and frequent, and to improve services and passenger journeys wherever I can. The pink Southwest Link buses are free because we acknowledge the challenges for commuters. It is a difficult time for our community but, in the end, the pain will be worth it when the metro provides the reliable services that people deserve and need.

The Minns Labor Government also understands that the best public transport networks are connected and integrated. That is why we are investing significantly to improve bus services across the inner west. This includes the 418 service from Burwood to Tempe, which now makes an extra 301 trips each week. This improves the frequency to every 10 minutes during peak hours and every 20 minutes during the day. It will also operate for more hours each day. The 423, from Kingsgrove to Martin Place, will make an extra 512 trips each week and services will operate at least every 10 minutes every weekday. The 428, from Canterbury to Martin Place, will make an extra 28 trips each week, and the 445, from Campsie to Balmain, will provide an additional five services each week. Local bus services provide critical connections that people rely on.

Our Government's increase in services is making a real difference to the lives of people in the inner west, whether it is getting to and from work, taking the kids to school, visiting friends or doing the shopping and

accessing services. We are not only investing in public transport but also delivering vital active transport links. We know that prioritising active transport options like walking and cycling creates healthier and more vibrant communities. Active transport reduces dependence on cars, which leads to less traffic congestion and improves the air quality for us all. It also encourages physical activity, which reduces lifestyle-related health conditions such as obesity and heart disease. It creates better connected communities to foster greater social interaction.

We are building the East West Pedestrian and Cycling Link—EWPCL, affectionately known as the "you-pickle". It is an active transport corridor that runs all the way from Bankstown to Sydenham along the alignment of the Sydney Metro Southwest line. I am so pleased to see that the new big bike shed at Sydenham station is being well used during the temporary shutdown. One of the most exciting projects happening in the Summer Hill electorate is the GreenWay. It has been coming for a very long time, and it is now close to being realised. The GreenWay was initiated by grassroots community groups which persevered for an incredible amount of time. People will be thankful for it for generations to come. Opening later this year, it will be an environmental, cultural and active transport corridor stretching from the Cooks River in Earlwood to the Parramatta River at Iron Cove.

GreenWay will soon be realised thanks to the commitment of the grassroots activists who have worked with such passion and dedication for so long. It has been improved thanks to an additional $6.2 million from the Federal Albanese Government in January of this year to deliver a tunnel under Old Canterbury Road in Dulwich Hill. This critical link in the GreenWay will remove a busy intersection under this road. That commitment is a further investment on top of the commitments of the State Government and the Inner West Council. Local, State and Federal Labor governments have listened to the community and committed the money to deliver these projects. The communities I represent in the inner west are among the highest levels for public transport use. They are also great users of active transport. They will be the beneficiaries of the investment of Labor governments when the GreenWay opens later this year.

DAVID "BRUCE" ROBERTSON

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (19:25): Today I recognise and honour an extraordinary Australian. David Bruce Robertson, affectionately known as Bruce, will celebrate his 105th birthday later this month. The Castle Hill and District RSL Sub-Branch held a morning tea last Sunday to honour Bruce. Bruce was born in 1920 in Lakemba. His life has been one of service, resilience and dedication to his country. Bruce grew up during the Great Depression and experienced hardship firsthand. He lost his father at an early age to tuberculosis which was made worse by the Spanish flu. Despite those challenges, he displayed remarkable perseverance. He walked miles to school and later secured employment in radio servicing at Price's Radio in Sydney.

His early expertise in wireless communication would prove invaluable in the years to come. Bruce's commitment to Australia began before the outbreak of World War II, when he joined the Army Militia in 1938 as part of the 30th Battalion, the New South Wales Scottish Regiment. An interest in flying was born from a childhood meeting with the aviator Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, and this led Bruce to join the Royal Australian Air Force. Recognising the need for skilled operators in wartime communication, Bruce transferred to the Royal Australian Air Force in 1940. Following rigorous training in radio theory, physics and Morse code, he graduated as a wireless telegraphist operator. That role would see him play a critical part in Australia's wartime efforts.

After graduating as a wireless operator, Bruce was posted to No. 30 Squadron at RAAF Base Richmond. During the early hours on 1 June 1942, Bruce was monitoring communications when he detected an unusual Morse code that identified as a Japanese transmission. Two direction-finding stations were able to identify the transmission as coming from a submarine off Sydney Heads. This was the "mother sub" which had earlier deployed three midget submarines that had entered Sydney Harbour. A Lockheed Hudson bomber was deployed to hunt for it but was unable to locate the mother sub. In 1942, Bruce and a detachment from the No. 30 Squadron were sent Milne Bay on the eastern tip of New Guinea.

The No. 30 Squadron was a long-range fighter squadron flying Bristol Beaufighters. In early 1943, the No. 30 Squadron took part in the Battle of the Bismarck Sea. During the battle, 12 out of 16 Japanese ships were destroyed. Following his service in New Guinea, Bruce was stationed in Townsville, Cairns and Darwin where he continued his vital work in radio and radar communications. He also contributed to the war effort by working with the Allied Intelligence Bureau, intercepting enemy communications and playing a role in counterintelligence operations. He returned to civilian life at the conclusion of the war. He initially managed Price's Radio before moving into the school supply industry.

He established a successful business with his wife, Beryl, which provided educational materials to schools. Their work supported generations of students and educators by ensuring that schools had access to high-quality learning resources. Bruce's business acumen and commitment to education left a lasting impact on countless classrooms across New South Wales. Even in retirement, Bruce's dedication to his fellow servicemen and the

legacy of the RAAF has never wavered. As the president of the 30 Squadron Beaufighter Branch, he has worked tirelessly to preserve the history of his squadron and to ensure the sacrifices of his comrades are remembered. He contributed to the design and construction of the Battle of the Bismarck Sea memorial at RAAF Base Richmond, which holds annual commemorations to honour those who served.

Bruce's efforts have extended to education and public speaking, where he has shared his vast knowledge and firsthand experiences with younger generations. His commitment to historical preservation has earned him widespread recognition, including invitations to prestigious RAAF ceremonies alongside Governors-General. His personal accounts of wartime service have inspired countless Australians to appreciate the sacrifices made by those who served before them. He remains a treasured mentor and speaker, ensuring that Australia's wartime history is not forgotten.

Beyond his military and professional achievements, Bruce has remained a devoted family man, a respected member of his local community and a source of wisdom and encouragement to those around him. His remarkable longevity and sharp mind are a testament to his enduring spirit and commitment to the values of service and dedication. Bruce Robertson is a living testament to the courage, resilience and dedication that define Australia's greatest generation. His contributions to both military service and community engagement have left an indelible mark on all those who know him.

On behalf of this House, I extend my warmest congratulations on his 105th birthday, and I express our deepest gratitude for his lifelong service to our nation. I thank the Castle Hill and District RSL Sub-Branch for organising a wonderful morning tea—which many members of Parliament attended, including the Minister for Veterans, the shadow Minister for Veterans and others—to honour Bruce, a very great Australian.

ISLAMOPHOBIA

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (19:30): We are currently in the middle of the holy month of Ramadan, the holiest month of the year for Muslims, when the *Holy Koran* was first revealed to Mohammed. It is a month of fasting, prayer, good deeds and self-reflection, as individuals strive to empathise with those who are suffering and become closer to God. Collectively, it is a time for community and coming together, especially at Iftar dinners, which bring people together to break the fast. The Granville electorate is home to thousands of Muslims, who make up 23 per cent of the population, the second largest religious group after Catholics. It is a diverse community, including Muslims born in Australia as well as around the world, from Lebanon to Sri Lanka, Sierra Leone to Afghanistan, Türkiye to Somalia and Palestine to Malaysia. It is an honour and a privilege to be invited to break the fast with the Muslim community, and I am attending over a dozen Iftar dinners during the holy month. Sadly, there are almost that many again that I will not be able to join. I also hosted an Iftar last Thursday with the Hon. Jason Clare, inviting friends and community leaders to break their fast with us and enjoy a delicious meal at Kabul House in Merrylands.

But Ramadan this year comes at a time when rising Islamophobia is creating fear in the community. Just as rising antisemitism has stoked fear in the Jewish community, rising Islamophobia is having the same effects in the Muslim community. The Islamophobia Register recently reported a steep increase in assaults, abuse and threats based on reports they received directly between January 2023 and November 2024. Almost half of those reported incidents were in New South Wales. Analysis of more than 600 in-person and online incidents found Muslim women were overwhelmingly the victims—75 per cent of the time. It found that 100 per cent of spitting victims are women and 95 per cent of the victims of Islamophobic incidents on public transport are women and children. The report found 309 verified in-person incidents of Islamophobia—more than 2½ times the number identified in any previous equivalent period. Online incidents also tripled, with 366 verified cases during the study period.

Recently, the terrifying threat to carry out "Christchurch 2.0" was made against the new mosque at Edmonson Park and, soon after, the Mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown reported that the threat "kaboom", along with multiple bomb emojis, was made on his social media, directed at the Al Faisal school. I have certainly witnessed that myself in recent weeks, following a widely reported protest at Granville Boys High School. Since then, I have personally received dozens of hate-filled Islamophobic comments about the school on my social media, some of which were quite concerning and I referred them to police. I understand the school has been inundated with hate-filled communications, some of which were seriously threatening and are also being investigated by police.

As I have said in this place before, Granville Boys High School is a wonderful school that is creating great opportunities for its students. However, the consequences of the protest have been terrible. Despite claims by the protest organisers and sections of the conservative media that Sheik Wissam was reinstated, the protest did not succeed in having him reinstated. He simply took down the video, and I am glad he did. He is a much-loved staff member, who has made an enormous difference to the life of students over the past 13 years. Obviously he and

I have our political differences, but I am glad he is back at the school. The worst consequence of all is that the protest has been grossly mischaracterised to have included antisemitic slogans, which just did not happen according to every witness I have spoken to. Such slogans do not feature in any video I have watched.

While it is not appropriate to yell "Allah Al Akbar" at a secular government school with students of all faiths and none, the phrase means "God is great"—nothing more, nothing less. It is not antisemitic and neither is chanting "Free Palestine". The accusation of antisemitism casts an awful aspersion on 900 boys with their whole lives ahead of them, especially when we have seen a surge in actual antisemitism. It is heartbreaking for all of those who have worked hard to turn around the school's reputation and significantly improve its academic performance. I hope it is only a temporary setback, and I am determined to work with the school's leadership and school community to move past this constructively. Likewise, the Islamophobic threats and hate-filled messages targeting the school are targeting 900 kids, and that is quite distressing. It is awful that this happened just before Ramadan.

The overwhelming majority of Australians of all faiths absolutely reject hate and discrimination against anyone of any faith. Yet the scourge of Islamophobia and other forms of hate, like antisemitism, are making many people fearful. According to the Scanlon Foundation and the Islamophobia Register, they are becoming more prevalent. The holy month of Ramadan is a wonderful opportunity to bring communities together, and this year we really need to do that. I urge everyone to reach out to their Muslim neighbours and colleagues to wish them "Ramadan Mubarak". Share a meal and learn that our common values and aspirations are far greater than our differences. Engage and learn more, and together we can make people less fearful. Over time, we can overcome hatred.

CLARENCE ELECTORATE SUSTAINABLE TIMBER INDUSTRY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (19:35): Tonight I update the Parliament on the sustainable timber industry in my electorate of Clarence. I inform the House of the devastating news I received yesterday that 38 workers at Pentarch's forestry operation in my electorate of Clarence have been immediately stood down without pay. That is devastating news for those 38 hardworking men and women working in the Culcairn facility, which has been operational in my electorate for over 60 years. That facility provides high-value sustainably harvested timber not only for New South Wales, which is very important, but also for Australia. As members of the House will know, we are in the midst of a building and housing crisis. New South Wales needs a sustainable long-term forestry industry. Most alarmingly, this is a Government-made lay-off of 38 workers in my electorate, and I fear there are more to come. In a letter to mills on 20 December 2024, Forestry Corporation said:

> As previously advised, there are a range of factors which have impacted, and continue to impact FCNSW's ability to supply timber in FY25 including the following:
>
> - the establishment of 106 'koala hubs' in the Great Koala National Park (GKNP) assessment area;
> - the issuing of Site Specific Biodiversity Conditions (SSBCs) for Southern Greater Gliders;
> - impacts on hardwood plantation production in relation to unique and special wildlife values under the Plantation and Reafforestation Act 1999;
> - impacts on native forest production resulting from legal challenges by third parties, contentious areas and forest protests …

Most importantly, I would highlight the ministerial direction that was issued on 17 December 2024. Those items highlighted in Forestry Corporation's letter to mills on 20 December 2024 have seen only 63 per cent of the contracted log volumes being supplied to Pentarch Forestry. As Temporary Speaker Kemp will understand, the economic benefits of this industry to my electorate, the wider Northern Rivers and indeed the State of New South Wales are pronounced. As I said a few moments ago, I fear that this is the first of many industries that will be impacted, and not only in my electorate. Yesterday I wrote to the member for Lismore, the new Minister for the Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast, Janelle Saffin, and the Premier of New South Wales urging them to urgently address this issue that was created by policy of this Government.

I will never stand idly by while hardworking men and women are stood down simply because of a log supply shortage. It is really important to note that this is not a company restructure. This is not the company saying that the business is unviable. This is a company pleading for help to ensure that New South Wales has a steady supply of timber from what is the most regulated forestry industry in the world. We should all be proud that it is heavily regulated, and it should be, but there is also the opportunity to ensure New South Wales has a steady supply of high-value timber products that are produced right here in New South Wales.

I urge the Premier to ensure that Forestry Corporation has access to very important parcels of land and ensure that every critter is protected, as it should be, but there is an opportunity for both to be achieved. I urge the Government to act quickly to ensure both are achieved.

SEAHAM PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT PARLIAMENT

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:40): On a very hot Friday afternoon in late February, Seaham Public School student leaders were sweltering in their blazers but were determined to demonstrate their commitment to their beautiful school. The school's small hall was full of seated students sitting in anticipation of a very special annual event—the opening of Seaham Public School's Student Parliament for 2025. Since 2013, Seaham Public School has embraced the concept of a school parliament. Since I was elected a decade ago, I have enjoyed playing a part in many of them. Under the leadership of Principal Craig Partridge and hardworking teachers and staff, students are engaging in something really remarkable. They participate in a school parliament where they have a chance to help shape their school's future and have their voices heard.

Seaham Public School's Student Parliament functions in a way that mirrors our very own here. There are Ministers, shadow Ministers and a range of portfolios. The opening of parliament began—just like here—with the Usher of the Black Rod seeking entry by banging on the wall at the back of the hall. Madam Speaker then entered, followed by the Prime Minister, Ministers and shadow Ministers alongside the Governor, also known as Principal Craig Partridge. They were surrounded by the honourable members who are their classmates and student peers from other school years.

Then the parliamentary session begins, with Ministers introducing themselves, their shadow Ministers and explaining their responsibilities and what they want to achieve in a school year. For example, the Minister for Student Welfare described her tasks as raising the Aboriginal and Australian flags, taking action against bullying and unsafe play. Lexi Benson, the Minister for Technology, oversees the public address system at assemblies. Sophie Tomkins, the Minister for Health, ensures students wear hats during recess. But perhaps, more importantly, the Ministers all shared their care for the welfare of other students, their commitment to representing the school with pride and making a difference during their time as a school leader. The kids are seriously switched on and they all have their hearts in the right place.

Next, a motion was moved without notice from the floor of the parliament that the school should have a storage shed for bikes, scooters and fishing equipment. A passionate debate ensued, with arguments for and against. Some students said it would help and other students said it was not needed. Watching those students express their views with confidence and clarity was exceptional. For the record, the motion did not pass, but the process itself demonstrated how they were able to engage in respectful dialogue and come to a collective decision. That is the essence of democracy—listening, debating, and making decisions that impact their own community. It is an initiative that is incredibly important.

The parliament provides a structured environment for students to engage with issues and empowers them to take ownership of their school environment. School parliaments like this allow students to address concerns and propose solutions, which helps them to develop a sense of responsibility and belonging. But, beyond that, it is an opportunity to build critical leadership skills that will stay with them for life—skills like communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and decision-making. I also always enjoy witnessing something that is very rare among adult conversations—the art of disagreeing respectfully.

I congratulate the student leaders on doing themselves, their school, families and community proud, including Prime Minister Ruby Kete; Leader of the Opposition Zeke Botha; the Minister for Education, Sophie Taylor, and shadow Minister, Marley Balcome; the Minister for the Environment, Madison Courtney, and shadow Minister, Nash Elborne; the Minister for Functions and Finance, Florence Krieger, and shadow Minister, Phoebe Burey; the Minister for Health, Sophie Tomkins, and shadow Minister, Penny Hogan; the Minister for Sport and Recreation, Scarlet Rumph, and shadow Minister, Able Hall; the shadow Minister for Student Welfare, Amber Parrish; the Minister for Technology, Lexi Benson, and shadow Minister, Logan Hartman.

The leadership shown by those young people is something to be celebrated. Their ability to engage with issues, debate with respect and make decisions that affect their school community is something we should all admire. They are learning valuable life skills which will serve them well as they continue to grow and become the leaders of the future. They are directly experiencing democracy in action, having a voice and shaping their own futures. Visiting my local schools in Port Stephens fills me with a sense of hope and optimism for the future. The students of Seaham Public School are what the next generation looks like. They are engaged, thoughtful young people who are ready to take on the challenges of tomorrow. The students demonstrated kindness, care and concern for others and their environment. They are willing to step up and take on responsibilities and undertake them with humility and respect. To the students, I say well done! They were awesome. I am delighted by their dedication, their enthusiasm and their commitment to making their school a better place for all.

WATER ENTITLEMENTS

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:45): People in this place often joke that all I ever talk about is water—well, no kidding, Sherlock. The reason I am always talking about water is because the Government has not fixed New South Wales' water problems yet. Premier Minns is a problem-solver. Chris likes to fix things, and he does fix things. To his credit, a few weeks back, Chris said to me, "Helen, tell me what I should do. I'm open to suggestions. I want to help." Good leaders do not just talk; they also listen. So, Premier Minns, please listen up as I tell you how to fix New South Wales' current water crisis. I am also going to tell the Premier how he can make a cool $3.5 billion. Think about what $3.5 billion in extra revenue could do for the State's budget.

This is what the Premier needs to do. Right now, the Commonwealth Government is trying to buy 450 gigalitres of water from the Murray-Darling Basin irrigators. I do not agree with buybacks because, for a start, the Commonwealth does not need the water. More importantly, New South Wales communities cannot afford to lose that water; nor can the New South Wales economy. New South Wales irrigators need that water to grow the food that is keeping Australians alive but, for political reasons, the Commonwealth still wants those 450 gigalitres. The water has to come from somewhere. I propose that the water comes from you, Premier Minns.

The New South Wales Government currently owns around 770 gigalitres of water entitlements, which is an extraordinary amount of water to control. I do not want to be rude, but the Premier could be accused of being a bit of a water hoarder. The New South Wales Government does not need to hoard that water. It could sell the water to the Commonwealth. For example, if the Victorian and New South Wales governments each sold 225 gigalitres of their water to the Commonwealth, then the Commonwealth would have its 450 gigalitres and it would stop trying to rip that water out of irrigation communities. And here is the best bit: If the New South Wales Government sells 225 gigalitres of its water at $16,000 a megalitre, the Commonwealth will pay New South Wales $3.5 billion. Imagine what the New South Wales Government could do with an extra $3.5 billion. That money could be spent in the New South Wales rural communities that have been neglected by State governments for decades. The New South Wales Government could no longer cry poor. It could finally fund the programs and infrastructure needed to support and rebuild rural New South Wales communities with digital connectivity, roads, bridges and health and education services.

