



New South Wales

Legislative Assembly

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday 19 March 2025

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 19 March 2025

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

AUTOMATIC MUTUAL RECOGNITION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill without amendment.

STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT (ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TRIBUNAL) BILL 2025

First Reading

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

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

[Notices of motions given.]

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS BILL 2025

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Jenny Aitchison, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)
(10:20): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. The bill establishes a dedicated legislative framework for the provision of community improvement districts in New South Wales. It is the first of its kind in our State and, indeed, in Australia. Community improvement districts, or CIDs, provide an opportunity for genuine place-based partnerships between government, councils, businesses, business landowners and the wider community. The central aim of these partnerships is to enhance public spaces, stimulate local economies, and support community building. To put it simply, a CID is a model of urban governance. This model empowers a group of local businesses to elect to form an entity. This entity will then develop a proposal to provide services, activities and projects within a defined geographic area. The proposal is voted on by relevant stakeholders and, if successful, a levy is raised to fund the proposal.

Critically, CIDs are locally led. They are about businesses, business landowners and communities taking the reins and coming together to form a CID entity. It is about their self-determination. CIDs will apply to specific geographic areas. It might be part of a CBD, a local town centre or a main street. It might be in the heart of metropolitan Sydney or in a rural or regional town. The CID model is specifically designed to be flexible to cater for a range of scenarios. CIDs allow businesses to directly fund services, activities and projects that will improve their local trading environment and public spaces. Some examples of these services, activities and projects that a CID could undertake include non-physical interventions such as district branding and joint strategic planning initiatives, or physical interventions such as events and programming, public art and beautification projects, improved public amenity, and security and safety measures.

Following the recent establishment of the New South Wales Government's \$5.25 million Community Improvement District Pilot Program, we now have direct evidence of how CIDs could work in New South Wales. Round one of the pilot program was launched in June 2024, with CIDs now operating across the following locations in New South Wales: Clarence Valley, Haymarket Alliance, Inner West Ale Trail, Murwillumbah, Muswellbrook, St Marys, Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct, Walsh Bay, and YCK Laneways in Sydney's CBD. These pilots have seen a positive community reception.

In Murwillumbah, for example, over 500 people have been involved in the co-design of their CID project, including widespread participation in community "walkshops", online surveys and local meetings. Similarly, in Haymarket, the Neon Playground 2.0 CID was launched this past weekend and is expected to attract over 350,000 visitors over the next three weeks to a captivating display of neon light installations, creative and cultural events, art exhibitions, music and food. These real-life CID examples build upon a New South Wales evidence base that demonstrates the profound impact that effective local place interventions can have for businesses right around our State. For example, at Darby Street in Newcastle, the Streets as Shared Spaces activation—an example of the type of project that we could imagine a CID leading—resulted in a 17 per cent increase in sales revenue. Likewise, the Open Streets grants program resulted in a 385 per cent increase in visitation during activations, and a 47 per cent increase in dwell time, meaning that more people came and stayed longer.

The Open Streets Program is transforming our streets into vibrant, walkable spaces for people to enjoy and safely access through free community events and activations. Again, these are exactly the sorts of things we envisage CIDs delivering in partnership with their councils and community. The evidence is clear. Creating a great community and building the strength of the local economy can, indeed, go hand in hand. As a regional MP, I am proud that three of the round one CID pilots are located in regional New South Wales: Murwillumbah, Yamba and Muswellbrook.

In Murwillumbah, the Murwillumbah District Business Chamber is leading its CID pilot. It is investigating a range of local improvements, including streetscape enhancements, safety improvements, and projects to boost the region's identity as an arts and cultural destination. To deliver these outcomes, the CID pilot has regularly engaged businesses, landowners and community stakeholders within their CID boundary. The pilot has also established a project steering group with Tweed Shire Council to provide strategic guidance and ensure alignment with broader local initiatives. The enthusiasm with which the Murwillumbah community has approached the CID pilot in their region demonstrates the fact that CID policy is a model for across our State, including regional communities who are already relishing opportunities for growth and redevelopment.