Let us not forget how the New South Wales Government came into possession of the water. Sure, it bought some of it. But a lot of that water was acquired from irrigators. "Acquired" is a nice way of saying taken or even stolen. For those who do not know, every time irrigators like me buy water, we do not get all the water we pay for. Even in a good year, if I pay for 100 megalitres of water, I mostly only ever get 85 megalitres of water and the State Government will keep 15 gigalitres of my water for itself. If we think about that for a second, that is like paying full price for a slab of beer only to have the State Government take four cans for itself before it hands over the rest of the slab. I do not need to tell the Premier that stealing a mate's beer is un-Australian. It certainly does not pass the pub test. The State Government used to pretend that the water it was taking from communities was used for environmental reasons. But we all know that these days the New South Wales Government puts a lot of this acquired or stolen water back onto the market. If the Premier is going to sell it, he should sell it to the Commonwealth.

I also note that the New South Wales Government is not just nicking water from irrigators; it also wants to charge us more for the privilege. Incredibly, WaterNSW wants to increase water delivery charges to some irrigators by more than 340 per cent over five years. Can you believe it? That is like the New South Wales Government nicking those four cans from your slab and then insisting you also shout it a round of beers. Premier Minns asked me what to do about water. Well, I have just told everyone what we should do. Premier Minns has 3.5 billion reasons to sell New South Wales water to the Commonwealth. If he does that, he will be flush with cash and able to invest properly in rural New South Wales. It makes sense and it is a simple solution. So I call on the Premier to stop being a water hoarder, sell some water and invest that money in the rural communities that feed and clothe us all.

CAMDEN HOSPITAL PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICE

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (19:50): This year the Camden community lost a beautiful member of our community. Melissa Deves passed away in January, surrounded by friends and family. I take the time today to recognise her incredible contribution to our area, and the long-lasting legacy she has created that I am hopeful will remain in our community forever. Melissa grew up in Camden, attended Narellan Public School and Elderslie High School, and had lived in the area ever since, starting a family and working across the wider community. She was incredibly kind and generous, always happy to help out anyone in need. Melissa was a strong advocate for palliative care in Camden, fighting for its future alongside former councillor Cindy Cagney, Sharon Robertson and Janice Maloney. That is how I got to know Melissa. Together, they rallied 5,550 members of the community. Melissa campaigned tirelessly on social media, creating petitions and writing letters. I had the

pleasure of meeting with her, when we were able to chat about the importance of palliative care in Camden Hospital and Melissa's future vision for it.

Melissa was also instrumental in organising the Camden Rotary Club's restoration project of the palliative care garden. Having a garden is an asset to the service. Green spaces have been proven to improve mental health and reduce stress. The garden provides a peaceful and enriching break from hospital life not just for patients but also for their families—and, of course, for staff. Camden Hospital has a wonderful view too, which can be seen from patient rooms. For those who have never had the pleasure of visiting Camden, the hospital sits on top of a hill and looks over the green hills and the old township, as well as the beautiful jacaranda trees, which are a lovely sight when in bloom. It is a welcome change from the usual view that hospital patients, staff and families are used to and only contributes to bettering the wellbeing of people who access the service.

Last year I had the opportunity to show the Minister for Health around Camden Hospital's palliative care ward, where we discussed how incredible it is and got a chance to meet the wonderful staff working there and see firsthand the positive impact their actions can have. I give a shout-out to the staff who decked out the palliative care ward in a sakura, or Japanese cherry blossom, theme. Completely strewn with hanging flowers, the area was beautifully decorated. It felt nothing like a hospital ward. It was the most inviting, beautiful, calm and loving place—certainly somewhere that anyone would like to spend their final months.

Palliative care helps people to live their life as fully and as comfortably as possible when living with a terminal illness. Ensuring they can do so within the comfort of their own community and surrounded by their family is of the utmost importance. I am incredibly proud to have a service like this in our local area and, more importantly, in my local hospital. I am so incredibly thankful to Melissa for keeping that service going. Thanks to her efforts, our palliative ward is not going anywhere. Rest easy, Mel. I thank her so much for all of her hard work. My deepest sympathies, and the sympathies of members in this Chamber, go out to her family and friends at this time.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE SCHOOL ENROLMENT AREAS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (19:55): I speak about the importance of community-mindedness and choice in education. On Saturday 8 March 2025 I hosted a regular listening post at West Lindfield shops. I thank the over 50 local residents who attended specifically to discuss changes to the local school enrolment area. Local residents were rightfully concerned, upset and angry about the NSW Department of Education's snap decision to change the local school enrolment area of Killara High School, Lindfield Learning Village and Turramurra High School. That snap decision by the Department of Education was made with little or no consultation. Community-mindedness was lacking. The Department of Education needs to improve its consultation methods with local communities—no ifs, ands or buts. Concerns and questions remain about adequate consultation between local school communities and the Department of Education about everything from local enrolment areas to building new schools to changing schools from same sex to co-educational.

On the weekend of 3 to 4 March 2025, I received several emails from residents about the local school enrolment changes. They mean that, from 2026, residents in Killara, Lindfield and Gordan will be required to attend the Lindfield Learning Village or Turramurra High School, not Killara High School. On 5 March 2025 *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported on the matter. I recognise constituent Debbie Levien for her advocacy with her children Oliver and Emilia. The article was headed "Catchment-22: School zone rejig's double trouble". I note that the editorial of *The Sydney Morning Herald* that day said, "New homes without new schools is a fail". I quote the editorial, which stated:

> The overcrowded schools in the north-west and south is a direct result of years of government planning not keeping up with demographic changes. Putting the north shore schools on hold suggests the Minns government has not learned the lesson.

I am relieved that, within 24 hours, the community's voice was heard loud and clear: The Department of Education is providing a two-year delay until 2028 for enrolment changes between Killara High School and Lindfield Learning Village. Change, however, is continuing for Turramurra High School. As reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald* in the article "Killara rezoning put back to 2028" on 6 March 2025, I stated as the local member that residents were:

> … frustrated the government was making "life-changing" decisions for residents "on a whim".
>
> "The community welcomes the news, but it's no way to run a school system. These decision deeply affect families."

It comes down to two issues. The first is the lack of investment in new schools and new infrastructure by the Minns Labor Government. The second is about choice in education when it comes to education models. I wrote to the Minister for Education and Early Learning, and said:

> As you know, Lindfield Learning Village is a Kindergarten to Year 12 school with an innovative educational model. Whilst some students and their parents/guardians are supportive of this model, other students and parents/guardians seek a traditional education model. I strongly support local choice when it comes to educational models. I am seeking your advice about the establishment of a joint local enrolment area based on educational models to allow choice for students and their parents/guardians.

The letter continues:

> I note that such an arrangement of joint local enrolment areas currently exist for students to access co-educational high schools and single-sex high schools.

That brings me to the importance of the principle of choice in education, which is a bedrock of my Liberal values. Choice in education is part of our Australian values. There are students and families that will choose an innovative educational model and others who will choose a traditional educational model. The question arises: Why the need for choice? Firstly, choice empowers individuals—namely, students, and families—to make decisions that best suit their needs, motivations and values. Secondly, choice provides personalised learning needs and styles. Finally, choice provides agency to individuals, which increases motivation and engagement that can enhance learning and academic results. Choice is about having the power to bring out the very best in individuals so they can reach their full potential. I am proud to have commenced a petition and survey on the issue for the students and families in my local community. A Lindfield resident stated:

> I have a child in year 1 at Lindfield Public, I would like choice when deciding what school to send her to for high school.

A Killara resident stated:

> To have the choice for a traditional educational model school taken away (and from my suburb) without consultation is unjust. I believe my son would more likely flourish under a more structured educational model.

Finally, a Chatswood West resident stated:

> All three schools are great schools but each is not suited for everyone.

On behalf of the Davidson electorate, I call on the Minister for Education and Early Learning to allow a choice of educational models and to allow a joint local enrolment area for the students and families of Killara, Lindfield and Roseville.

ANTISEMITISM

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (20:00): Tonight I speak on antisemitism, which is a topic particularly close to me and my community. The electorate of Coogee has one of the largest Jewish communities in the State and it has two Jewish schools. I have spoken a number of times in this place about antisemitism. I do not get any joy speaking about it again tonight, particularly in light of rhetoric from some people in this place and the broader community, which I and many people in my community, particularly the Jewish community, find offensive and insulting. Many people are choosing to frame the Dural incident as an isolated event. They are insinuating that because it was shown to be a fake event, any claim that antisemitism has been on the rise throughout our State—particularly within the eastern suburbs of Sydney—and across our country can be completely undermined. I find the insinuation that it was a weird, isolated event and that we should pin everything to it, offensive and insulting.

To reduce antisemitism to what people say is one weird, isolated event is so incredibly abhorrent. It demonstrates people's lack of understanding and their lack of empathy. It also shows the depth of the problem that continues to exist in our State, which started long before this. As I said, I do not get any joy talking about the issue. I speak about it because it is something that is very close to me and many friends of mine within our community. We are faced with it on a daily basis in our electorate office. Kids going to school are told that they should have been gassed along with their families. Those things have been happening for a very long time. A 2023 report on antisemitism in Australia showed that antisemitic incidents have been increasing. In 2023 there were 18 reports of vandalism—and we know that most are under-represented.

In 2013 there were five reports of physical assaults; in 2014, there were 15; in 2016, there were 12; and in 2023, there were 11. Since 2013 reports of verbal abuse increased from 115 to 118. In 2013 there were eight reports of posters and stickers; and in 2023, there were 86. I would encourage anyone who has doubts about the depth of antisemitism in our State and across Australia to familiarise themselves with the report. It is nothing to laugh about. These are incredibly serious things. For anyone to reduce antisemitism to the Dural incident is so offensive. They have no idea of the depth of the issue. It is deplorable and anyone who seeks to do it is a deplorable person.

BLACKBERRY MANAGEMENT

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:05): As the old saying goes "There aren't multiple blackberry bushes; it is only one blackberry that covers all New South Wales." Recent research suggests that the total annual

financial cost of invasive species, including flora and fauna, in New South Wales in 2020-21 was around $1.35 billion. Weeds alone were assessed as contributing nearly 83 per cent of the total, indicating that the cost imposed by all weeds in New South Wales could be around $1.12 billion annually. Blackberry is one of the most problematic weeds. Classified as a Weed of National Significance, it is among Australia's top 10 invasive species, affecting our biodiversity and ecosystem and impacting on 47 threatened native Australian species. One only needs to speak with local landholders to get a sense both of the damage the weed causes and the frustration with the limited action to date. How do they get the ear of the Government so it does something about it?

That is where the *Murray Region Forestry Hub Blackberry Impacts Project Report* is so important. Released last year, what elevates the report is that, for the first time, careful analysis puts a dollar cost to both controlling the problem and the cost of inaction. Using the hub's region as a case study, it has been estimated that blackberry impose average annual control costs and direct primary production loss of approximately $71 million over an area of 170,000 hectares, encompassing softwood plantations, livestock grazing and conservation areas. Overall total economic activity in the region could be reduced by approximately $306 million per year. It is well understood how blackberry also impacts management of bushfires. Access problems for fighting fires and an increase in fuel load all contribute to the intensity and size of a bushfire. That has wider implications for our community, not just landholders and forestry.

With the report as a base, in December 2024 the Murray Region Forestry Hub convened a strategy day in Albury. As the hub sets out in advice to government, "Regardless of a positive outcome to find and implement an effective biological control, there is still a need for a collective approach." By using strong economic data and bringing stakeholders together, the Murray Region Forestry Hub has been able to develop a much-needed strategic plan that recognises a comprehensive landscape-scale approach beyond mere control to reduce infestation levels across Australia. The strategic plan sets out three pillars necessary in tackling the weed: collaborative management and governance; research and innovation; and on-ground implementation and demonstration. The first pillar outlines the importance of a collaborative approach. It is near impossible for the average landowner to manage the issue on their own. A range of stakeholders including government, the Forestry Corporation, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and landowners must all work in collaboration. It requires a multi-jurisdictional approach. We must work across borders and across levels of government.

The second pillar centres around research and innovation. The use of the French strain of sawfly in combating this weed is being assessed, as they are known to attack the elmleaf blackberry. Further funding is much needed. The use of new technologies may also play a part, with the 2023 blackberry best practice management manual suggesting the use of drones for aerial spraying. As blackberries typically grow in mountainous areas, drones may provide a greater ease of accessing areas that were previously unreachable. The third pillar concerns delivering targeted, collaborative control programs that integrate research findings, demonstrate measurable impacts and inspire broader adoption.

The blackberry has been a known problem for decades and is not going away if we limit action to just the protection of key assets, as it currently stands. Local landholders have told me, "It is critical that the investment of land managers is recognised and supported by long-term funding for further management of blackberries." With Murray Region Forestry Hub doing the heavy lifting to get to a point where a well-considered strategic plan has been formed, now is the time for critical government support and funding. We need to harness the vision set out by the Murray Region Forestry Hub for a healthy, productive Murray region where blackberry infestations are sustainably managed and progressively reduced across all tenures through a collaborative, landscape-scale approach. That will protect biodiversity, reduce fire risk, enhance the productivity of enterprises and restore the ecological balance of the landscape. We may not be able to eradicate blackberry, but we can control the weed by working together.

CROWN RESERVES IMPROVEMENT FUND

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:10): I discuss the concern and dismay I have for communities across the Goulburn electorate under the remit of the New South Wales Labor Government, particularly in light of the recent modifications to the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund [CRIF]. This is not just bureaucratic red tape; it directly affects the quality of life and infrastructure in rural and regional areas. Last year I voiced my concerns about the Government's troubling trend of de-prioritising rural and regional communities for essential infrastructure improvements and funding. That issue becomes even more critical for our regional communities, where councils are spread across vast distances, often encompassing hundreds of kilometres. Their focus is rightly directed toward public infrastructure needs such as roads and waste management, which are fundamental services that urban areas may take for granted.

Unlike urban centres such as Sydney, Wollongong or Newcastle, regional communities do not enjoy the same level of commercial investment or development opportunities. That scarcity underscores the importance of the CRIF program, which has historically been a cornerstone of securing funding for vital community

infrastructure. Unfortunately, that program has now been compromised. Minister Kamper's misguided decision to turn funding allocation into a popularity contest has derailed a system that once ensured equitable support for all communities. The implications of the shift are far reaching. Should we only fund the busiest hospitals because they serve higher populations? Should only roads with millions of vehicles receive attention? That is the flawed logic that has now taken hold within the funding framework.

Crown lands, which are managed by local volunteer trusts, serve as vital communal spaces where residents of rural areas celebrate significant life events, engage in recreational activities and come together. Is it fair for a government to slash funding from those invaluable resources? Labor's decision to cut $8 million from the original $18 million in its two short years since taking office is not just financially irresponsible; it is an affront to rural communities relying on those funds. The program now stands at a mere $10 million to be divided among 850 community facilities, 950 cemeteries, 260 showgrounds, 2,500 sports facilities, 4,000 parks, and 160 care facilities. The maths is painfully clear and speaks volumes about the Government's priorities.

The CRIF program is consistently oversubscribed and widely valued across regional New South Wales. However, the message being relayed to regional applicants is discouraging: "Don't bother." This is due to funding criteria focusing heavily on attendance numbers, putting regional facilities at an unfair disadvantage. The 2023 guidelines made it clear that funding success hinged on high visitor numbers, effectively leaving many rural reserves with fewer than 10,000 annual visitors scoring zero points. It is an unattainable goal for many communities. The blatant disregard for the unique challenges facing rural areas reveals the Labor Government's true agenda: funnelling funds into densely populated areas is more likely to secure it votes.

The ongoing cuts and revised criteria are nothing short of an insult to regional and rural New South Wales. Crown land is not merely a commodity for the Government; it is the heart and soul of our communities. Places like showgrounds, sports fields, picnic areas and community halls are what knit our social fabric together and foster economic resilience and heritage. Take, for example, the Yass Swimming Club in the Yass Valley shire. Its application for a grant under the CRIF seeks to upgrade the power supply for Victoria Park Crown reserve—a critical step toward improving its facilities. The inadequate pool conditions discourage usage, particularly in cold weather. Upgrading the power supply is essential for extending the swimming season and enhancing the community's overall wellbeing, especially for ageing residents who benefit from low-impact exercise. I remain disheartened that the New South Wales Labor Government continues to siphon resources from rural and regional areas to favour metropolitan conveniences. It is time to prioritise the communities that truly need support, not just the areas where votes are guaranteed. Our regions deserve better.

FERTILITY TREATMENT REBATES

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (20:15): I take this opportunity to talk about the rising cost of living. It affects every person and every household within my community. I believe that in this Parliament we have to get serious about this issue. As the costs of everyday necessities such as groceries, electricity, mortgage repayments and rent continue to skyrocket, the people of New South Wales need a government that is serious about addressing the cost of living. According to an article published in *The Daily Telegraph*, families are $3,000 worse off today than they were before the Albanese and Minns Labor governments came to power. At a time where grocery prices have risen by 30 per cent, families should not be choosing between keeping the lights on and putting food on the table.

Women are often the ones who manage the household budget, and they are making tough decisions when it comes to household finances. I have spoken to many women in my community about the way the rising cost of living is impacting them. I condemn the Minns Labor Government for its cuts to IVF treatments across New South Wales. Those changes, announced at the end of November 2024, are a significant step backwards. For so many families, the journey towards parenthood is not easy. One in seven couples has fertility issues and one in 16 children in New South Wales are now born through IVF. By means-testing a service that is medically necessary for so many women, the Government is adding additional hurdles to family planning and increasing the strain on family budgets. For those families, IVF is not always a choice. It is an essential service that ensures all couples are given the opportunity to raise a family. During that difficult, emotional and expensive process, the IVF rebate scheme provides much-needed relief to families, especially during a cost-of-living crisis.

The IVF rebate was introduced under the previous Liberal Government as part of an $80 million expansion to ensure access to IVF remains affordable for families. Under the previous program, the $2,000 rebate was available to any New South Wales family that had incurred an out-of-pocket cost from a private IVF program after 1 October 2022. Under the new means-tested program, which was implemented last month—beginning 19 February 2025—women in New South Wales will only be eligible to receive the rebate if household income tests are met. That includes receiving the Family Tax Benefit, having a Health Care Card, or having a household income of $116,000 or less. That means that if each partner has an income of $58,000 or greater, they are not

eligible for the rebate. To put that in real terms, that is nearly $20,000 less than the starting salary of a New South Wales public school teacher.

We know birth rates are declining in this country, and we should be encouraging and supporting women and families, not putting up financial roadblocks and limiting access to essential healthcare services. At the Federal level and internationally, governments are investing significantly in fertility research and IVF treatments because they understand their importance. Yet, here in New South Wales, the Government is taking steps in the wrong direction. As it stands, the average Australian woman is having 1.5 babies—a trend that will see a sharp decline in our population over the coming decades. In order to maintain our population, that figure would need to increase to 2.1, but that cannot be achieved whilst the Government continues to slash public funding for IVF treatments.

According to IVF Australia, the average out-of-pocket expense for a single cycle of IVF is $6,265, with subsequent cycles costing $5,568. Studies from UNSW suggest that only one out of three women will fall pregnant during their first cycle of IVF, ultimately pushing the cost of treatment into the tens of thousands of dollars. While I understand that this $2,000 payment does not cover the full cost of IVF, it goes a long way to making treatment more accessible. As a young woman, I find it particularly disturbing that these cuts will disproportionately affect women. IVF is a difficult process and these cuts will add additional financial barriers for women. The Government has claimed these cuts are about budget savings, but cutting IVF rebates is not a responsible saving measure. Instead, these cuts are a short-sighted decision with long-term consequences for families across my community and New South Wales. Women should not have to choose between paying their bills and starting a family. I thank the House.

The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:20 until Wednesday 19 March 2025 at 10:00.

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

HILLTOP ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL'S K-2 PRESENTATION DAY - 11 DECEMBER 2024

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I would like to wish a warm congratulations to all the award winners on Hilltop Road Public School's K-2 presentation day! Presentation day is a time for students to be specifically awarded for their efforts and achievements during the school year - something which means a lot to those kids representing Australia's future leaders and shapers of our beloved community. I also would like to give a shout out to the amazing teachers, staff and parents that make these presentation days possible. Hilltop Road Public School celebrated its 72nd birthday last year. This huge milestone as well as the milestones of the students all come hand in hand, so must be celebrated. I was delighted to present the attendance awards. Well-done to Hilltop Road Public, the students, teachers and parents alike!

GRANVILLE'S MR UNIVERSE

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I am pleased to recognise Bodybuilder and Westmead resident Hasnain Karimi on his amazing achievements at the 2024 Mr Universe competition that was held in Perth late last year. Hasnain's incredible dedication and strength was on full display as he managed to take home Gold in the Classic Physique and BodyBuilding Under 70kg categories, and Bronze in the Men's Physique category. Born in Pakistan Hasnain migrated to Australia in 2009. In 2011 he began going to the gym and has since built a life in Western Sydney through his passion for fitness. Hasnain's success in Perth has qualified him to represent Australia on the world stage. I would like to extend a sincere congratulations from myself and the Granville community and wish him the best of luck in his future competitions. I hope that Hasnain's dedication and hardwork can inspire everyone in the local community to follow their passions with tenacity and perseverance.

GRANVILLE SOUTH CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS HIGH SCHOOL PRESENTATION DAY

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was truly honored to be invited to the Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School Presentation Day on December 12th, 2024. We gathered to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our students, recognising their hard work, dedication, and accomplishments throughout the year. This event was a testament to their resilience and passion for excellence, providing an opportunity to congratulate and inspire the next generation of leaders. Each student who was recognised demonstrated incredible commitment to their craft, and their success served as an inspiration to their peers and the entire school community. A memorable highlight of the day was the exceptional performance by the school band, Guns N' Roses' "Sweet Child O' Mine." Their remarkable talent and energy left a lasting impression, showcasing the outstanding musical abilities cultivated here at Granville South Creative and Performing Arts High School.

LAUNCH OF DIVINE DHARMA MEDITATION

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—It was an honour to attend the opening of Divine Dharma Meditation in Fairfield on the 24th of August 2024. Divine Dharma Meditation is a registered charity that aims to advance health and improve quality of life by sharing the lectures of Grand Master Dasira Nada and teaching Divine Dharma Meditation, a discipline that helps followers awaken their souls. From the Himalayan range where the founder Dasira Narada began his journey to enlightenment, to the streets of Fairfield, Divine Dharma Meditation now contributes to the diversity of beliefs and culture that Australia is known for. It was truly heartwarming to watch the passion and dedication the community has for this cause and the contribution they seek to make to the community.

MARCO POLO - AWARD CEREMONY OF THE INTERNATIONAL LITERARY COMPETITION

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—It was an honour to attend the Award Ceremony of the International Literary Competition on the 9th of November at Club Marconi. The competition is held by Marco Polo, The Italian School of Sydney in honour of the life of the renowned explorer. The Italian Government declared 2024 the year of the Italian Roots in the world and in light of this, the competition was titled "The Return of Marco Polo: Travels, Memories and Adventures to the Italian Roots." Many esteemed guests including the Consul General of Italy were in attendance and it was a privilege to witness the incredible talent of all the participants. Congratulations to the winners, Antonio, Duska and Elga who wrote thought provoking and emotional pieces that recognise the life of Italian migrants and celebrate their rich cultural lineage.

ACTION FOR AGAPE RIDERS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Today I recognise the extraordinary efforts of 16-year-old Nate Fullerton, 15-year-old Samuel Terry and 15-year-old Hamish Chalmers from Heritage College Lake Macquarie, who last month pushed their bodies and minds to the limit to raise desperately needed funds for Majimoto Secondary School in Kenya. The teenage trio took part in the gruelling Action for Agape Ride, a 250-kilometre mountain bike ride which spans from Canberra to Mount Kosciuszko and takes place over five days. The year 10 and 11 students managed to raise just shy of $5000, which will provide critical resources like textbooks, classroom supplies, food, clean water, and hygiene items for students at Majimoto Secondary School who face daily challenges due to poverty. In addition to the bike ride, the Heritage College community organised a sausage sizzle fundraiser, led by SRC members and Action for Agape team member Nate Fullerton. The event was a resounding success, with every sausage sold. While charity may indeed start at home, these three teenagers have proved themselves to be valuable members of our global community, going above and beyond to help their fellow students in Kenya, who truly needed it.

LYN TURNBULL

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Lyn Turnbull of Caringbah South on being a finalist in the 2025 Cronulla Senior of the Year Awards. Lyn was nominated by Caringbah Baptist Church for her remarkable dedication to the church community over the past 20 years. She has made an extraordinary impact through her initiative, 'Caring by Cards,' by sending thousands of personalised birthday cards to church members, each accompanied by a thoughtful note of encouragement. In a world where personal letters are increasingly rare, Lyn's cards arrive as a nice surprise, making recipients feel valued and connected to the church family. In the past year alone, Lyn has sent 288 cards, averaging between 20 to 25 each month, and over the years, she has sent more than 5,000 cards, each carefully handwritten and addressed with individual words of kindness. Lyn takes the time to personalise each message with words of encouragement and appreciation, ensuring each card feels special. Caringbah Baptist says Lyn's long-term commitment has been a blessing to people in the church. I join the church in recognising Lyn's service as a volunteer over many years.

ROBERT AND NERIDA BROADY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate dynamic Caringbah couple Robert and Nerida Broady on being finalists in the 2025 Cronulla Seniors Awards. They were nominated by Caringbah Baptist Church for their volunteer efforts to support the church's Friday night 'Adventure' club. During school terms over the last five years, Robert and Nerida have spent Friday nights lovingly cooking and served meals for 35 children then cleaned up afterwards. Over the five years that's more than 5,000 meals. The Broadys also shop for the ingredients of the meals and offer a variety of meal options so that each child receives a plate of their preferred choice at the end of the afternoon's Adventure program. I'm told parents love that their kids have had their evening meal before arriving home. Caringbah Baptist says to regularly shop, prepare and serve meals and clean-up is a big commitment, and that the Broadys' reliability and consistent involvement has been an essential part of the Adventure club's success. I'm delighted to recognise the volunteer commitment of Robert and Nerida in our community.

ROBERT BRYANT – CRONULLA SENIOR OF THE YEAR

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate water polo stalwart Robert 'Rocko' Bryant of Kirrawee on being named 2025 Cronulla Senior of the Year. Robert has made an enormous volunteer contribution to water polo in the Sutherland Shire over half a century. He's continually dedicated his time to pass on his knowledge and skills as a two time Olympian to up and coming players, serving as a coach and mentor for both the Cronulla club and the Sutherland Shire Junior Water Polo Association. Robert can be found at the Sutherland Leisure Centre on most days and evenings helping teams and coaches and is also actively involved with running the junior association's 'Polobility' competition to help young disabled people get involved in water polo. He also continues to compete in the pool and racked up his 900th game for the Cronulla Sharks in late 2024. His community involvement has also extended to Cronulla Polar Bears, Elouera Surf Life Saving Club and St Patrick's Football Club. Robert is person with huge community spirit and this award is well-deserved recognition for what he's done for local sporting organisations and the sport of water polo over many decades.

MR DAVE NICHOLSON

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Mr Dave Nicholson. Mr Nicholson is a keen participant in cue sports which can be played by many individuals who have been born with or acquired a disability through their lifetime. Mr Nicholson has Multiple Sclerosis and Osteoarthritis and had not played snooker since participation in the combined Catholic Clubs Snooker Association Snooker High Break, Campbelltown Catholic Club Snooker Open Club Championships, Doubles Winner, combined Catholic Clubs Snooker Association Snooker semi-finalist all accomplished in 1991. Mr Nicholson travelled to participate in 2024 for The Cube UK Disability Championship supported with sponsorship from Jigsaw Accountants, with a ranking of thirteenth. Mr Nicholson is currently seeking sponsorship to travel to compete in the 2025 World Abilitysport Games being held in Jakarta to compete in snooker. I take this time to congratulate Mr Nicholson for his return to cue sports and his ability to attain representative status for Australia, this is a truly wonderful accomplishment. I wish you every success in your future participation and representative roles.

MR CHARLIE FENTON

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Mr Charlie Fenton. Mr Fenton organised the 24-hour Saddle Up For A Mate horse ride commencing on the 28th of February through till the 1 st of March, to promote and raise awareness for men or those who are struggling with their mental well-being. In recognition of the suicides in the Shire and his own personal experience of the loss of someone to suicide Mr Fenton is passionate about bringing the community together to encourage open interaction and support for those experiencing mental health issues particularly for men and those living in rural communities. Mental health can often go unrecognised, and often even by those experiencing it, and this is why such events are crucial. It is recognised that advocates such as Mr Fenton play a pivotal role in enabling open discussions and the development of social support and networks within communities, which play a powerful premise in suicide prevention. I take this time to sincerely acknowledge Mr Fenton for his commitment the prevention of suicides.

POLICE SERGEANT LEON LINCOLN

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Police Sergeant Leon Lincoln for his outstanding service and dedication to the Goulburn region, and Upper Lachlan Shire. Over the past two years, Sergeant Lincoln has been a driving force in advocating for improved policing across the region. Since his arrival, he has actively engaged with the CWA, Rotary, Lions, Probus, local schools, and various community organisations. Through these connections, he has effectively shared his vision for securing the personnel needed to enhance police services across the Shire. Sergeant Lincoln's professionalism, leadership, and expertise have played a crucial role in attracting experienced officers to fill vacant positions. As a result, the community has benefited from an increased police presence, leading to improved road safety and greater security across the region. In March, Sergeant Lincoln will be transferring to the Central Coast, marking the end of his tenure in the Upper Lachlan Shire. His contributions have left a lasting impact, and I sincerely thank him for his dedication, collaboration, and service to our community.

DR CHRISTA WOOD

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the 2025 Kiama Electorate Woman of the Year, Dr Christa Wood, from Gerringong. I was absolutely delighted to make the official announcement on Thursday 6th March 2025, whilst Dr Wood at a special NSW Women's Week Awards ceremony in Sydney. Dr Wood has been actively involved in the local Gerringong Rotary Club and their Markets, the Berry Writer's Festival and Gerringong 'Pics & Flicks'. Dr Wood founded the Alchemy Chorus South Coast in Gerringong in 2022, which is an inclusive working choir which welcomes those living with dementia and their care partners. Dr Wood is also a Dementia Advocate and has established many local activities to improve the lives

of local people living with dementia. These include Dementia Inclusive Dancing held at the community hall at the Mayflower Retirement Village. She is a deserving recipient of this award. International Women's Day was celebrated on Saturday 8th March. Thank you to all of the amazing women right across the Kiama electorate. From mothers to grandmothers and sisters and aunties and women caregivers of all descriptions, our local women make our communities stronger and better.

PETER WILLIAMS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Mr Peter Williams from Nowra. As part of the 2025 NSW Seniors Festival, I was honoured to announce Mr Peter Williams from Nowra as the recipient of a Local Achievement Award. Mr Peter Williams was recognised for his enormous contribution to our local Shoalhaven community, and in particular for his distinguished contribution to the local Shoalhaven RSL Sub Branch and veterans' community. Mr Williams for many years used his bugle to perform The Last Post at local memorial, ANZAC Day and other Remembrance Day commemorative services across our region. The Local Achievement Awards are among a range of exciting events taking place across the state as part of the 2025 NSW Seniors Festival, which celebrates older people and helps keep them active and engaged with their community. The theme for the 2025 NSW Seniors Festival was 'Time to Shine' and there is no better sentiment to express the enormous contribution which older people make every day across our diverse Kiama electorate. A huge congratulations, thank you and well done to Mr Peter Williams from Nowra.

MS AMELIA BEAHAN

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises outstanding local Kiama small business owner, Ms Amelia Beahan. At just 21 years old, Kiama local Amelia Beahan has traded the world of wedding planning for a new venture – Acai Fix, a popular local small business in Kiama. The shop, which opened on Sunday 1st December 2024, has taken over the space formerly occupied by Bouquiniste and welcomes customers seven days a week. Acai bowls, the shop's specialty, feature the nutrient-packed superberry blended into a smooth, creamy base, ready to be topped with your favourites. Whether you're after breakfast or a guilt-free treat, Acai Fix in Kiama offers something great for everybody to enjoy. Acai Fix located at Shop 1/106 Terralong St, Kiama, is a much healthier option for local Kiama residents than other fast-food options. Acai Fix has quickly become extremely popular with incredibly friendly staff members and loyal customers. Please drop by and support our young people in small businesses, and I know Amelia has been investing many hours of hard work and dedication towards creating vibrant new logos and creating a space for our local Kiama residents to enjoy.

ARETE HEALTH CARE 2024 CHRISTMAS DINNER AND STAFF RECOGNITION

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 13 December 2024, I had the honour of attending the Arete Health Care (Lansdowne Aged Care) Christmas Dinner and Staff Recognition Event 2024. Aged care is an essential service in our community to ensure individuals receive the respect and support required to live their lives in older age. It is important that we all recognise the dedication of aged care staff members for all their hard work and dedication they provide every single day. These workers work tirelessly to provide not only physical but also social and emotional support to the aged care residents whom they care for. I would like to thank Nam Pham and the Team from Arete Health Care (Lansdowne Aged Care) for inviting me to their Christmas Dinner and Staff Recognition Event 2024. Thank you to the event organisers for the wonderful evening and to the venue for the amazing food. I wish Arete Health Care (Lansdowne Aged Care) and all their staff a happy and safe Christmas and all the very best for the new year ahead. Thank you again for all your hard work and dedication you bring to your job.

MEETING MEMBERS OF CASS IN CAMPSIE

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the morning of 10 October 2024, I had the pleasure of visiting the headquarters of CASS in Campsie, an outstanding organisation dedicated to supporting individuals across all ages in our community, from the young to the elderly, across Metropolitan Sydney and Wollongong, with an active presence in my Cabramatta Electorate. CASS plays a vital role in strengthening local communities by offering essential services such as residential aged care, disability support, childcare, and vocational training. The organisation is powered by a dedicated team of over 800 staff members and over 450 volunteers. CASS delivers crucial and tailored services to Asian communities, serving over 7000 families on a weekly basis. I extend my heartfelt thanks to CASS leadership team, Mr Henry Pan OAM – Honorary Executive Director, Mr Evan Huang – Board of Director Member, and Mr Anthony Pang OAM – Deputy Chairperson, as well as the Vietnamese team representatives Ms Tam Nguyen and Ms Giang Phan for their kind invitation and informative discussion. With exciting expansion plans underway, I look forward to CASS's growing impact and the continued benefits for my constituents.

PAL BUDDHIST SCHOOL 2024 END OF YEAR AWARDS CEREMONY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—Pal Buddhist School is the first and only Buddhist Primary and High School in New South Wales, dedicated to providing young students with a unique and holistic learning experience. Rooted in the values of Buddhism, the school fosters a nurturing, inclusive, and respectful environment that empowers students to grow both academically and personally. It was an honour to attend the school's end of year 2024 awards ceremony and present the Tri Vo MP Student Leadership Awards to four outstanding recipients: for Primary School: Henry Mollica and Velvet Phan, and for High School: Munireach Py and Nancy Ha. These awards celebrate students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, resilience, and dedication to their school community throughout the academic year. I thank Principal Mr Pal, and Head of School, Ms Helen Lam for their kind invitation and their support of the Awards. In addition, I congratulate the award recipients, teachers, staff, parents and the school for the successful year.

BAILEY CAMPBELL

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Bailey Campbell, school captain from Warilla High School who has been honoured by NSW Governor Margaret Beazley. Bailey's is a senior mentor and a leader on the Student Representative Council and demonstrates her natural leadership qualities every day. Bailey was one of 26 students honoured at Government House in October 2024, receiving a trophy and certificate of commendation from the Governor. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Bailey on this this wonderful achievement.

DAVE BATEMAN

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Dave Bateman, HSIE teacher at Dapto High School, for his 32 years of dedicated service at Dapto High School. Mr Bateman's passion for education, environmental awareness and commitment to fostering a positive learning environment is a legacy he will leave for not only his students but the teachers and the entire school community. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Dave on this wonderful achievement.

MELISSA RITCHIE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Melissa Ritchie, from Mt Warrigal, a local artist who has provided art on four bus shelters across the Shellharbour local government area up until the end of January 2025. Melissa says her paintings 'capture a moment in time where many represented items are meaningful beyond the composition. Many of her still life paintings feature a piece of folded paper or origami alongside modern everyday objects and heirlooms that pay homage to memories of my childhood. I've also painted iconic, locally owned family businesses in my urban landscapes, that celebrate our local region and local personalities. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Melissa on this wonderful achievement.

CAVES BEACH PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2025

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Ace Campbell, Maiple-Rose Wither, Olivia Gilber, Kingston Martins, Koah Toby, Jessica Shepherd, Flynn Liversedge and Pepper Janiszewski on being named the 2025 school leaders at Caves Beach Public School. These students have demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to their school community. They represent Caves Beach Public School with exceptional pride and integrity. Throughout their time at school, each of these students have 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 pride, and in doing so, develop valuable skills that will benefit them beyond schooling. I congratulate Ace, Maiple-Rose, Olivia, Kingston, Koah, Jessica, Flynn, and Pepper on this well-deserved achievement. I also wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

KATE WARD

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge a remarkable young talent, Miss Kate Ward, who has recently earned 2nd Place in the 15-17 Years category at the Gosford Regional Gallery's 'About Face' exhibition. 'About Face' is a prestigious junior portrait prize that invites young artists, aged 5 to 17 years old, to showcase their artistic skills. The exhibition encourages young artists to engage with the world around them, inspiring them to observe, interpret and capture the human form by drawing 'from life' - with their subjects sitting in person or the portrait. Among the exhibition, Kate's portrait stood out not only for its technical expertise, but also for its originality and emotional

sincerity. Kate chose to portray her Nan, Fay, capturing her likeness and the profound bond they share. Through her artwork, Kate expressed the deep love and admiration she feels for her Nan, and the invaluable life lessons that Fay has imparted – lessons rooted in love, kindness and laughter. I congratulate Kate on her incredible achievement. You are a truly deserving recipient of this award, and I look forward to seeing the future works you will create.

SHAYLIE CAPNER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge a remarkable young talent, Miss Shaylie Capner, who has recently earned 1st Place in the 12-14 Years Category at the Gosford Regional Gallery's 'About Face' exhibition. 'About Face' is a prestigious junior portrait prize that invites young artists, aged 5 to 17 years old, to showcase their artistic skills. The exhibition encourages young artists to engage with the world around them, inspiring them to observe, interpret and capture the human form by drawing 'from life' - with their subjects sitting in person or the portrait. Among this exhibition, Shaylie's portrait stood out for its technical expertise, originality and sincerity as she chose to portray her brother, Brayden, capturing not only his likeness but also the profound bond they share. Shaylie expressed that her brother is source of inspiration for her and reflected this strong familial relationship of affection and admiration through her work. I congratulate Shaylie on her incredible achievement. You are a truly deserving recipient of this award, and I look forward to seeing the future works you will create.

JOHN STEVENS – VOLUNTEER - MUSIC PROGRAM HOLLYWOOD

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge John Stevens from Albury for his outstanding dedication enriching the lives of our community's elderly through his volunteer music program, called Hollywood. This wonderful initiative has brought immeasurable joy and lasting memories to many individuals across local nursing homes, retirement communities, hostels, aged care facilities, rehabilitation groups, and dementia support centres. Mr Stevens has shown remarkable talent, despite facing the challenge of impaired eyesight and playing the piano by ear whilst skilfully composing melodies through attentive listening. Music therapy has long been recognised for its therapeutic benefits. As Martin Luther once said, "Beautiful music is the art of the prophets that can calm the agitations of the soul." John, thank you for your commitment and years of selfless service, sharing the healing power of music with our most vulnerable community members and creating moments of joy that will resonate for years to come.