To be clear, CIDs will not fund major infrastructure or other works that fall under the responsibility of the New South Wales Government or local councils. The CID policy is not about passing the buck or creating unnecessary duplication. Rather, the services, activities and projects undertaken by the CID entities will be complementary to those being undertaken by local councils. For example, CID entities might elect to undertake activities that are additional to what councils already fund, such as more frequent street cleaning or urban greening. Local businesses are passionate about the communities they serve and operate in. They have a keen sense of what brings customers through the door and what improvements their local areas need.

Activating the public spaces through CIDs will have a twofold effect. On the one hand, CIDs will stimulate local economies and encourage the conditions that create new employment opportunities. On the other hand, it will enhance the environment of local neighbourhoods, improve liveability outcomes, attract visitation and facilitate vibrant community life. They will just make our communities better places to be. This is why CIDs will be business-led community-building initiatives. Some might be rightfully asking why the New South Wales Government needs to introduce legislation to enable CIDs to flourish. While limited CID-like entities already exist in New South Wales, the kind of initiative we have seen has not gained significant traction.

Yet we know that there is a strong appetite for this type of arrangement. This was evidenced in the feedback received from the improvement districts white paper, and the exposure draft CID legislation, which were released in 2022 and 2023 respectively. In that feedback, stakeholders expressed that they wanted support for streamlining CIDs in New South Wales because the current process for CIDs is uncertain and not fit for purpose. Businesses and councils expressed that the current process is cumbersome, costly, time consuming and inefficient. Currently, there are no appropriate guidelines or governance arrangements in place to support a consistent approach to CIDs and no statutory recognition of this specific type of arrangement.

Funding CID-like entities is also challenging. Existing funding sources include special rates struck under the Local Government Act 1993 using New South Wales government or local council grants, or by voluntary business membership fees, none of which provide the necessary funding stability and accountability required for CIDs. Ultimately, CID-type organisations are difficult to establish, resulting in very few CIDs successfully established to date. Place-making and community building initiatives need long-term stability and an appropriate legislative framework. The legislative framework developed through the CID bill will ensure CID proposals can be fully realised, from ideation to implementation. This is the certainty that businesses need right now. This is why standalone legislation is required.

The structure of the CID bill comprises the following. Part 1 sets out the important objects of this legislation and how the legislation will foster the establishment and operation of community improvement districts. Part 2 provides for the functions of the CID authority. Part 3 deals with the preparation and approval of CID proposals, the mandatory requirements to be included in a CID proposal, how CID ballots will occur, how CID proposals

will be approved, the need for council support and the requirements around CID entities. Part 4 deals with financial matters and the imposition and collection of CID levies by the authority. Part 5 includes miscellaneous provisions, including application of the bill to government land, delegations, sharing of information, review rights and regulation-making powers. Schedule 2 includes consequential amendments to the State Debt Recovery Act 2018 to provide that levies, fees and interest are referable debts, allowing, amongst other things, access to the State Hardship Review Board. Schedule 3 contains the Community Improvement Districts Regulation 2025, which prescribes the two permissible methodologies for calculating CID levies.

The CID bill will create the right conditions for those looking to form a CID and to have it succeed with confidence. To guarantee that CID entities will have the necessary long-term stability, the CID bill specifies that approval of a CID proposal will be for five years or the period otherwise stated in regulation, if any, and that this can be renewed subject to another ballot. The CID bill also recognises how critical community engagement is to the success of CIDs. When the draft CID bill was out for public consultation between December 2023 and May 2024, councils including the City of Sydney, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Northern Beaches Council, Port Stephens Council and the Hills Shire Council as well as Local Government NSW outlined in their submissions that they wanted community engagement to be central to CID policy. The New South Wales Government has listened to this advice.

Proposed section 9 is a direct response to the feedback that councils have provided. It sets out explicit requirements on community and council consultation in the development of a CID. In other words, a CID proposal will not be given the green light to proceed unless the CID entity can demonstrate that it has consulted with the community. A letter of support from the local council or councils that the CID entity traverses is also a prerequisite for a CID proposal being approved. Moreover, the legislative framework provides appropriate reporting, accountability and governance requirements to ensure that CID activities, services and projects are delivered in a timely, effective and efficient manner, and align with council and New South Wales Government policies and strategies. We heard, through feedback on the draft CID bill, that stakeholders were seeking more clarity on who exactly the CID authority would be and how this would be operationalised. We have listened to this feedback from groups such as the New South Wales division of the Planning Institute of Australia, Local Government NSW and the City of Sydney.