JINDERA FORGOTTEN TRADES

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to thank the Jindera Pioneer Museum, and its wonderful volunteers for organising this year's event, "The Jindera Forgotten Trades Festival", February 26. The festival continues to serve as a celebration and a reminder of the importance of preserving our heritage, a sense of pride in craftsmanship's that have shaped our past and continue to influence our future. This year's festival once again offered live demonstrations of time-honoured trades such as blacksmithing, shingle making, knife crafting and stone masonry. Other traditional skills were also on show, like basket weaving, felt craft, spinning, weaving, lace making, calligraphy, and hand shearing. As we look forward to the future, it is important that this kind of knowledge continues to be preserved and passed down through generations. Thank you to all the volunteers, the passionate craftsmen, local vendors and the attendees, who made this event possible. I celebrate the Jindera Forgotten Trades Festival and look forward to many more to come.

TUMBARUMBA ROTARY CLUB CELEBRATES AUSTRALIA DAY 2025

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate the following constituents who were honoured for their exceptional efforts this Australia Day Award Ceremony January 25: Citizen of the Year: Susie Goldspink; Senior Citizen of the Year: Carol Barclay; Junior Citizen of the Year: Hannah Rankin; Senior Sportsperson of the Year: Michael Schwab; Junior Sportsperson of the Year: Deegan Lesniak; Rising Star: Leo Peel; Community Group of the Year: Bereavement Committee. A special mention of appreciation is extended to the following individuals for their invaluable contributions to our community: Alex Lilly; Erin Nurthen; Debbie Rhynehart; Peter Marshall; Noelene Haslett; Patrick Rhynehart. I would also like to acknowledge the incredible members of our community who helped make the day memorable: Julia Ham (Master of Ceremonies); Brent Edwards (Welcome to Country); JNE Legends (Aussie Songs); Debbie Gadd (Australia Day Ambassador). A sincere thank you to the Snowy Valleys Council, Kylie Franco (Australia Day Coordinator), and Tumbarumba Rotary Club for their dedication in organising such a special event. Your hard work and commitment are deeply appreciated. Finally, to the Tumbarumba community and the volunteers – your spirit, warmth, and unity continue to make this town truly remarkable.

SYDNEY CHINESE LIONS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Saturday 15 March 2025, I attended the Sydney Chinese Lions Charity Ball 2025 at the International Convention Centre in Sydney. The Sydney Chinese Lions Club marked a significant milestone this year, celebrating their 30th Charter Anniversary in January 2025. Over these three decades, the club has raised and donated over $1 million to a wide range of charities and community initiatives. Their charitable work continues to touch the lives of many individuals and families in need, thanks to the dedication of their members and supporters. I recognise the Sydney Chinese Lions Club President Dr Anthony Cheung OAM, along with the Sydney Chinese Lions members, both past and present, for their tireless commitment to the Club's mission and their outstanding fundraising achievements over the years. The generosity and spirit of service of the Chinese community is exemplified by the Sydney Chinese Lions Club, and I am truly honoured to acknowledge their contributions in the Parliament of NSW. I look forward to seeing the continued impact of the Sydney Chinese Lions Club's charitable efforts in the years to come.

CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL YEAR 6 LEADERS 2025

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Tuesday 4 March 2025, I visited Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School in St Ives to meet with the Year 6 students and serve pancakes to mark Shrove Tuesday. Shrove Tuesday is the day before the season of Lent, that takes place from Ash Wednesday to Holy Thursday. It is a wonderful time of reflection and prayer in the Christian calendar. I recognise the 2025 Year 6 school captains, Hana Haughey and Amaya Watts; and school vice captains Clementina Alvarez-Rosas and James Perrett. Thank you for your service and leadership. I recognise school principal, Jayne Wheen; and Year 6 teachers, Penny Delmage and Sophia Harrison. Thank you for what that you do for the students. Corpus Christi is a wonderful local catholic primary school. I am proud to support it and represent the people in the Parliament of NSW.

SHAZIA KIMATRAI – DAVIDSON ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2025

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I am proud to announce that Shazia Kimatrai is the Davidson Electorate Woman of the Year for 2025. Shazia is founder and clinical director of Dreamspire Therapy in Gordon. She has been instrumental in making a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities and their families. Through a range of therapies, Shazia helps people overcome challenges to reach their full potential by assisting them with skills, behaviours, emotions and independence. She is a woman of compassion and dedication, who goes above and beyond her profession. In 2024, Shazia established the Dreamspire charity event helping raise funds to support 30 families with extra therapy. On Thursday 6 March 2025, Shazia accepted this award at the NSW International Women's Day Annual Breakfast. She said that enabling people struggling with communication difficulties empowers them to participate in the community, "If you can't let others know how you feel or what you want, it is understandable that you get frustrated and even angry. Finding a way to communicate can be profoundly life altering for people with a communication difficulty and for their family." Thank you for all your work for our community, Shazia.

URALLA MEMORIAL LITERARY INSTITUTE INC.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Uralla Memorial Literary Institute Inc on preserving and honouring the memory of servicemen and women who have served Australia in conflicts throughout history, particularly from the local area. The institute is a registered War Memorial and since its inception in 1927, has continued to tell historical stories and enhanced via electronic and visual displays. I congratulate all involved in providing this community legacy, including Chairperson Max Schultz and fellow volunteers: Pete McCarthy, Ian Beal, Tony Lashlie, Peter Phillips, Daniel Westbury and Troy Schultz. Each of the volunteers give selflessly of their time and knowledge, ensuring our valuable history is maintained and shared. Behind the scenes volunteers are using their individual expertise, renovating and maintaining the building, overseeing daily operations and recently, securing funding to provide additional holographic and video displays, ensuring the institute evolves and continues to impart our history. I commend all involved in the institute, for their hard work and devotion to safeguarding and importantly, remembering those who have fallen for their country. Thankyou on behalf of the community - organisations such as this, cannot function without the wonderful support and commitment their volunteers give.

BACKTRACK ARMIDALE

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Armidale local organisation BackTrack for their enduring success of their programs, which are aimed at assisting vulnerable young people to get their lives back on track. BackTrack is nationally recognised for its proven approach to helping youth develop work and life skills, participate in learning and training, whilst preparing them for employment and connection to the wider community. I congratulate BackTrack on their 20 years assisting young people at risk, for their encompassing support, through a combination of education, training, diversionary activities, transitional

employment via BackTrack Works, whilst providing safe residential accommodation and flexible wraparound youth work at The Shed and BackTrack farm. I congratulate BackTrack also on extending their services recently, to include an after-hours youth-led outreach program, to meet young people where they are and to find ways to engage and provide opportunities for belonging. I commend CEO Marcus Watson, the Backtrack team and volunteers for their commitment to our youth, giving each value, another chance and the message that someone is here for them, knowing they can always come back and receive support should they need from BackTrack.

RECOGNITION OF DARRYL BRADY

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Moree local Darryl Brady, for his dedication and enduring voluntary service to the Moree community. Whilst a quite achiever, Darryl was rewarded recently by being named Citizen of the Year, at the Moree 2025 Australia Day celebrations. I congratulate Darryl on his many accomplishments, among these: in 2021 being named Volunteer of the Year at the Moree Plains Shire Council Australia Day awards; being recognised by the NSW Rural Fire Service Commissioner and the NSW Premier Glad Berejiklian in 2020, thanking and honouring Darryl for his service as a volunteer firefighter; as well as in 2023, being awarded the inaugural Moree RSL sub-branch Member of the Year award. These accolades follow a life of fundraising, spreading awareness, generously giving of his time and sharing his expertise, to improve the wellbeing of others. I commend Darryl for his hard work and devotion to giving back to Moree and districts. Thank you from the Northern Tablelands electorate and the local community - regional towns such as ours, cannot function without the wonderful support and commitment given by volunteers such as Darryl.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—I would like to acknowledge three outstanding organisations recognised at the International Women's Day event held by the Ulladulla Resource Centre. These groups exemplify the spirit of generosity and dedication that strengthens our community. Mollymook Beach Ladies Bowling Club tirelessly fundraises by knitting, saving pull rings and bottle tops, and collecting non-perishable items to raise vital funds for local charities. Their ongoing commitment has made a meaningful difference in the lives of many. The Milton Knitters have provided substantial donations to 13 local charities through the sale of their beautifully crafted knitted items. Their passion for helping others is woven into every piece they create, bringing warmth and support to those in need. Milton District CWA hosts market days to sell handicrafts, jams, and pickles, using the proceeds to give back. Their toiletry bag donations provide comfort to the homeless, women fleeing domestic violence, and hospital patients in need. I would also like to recognise the amazing performance by Tina Broad and Sing Express – a wonderful group of women that formed a choir to perform at three events celebrating International Women's Day. The day was a wonderful celebration of women working together for the benefit of others.

MHERV

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—I wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank the dedicated Rotarians and volunteers who made the Men's Health Education Rural Van [MHERV] visit to the South Coast a reality. Over three days in Nowra and Ulladulla, MHERV provided free health screenings to local men, raising awareness about preventable diseases, and offering potentially life-saving early detection. This initiative is critical as too many Australian men remain unaware of serious health risks, and MHERV's impact speaks for itself. Since 2017, thousands of men have been tested, with a significant number requiring urgent medical attention. The presence of this mobile health service in our region is invaluable, ensuring that rural and regional men receive the support they need. I commend the combined Rotary Clubs for their commitment to community health and wellbeing. Their efforts in bringing MHERV to the South Coast have undoubtedly saved lives. To the registered nurse, volunteers, and all involved, thank you for your dedication. Your work makes a real difference, and our community is better off for it.

SOUTH COAST STINGRAYS BOCCIA CLUB

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—The South Coast Stingrays Boccia Club is a shining example of inclusivity, sportsmanship, and community spirit. Boccia is one of the most inclusive sports in the world, welcoming individuals of all abilities to compete in a fair and exciting game. Whether playing individually, in pairs, or as part of a team, Boccia is a sport where age and gender have no barriers, and players can participate using a variety of techniques, including throwing, kicking, or using an assistive ramp. It was fantastic to see the Stingrays take on the All Stars at the Dunn Lewis Centre in Ulladulla - a match that showcased incredible skill, determination, and the joy of friendly competition. The club continues to provide opportunities for people of all abilities to connect, compete, and celebrate the sport of boccia. The dedication of the South Coast Stingrays Boccia Club committee to promoting inclusivity through sport is truly commendable, and I look forward to seeing them thrive for years to come.

SARAH WHEELER

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Sarah Wheeler recently returned to her family farm in Rowena from trekking a 5500 kilometre horseback journey. Sarah sadly lost her mum to stage four bile duct cancer. This loss inspired her to raise funds for the gastrointestinal cancer charity Pancare. Sarah saddled her horse and rode north to Cloncurry in Queensland and south to Wagga Wagga, raising $500,000. I would like to thank Sarah for bravely taking on a huge challenge to raise funds for charity. This dedication is inspiring.

DEBRA WHILEY

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Local Condobolin resident and Condobolin High School educator Debra Whiley has recently been recognised with a Certificate of Achievement for 20 Years of Service to public education and her outstanding contribution to education and training in NSW. 20 years of service is an extraordinary achievement, and it truly shows how dedicated Debra is to the local High School and community. I would like to congratulate Debra on 20 years' service, and I thank her for her selfless attitude and commitment to the students at Condobolin High School.

HAPPY HOLI 2025

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—14 March 2025 marked the Hindu holiday of Holi, an ancient Hindu celebration that marks the end of Winter and the beginning of Spring in the Indian subcontinent. It recognises new life and new beginnings, as well as the triumph of good over evil. Holi is celebrated through music, dance and colour-throwing events, many of which take place in communities throughout my electorate of Badgerys Creek. Happy Holi to everyone who celebrated in my local community and across NSW. May the festival of colours brighten your days with happiness, health and time spent with loved ones.

HARMONY WEEK 2025

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—Monday 17 March 2025 to Sunday 25 March 2025 marks Harmony Week, a celebration that recognises our diversity while bringing together Australians from all different backgrounds. I thank all organisations and individuals involved in organising the number of events across our region throughout Harmony Week, which provide an opportunity to celebrate our community's inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. I wish everyone participating in this week's festivities an enjoyable Harmony Week.

WORLD CARE DAY 2025

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—21 February 2025 was World Care Day, an international acknowledgement and celebration of children and young people who grow up in foster or residential care. Across Australia there are currently over 45,000 children growing up in foster or residential care. I encourage my constituents in the Electorate of Badgerys Creek to Celebrate every journey and learn more about these incredible, resilient children and young people, which they can do so by visiting https://www.mackillop.org.au/landing-pages/world-care-day.

NORTHCOTT PENRITH OPENING

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—Last month the new Northcott Penrith Centre opened its doors with its official opening. Northcott has been working with the local community for over a decade, hundreds of people with disability and their families have been supported through our many services. The opening of this new facility was a great celebration with the amazing clients, dedicated staff, and wonderful community members. I had a special tour from client, Jacob, who was extremely proud to show off his new centre. The new Northcott centre supports their mission of inclusion and empowerment, with the new facilities at street level near the centre of town. This means it is finally accessible to everyone, including its very own leafy outdoor area, where we were able to see the rewards of the budding gardeners. This new space is more than just a centre, it is a place where everyone is welcome, supported, and encouraged to thrive. I can't wait to see the positive impact it will have on our Penrith community, supporting individuals to live their best lives. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making the day a success.

PENRITH CITIZENSHIP

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—It is with great pleasure that I congratulate all those new Australians who became citizens in Penrith on 13 March 2025, afternoon ceremony. The Penrith community are richer for the diversity of culture you all bring to our city: Alisina Ahmadi, Manimala Athimoolam, Sudhakaran Kathiravan, Jeevika Sudhakaran, Jasvika Sudhakaran, Rahul Bhatia, Dharaben Joshi, Sahil Chaudhary, Juna Chaudhary, Karl Coresis, Amelia Coresis, Nessa Sarona, Michael Faamita, Renee Remuera Subritzky, Izaiah Subritzky-Faamita, Pariz Subritzky-Faamita, Talita Ferreira Magalhaes, Wellington Peres Ignacio, Chinthaka Ganeachchi

Pathiranalage, Rini Isaac, Dinesh Ponnudurai, Prarthana Kakkar, Sankalp Kakkar, Manju Lama, Suresh Moktan, Nhorden Moktan, James Malo, Andrea Smith, Rochelle McFarlane, Michael McNally, Semisi Muni, Jeanine Nkunzimana, Abriel Ndagijimana, Marlito Jr Pedrera, Hannes Pedrera, Sujina Pradhan, Kapil Rattan, Chaitanya Rattan, Jitendra Singh, Niamath Syed, Temukisa Samuelu, Tone Samuelu, Naoafioga Samuelu, Alvin Samuelu, Rey Sandoval, Thayna Silva Barbosa, Anyarat Tokunwat, Ali Yousaf, Sushma Bist, Carolyn Garnham, Melanie Guillebaud, Daisy Hu, Hui-Ping Huang, Azin Masoumitabaeizevareh, Mohammad Behinaein, Behrad Behinaein, Barana Behinaein, Aloysius Canete, Sufi Canete, Rumi Canete and Elliot Clemente. I wish them all the best for their futures as Penrith locals.

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OCEAN QUEEN CLASSIC

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—The Illawarra shores will soon welcome the Queens of the Ocean on the 29th of March, for the second instalment of the invitational all female surf event, The Ocean Queen Classic. This event aims to highlight and recognize women's talent and skills in surfing, while fostering a strong sense of community and support in celebration of the sport. I would like to extend my gratitude and recognition to the Woonona Board Riders Club for conceptualising and organising this event. Their unwavering support for female surfers in my electorate, as well as their efforts to attract visitors and showcase our stunning beaches, is truly commendable. I'm filled with pride, to see the celebration of female surfers, and I am thrilled to have secured $10,000 in government funding to support this important initiative. Good luck to all the participants, may you ride the waves with skill, passion and determination.

THE GREAT ILLAWARRA WALK 2025

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—On the 8th of March, locals and visitors alike had the pleasure of attending the annual Great Illawarra Walk which has raised funds for many worthwhile causes that help children in need as well as their parents and carers. This year funds raised went to Illawarra-based charity, KidsWish. The aim of this charity is to support the lives of children with disabilities or illnesses, and their families through programs, special events and community projects. It's heartwarming to see so many people in our community come together for such a worthy cause, showing incredible community spirit and compassion. Partakers taking in our spectacular region have the option to walk the 40km from Shellharbour to Austinmer or start at other locations closer to the finish line. I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the event organisers and everyone who sponsored or participated in the walk, contributing to the incredible amount of over $72,000 raised this year. Your generosity and dedication make a significant difference, helping create a brighter future for children and their families. Thank you for your support!

VALE GEORGE BARTOLO OAM

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—I was very sad to learn of the passing of George Bartolo OAM. A staunch advocate for our multicultural communities, he was always looking to improve the lives of those who had travelled across the globe to make the Illawarra their home. George was one of the founders of the Illawarra Ethnic Council, now called the Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra [MCCI]. George worked for decades to build a more inclusive and welcoming society. George was one of the first people I met in the Labor Party and over the years he was a great supporter, a friend and someone who was always willing to share his advice and thoughts on a range of issues. George was a life member and a staunch advocate for social justice. We will miss George deeply. He was a vibrant character who always was the first to the dance floor at an MCCI event and his infectious energy was something appreciated by all who knew him. My deep condolences go out to his daughters, Janet and Karen.

Our community is a better place because of him, and our lives have been enriched for having known him. Rest in Peace George.

MINMI HOTEL

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Minmi Hotel publican Kelly Fitzsimmons has raised $38,610 for charity over three years of annual fundraising, most recently donating $14,000 to Beyond Blue to aid suicide prevention. Kelly arrived at the Minmi Hotel in 2019, working previously at the Maryland and Tenambit Taverns – then Covid hit. It was a tough beginning for her and husband Allan, but a strong, generous and supportive community spirit shines through at this local pub. Hundreds of people enjoyed the Pig Races Charity Day on Saturday 15 February, supported by so many kind volunteers - cooking at the sausage sizzle, setting up furniture, marquees for merchant stands, face painting, emptying bins and collecting donations for the all-important raffle. Noah's Farm Thoroughbred Pig Racing hosted the races for fundraising and great entertainment. Several young racing pigs were "auctioned" – half the money going to charity and half to the buyer – with each animal wearing a different coloured jacket. The prize waiting for the winning pig – first go at a large bowl of wholesome milk! Thank you, Kelly, for raising awareness about an important issue and for your continued support of local causes.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—A few months ago, we all voted in local government elections to elect our local mayors and councillors. Most of the constituents I represent live in the City of Newcastle, but a sizeable minority reside in the City of Lake Macquarie. Both cities have new civic leaders, and I warmly congratulate Councillor Adam Shultz, who is the new Mayor of Lake Macquarie, and Councillor Ross Kerridge, the new Lord Mayor of Newcastle, and also to all those new and returning councillors. As someone who served on Council before my election to the New South Wales Parliament, I know how important it is for representatives at all three levels of government to work collaboratively to get the best outcomes for those we serve. I would also like to recognise and congratulate Lake Macquarie City Council which was recently named the best Council in New South Wales. This is the second time they have won the AR Bluett Memorial Award, and they are the only Council in the entire state to have been recognised in this way twice.

WALLSEND TOUCH ASSOCIATION

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Wallsend Touch association won the NSW Junior State Cup 17 years ago. Now, they have a second – the 14 Boys team won the "Yiangou Cup on Sunday March 2 at Tempe. They defeated Wollongong twice in a best-of-three series to be crowned NSW Champions. Coach Dylan Thompson and Assistant Coach Cameron Maxwell were both members of the champion 2008 team. Thompson has been the coach of this group since Under 8s, finally grabbing the title after a series of near misses. The team comprised (shirt numbers): 1 Jordan Ryan; 3 Nicholas Gray; 4 Cruz Elers; 6 Cruz Thomas; 7 Travis Campbell; 8 Tyler Johnson; 10 Hugo Wawrzonek; 11 Ryder Grogan; 12 Kruze Thompson; 13 Elvis Nathan; 19 Isaac Georgalis; 21 Cayden Norris; 22 Tarek Haouchar; 32 Samuel Farrar. Coach- Dylan Thompson Assistant Coach - Kurt Grogan; Assistant Coach - Cameron Maxwell; Manager - Georgia Grogan; Thanks to all the parents and carers for supporting the boys with travel to training and tournaments and covering all the costs involved. The team has developed from under 10s and improved more every year; this win will hold wonderful memories.

PARIS BRAILSFORD

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to recognise and congratulate Paris Brailsford of Yamba for her outstanding contributions to youth advocacy and policy development at the inaugural NSW Youth Summit held in Sydney in November 2024. At just 21 years old, Paris has already demonstrated an incredible commitment to representing the voices of young people, particularly those in regional communities. As a key member of the Youth Summit Working Group, she helped co-design the event, ensuring it reflected the true priorities of NSW youth. Paris has been a passionate advocate for education, financial support, youth homelessness, and substance abuse, drawing from her own experiences as a full-time student living away from home while studying a Bachelor of Economics/Bachelor of Laws at the University of New England in Armidale. Her involvement in NSW Youth Parliament and the NSW Government's Regional Youth Taskforce has given her a platform to amplify the concerns of young people at the highest levels of government. Paris continues to inspire others with her dedication, leadership, and determination to create positive change. I congratulate her on this achievement and look forward to seeing the impact of her advocacy in shaping the future of NSW.

CONGRATULATIONS - DONNA LAYTON RETIREMENT

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to extend my congratulations to Donna Layton, General Manager of Marshall Notaras Hardwoods on her retirement. After a remarkable career spanning close to 50 years, Donna made the decision that it was time to retire. Donna's last day on the job was December 20, 2024.

Founded in 1952 by brothers Brinos and Spiro Notaras, J Notaras and Sons Sawmill was purchased by Marshall's Timbers in early 2023. Donna first started working at the business in 1978 as a junior clerk when she was 16 years old. Throughout her career, Donna progressed into sales and became the office manager after completing a Bachelor of Business in 2000. In 2016, Donna was promoted to General Manager. Donna's dedication, commitment, and personal strength over her time at Marshall Notaras Hardwoods has greatly contributed to maintaining a successful business. Donna has made a great impact on not only Marshall Notaras Hardwoods, but also the timber industry, while showing compassion and providing valuable support to her colleagues over her time in the business. I congratulate Donna on such an achievement, her 47 years in the business and wish her all the very best for her retirement.

MACLEAN'S INAUGURAL ENCHANTED FAIR 2024

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—Congratulations to the Maclean District Business Chamber for the organisation of Macleans' Inaugural 2024 Enchanted Christmas Fair held in December. River Street in Maclean's CBD came to life with stalls, food trucks and entertainment. Stores and households were encouraged to create window displays for a chance to win the best Christmas displays. Rotary, Maclean Music Academy and locals Mal Eastick and Andy Hegedus put on stellar performances throughout the evening from a full stage setup. Face painting, interactive games and crafts, and a visit from Santa kept the kids entertained. The event brought a very cheerful community vibe to the riverside town with all generations joining in on the fun. Maclean Chamber president Sarah and her team worked hard to create a great event in the lead up to Christmas. I congratulate all involved in making the event such a success and I'm sure next years will be even bigger and better.

ASEAN SUMMIT

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to attend the ASEAN Summit, hosted by the Australian Southeast Asian Network. It was an incredibly enriching experience. The ASEAN Foundation advocates for Australian communities that face challenges, including First Nations Peoples and individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds. In addition to this, ASEAN seeks to encourage intercultural and interfaith dialogue between different groups of people, encouraging stronger connections. Their work makes a significant difference to many people in our community. It was wonderful to join with friends and Parliamentary colleagues on the day to discuss the issues that specifically impact our multicultural communities, working towards a better understanding of harmony and social cohesion in New South Wales. I would like to specifically thank the founder and CEO of ASEAN, Sawathey Ek OAM AFM for his leadership. I also want to thank Angie Mastrippolito, Dr Patricia Jenkings, Rox Molavin AFA, Thiru Arumugam, Phina Camilleri, Andrea Nevill and Brian Laul, for all of your fantastic work. I am confident that the work of the Australian Southeast Asian Network is helping to make New South Wales a more inclusive, respectful and accepting place to live.

HOLI MELA

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to recognise the recent Holi Mela event, held at Prince Alfred Square in Parramatta. Hosted by Indian Australian Voice Inc, it was fantastic to see so many participate in one of the largest Holi celebrations in New South Wales. Holi is one of the largest Hindu festivals in our state's calendar, representing the spirit of unity and the triumph of good over evil. It also welcomes springtime in India, which is a time of joy, celebration and of course, colour! The colour-throwing tradition at Holi is always such a blast and for the last few years, my son James and I have always looked forward to this event the most. It was heartening to see people of all ages and all backgrounds getting involved. Multiculturalism is one of our pillars of success here in New South Wales. As the Shadow Minister for Multiculturalism, events like this make me extremely proud of our commitment to diversity. I would like to thank the Indian Australian Voice once again for hosting me. I look forward to attending next year.

PAUL MILLER - 25 YEARS OF SERVICE CLUB RIVERS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Paul Miller on reaching an incredible milestone—25 years of service at Club Rivers! Club Rivers is a local institution that contributes so much to our community in a variety of ways. Whether it is hosting their annual ANZAC Dawn Service, supporting local charities or hosting a sporting event, they truly do make an enormous difference in our community. Under Paul's leadership as CEO, Club Rivers has grown into a thriving community hub, supporting local initiatives, charities, and countless residents. Over the last few years specifically, Club Rivers has made a real impact. From raising vital funds for St George Hospital, to contributing to Clean Up Australia, and standing as the major sponsor of St George Basketball. These accomplishments are a direct reflection of Paul's vision and dedication. I would like to thank Paul Miller once again for his remarkable service and everything he has done for our community. I wish him continued success and fulfillment in the years to come.

REMEMBERING HAJJ HISHAM ALI KRAYEM - ZAKAT HOUSE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—It is with deep sorrow that I extend my heartfelt condolences on the passing of Hajj Hisham Ali Krayem, aged 90, the visionary founder of Zakat House in Sydney. Hajj Hisham transformed a simple idea into a vital institution built on the principles of honesty, integrity, and charity, ensuring that the most vulnerable members of our community were supported and never forgotten. I had the privilege of witnessing his unwavering commitment to service, as he inspired countless individuals to uphold faith and work tirelessly for the betterment of our community. His efforts in strengthening community bonds and fostering a spirit of unity have left an incredible mark on our multicultural society. Today, as we celebrate his life and legacy, we are reminded that our true strength lies in our connection to faith and in our shared commitment to caring for one another. Hajj Hisham's remarkable achievements will continue to guide and inspire us in our work to build a more compassionate and inclusive community. We pay tribute to the late Hajj Hisham Ali Krayem, whose lifelong dedication to community service and multicultural engagement enriched countless lives in our community.

HUMAN APPEAL AUSTRALIA – YEAR 12 HIGH ACHIEVERS AWARDS

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On Sunday, 23 February, I had the pleasure of attending the 18th Annual Year 12 Muslim Achievement Awards. This is one of the most prestigious events held for the Australian Muslim community, where year 12 Students High Achievers are acknowledged for their great success and dedication to education. These awards celebrate the incredible achievement of Year 12 students who attained a RAW ATAR of 90+ and are aimed at empowering students to become positive contributors in the community. Human Appeal Australia's presence in the community has been prominent for over 30 years, dedicating great efforts towards today's youth who are vital to the growth and development of tomorrow. As such, these bright students are recognised for their hard work and commitment to building a brighter future. Each student received a Certificate of Excellence, a Certificate of Mayoral Recognition as well as a small gift. Throughout the night students from opposite sides of the state were able to build friendships and connections to last a lifetime. This night is not only significant in highlighting the talents and bright minds of Muslim youth but also instilling dedication into future generations.

ST CHARBEL'S MONASTERY GALA DINNER

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I was honoured to be invited to the St. Charbel's Maronite Catholic Church 50th Jubilee Gala Dinner, to celebrate a remarkable milestone in my community's history. The event marked fifty years since the first Mass was celebrated at St. Charbel's, a testament to the enduring faith and commitment of the Lebanese Maronite Monks in serving our community. The atmosphere was filled with warmth and reverence as we celebrated both past achievements and exciting plans for the future. This special occasion offered a moment to reflect on the incredible work St. Charbel's Parish has accomplished over the years, highlighting the importance of preserving their traditions while looking ahead with hope and faith. Moments like these remind us of the strong bonds that connect us to our heritage and rich culture. I was honoured to be in the presence of the Most Reverend Abbott Hady Mahfouz, Superior General of the Lebanese Maronite Order of the Monks. His dedication to the community and inspiring leadership are a source of immense pride. Congratulations to St. Charbel's Monastery on this momentous Jubilee Year. I am incredibly proud to be part of this wonderful and special community.

HANNAH SPEERS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Great citizens always deliver for their communities and for Snowy Valleys Council's 2025 Citizen of the Year, Hannah Speers, that delivery of community support has been literal and tangible. Hannah's list of community service is long but in Adelong, she will always be remembered for her role as President of Adelong Community Enterprises, the owner and operator of the Adelong Post Office. Hannah oversaw steady and sustained improvements to the premises and operations and in doing so, kept the Adelong Post Office open and employing locals. Hannah has also supported the Tumut Cricket Association, Adelong Cricket Club, Tumut Rugby, Adelong Golf Club, helped bring BlazeAid to the town after the Black Summer fires, and was instrumental in bringing the transformative Life Changer program to local schools. Armed with this passion and knowledge, she was keynote speaker at the Regions Rising conference in Canberra where she championed small communities and outlined ways in which governments can support them to thrive. Thanks to Hannah, vital services are still available in Adelong, and her community is an even better place because of her passion and dedication. Congratulations to Hannah Speers, a very worthy recipient of her award.

TOP TASTES

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Congratulations to the organisers of Wagga Wagga's inaugural Riverina Harvest Festival, who have literally served up a celebration of the region's world class produce to locals and visitors. More than a thousand people attended the event on March 1 and 2 to see a showcase of the region's produce, community gardens and sustainability practices. With a paddock to plate theme, it demonstrated how the Riverina – as one of the nation's most important food bowls – can supply outstanding produce direct to local consumers, bypassing expensive freighting to ship the produce out and then back again – and cutting carbon emissions at the same time. The festival was a remarkable success in terms of connecting people with the food they eat and there are hopes it will become a permanent fixture on Wagga's events calendar. Congratulations and thank you to the organisers: Eltan Mestan, Karen Kime and Elizabeth Fox-Lewin from Erin Earth; Tina de Jong and Annika Colenso from Murrumbidgee Land Care; Narelle Johnson, Canny Kinloch, Olivia D' Souza and Jim Rees from The Demonstration Gardens; and Tim Dick, Jason Frost, Alistair Mills, Abraham Buchner, Marty Bushby and Sally Bushby from the Pro Patria Centre. An amazing effort by all involved!

PEACE LEADERS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—At a time of global unrest, it was heartening to join the Combined Rotary Clubs of Wagga to celebrate peace at the annual Rotary World Understanding and Peace Day on February 23. It was a wonderful opportunity for the community to add their voices to the call for a peaceful world. The event is especially significant for Wagga Wagga which became the world's first Rotary Peace City in 1993 and while far from the trouble spots of the world, Wagga's annual Peace Day has become a focal point for the Rotary message of "Peace begins with me and you making a difference." In this way, Rotary is celebrating the successes of an engaged and active local community while sharing the message of peace, starting at home and hopefully one day spreading across a troubled world. I would like to congratulate Rotary peace leader Deidre Tome and all Rotarians and Rotaract members for promoting peace, through their club presidents, Phillip Tome (Kooringal), Bill Roche (South Wagga), Simon Swan (Sunrise), John Heazlewood (Wagga Wagga), David Post (Wollundry), Brianah Griffin (Wagga Rotaract) and Travis Holland (E Club, Brindabella). Thank you to all who support the spirit of peace in Wagga Wagga.

JOEL BLANCHFIELD-KEANE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to celebrate an incredible achievement by a truly inspiring young athlete—Joel Blanchfield-Keane. At just 15 years old, Joel has been selected to represent the U23s Australian Deaf Football Team, a testament to his talent, dedication, and unwavering determination. Born and raised on the Central Coast, Joel's journey from East Gosford FC and JR ZL Central Coast Mariners to the international stage is nothing short of remarkable. Football is life for Joel, and his selection for the 2026 Deaf Football World Cup in Thailand is a moment of immense pride for his family, his school, and our entire community. Despite facing the challenges of auditory neuropathy and wearing bilateral hearing aids, Joel has never let his hearing loss hold him back. Instead, he has shown resilience, proving that determination and passion can break down any barrier. As he heads to the Australian Institute of Sport for training, we know he will continue to do the Central Coast proud. Joel, we applaud your hard work, and we will be cheering you on every step of the way. Congratulations and best of luck!

CENTRAL COAST BRANCH SLS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is my absolute pleasure to stand before you today and congratulate all of our incredible young surf life savers who competed at the Central Coast Branch Championships this past weekend. Braving a challenging four-foot swell at Avoca Beach, each and every competitor displayed resilience, courage, and an unwavering commitment to their sport. A special congratulations to Avoca for securing the overall trophy with an outstanding 1062 points – a historic achievement, marking the first time the club has ever broken a thousand points! But beyond the scores, what truly stood out was the determination of our young athletes. From first-time competitors to seasoned racers, you all showed the true spirit of surf lifesaving. A massive round of applause for Layla McCarthy and Lilly Parker, who competed in their first-ever official ironperson events and have now qualified for the State Championships. And to Ava Knight, Alex Hall, and Liv Manser – your performances were inspiring, with Alex and Liv giving us an unforgettable finish. To all competitors, officials, and volunteers – thank you. Your dedication makes events such as these possible. Congratulations once again, and best of luck to those heading to the State Championships.

AVOCA KAYAK CLUB PADDLERS—NATALIA AND JEROME DROBOT

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Today we celebrate the outstanding achievements of our talented paddlers from the Avoca Kayak Club—Natalia and Jerome Drobot—who have returned from the Paddle Australia 2025 Grand Prix 2 with an incredible haul of gold medals! Natalia, at just 20 years old, has dominated the

competition, winning gold in the Women's Open K1 500, K2 500, K1 200, and the Women's 23 & Under K2 500. Her incredible teamwork also saw her tie for first in the Women's Open K4 500 alongside Avoca Beach teammate E. Beere. What an incredible performance! Not to be outdone, her brother Jerome, 17, also delivered outstanding results, tying for first in the Men's 18 & Under K2 500, K4 500, and K2 200, while also securing gold in the Men's 18 & Under K1 200. A special mention also to K. Montgomery, who tied for first in multiple events, showcasing the depth of talent at Avoca Kayak Club. These races were filled with excitement, team bonding, and fierce competition. We wish our paddlers the very best as they return to the Sydney International Regatta Centre for the 2025 PA Canoe Sprint Championships in March.

VALE HENRY SMITH

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 tribute to Henry Smith, a staunch Labor supporter, who recently passed away at the age of 97. Henry was a true gentleman. I recall spending time with Henry and his late wife, Iris, to recognise their 70th wedding anniversary on 21 April 2021. Henry proclaimed that marriage was a blessing, and Iris the love of his life. Henry and Iris migrated to Australia from England with their young family in the 1970s. After a stint in Tasmania, the couple moved to Glenfield and Macquarie Fields. Henry played an active role in the University of the Third Age and was a champion of lifelong learning. Through their involvement with the church, Henry and Iris witnessed Broughton Anglican College's growth. Henry loved cricket and was a huge Arsenal F.C. fan. Henry once said of his long marriage that life was full of ups and downs, but better enjoyed together. Henry and Iris had four daughters, and a loving extended family. While Henry's passing is sad for all those who knew and loved him, he is now home in heaven – reunited with his beloved Iris.

ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE - VINCE NGUYEN AND DANIELLE LUONG

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I am delighted to congratulate Vince Nguyen And Danielle Luong who celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary in November. There is something to be said for 20 years of marriage. It is a symbol of love, loyalty and, no doubt, triumph over the inevitable adversity that one would encounter in any partnership. Throughout life's journey they would have seen significant change. We know that communities evolve, technology develops and people come and go from within our respective orbits. To have the steady presence of a life partner—in Vince's case, Danielle, and in Danielle's case, Vince—is to experience that journey to its fullest. Vince has asked to share these heartfelt words in Parliament: "Happy 20 years anniversary, here's to another 100. Started from the bottom now we're here! Love Banjo & Vinnie." Vince and Danielle's example is one that we can all aspire to—a lifetime of partnership and the building of an enriching legacy. I ask the House to join me in congratulating Vince and Danielle on their 20th wedding anniversary.

TARNEET KAUR AND SARTAJ SINGH PAWAR WEDDING

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Tarneet Kaur and Sartaj Singh Pawar on their wedding, which took place on the 14th of March. Marriage is a beautiful journey, built on love, trust, and shared dreams. Tarneet and Sartaj have embarked on this next chapter together with the support of their family and friends. Their wedding was a celebration of their union and a reflection of the deep cultural and community ties that bring us together. I wish them a lifetime of happiness, laughter, and success in all their endeavours. May their future be filled with joy, prosperity, and countless cherished moments. Congratulations once again to Tarneet and Sartaj!

BIRTHDAY - DANIEL RIANTO

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in wishing Daniel Rianto a happy 40th birthday and note the following message for Hansard: "Happy birthday." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday in a community like Ryde, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Daniel's day that little bit extra special. As you reflect on your birthday, I hope the memories are filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that you will take on your journey in the future. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Daniel!

BRIAN SEIDLER AM FAIB

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 Brian Seidler AM FAIB who recently passed away. Mr Seidler was a tireless advocate for the building and construction industry. He dedicated more than 40 years to the Master Builders Association, including 25 years as Executive Director of the NSW MBA. His dedication was recognised by the bestowment of the Florence Taylor CBE award and his appointment as a Member of the Order of Australia. Mr Seidler's dedication to strengthening the construction industry and

improving standards was highlighted through his advocacy for the appointment of a Building Commissioner in NSW; his service as an adjunct Fellow of Construction and Construction Management at Western Sydney University; and his election as a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Building. Mr Seidler was passionate about mental health and wellbeing in the sector through his work with suicide prevention charity MATES in Construction. He was also a strong advocate for opportunities for women in construction. I extend my condolences to Mr Seidler's family, friends and colleagues. Let it be formally said that he loved and adored his wife and was unswervingly proud of their children.

THE 33RD AKUBRA CLASSIC

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—I am thrilled to celebrate and share the remarkable achievements of the 33rd Akubra Classic. The day began with heavy rainfall, threatening to disrupt the event and cast doubt on whether it could proceed. However, through the swift action and dedication of volunteers, racing got underway. As the weather cleared and blue skies emerged on Sunday, the stage was set for an unforgettable day of racing. The 10-lap AKUBRA Pro 450 final became the highlight of the weekend, offering fierce competition, thrilling lead changes, and intense excitement that kept both competitors and spectators on the edge of their seats. The level of skill displayed by the riders was exceptional, and the event served as a showcase of both individual talent and the hard work of the entire community. Everyone played a pivotal role in ensuring everything ran smoothly. From the flag marshals to the start gate team, to the canteen workers and the scorers, every volunteer's contribution was invaluable. This year's event exemplified what can be accomplished when a group of people come together with passion and determination to make something great happen.