The CID bill confirms that the CID legislative framework will be overseen by a single fully government-funded CID authority—Transport for NSW. There will be no buck passing—one agency. The CID authority will ensure compliance and consistency in how CIDs will be run across New South Wales and will also be responsible for imposing, collecting and distributing CID levies, in addition to managing a dedicated levy fund. A key function of the CID authority will also be to support the implementation of CIDs through education and capability-building activities. The CID legislation is new for New South Wales, and we need to ensure that communities, businesses and councils are supported to understand how they can best utilise this new policy. One of the critical features of the CID legislative framework is that CID proposals can only proceed following a ballot of businesses and business landowners. The ballot ensures that there is sufficient support for the proposal from the people who will pay the levy.

Originally, the ballot was only going to be open to landowners. However, in feedback on the draft bill that we consulted on last year, we heard from the Committee for Sydney and local groups such as YCK Laneways, the Chippendale Collective, the Haymarket Alliance and Uptown Sydney, as well as councils such as Bega Valley Shire Council, City of Sydney, Lake Macquarie City Council, Shoalhaven City Council and the Hills Shire Council, that businesses should be able to participate in ballots too. The CID bill provides for CID levies to be imposed on business landowners in the CID area. This is consistent with the approach adopted in other jurisdictions, including New Zealand. However, it is expected that business landowners will typically pass levies on to business tenants in the CID as an outgoing cost. This will be subject to there being a lawful basis on which the levies can be passed on, such as in accordance with the terms of their lease or in accordance with section 12A of the Retail Leases Act 1994.

In most CIDs, business tenants will be the ones paying the CID levy. This is the reason proposals will require a two-thirds majority of CID businesses voting in favour to pass the ballot, in addition to support from a simple majority of CID business landowners. The option of imposing levies directly on businesses was considered. However, as there is no centralised means of identifying current business owners in New South Wales, there would be practical difficulties in identifying relevant business owners. In contrast, the existing land registry system provides the necessary data to enable the identification of business landowners. Business landowners will benefit from CID improvements through increased property values over time. Having CID levies payable by business landowners will also encourage long-term sustainable investment in CIDs as well as near-term improvements. It is fair that businesses get a vote too, and that is what the legislation now provides for. We have listened to councils and other stakeholders to make that change.

The CID authority will be responsible for ensuring that a ballot is conducted. A ballot can only take place following consultation with local communities, the relevant council and other stakeholder groups in the CID area. For a ballot to be validly conducted, at least 25 per cent of businesses and 25 per cent of business landowners in the CID proponent area need to vote. For a proposal to proceed past the ballot to approvals, two-thirds of the businesses that cast a vote and a simple majority of business landowners who cast a vote need to vote in favour of the proposal. Again, this recognises the critical role that businesses will play in setting up, operating and funding CIDs. Without business support, a CID will not be successful. Bega Valley Shire Council's suggestion of a two-thirds majority for support has been very instructive in this respect. The ballot model also provides for each person voting to get one vote, the same as applies in, for example, council elections.

This is in response to feedback on the draft bill from councils such as City of Sydney, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Shellharbour City Council and Shoalhaven City Council on the importance of ensuring that all parties have an equal say in the ballot process. The updated legislation responds to this feedback and puts a fair system in place. Legislating those ballot requirements ensures that the CID policy remains robust and democratic. We recognise the concerns that some stakeholders have raised about the logistics of generating a list of all businesses in an area. There is no single government information source, and this list will need to be developed by the CID entity in close partnership with the CID authority. A draft list will need to be provided as part of the CID proposal. This list, once complete, will inform which businesses are eligible to vote. Proposed section 12 provides for the regulations to permit provisional voting in the event that a business or business landowner is not included in the list.

Developing this list is not an easy task, but it is important and valuable work. Not only will it underpin the ballot process but also, once operational, the list will form a valuable source of information for the CID on understanding who the businesses operating in the area are. The list does not need to be maintained once the ballot process is complete, but some CIDs might choose to do so because they think it is useful, such as to support their monitoring and evaluation. In our discussions with other jurisdictions, such as officers in New Zealand councils where improvement districts already operate, we have confirmed the logistics of preparing such a list. Let me stress that councils play an important role in the CID process. The CID bill mandates that consultation with council is a requirement before a ballot is undertaken. Councils also have a veto right to stop a CID proposal from proceeding where, for example, it does not align with the council's strategic plans for the area in question.

Following a successful ballot, the CID authority must reject a CID proposal unless each relevant council has confirmed their support for the proposal. Through consultation we heard concerns from councils, such as City of Sydney, about the potential for a party to appeal a decision by council not to support the proposal. We have listened to those concerns and updated the bill to reflect this. The right of appeal has been removed and a CID will not proceed until the council or councils in the CID area confirm their support. Councils also told us that CIDs build upon, not duplicate council/government services and need to align with council and government plans.

Local Government NSW, local groups such as YCK Laneways, the Chippendale Collective, the Haymarket Alliance and UpTown Sydney, and councils such as City of Sydney, Blacktown City, Cessnock City, Lake Macquarie City, Northern Beaches, Port Stephens, Shellharbour City and Shoalhaven councils suggested to us that the legislation needed to be clear on how this would be achieved. We have listened. A key object of the legislation now before the House is for CIDs to support the place-making and economic policies of the New South Wales Government and local councils. To achieve this, the bill now has detailed requirements for what a CID proposal must contain so there is visibility on what is being proposed.

It is the Government's intention that, through regulation, a service level agreement between council and the CID will need to be struck before the CID commences. This will confirm the "swim lanes" that council and the CID respectively operate in. And, of course, the council veto right has, as discussed, been strengthened. The CID bill also includes provisions to ensure appropriate accountability in this place with respect to CID levies. For example, CID levies will be required to comply with any cap set by the Minister. The legislation has been drafted so that only those CID proposals that local businesses and landowners feel meet their needs will actually proceed. The CID will be operated by a CID entity.

We heard from councils such as City of Sydney, Lake Macquarie City Council, Hills Shire Council and Local Government NSW during consultation on the importance of providing more detail on who the CID entity would be and how it would operate. In response to this feedback, the legislation now provides that the CID entity will be an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. Responding to Local Government NSW's submission on the draft legislation, the bill now also establishes that all business landowners and businesses in a CID will be eligible for free membership of their CID entity. The choice to become a member in the CID entity is voluntary, but the option for each business landowner and business is there.

Prior to releasing funds to the CID entity annually, the CID authority will ensure that compliance requirements, to be set out in regulation, are met. In other jurisdictions, this can include requiring information on

the annual improvement budget, details of monitoring and evaluation, advice on how conflicts of interest have been managed, and confirmation that the entity is compliant with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act 2009. The CID bill provides an unprecedented opportunity for local businesses, business landowners and communities to partner with the Government and councils to develop solutions that help shape the future local trading environments and breathe new life into local neighbourhood spaces across the State. I am very pleased to put forward this bill on behalf of the Hon. John Graham in the other place, and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 18 March 2025.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (10:43): I make a brief contribution in support of the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. The bill amends the Bail Act 2013 to extend the operation of the temporary bail test in section 22C for an additional three years, until 4 April 2028. This extension is a necessary and responsible measure to address ongoing community concerns about youth crime, particularly in regional New South Wales, while allowing time for broader community-based initiatives to take full effect. Section 22C was introduced in 2024 as an immediate response to the rising rates of serious youth offences, specifically break and enter and motor vehicle theft, committed by young people already on bail for similar offences. This provision requires a bail authority to refuse bail unless it has a "high degree of confidence" that the young person will not commit further serious indictable offences while on bail.

It was implemented as a circuit breaker—a temporary, but essential measure to curb repeat offending while longer term, holistic solutions were being developed. As the initial sunset date of 4 April 2025 approaches, it is evident that, while progress has been made, youth crime persists. The people of Moree and other regional communities have made it clear that the safety of their towns remains a pressing concern. The Government has listened and responded accordingly. The extension of section 22C will ensure that community safety remains a priority while the broader initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of youth crime continue to be implemented and refined.