TONY FULLER SELFLESS PERSONALITY

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Tony Fuller is an exceptional individual whose selflessness and dedication have left a lasting imprint on the Nambucca Valley community. His giving personality and willingness to go above and beyond are truly unparalleled. Tony has been a vital part of St. Jimmy's Kitchen in Bowraville, a community initiative that provides free meals to those in need. Through his leadership and supervision, the program flourished, serving up to 80 people on some evenings. Tony worked tirelessly with the disaster relief team and played a pivotal role in co-ordinating the Bowraville Food Hub, through many troubled times including bush fires and covid, offering essential support to those impacted by the fires. Further to his already remarkable generosity, Tony initiated the "Bloke's Brekkie" and "Women's Brekkie," providing safe, welcoming spaces for local men and women to come together. These monthly gatherings have become a cherished tradition in the community. Tony's unwavering commitment—whether as a volunteer, organiser, or coordinator—has greatly improved the physical, social, and mental well-being of countless individuals. His compassion and dedication to the Valley are truly admirable, making him a beacon of selfless service.

A YOUNG VOICE OF BELLINGEN

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—In the face of rising floodwaters in Bellingen, a young voice emerged to serve as a beacon of hope and guidance for the local community. Teale Kelly-Wright, a Year 8 student at Bellingen High School, demonstrated extraordinary initiative and compassion during the severe weather events brought by Cyclone Alfred. As floodwaters surged on March 6, Teale, alongside his father Anthony, swiftly collected equipment from the 2BBB community radio station to ensure that vital emergency information was broadcast to those in need. There were 9 other presenters that worked around the clock to keep the community updated and help push the updates out but Teale, who hosts a good news show about teen culture and activities, stepped up to help his town by broadcasting the critical information from his makeshift bedroom studio. Despite the challenges posed by the floodwaters, including the near flooding of the local bridge, Teale's resilience never faltered. His commitment to keeping his community safe through radio broadcasts was a vital lifeline to residents, as power outages threatened to disrupt other forms of communication. This selfless act shows how one young man's passion for music and community service converged to make a difference.

INGRID HEYMAN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to 2025 Maitland Local Woman of the Year finalist Ingrid Heyman. Ingrid is a founding member of the Maitland Cancer Appeal Committee Inc. and has been a driving force behind the charity's significant impact on cancer research over the years. Ingrid's journey began in 1982 when she, alongside her friends Alice Dennis and Lesley Flannery, formed the Committee after Alice's heartbreaking loss to cancer. Together, they established a registered charity to raise funds and provide vital support services, including laundering linen for terminally ill patients in Maitland. For over four decades, Ingrid has been an unwavering volunteer at the Committee's Op shop, dedicating countless hours each week to keep the charity's efforts alive. From coordinating volunteers to donating goods herself, Ingrid has poured her heart into the cause. Her consistent commitment has helped raise over $2.5 million for cancer research since 2007, supporting vital work in breast, prostate, bowel, lung, pancreatic, ovarian

cancer, and more. At 81, Ingrid continues to lead by example, proving that age is no barrier to making a lasting difference. Ingrid's selflessness and dedication to the fight against cancer are truly inspiring, and our community is incredibly fortunate to have her.

CHRISTINE WALMSLEY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to 2025 Maitland Local Woman of the Year finalist, Christine Walmsley. With a remarkable 40-year career in teaching, including 17 years as a Primary School Principal, Chris has made an incredible impact on our local community. Her dedication to education has extended beyond the classroom, as she has mentored local high school students and volunteered at the Maitland Regional Art Gallery. In 2018, she was awarded a City of Maitland Service Award in recognition of her unwavering commitment to the community. Chris joined Rotary in 2004 and has wholeheartedly embraced its ethos, taking on numerous leadership roles. Between 2020 and 2023, she served as Area Governor for District 9670, overseeing 14 Rotary Clubs in the Maitland and Lower Hunter area. Currently, Chris is the President of the Rotary Club of Maitland Sunrise, and has been a key member of the organising committee for the Rotary Golf Days, which support the Maitland HealthStays Accommodation project. In 2023 and 2024, Chris worked with local agencies to coordinate the March Against Domestic Violence in Maitland. Chris's tireless dedication to our community truly makes her a remarkable individual.

ANGIE USSHER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to 2025 Maitland Local Woman of the Year finalist, Angie Ussher. Angie is a local mum, musician, performing arts teacher, mentor, and a dedicated volunteer for community groups. Her passion for the performing arts has earned her widespread recognition, including being the recipient of the 2023 Maitland Australia Day Performing Arts Award and a previous nominee for Citizen of the Year. Angie's commitment to our community is unwavering. Despite undergoing brain surgery last year, she has continued to make the performing arts accessible to all. She founded VTP Presents, an inclusive production company, to ensure that everyone can participate in and enjoy the arts. This year, Angie started two community choirs, 'Valley Tone Pipes' and 'Valley Tone Pipettes,' offering people of all ages the chance to sing, and connect in a supportive and welcoming environment, all at no cost. After just one term, the choirs performed for local charity, We Care Connect. Currently, Angie is working on a children's musical in Morpeth, specifically designed to include children of all abilities. Angie's dedication, compassion, and drive to make a positive impact are truly inspiring. She embodies the values of excellence, integrity, and community spirit in everything she does.

MANLY WARRINGAH CLAIM POIDEVIN-GRAY SHIELD GLORY

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I am thrilled to congratulate the Manly Warringah Waratahs on their incredible victory in the Poidevin-Gray Shield Grand Final, breaking a 39-year premiership drought in style. Facing tough opposition at Bankstown Oval, the 'Tahs' showed true grit from the outset. A strong batting performance set the stage for success, with key partnerships building momentum and some exciting stroke play lifting the team to an imposing total. When it was their turn to bowl, Manly came out firing, striking early and maintaining relentless pressure. A combination of disciplined bowling and relentless pressure in the field saw them dominate their opponents and secure a resounding 173-run victory. Special mention must go to captain Joel Davies, as well as Henry Rogers who received the Shane Lee Medal for Player of the Final following a commanding knock of 80, and Bertie Foreman who was impressive with both bat and ball. Credit must also go to those off the field, including coaches, support staff, and those in the community who have backed the team every step of the way. Congratulations again to the players and everyone involved in this historic achievement - a wonderful day for Manly cricket.

MELISSA BURGESS - MANLY WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2025

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I am proud to recognise Melissa Burgess as Manly's Local Woman of the Year for 2025. Melissa is the founder and managing director of Op for Change, a charity op shop that has grown into a vital support network for our community. Over the past three years, her leadership has transformed the store into a thriving social enterprise which provides direct assistance to local charities and individuals in need. Melissa's dedication to helping others goes far beyond running a business. She has built Op for Change as a fully independent, volunteer-driven organisation that not only raises essential funds but also fosters a strong sense of community. Her work ensures that all profits are reinvested back into local charities, benefitting those facing hardship on the Northern Beaches to create meaningful change. In being named Manly's Woman of the Year, Melissa joins an outstanding list of passionate and inspiring local women who continue to make a positive impact on our community. I extend my sincere gratitude and congratulations to Melissa. She embodies the very best of Manly, and this recognition is a testament to her outstanding contribution to our local area.

FINN IRVINE AND MANLY SAILING

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, today I acknowledge Finn Irvine, Managing Director at Manly Sailing, for his unwavering support of the Saltwater Veterans Sailing Project. Saltwater Veterans Sailing Project is a phenomenal initiative which aims to facilitate free and inclusive sailing for current and former service members and their families. Launching from Manly Yacht Club, in vessels provided by Manly Sailing, the Project combines the camaraderie and shared sense of purpose of being a member of a sailing crew with the tranquillity and therapeutic benefits of being out on the water. Over the past six years, I have had the pleasure of watching Saltwater Veterans grow from strength to strength. The backing of Finn and everyone at Manly Sailing and Manly Yacht Club has been imperative to this success, and I thank them for throwing their support behind our veteran community. Their ongoing support provides lasting purpose, social reintegration, skill-building, and meaningful engagement for those who have served our nation. If there is any Member in this Chamber who knows of a current or former service member and their family who may benefit from this important initiative, please encourage them to reach out and connect with Saltwater Veterans.

BRANDS PHARMACY SOLD AFTER 110 YEARS SERVING LISMORE'S CBD

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I wish to congratulate Greg and Sue Brand and their daughter Helen on the sale of the family's iconic pharmacy which has served customers in Lismore's Central Business District for 110 years. Brands Pharmacy was established in 1915 in the same Molesworth Street building by Les Brand and his brother Bert. According to The Lismore App, Greg Brand took over the family business, more recently working with his daughter Helen. Greg told The App that selling Brands Pharmacy was not an easy decision, given its history. "Enormous. Yes, it was a very difficult decision," Greg said. "I've enjoyed my work here. We've got a marvellous customer base who we've made good friendships with. "We've been dealing with some people for the third generation, really." It was nice to read that Greg and Sue are staying in Lismore with more free time and travelling on the retirement agenda. Their final day of trading was Saturday, 1 February, and we thank the Brand family for its caring service. The Brands have ensured a smooth transition for new owner, Kyle Wood, who already runs the successful Southside Chempro Chemist in South Lismore. Congratulations Kyle.

IRENE DAWSON, AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS TEAM LEADER

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I wish to pay tribute to Goonellabah's Irene Dawson, who has dedicated 14 years to disaster preparedness, response, and recovery within the Lismore Local Government Area as an Emergency Services volunteer with Australian Red Cross. As the Lismore Emergency Services Volunteer Team Leader, Irene has tirelessly led her team in evacuation centres through successive fire and flood events, providing vital support to vulnerable community members, disaster welfare agencies, and emergency services. Irene's efforts have been integral to the team's successful operation. Beyond immediate response, she supports early and long-term community emergency preparedness and recovery through community events, outreach and training, strengthening community-led resilience in Lismore and surrounding areas. Irene is a Master Trainer and volunteer facilitator for Australian Red Cross, training and supporting other volunteers to deliver community workshops, including Psychological First Aid, Pillowcase preparedness for children, Recovery Basics and Register.Find.Reunite. Irene Dawson has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to her community, volunteering nearly 800 hours in 2024 alone. Embodying the Red Cross values through bringing people and communities together in times of need and building on community strengths. Irene exemplifies the Australian spirit of lending a hand in times of hardship and disaster.

SETTING UP A NIMBIN MEN'S SHED

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—When the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre conducted its annual community wellbeing survey last year it found that men are more vulnerable to loneliness and less likely to participate in local activities and groups, and less likely to volunteer. I'm pleased to report that things are changing for men in Nimbin, with action underway for setting up a Men's Shed. In February there was an impressive turnout for the inaugural Nimbin Men's Shed meeting. Andy Kelly facilitated the meeting and Phil Bromley took minutes and has reported back to the community through the Nimbin GoodTimes and the Nimbin Men's Shed Facebook page. There was discussion about the location and direction of the Men's Shed and the sorts of activities to do, including small motor servicing, computer programming, woodworking and music. A core issue everyone agreed upon was the importance of supporting the mental, physical and social health of Nimbin's men. As Phil says " Whatever you do, wherever you've been, whatever you've learnt, we'd love to have more blokes getting involved and telling their stories and passing on their experiences." My thanks to Northern Rivers Suicide Prevention and Awareness for donating $1000 to support the group.

LUNG CANCER RESEARCH – CHATSWOOD INTERNATIONAL ROTARY CLUB

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I acknowledge Chatswood International Rotary Club President Grace Zou and the Committee for their leadership in organising the Fundraising for Lung Cancer Research event, held at Sunny Seafood Restaurant in Chippendale on Thursday 6 February. It was an honour to be invited as a VIP guest at this meaningful event, which brought together community leaders, supporters and advocates to raise vital funds for lung cancer research. Lung cancer remains one of our most significant health challenges and the commitment of organisations like Rotary to supporting research and awareness makes a real difference in the lives of those affected. I extend my gratitude to Grace Zou, Dr Angeline Low, Prof Nick Pavlakis, their local Rotary Committee and all attendees for their generosity and dedication to this important cause. Their efforts exemplify the power of community-driven action in advancing medical research and improving health outcomes.

SARAH LOGAN

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I acknowledge the advocacy and commitment of Sarah Logan, a dedicated resident of our community, who is working tirelessly to bring attention to the urgent need for mental health reform in New South Wales. Sarah has experienced firsthand the challenges faced by those seeking support within the public mental health system. Despite these challenges, she continues to be a strong voice for change, raising awareness and championing improvements to ensure that individuals in crisis receive the care they need. Sarah has taken meaningful action by launching a petition calling for urgent reforms, which has already gained over 5,000 signatures, many from within our local community. Her efforts highlight the concerns of those who rely on the public health system for mental health support and the need for a stronger, more responsive approach to care. I commend Sarah for her dedication, courage and advocacy. Her work serves as a reminder that mental health is a critical issue that affects many and her passion for change is truly inspiring.

RABBI CHAIM KONCEPOLSKI

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Rabbi Chaim Koncepolski has given a remarkable decade of service to the Cremorne Synagogue and its community. For the past ten years, Rabbi Chaim, along with his wife Dina and their family, has been a pillar of strength, faith and unity. Through his leadership, he has provided guidance, support and inspiration, ensuring that Cremorne Synagogue remains a welcoming and thriving place for all who walk through its doors. His impact has extended beyond the synagogue, strengthening the broader community with his wisdom, compassion and unwavering dedication. As he moves on to a new role, the community gathered on the 9 March 2025 to express their gratitude for his incredible service. His legacy will endure and I thank him for his tireless work in enriching the lives of so many. I wish him and his family all the very best in their next chapter.

FRANCINE LAZARUS – AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to formally recognise Mrs Francine Lazarus who has been awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] in the 2025 Australia Day Honours. Mrs Lazarus received this award for her dedicated service to the Jewish community. Mrs Lazarus has made significant contributions to the Sydney Jewish Museum where she has been a volunteer and Holocaust survivor speaker since 2010 and was a contributor to the Dimensions in Testimony project, helping preserve Holocaust survivor testimonies for future generations. Mrs Lazarus is the author of 'A hidden Jewish child from Belgium: survival, scars and healing' (2017), and is a Member of the Australian Association of Holocaust Survivors and Descendants. In addition, she has been a valued member of the Double Bay Probus Club since 2018. On behalf our community, I offer our heartfelt congratulations and thank Mrs Lazarus for her contributions to Holocaust education and to our nation.

CECILIA PEMBERTON – AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to formally recognise Cecilia Pemberton, who has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] at the 2025 Australia Day Honours. This well-deserved honour acknowledges Ms Pemberton's outstanding service to community health as a speech pathologist. A certified practicing Speech Pathologist since 1977, Ms Pemberton is the Director of Voice Care Australia and a co-founder of both the Australian Voice Association and the Voice Assessment Centre of St. Vincent's Clinic. She is the creator and facilitator of The Voice Care for Teachers Program in the Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong and Co-Author of several publications. Ms. Pemberton has received the lifetime achievement award from the Australian Voice Association as well as the British Voice Association's Van Lawrence prize. On behalf our community, I extend our heartfelt congratulations and thank Ms. Pemberton for her enduring contributions to speech pathology and community health in our country.

BRONWYN FOX – AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to formally recognise Professor Bronwyn Fox for being awarded the title of Officer of the Order of Australia at the 2025 Australia Day Honours. This prestigious honour was awarded in recognition of Professor Fox's distinguished service to public administration, scientific research and development, advance manufacturing, and tertiary education. Professor Fox is the current Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) at the University of NSW in Sydney. Prior to joining UNSW, she was the Chief Scientist at the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation [CSIRO], Australia's national science agency. Professor Fox has held positions at Swinburne University of Technology and Deakin University. Professor Fox is also President of the Australian German Chamber of Commerce and a board member of Museum Victoria. On behalf our community, I extend our sincerest congratulations and thank Professor Fox for her contributions to our country.

CASTLE HILL LIONS CLUB YOUTH OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I recently had the pleasure of attending the Castle Hill Lions Club, Youth of the Year Program, Club Round. I recognise the competing students: Alyssa Joseph and Elyssa Tedesco from Castle Hill High School, Avneet Singh from Baulkham Hills High School, Rowen McLean and Shahaan Choksey from William Clarke College. The Youth of the year program originally commenced in Queensland in 1964 and because of the popularity the program is now supported by all Lions Districts and involves thousands of students each year. The aim of the program is to encourage personality development, confidence, self-expression, citizenship, and leadership. Each of the students provided wonderful speeches during the competition. The students were interviewed by a panel of judges, delivered short impromptu speeches, and delivered a five-minute prepared speech. The competition was close but, on the day, the overall winner was Rowen McLean. Rowen delivered a wonderful five-minute speech titled "What if." I acknowledge and thank the judges, Jennifer Leone, Phillip Combe and Councillor Mitchell Blue from The Hills Shire Council. I also acknowledge the Castle Hill Lions Club. I commend all students who competed. Rowen will now compete against other regional winners.

CASTLE HILL LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR CAROL BAKER-DERSCH

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I recognise the Local Woman of the Year for Castle Hill for 2025, Carol Baker-Dersch. Carol has been an active volunteer in the Hills community for over 30 years Carol is a truly amazing volunteer who has contributed widely within the community over many years. Carol has contributed on committees including Soroptimist International of The Hills District over the past 32 years serving in various roles including Regional President; Club President; and Regional Representative. Carol joined the Friends of Bella Vista Farm in 2006 and has remained a member of the Friends until today. Carol organises community events including historical tours, supply of Devonshire teas every Open day as well as fundraising. Carol also volunteers as a Yellow Lady, Sydney Adventist Hospital and has done so for many years. - Carol was an active committee member on the Castle Hill Showground Committee for many years prior to becoming a Volunteer in 2019 on Castle Hill Agricultural Society Service. Carol is the current secretary and is involved in organising the Youth Agricultural expo. Carol is a worthy recipient of the Castle Hill Local Woman of the Year for 2025.

HAPPY 102ND BIRTHDAY TO JACK WELLER

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I wish to extend my congratulations to Jack Weller on the occasion of his 102nd birthday. A beloved member of the Hills community and a life member of The Hills Club, Jack's remarkable life is an inspiration to all who know him. Jack's story is one of resilience and hard work. After leaving school at just 14, he took a job as a messenger boy for the Department of Agriculture while studying at night to secure better career prospects. During World War II, Jack worked in a factory, and it was there that he met he met his late wife with whom he had two children. Jack's contributions extend beyond his working years—his love for sport, particularly lawn bowls and golf, has kept him active and socially engaged. Now a devoted grandfather of four, Jack cherishes his family and maintains strong connections with his loved ones – one piece of wisdom he shares is to "take advice from your kids". Jack's wisdom, kindness, and unwavering spirit continue to enrich those around him. Happy 102nd birthday, Jack—may the year ahead be filled with joy and good health!

AUSSIE BISCUITS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I wish to draw your attention to the amazing work being produced by Forbes-based disability enterprise Aussie Biscuits. Since 1976, almost half a decade ago, Aussie Biscuits have been producing classic Australian staples such as jam drops and Anzacs, starting from a modest 600 tasty jam drops a day. These days, the number of biscuits produced each day is in the thousands and covers six distinct flavours. As the numbers increased, so did the need for more floorspace and in 2018 the company moved to a new location. The bonus was the opportunity to offer supported employment to more people living

with a disability, and now Aussie Biscuits has around 30 people on its staff. Aussie Biscuits hit a high recently, announcing that in November last year, it had increased its revenue on the previous year by 30 per cent. Jam drops led the way! Along the way, the business battled equipment issues and building problems resulting from the 2022 floods but still worked through its corporate orders. Mr Speaker, I've taste-tested Aussie Biscuits and can assure you they make a great product. Well done!