The Government has made significant investments in community-based programs designed to provide young people with alternative pathways away from crime. In Moree, nearly \$900,000 of the allocated \$1 million for additional after-hours activities has been used, funding programs that engage young people constructively. The Miyay Birray Youth Service Street Beat bus, for instance, has successfully provided over 1,000 pick-ups in its first three months of operation, ensuring that young people have safe and structured environments to turn to instead of the streets. Similarly, the PCYC and the Sports Health Arts and Education Academy programs continue to attract dozens of young people each night, fostering a sense of community and purpose through sports, health, arts and education activities. The small grants program has distributed over \$215,000 to support diverse after-hours initiatives, from mental health peer support to recreational activities.

Furthermore, the Moree Bail Accommodation Program, delivered by a consortium of local Aboriginal organisations, is expected to open later this year to provide young offenders with stable environments and supportive case management. Beyond Moree, the New South Wales Government has expanded its commitment to addressing youth crime in regional areas, such as Bourke and Kempsey. In February 2025 an additional \$2 million over four years was allocated to Moree to strengthen community safety measures. Meanwhile, the NSW Police Force has conducted over 30 targeted operations under Operation Regional Mongoose, identifying 255 offenders across the western region. These proactive measures are essential deterrents to criminal activity and will ensure that young offenders are held accountable for their actions.

The extension of section 22C will allow for the collection and analysis of more comprehensive data on the provision's impact. Currently, the data available covers only a six-month period from March to September 2024. By extending the provisions, we will be able to assess long-term trends and make informed decisions on future legislative and policy approaches to youth crime. Additionally, the Committee on Law and Safety, which I chair, held community hearings in Bourke, Kempsey, Broken Hill and Sydney. An interim report will be tabled in May 2025, and the final report of the inquiry is due in November 2025. This additional information will provide valuable insights and inform further work to be done to reduce youth offending. By extending section 22C, we are not turning away from our broader vision of restorative justice and rehabilitation. Instead, we are reinforcing the need for an evidence-based, balanced approach that prioritises both public safety and youth development.

The extension of section 22C is a necessary and responsible step to address ongoing community concerns about youth crime while allowing sufficient time for broader community-based initiatives to take full effect. It is part of a larger, multifaceted response that balances immediate security measures with long-term investments in prevention and rehabilitation. This bill is a critical component of our commitment to keeping our communities safe while fostering a future in which young people are given the support and opportunities they need to succeed. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (10:50): I speak in contribution to the debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. We all know that youth crime is escalating across regional New South Wales, and it is getting worse by the day. A year ago, we were talking about bail reform in this place to help solve this crisis, but the one thing that is abundantly clear is that those changes are not working. When the Minns Government put forward its bill to amend the Bail Act, the Coalition said it did not go far enough, and now we are here having the exact same conversation.

It is a year later, and serious repeat youth offenders are still holding our communities to ransom. It is a year later, and our residents are still terrified to walk the streets. It is a year later, and families still do not feel safe in their own homes. Living in a constant state of panic and fear is absolutely no way to live, and our communities are completely fed up. They are so fed up that they are holding public rallies to take a stand and have their voices heard. They feel ignored in all of this because the current Government's approach of drip-feeding bits of funding to certain areas leaves others to fend for themselves. It is not working.

The latest Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] statistics show that, in the 12 months leading to December 2024, there were 2,000 more break and enter offences in the regions than there were in city areas. Who can blame regional people for feeling frustrated and helpless? I have seen their frustration firsthand, including at a rally in Kempsey a few weeks ago. I was there with the member for Oxley and several of my Nationals Party colleagues. The more than 700 locals there all wanted real action. If you had asked anyone at that rally whether they felt the bail changes made last year were making a difference, they would say, "You are absolutely kidding yourself."

It is not just people in Kempsey who feel that way. We have seen similar events held in Armidale and even in Moree, where the majority of the Premier's focus has been for a year and still seems to be right now. The clear message from people right across regional New South Wales is that if nothing changes, they will be stuck in this same situation and things will keep heading in the wrong direction. The Government can try to say that crime has been around for years, but there is no question that this epidemic is not only deepening but also, sadly, becoming more deadly.