ORANGE RAIL ACTION GROUP

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Living in the regions means public transport restraints and in Orange, a regular morning rail passenger service to Sydney, or lack there-of, is a major issue. I therefore take my hat off to a small band of volunteers who, for the last decade, have been fighting to bring such a service to their city. Orange has a rail passenger service but it's 'upside down', leaving Orange mid afternoon and returning late morning the next day. People using the service are automatically called on to find overnight accommodation. The alternative is to catch the early-morning service from Bathurst but for people who don't drive, this is not feasible. Getting the Bathurst service extended to Orange is the goal of ORAG, which seems an easy enough fix but the tracks, built during Queen Victoria's reign, need extensive upgrades, a big undertaking. ORAG remains determined to improve the lot of Orange rail users, gathering 10,000 signatures for a petition I presented to Parliament. I congratulate ORAG on its determination to better rail alternatives for the west. It has advanced this issue steadily with the possibility of a trial period on the table, which is a great step forward.

BILL KELLY

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, a former Orange City Councillor, stalwart of the Orange CYMS sporting codes and long-serving volunteer within the framework of the Catholic Church, Bill Kelly's influence and impact on his community is far-reaching but without fanfare. Perhaps best known as the manager of the family business, The Rugby Hotel, better known as Kelly's, Mr Kelly was a stalwart of Orange CYMS rugby league and cricket clubs, providing not only sponsorship but guidance as a committee member and mentor to players. As a hotelier for three decades, Mr Kelly was also aware of the position's social responsibilities and chaired Orange's Liquor Accord from 2008 to 2018. He was instrumental in introducing guidelines to curb anti-social behaviour related to licensed premises. A three-term Orange Councillor from 1977, Mr Kelly was a supporter of Orange's Regional Gallery and Library development, on a long list of achievements. A tireless worker for the St Joseph Parish, he is described as one of its most loyal advisers. He has volunteered for the St Vincent De Paul Society. He was also awarded an OAM in 2022. Mr Kelly is an outstanding contributor to Orange's community and I thank him on its behalf.

AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS LIFEBLOOD DONOR CENTRE HURSTVILLE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and celebrate with all of you the recent opening of the Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Donor Centre in Hurstville. With demand for blood at a 12-year high across New South Wales and the demand for plasma at an all-time high, the new blood and plasma donor centre is expected to help save 48,000 lives every year. Since almost a third of Hurstville's population is of Chinese ethnicity, the new centre will increase the ethnic diversity of the nation's blood supplies, of which less than one percent is of Chinese background. Because ethnicity is closely linked to blood types and Australia is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, the extra blood diversity the new centre offers is incredibly important to patients, including those experiencing trauma or accidents, cancer patients, new mums, babies and other seriously ill Australians. Once again, I recognise the new Australian Red Cross Lifeblood Donor Centre in Hurstville and the tens of thousands of lives it will be saving.

CLARE CINI

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Clare Cini on her incredible success at the 2025 International 420 Class (Sailing) Australian Championships. Clare was a former member of the Georges River Sailing Club, now sailing at the Woollahra Sailing Club. She and her sailing partner emerged victorious after winning seven first places and three second place out of ten races, dominating the competition to become the Australian Open Champions. Both won several awards including the Sardine Trophy, on top of their previous state titles from 2024. Clare's achievements are a testament to her hard work and dedication towards the sport and is an inspiration to the local St George community. Once again, I would like to commend Clare Cini for her well deserved championship title.

BUNNINGS WAREHOUSE – KINGSGROVE AND ROCKDALE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and thank both Kingsgrove and Rockdale Bunnings Warehouse's for their commitment to support local community groups and programs. Between the Kingsgrove and Rockdale stores, Bunnings Warehouse employs over three-hundred locals, maintaining a multigenerational workforce of young and older workers. Each Bunnings store provides swift

support in times of need to their local State Emergency Services, benefiting the community's safety. Additionally, in 2024, both have raised a total of over two-hundred thousand dollars from fundraisers, contributions, and other activities, including the renowned Bunnings community sausage sizzles and cake stalls. I commend the Kingsgrove and Rockdale Bunnings stores for their community driven endeavours, and I encourage the warehouses to continue supporting and serving their local communities.

MOTORCYCLE CLUB TO HONOUR PAULINE LANGFIELD

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to congratulate Mrs. Pauline Langfield, who will be honoured by the Cowra Motorcycle Club on Saturday, 30 March, at Woodstock Parkway. This meeting will include the Pauline Langfield Memorial Cup. Pauline was a founding member of the club and worked tirelessly to steer and guide it to the success it is currently experiencing. Pauline began her involvement in motorsport in an administrative role in 1978, where she served as Secretary and Race Secretary at Parramatta Speedway through to the early 1980s. She held Level 4 Accreditation and conducted numerous Australian and State Championships as Race Secretary. Pauline was awarded the prestigious Bob Barr Memorial Award in 2001-2002 for services to sports administration. She was also the recipient of several medals from Motorcycling NSW, including the Award of Honour and the Award of Merit in 2009. Pauline is a life member of the Cowra Motorcycle Racing Club, the ACT Motorcycle Club, and an honorary member of the Far South Coast Motorcycle Club, contributing a tremendous amount to the sport. Pauline passed away in 2017 after battling illness. Congratulations, Pauline. You are sadly missed by all.

SEARCH FOR A COUNTRY COMMUNITY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Congratulations to Megan King who has now achieved the role of the Gundagai SES' Deputy Commander. Megan moved to Gundagai seven years ago and has not looked back. Like many people moving back to the country she took her time to slowly become part of the community. However, when Megan walked into an open night at the Gundagai SES shed and met the late Lizzie Britt her involvement with the SES was secured. Lizzie's enthusiasm was infectious and her knowledge legendary. After a tour of the Shed and Truck and further information Megan was hooked and signed up that night. It wasn't long before she was attending motor vehicle accidents, assisting with bushfire evacuations or floods, searching for missing people and completing complex and physically demanding training. Under the leadership of Ross Tout and support of the whole crew, Megan says that over time she will become more confident as she grows into her new role and her initial tentative thinking "girls can't don't this" has now gone out the window.

ALLAN VORIAS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I rise today to congratulate Allan Vorias, who, after 70 years of dedicated service to the Hilltops region, has decided to retire. Allan is a well-known figure throughout the region, particularly for his Canola Tours, where he has welcomed busloads of visitors to explore the stunning fields of gold. He ensured that everyone had the chance to capture the perfect photo while also educating them about the canola industry in a safe and engaging way. While Allan is best known for his canola tours, his contributions to the region extend far beyond that. Over the years, he has also taken visitors to witness sheep milking and beetroot harvesting, further showcasing the diversity of Australian agriculture. Allan's commitment to promoting the agricultural industry and educating the public has been truly remarkable. He began his journey with the Cowra Visitor Centre, but his passion and vision soon led him to expand his tours to encompass the entire Hilltops region. Please join me in congratulating Allan on a lifetime of service, innovation, and for helping to showcase this beautiful region to the world. We wish him all the best in his retirement.

NSW SURF LIFESAVING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025 WINNERS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—Although only young, Stockton's Stevie Robinson, William Isedale, and Sadie Upton have proven they're forces to be reckoned with after coming home as winners from the 2025 NSW Surf Lifesaving Championships in Sydney. Pocket rocket and dedicated member of the Stockton Surf Life Saving Club, Stevie, took out first place in both the under 8's Sprint inclusion event and under 8's beach flags inclusion event. For the second consecutive year, Stockton club member William took first place in the under 10's boys flag event out of a pool of 144 competitors, whilst club teammate Sadie took home gold in the under 12's girls beach sprint event. Stevie, William and Sadie's results are a testament to their determination and resilience, and I congratulate them on their incredible achievements!

JIMMY NEWTON

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—I would like to wish a happy retirement to veteran lifesaver Jimmy Newton after more than 60 years of service as a Stockton Surf Life Saving Club lifesaver. Joining Stockton Surf Life Saving Club as a teenager, Jimmy has played an integral role in keeping our community safe over the years. In addition to the inflatable rescue boat named in his honour, Jimmy's legacy lives on through his son who

joined as a Nipper and followed his father's course through the Stockton club. Jimmy's leadership and commitment to helping others showcases true Novocastrian spirit, and I commend him on his incredible career. Enjoy your retirement!

BLACK FAMILY, ABORIGINAL LOVE AT BOOMALLI

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I'd like to bring to the attention of the house the 'Black Family, Aboriginal Love' exhibition currently being shown at Boomalli Aboriginal Artists Co-operative in Leichhardt. This exhibition, curated by Nioka Lowe-Brennan is a celebration of the beauty and spirit of the Queer Aboriginal community and a fitting part of Boomalli's participation in Mardi Gras. I was very grateful to be able to attend the opening of this exhibition, and learn more about its themes of chosen family, belonging and love. The exhibition runs until the 12th of April, and I encourage everyone to go and see the contributions of the brilliant artists displayed in it for themselves. I would like to thank Nioka Lowe-Brennan for her deft curatorship, Dr. Liesa Clague, the chair of the board of Boomalli for her important work supporting Indigenous Australian art and extend my thanks to all of the 23 Aboriginal and LGBTQIA+ artists whose participation in this exhibition has made it so powerful. Thanks also to the many staff and volunteers of Boomalli who make this wonderful community space so valuable.

GILLIAN LEAHY – BALMAIN LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I recognise and celebrate the achievements of Gillian Leahy, the recipient of the Local Woman of the Year award in the Balmain electorate. Gillian is a dedicated local community member, whose efforts in many different areas of service make her a worthy recipient of this honour. Gillian is the coordinator and founding member of the White's Creek Food Forest in Lilyfield, an organisation that cares for a community space which provides habitat for native fauna and produces organic food by and for our community. Gillian also volunteers with the not-for-profit Leichhardt Dog Training Club. I give my sincere thanks to Gillian for her many years of service to our community and congratulate her wholeheartedly on receiving this award. I was proud to be able to present it to her as part of our International Women's Day celebrations. It was an honour to meet with Gillian along with so many of the recipients of the Local Women of the Year awards whose efforts make our communities better all around our state.

AUSTRALIA WESTERN SAHARA ASSOCIATION FLAG RAISING

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I'd like to acknowledge the advocacy of the Australian Western Sahara Association [AWSA], who do amazing work to promote the struggle for justice in Western Sahara, the last African colonial state yet to achieve independence. The Australia Western Sahara Association recently marked the 49th anniversary of the declaration of the Saharawi Republic, with a flag-raising at Leichhardt Town Hall. I was honoured to join them and discuss the push for independence. The strength of this community, and their concern for the rights and dignity of all peoples is incredibly inspiring, and it was fantastic to be a part of the event. I owe a huge thank you to the Association for inviting me to join you. I would also like to extend a particular thanks to Lesley Osborne, the secretary of AWSA for welcoming me at the ceremony, and to AWSA President Kamal Fadel and other members of the association and attendees for their dedication to the cause of Saharawi justice.

CHRISTINE MASTELLO

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Congratulations to Christine Mastello from Southlakes Inc Community Hair Project for being selected as a finalist for the 2025 Women Changing the World Awards in the Woman of the Year category. The awards are presented by Dr Tererai Trent to recognise women achieving outstanding success in areas such as sustainability, humanitarian work, leadership, advocacy, tech, product development, education, health, and innovation. The awards recognise the growing number of women who are leading the way in making the world a better place and inspiring other women to answer the call to act. 14 years ago, Ms Mastello started a small food pantry and it gradually grew, currently reaching over 100,000 people annually. Mastello has made significant strides by establishing a monthly community food pantry in rural NSW and providing free haircuts in 150 Australian towns, fuelled by her passion to foster connection and support those in need. Her commitment to uplifting rural communities extends to her plans for pop-up food pantries and facilitating Certificate III in hairdressing for Indigenous individuals in outback locations. The winners of the 2025 Women Changing the World Awards will be announced at London in April.

ELEANOR DUNCAN ABORIGINAL SERVICES

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—

Congratulations to Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services in Wyong for receiving $30,000 as part of the 2025 Connecting Seniors Grant Program which aims to reduce social isolation among older people. Under the Connecting Seniors Grant Program 2025, the NSW Government awarded $840,000 to 28 organisations to deliver projects that foster and build social connections for older people. The Eleanor Duncan Aboriginal Services project, Connecting Elders in Darkinjung Country, aims to foster community engagement and cultural connection among the senior members of the Darkinjung community. It focuses on cultural revitalisation with seniors playing a crucial role in preserving and passing down traditional knowledge, stories, and practices to younger generations. Regular gatherings and events are organised to celebrate the rich heritage of the Darkinjung people, such as storytelling nights and cultural ceremonies, and intergenerational activities build strong bonds between the generations. Essential services and support are provided to seniors, ensuring their wellbeing and active participation in community life, including help to learn social technology. The Connecting Seniors Grant Program funds locally driven projects, programs or activities that support seniors to connect with others, foster social inclusion for older people and address the challenges that contribute to social isolation.

MARNEY MCQUEEN

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—Congratulations to singer, actress and comedian Marney McQueen for being recognised as Wyong Woman of the Year 2025 at the NSW Regional Woman of the Year Award 2025 in the International Convention Centre Sydney. Mrs McQueen has been a beacon of hope and inspiration in Wyong, dedicating her time and efforts to various local initiatives. Her work in promoting community organisations and engagement has made a significant impact on the lives of many locals. Seven years ago, Marney and partner Frank Arangio made the life-changing decision to move to the Central Coast and purchase the Royal Hotel Pub in Wyong. Her fundraising efforts contributed over $250,000 to local charities and organisations, including Friends of Wyong River Rubbish Clean Up, Wires Group in Jilliby and Dooralong areas, and We Care Connect. Mrs McQueen dedicates her time hosting local events, such as the Wyong Christmas Carols, Wyong Business Awards, and Royal wedding celebration at Love Lanes Festival, along with her involvement with children's activities such as P+C at Jilliby Public School and volunteered with school working bees, and she sang and ran the fundraising raffle at the school during the Harvest Festival.

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NARRABEEN SUPPORT GROUP FOR BEREAVED PARENTS

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—I would like to acknowledge the critical support and contributions to the Pittwater and Northern Beaches community made by The Compassionate Friends Narrabeen Chapter and its Group Leader, Leanne Shanahan, and Support Leader, Averill Mclean. The Compassionate Friends is a non-profit organisation that facilitates support for bereaved families who have tragically lost their children. Establishing the Narrabeen Chapter in 2018, Leanne has led group meetings, one-on-one sessions and walks – in person and by phone – for which she received an Outstanding Community Service Award this year. The support group offers a crucial network for grieving parents and siblings, made up of volunteers as well as family members that help organise and run the group. Gathering monthly, the group meet at the Tramshed Arts and Community Centre to speak, support, and provide solace to each other as well as participating in therapy through a range of mindful activities such as breathwork, meditation, and yoga. The Chapter's Support Leader, Averill, has been present since day one and is known for her compassion, kindness, and creativity, which she instils via her art therapy.

AVALON BEACH SURF LIFESAVING CLUB – 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—This month marks a significant milestone for the Avalon Beach Surf Lifesaving Club as it celebrates its 100th anniversary. Since 1925 Avalon Beach Surf Lifesaving Club has transitioned through four clubhouses and pioneered numerous "firsts". The club was instrumental in introducing the world's first successful trial of an inflatable rescue boat in 1969 and was the first local club to witness mal surfing from America in 1956. The club also introduced the 24-Hour Row for Mental Fitness. Avalon Surf Club has set itself apart by being more than just a surf club. It is also a community hub, hosting a variety of organisations and serving as a gathering place for a range of activities. Beyond the beach, members contribute in countless ways, whether through patrolling, training, administration, or the many other tasks that ensure the smooth running of the club that now supports nearly 1,000 members. And of course - saving lives! The club conducted 43 rescues last summer, with no lives lost during patrolled hours. A remarkable achievement and a remarkable club.

PAULA GOODMAN

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—It is my great pleasure to recognise Paula Goodman of Avalon for her outstanding contributions to our community. Paula has long held the belief that giving back to others is a fundamental part of making society stronger, and her actions speak volumes about this commitment. In her

professional life, Paula worked as a television producer on programs focused on animal welfare, a passion that inspired her to become a dedicated volunteer for WIRES. For many years, she has rescued a wide variety of animals in need, from possums to numerous species of birds, demonstrating her compassion for all living creatures. Since 2021, Paula has lent her expertise and support to the founder of the Women's Resilience Centre in Mona Vale. As a mentor to women facing difficult times, she provides invaluable guidance and advice, sharing her own lived experiences of domestic violence and depression. Through this, Paula ensures that these women receive the support they need to overcome their challenges. Paula's belief in the power of hope and her unwavering dedication to others is truly inspiring. I am proud to acknowledge Paula Goodman for her selflessness and commitment to making a difference.

MRS FELICITY MCCAFFREY

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I wish to congratulate Mrs Felicity McCaffrey for her outstanding commitment to the Hunters Hill Community. Felicity is a supporter of various local organisations, indigenous programs, and custodian of the local history. She is a deserving recipient of the Hunters Hill Citizen of the Year Award. Congratulations Felicity.

ST IGNATIUS COLLEGE ROWING

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker - I wish to acknowledge St Ignatius College Rowing Squad for their performance at the Gold Cup Regatta. A day filled with community engagement and sportsmanship like no other. I pay tribute to the volunteers, coaches, and other schools for their commitment to such an incredible Sport.

MR MARK TANNOCK

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I'd like to congratulate Mr Mark Tannock on his appointment as the Headmaster of St Ignatius College, Riverview. I am certain he will be an excellent role model for the students and a fitting custodian of this fantastic institution.

JULIE FAVELL

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—I Congratulate Julie Favell and the acknowledgement she has received as a recipient of the Lithgow Environmental Contribution Award. Julie has demonstrated the highest degree of commitment and contribution through her tireless efforts to protect, improve and preserve the Lithgow natural environment. As a Project Officer of Lithgow Environmental Group and a founding member of the group Julie also holds positions on various committees such as the Gardens of Stone Alliance, Energy Australia Community Consultant Committee, NCC Climate & Energy Working Group, Western Sydney University Advisory Group at The Transformation Hub, Lithgow City Council's Environmental Advisory Committee, and is the Chair of the Lithgow and Community District Native Nursery. Julie also runs educational nature walks where the principal aim is to create awareness of and connection to local nature. Truly an inspiration, I congratulate Julie Favell on the recognition she has been given for her ongoing dedication to the Lithgow environment and on receiving this Award.

ELI GEORGE

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—I congratulate Eli George who has been recognised as Lithgow's Young Citizen of the Year. Eli has many achievements and his community endeavours commenced when he was attending Lithgow High School where his leadership skills were clearly demonstrated. From School Captain, part of the Student Representative Council, member of the debating team, the hockey team and also performing in the school musical. Eli George's heart, humour, and incredible vocal talents were seen when he was a cast member of the Lithgow Musical Society's Little Mermaid Musical. Graduating from CSU with a Bachelor of Computer Science degree Eli is now a software developer at a cutting edge e-learning company in Lithgow. I would like to wish Eli George every success on his future endeavours, and I congratulate him on his commitment and dedication to all he undertakes and the acknowledgement he has received as the Lithgow Young Citizen of the Year.

BONDI DAWN REFLECTION CULTURAL CELEBRATION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—On behalf of the Coogee Electorate, I would like to acknowledge those involved in the organising, and those who attended the Dawn Reflection at Bondi Beach on January 26th. Aunty Lola Ryan, who held the welcome to Country, said that "To me and my People, Australia Day is Survival Day," those who came to the beach reflected on the survival and strength of the First Nations People. Local artist and performer, Walangari Karntawarra played the yidaki, didgeridoo, as the sun came over the horizon. Then the Gamay dancers performed a traditional dance and did a Smoking Ceremony. Wiradjuri group the Wagana performed contemporary and traditional dance. I would like to commend everyone involved for working to create such a beautiful reflection.

OCEAN LOVERS FESTIVAL RETURNS TO BONDI

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—The Coogee Electorate would like to acknowledge the Festival for Ocean Lovers Returning to the beautiful beach of Bondi. The program plans to feature a talk by shark expert Valerie Taylor on the latest grey nurse shark census. Learn how hundreds of citizen scientists have been collecting information on numbers of this protected species save this threatened species. Artist Carolyn Cardinet's 'trashion parade', where models take to the catwalk wearing clothes made from beach trash, will be one of the many highlights of this year's Ocean Lovers Festival at Bondi on the weekend of March 22-23. We as a community comment the conservation education that this festival will bring.

MOUTHS OF ILLUSION: BEYOND THE MACHINE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—The Coogee Electorate would like to acknowledge artists Nick Frost and the late Nick Kealey for their creative exploration on mental health and identity issues in our competitive, commodifying community. The immersive experience will premiere in the Bondi Pavilion's Yalagang Room on March 1st running till March 15th. Mouths of Illusion: Beyond the Machine gathers original poetic texts, videos, sculptures, and soundscapes Creating an immersive setting for viewers to look introspectively. The artists have been working at this project for nine years, well done, it is finally going to be on display. Congratulations on this achievement.

2025 HANSEN SCHOLARSHIP

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I congratulate Mia Sinosic-Cass from North Sydney Girls High School for being awarded the prestigious 2025 Hansen Scholarship from the University of Melbourne. This highly competitive scholarship is granted to exceptional students who not only demonstrate outstanding academic achievements but also a commitment to leadership, community service, and the ability to overcome financial or personal challenges in their pursuit of higher education. Mia's dedication, resilience, and passion for learning have earned her a well-deserved place among just 23 students nationwide to receive this scholarship. As a Hansen Scholar, she will benefit from a full scholarship, living allowance, mentoring, and professional development resources throughout her university career. Mia's accomplishment is a reflection of her hard work, as well as the strength of the North Shore schooling community in fostering young leaders. I have no doubt she will continue to make a positive impact in her studies and in her personal life. On behalf of the North Shore community, I congratulate Mia on this remarkable achievement and wish her all the best as she embarks on this exciting new chapter of her education and career. I am sure her parents and teachers are very proud of her.

ART@THEROWERS EXHIBITION

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to celebrate the return of the much-loved Art@The Rowers Exhibition at Mosman Rowers. The exhibition is an annual event celebrating the creativity of local artists. Since its inception in 2022, it has provided a fantastic platform for artists to showcase their work in a stunning waterfront setting, enticing artists and art lovers from across Sydney. Running from 1 March to 21 March, this year's exhibition embraces the theme "Coast", featuring watercolours, oil painting, sketching, printmaking and photography. The pieces have been meticulously selected by an expert panel and judged by iconic Australian artist and architect, Susan Rothwell. I warmly congratulate Kathrina Doran and the amazing team behind the scenes who work tirelessly to bring this successful exhibition together. I want to thank the Mosman Rowers members who tried their hand at judging and voted on their favourite work. Finally, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the award winners: first place, Trudy Goodwin, second place, Ian Collins, third place, Jon Crothers, Members' Choice, Jeffrey Kendall, and Highly Commended, Julie Foster. The Art@TheRowers exhibition always presents such a fantastic opportunity to support local artists. Congratulations to all involved.

NILGIRI'S VOTED BEST INDIAN RESTAURANT IN AUSTRALIA

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—In my community of North Shore, we are so fortunate to enjoy some of the best cuisine in the state, so I was not surprised to hear that local Indian restaurant Nilgiri's was crowned 2025's "Best Indian Restaurant in Australia". Nilgiri's has been serving authentic Indian cuisine in the lower north shore for over two decades from different venues. Their first restaurant earned them Sydney Morning Herald's Award for 'Best Indian' over a decade ago. I want to recognise the passion and dedication behind the restaurant and to congratulate husband and wife owners, Ajoy and Meera Joshi. Ajoy and Meera have spent decades crafting a fantastic Indian menu that capitalises on Australia's abundance of fresh seafood. I congratulate Ajoy, Meera, and the entire Nilgiri's team on this incredible achievement. Their commitment to quality, hospitality and innovation has not only earned them this award but highlights their passion for India's rich culinary heritage and I thank them for bringing their heritage, passion, and talent to the lower north shore, and for sharing it with my community.

2CR CHINESE RADIO AUSTRALIA ANNIVERSARY

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Congratulations to the 2CR Chinese Radio Australia team on 30 years of providing national and international news and information alongside the promotion of Chinese culture. 2CR has been a vital communication source and a cornerstone for the Chinese Australian diaspora, broadcasting in both Cantonese and Mandarin. I admire how they have been working constantly towards preserving and maintaining Chinese heritage, welcoming Chinese immigrants and students into Australia and helping new arrivals to navigate language barriers. On behalf of their listening audience, I commend 2CR's extensive coverage of local, national and world events. Embracing modernisation and digitalisation, 2CR's repertoire spans not only current news and economic insights but also information about day-to-day tasks like gardening and travel. I commend 2CR for extending their reach in the digital age to platforms like Spotify and Amazon Audible and delivering a 24-hour news service operating 7 days a week since 1994. 2CR is an irreplaceable part of many people's lives within the Chinese diaspora. I would like to congratulate Esmond Cho, 2CR Managing Director and the entire team for their great work. I wish them many more years of success!

I4GIVE FOUNDATION FESTIVAL

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—The I4Give Foundation Festival was held at Prince Alfred Square on Saturday 1 March. It is always so moving to meet with Danny and Leila Abdallah and Bridget Sakr to witness their brave and generous commitment to forgiveness. We should all look to these parents, who have taken their grief and tragedy stemming from the loss of their children – Antony, Angelina, Sienna and Veronique - to help others grow and forgive. I can't think of anything more selfless. Leila spoke about the four steps of forgiveness - acknowledge, accept, surrender and voice each linked to the initials and the memory of Antony, Angelina, Sienna and Veronique. When seeking to forgive we must acknowledge hurt, accept what cannot be changed, surrender the pain to peace and voice your choice to forgive. Thankyou to the I4Give Foundation and the City of Parramatta for coordinating this wonderful day that was free for all to attend. I am sure the festival attendees enjoyed the free rides and entertainment as well as the opportunity to watch Mamma Mia at an outdoor cinema. No words can express the gratitude and respect Parramatta and Australia has for you and your families.

HOLI 2025

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Holi is one of the most vibrant and joyous festivals in Hindu culture, celebrating the eternal and divine love of the deities, Radha and Krishna, while also symbolising the triumph of good over evil. The festival is not just a religious occasion, but a celebration of life itself - one that brings people together to embrace joy, unity and community spirit. Holi has a special way of bringing everyone together and this year's festivities in Prince Alfred Park, Parramatta were no exception. Beyond the colours, Holi also marks the arrival of warmer weather, the blooming of flowers and the renewal of nature, offering a fresh start for all. It's a time for people to come together in the spirit of love and togetherness. The music, dance, colours and delicious sweets all added to the incredible atmosphere. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to Anuj and Sweccha Kulshrestha and everyone from Indian Australian Voice Inc., for graciously inviting me to this wonderful celebration and for making it a truly unforgettable experience. Let's remember at this time of year - Bura Na Mano, Holi Hai. Don't be sad today, it's Holi.

SPIRO CHRISTOPOULOS

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to recognise the contributions of Spiro Christopoulos for his outstanding service to our community. Spiro has played a pivotal role in his service to Communities for Communities, a local organisation working to build a sense of community in the Canada Bay area. Spiro has generously given his time and talents as the Master of Ceremonies for local events including Christmas Carols at Halliday Park and the Community Fun Day which is held each year on the June long weekend. Spiro's dedication to these events has not only brought joy and entertainment to all who attended but has also fostered a sense of unity and togetherness within our community. Congratulations, Spiro, you are the ultimate professional. I commend and thank you for your continued commitment to making a difference. Your efforts are truly valued and appreciated. I wish you all the very best.

LARA CONROY

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I would like to congratulate Lara Conroy on her involvement in the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Young Women's Leadership Forum in November 2024. This prestigious opportunity is a recognition of Lara's leadership potential, dedication, and commitment to empowering women in politics and public service. The CWP Young Women's Leadership Course provides an invaluable platform for emerging female leaders to develop their skills, connect with like-minded individuals, and strengthen their capacity to make a positive impact on their communities. Lara's selection is a clear reflection of her passion for leadership and her determination to contribute meaningfully to her community. Congratulations

Lara on your involvement with the Commonwealth Women's Parliamentarian Leadership Forum. I have no doubt that this experience will further shape your leadership journey, and I look forward to seeing the difference you will continue to make in the future. I wish you all the very best.

SONNY WRIGHT

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to sincerely congratulate Sonny Wright on his remarkable achievement as the Winner of 2024 Drummoyne Electorate Christmas Card Competition. Sonny's winning design beautifully captured the festive spirit of this year's theme, 'What Christmas means to me'. He showcased his creativity and talent in a way that brought joy to many during the Christmas season. Throughout December and January, Sonny's artwork was on prime display in the front window of my electorate office. Sonny's artwork was also published in the December edition of my community newsletter and my Christmas Card which was sent across the community. We had many visitors come into the office to tell us that they loved Sonny's artwork. The Christmas Card Competition is a wonderful opportunity for local children to express their creativity, and Sonny's winning entry is a testament to the potential of young artists in our community. Congratulations Sonny, on this well-deserved recognition. Your artwork has undoubtably brought joy to many in the Drummoyne Electorate, and we look forward to seeing more of your creative achievements in the future!

PREMIER'S HARMONY DINNER

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Wednesday 12th March, I was delighted to join the Hon. Steve Kamper, Minister for Multiculturalism, Parliamentary colleagues and more than 1,600 members of our multicultural community at the Premier's Harmony Dinner, held in the Grand Ballroom, ICC Sydney. Western and South Western Sydney is the beating heart of multicultural harmony in Australia. Our diversity in faiths, languages and cultures is what makes our local Prospect Electorate such an amazing place to work, live and learn. It is always so wonderful to recognise our Tamil, Maltese, Assyrian, South Sudanese, Maronite, Indian, Coptic, Pilipino, Palestinian, Vietnamese, Italian, Greek and other local backgrounds as the foundation for modern Australia that is peaceful, integrated and united. This year, the event was highlighted by presentations of Multicultural Honour Roll Inductees and Premier's Multicultural Community Medals, alongside some amazing live cultural performances. It was great to be joined by a number of Prospect Electorate community leaders. I extend my congratulations to Minister Kamper, as well as Nick Kaldas APM, Chair and Joseph La Posta, CEO, Multicultural NSW on a wonderful celebration of our modern, vibrant and harmonious community in New South Wales.

CONSULATE GENERAL OF IRELAND – ST PATRICK'S DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 6th March, I was delighted to address members of our esteemed Irish-Australian community for St Patrick's Day celebrations hosted by the Consulate General of Ireland in Sydney. As the Patron Saint of Ireland, St Patrick is credited with converting the Irish people to Christianity in the 5th Century. Irish settlers participated in the creation of modern Australia, with the transportation of convicts beginning in 1791 and free Irish migrants arriving from the 1840s. The Irish were largely responsible for the establishment of church communities, and of political activism in Australia. One of the first great Irish leaders in Australia was Patrick Moran, who became the new Archbishop of Sydney in 1884. Today in New South Wales, more than 730,000 residents have Irish ancestry, part of a vibrant, active and connected community. At the event, I was pleased to represent the Hon Steve Kamper, Minister for Multiculturalism, and share my own family's story as proud Irish Australians, reflecting many Australian stories of migration and hard work. My congratulations go to Ms Rosie Keane, Consul General of Ireland in Sydney, and to all our Irish Australians on a wonderful event. Happy St Patrick's Day!

ARCHBISHOP NAIGAZOUN NAJARIAN

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 23rd February, I was honoured to address our local Armenian community celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Priestly Ordination and Farewell Tribute Dinner for His Eminence Archbishop Naigazoun Najarian. Vrej Najarian was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1952 and graduated from the Gevorkian Theological Seminary, Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, and ordained as a deacon in 1973. He was ordained a celibate priest at St Sarkis Church, London in 1975, and in 1978 graduated from King's College London with a Bachelors Degree in Theology. He graduated from Columbia University with a Masters Degree in History in 1993. He served in posts across Armenia, Europe and North America before being consecrated Bishop in 2011 and appointed Primate of the Armenian Diocese in Australia and New Zealand in 2013. Throughout his 11 years as leader of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Australia, His Eminence has championed solidarity within the Armenian community, supported Christian unity and interfaith dialogue for peaceful coexistence in modern Australia.

VALE ROSEMARY PLAYFORD

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the life of Rosemary Playford, a dedicated educator, historian and community leader. I extend my condolences to her family following her passing aged 89. From an early age, Rosemary was determined to become a teacher, overcoming the effects of childhood polio to pursue her calling. Her distinguished career took her from Peakhurst West to Clunes, Casino and Jiggi, before she found her true vocation in special education. She was appointed to a special school affiliated with the charity we now know as the Cerebral Palsy Alliance, where she went on to serve as Principal. Rosemary's commitment to her students transformed lives, and she retired in 1985, having made a lasting impact. Her passion for history extended to the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society, where she and her sister Margaret played a pivotal role in documenting local heritage. Their meticulous research helped sustain the society in its early years, ensuring that stories of the region would be passed down for generations. Rosemary's dedication, intellect and humour will be long remembered and she will be dearly missed.

CAROLINE BAILEY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I would like to recognise the contribution of Caroline Bailey, who stepped down as President of Byron Bay Runners last year after 10 years. Caz's impact extends far beyond the medals won by BBR athletes during that time. She's played a vital role in promoting the mental and physical wellbeing of club members - ranging in age from 8 to over 70 - from recreational runners to national-level competitors. A World Athletics and Athletics Australia Level 3 Coach, Caz is BBR's highest qualified coach, with expertise spanning sprints to long-distance. Her expertise has been recognised at State and National level, including being selected as a coach for Athletics Australia's U23 European Tour. Caz's dedication to nurturing talent is matched only by her commitment to the running community - volunteering her coaching expertise to BBR, despite the high value of such credentials in the commercial coaching world. A talented runner herself, she remains an active competitor in Masters Athletics. Under her leadership, the club's marquee event was established - the Herb Elliott Twilight Track Meet - which is a fitting legacy for a coach who continues to inspire so many.

BONG BONG PICNIC RACES

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—On 24 November 2024, I was delighted to attend the Bong Bong Picnic Races, and I extend congratulations to the Bong Bong Picnic Race Club for putting on such a fantastic day. Wherever I looked, there were endless happy people. There were six races and warmest congratulations to the winners - Wayne Wheatley rode Grande Bellezza to victory in the Ashbourne Maiden Plate, Todd Bailey rode Oakeys Choice to victory in the Gubbins Pulbrook Mitre 10 Class 2 Handicap, Leandro Ribeiro rode Kennedy Choice to victory in the Sew & Sew Wines Open Handicap, Wayne Wheatley rode Seacore to victory in the Equicom Equine Therapy and Life Skills Class 1 and Maiden Plate, Wayne Wheatley rode Arancione to victory in the K J Scaffolding Bong Bong Cup, and Emily Waters rode King Tat to victory in the Third I Group Class B Handicap. Congratulations also to the winning trainers: Fabio Martino, Luke Musson, Kristen Buchanan, Brett Lazzarini, Mark Gee, Rodney Northam and Andrew Jenkyn. Congratulations to all the owners and support staff who had wins and places at the Races. The efforts and dedication of the Club made this sold-out event a truly enjoyable experience.

MACARTHUR FC'S BULLS IN SCHOOLS PROGRAM

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—It was great to drop by the football clinic held on Monday 16 December 2024 at Tahmoor Public School. The Macarthur Football Association delivers the Bulls in Schools football program, a NSW State Government funded program, to primary schools throughout the Greater Macarthur region and Wollondilly. It is a fun, engaging, football (soccer) program, which encourages participation and skill development for children. Perhaps we will find the next Sam Kerr or the next Craig Foster at one of these clinics. The program on that Monday was delivered by Hayden Tonna, the community football development manager of the Macarthur Bulls, as well as Club players. The Macarthur FC Bulls in Schools program is targeted to students in years 3 to 6 and is provided at no cost to the school. I encourage the schools of the Wollondilly electorate to get active and get involved in the program.

WALK IT OFF WARRAGAMBA ANNIVERSARY

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I would like to recognise the one year anniversary of Walk It Off Warragamba. Walk It Off, led by Chris Edwards, is a volunteer run walking group which operates with the goal of supporting mental health issues. Walk It Off has several branches over Sydney, and I am proud of the efforts of those who have made such a supportive and valuable group available to residents of Wollondilly. Walk It Off aims to reduce the stigma associated with suicide by providing a safe and supportive space for people to meet and connect. The repetitive motions of walking can make those tough conversations a little easier to have. The act of

walking alongside someone else who understands shows that no-one has to go through trauma alone - whether it is grieving a lost family member like Chris Edwards, who lost his teenage son to suicide, or for someone dealing with their own struggles. Real life connection is so important these days, and I would like to congratulate the volunteers of Walk It Off Warragamba for their ongoing commitment to the group and for living their motto of "Change starts with a walk."

PERSIAN NEW YEAR - NOWRUZ

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I would like to acknowledge the successful Persian New Year (Nowruz) celebration held at Epping West Primary School, organised by Andisheh Persian School. This event celebrated the rich cultural traditions of the Iranian people, marking the beginning of spring and the start of a new year in the Persian calendar. I particularly admire the commitment of the parents who support and contribute to the continuation of their family traditions, and culture through community language schools such as Andisheh Persian School. Their dedication ensures that younger generations maintain a connection to their heritage, language, and customs. The Nowruz celebration was a reflection of this effort, as it provided a platform for learning and sharing cultural practices. It is through the hard work of the Andisheh Persian School that we are able to celebrate such events, which foster cultural awareness and unity within the broader Epping community. Their role in promoting cultural understanding is invaluable, and I commend them for their ongoing commitment to enriching the multicultural fabric of Epping. Nowruz Mobarak!

PARRAMATTA AND TELOPEA WOMEN'S SHED

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I recently attended the Open Day for the Parramatta Women's Shed and Telopea Shed. On the day, attendees were able to participate in hands-on woodworking sessions, enjoy market stalls, games, and food, and take a tour of Telopea Shed to learn more about the work of the Shed. Based in Telopea, the space is a vital part of my electorate, providing a space for women to connect, socialize, and make meaningful contributions to the community. This was evident during the Open Day, where the enthusiasm of the members highlighted their dedication to making a positive difference in the community. Its offering of woodworking classes and workshops allows people to learn practical skills in a welcoming environment. The space is shared with other members of the community and this only strengthens the role that it plays in Telopea and beyond. The Parramatta Women's Shed and Telopea Shed plays a key role in our community, and I commend the organising committee of Monisha, Alison, Laurraine, Jo, Kim and Julz for their commitment and their efforts in opening the space for all and hosting the Open Day.

JESS WARD

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I acknowledge the extraordinary achievements of Jess Ward, a talented student from Avondale School, whose HSC artwork, Simply Being, has been selected for the prestigious First Class 24 exhibition at the Museum of Art and Culture. Simply Being, a deeply moving piece created with charcoal and soft pastels on paper, portrays three significant people from Jess's life. Through her work, Jess explores the concept of human connection and the subtle yet profound moments that exist between conversations. These moments—the silences, the expressions, the shared glances—are often where true understanding and connection are found. Jess's artistic exploration of this intimate space is both insightful and visually captivating. The selection of Simply Being for such a renowned exhibition is a testament to Jess's exceptional talent, creativity, and emotional depth. Her ability to translate such a nuanced theme into a powerful visual experience speaks to her maturity as an artist and her understanding of the human condition. Being chosen for the First Class 24 exhibition is an incredible honour and reflects the high calibre of her work. Congratulations, Jess. Your work truly speaks volumes.