At the end of last month, we saw another tragic escalation with the death of a 17-year-old, Kallan Murray, at Bourke in the west of the State. It started with a joy ride in an allegedly stolen vehicle and led to a police pursuit and a crash that ended his life far too soon. There was also a 13-year-old, a 16-year-old and a 14-year-old with Kallan in the car that night, and one of them was on bail at the time. I cannot help but wonder if this would have happened if we had done more in the first instance. This is a serious issue, and we need to do better in the future. Kallan's family and friends are struggling to come to terms with this senseless loss. It was a wasteful and avoidable tragedy that never should have happened.

There was another scary incident in Bourke last night when a couple experienced a hold-up at a motel. There has also been another death at Gunnedah when a man on a motorbike was hit by a group of youths. This needs to be a wake-up call for the Government. We need a circuit breaker to stop these incidents from occurring. As we said last year, we do not oppose the extension, but these laws need to go further. We will be proposing amendments that do this, including the stricter bail conditions mentioned by my colleague and other things like curfews and the use of electronic monitoring. Bail should also be immediately revoked and not granted again if the conditions are breached in any way or if there have been any new criminal charges laid while they are on bail. Those charges will relate to any offence, not just the two crimes covered by the Government's bill.

Serious break and enter offences and motor vehicle theft are currently the only ones included in these bail laws. We have always said this scope is far too narrow. The latest BOCSAR stats show that, outside of break and enter offences and motor vehicle theft, there are serious problems that need to be dealt with in the regions. For example, prohibited and regulated weapons offences are up 17.4 per cent in the past two years. The number of young people stealing from a retail store went up 23 per cent between 2023 and 2024. Domestic violence offences committed by a young person are up nearly 7 per cent in a year. But none of these crimes, or others like assault, are covered by this bill.

These bail amendments are not only narrow in the scope of crimes they cover but are also narrow in the age group they cover. A young boy in my electorate of Dubbo had faced court more than 70 times before his twelfth birthday. We are talking about a boy who had more than 100 offences to his name at just 11 years of age.

That particular youth is not covered by the Government's bail laws, because the additional bail test for young people only covers those aged between 14 and 18 years of age. We know several of the offences we are hearing about are being committed by people younger than 14. It just doesn't make sense, from a community perspective, to limit it like that.

We have a crucial opportunity here after a year of these laws being in place. We have a moment to pause and reflect. Most importantly we can listen to the people who are impacted about what is actually making a tangible difference. We need legislative change to stop repeat youth offenders from carrying out crime sprees across regional New South Wales. We need to make those changes count or there will be more deaths as a result of the crisis. The time for change is now. That is why we will be putting forward our amendments to ensure that our regional communities are protected.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (10:57): Today I address an issue of paramount importance to the people of Heathcote and to all communities across New South Wales. The Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025 represents a crucial step in the Government's ongoing commitment to keep the people of New South Wales safe and secure. Considerable and ongoing concerns have been expressed about the magnitude of youth crime by communities across New South Wales, and in particular by regional communities. Residents in my electorate of Heathcote have made me aware of their concerns for their own safety and for the wellbeing of the youth involved in these crimes. I am a member of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety, which has been holding hearings across regional New South Wales. I am aware of the worrying increase in youth crime throughout regional New South Wales. I understand that this is a serious problem that needs to be tackled with long-term policy action.

The committee's ongoing inquiry into community safety in regional and rural communities has shown that at-risk youth require strong, wraparound services and community initiatives in order to limit reoffending. They also need compassion, understanding and community support. The Minns Labor Government is committed to keeping the people of New South Wales safe and secure. That is why in 2024 the Government introduced a multifaceted response to combat youth crime, including legislative reform, which the bill seeks to extend, and diversionary and community initiatives, which continue to be implemented. There needs to be a balanced and evidence-based decision-making process. The bill will strengthen the previous legislation and allow for the Minns Government to better address the ongoing community concern about youth crime. Restoring peace of mind in my communities and everywhere else is something we champion. We welcome the action taken to support public safety in communities right across New South Wales.

The bill seeks to extend the legislative measure in section 22C of the Bail Act, which provides an additional bail test for young people aged 14 to 17 who have been charged with committing a serious break and enter or motor theft offence while on bail for another offence of that type. Under that test, unless the bail authority has a high degree of confidence that the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail, bail is to be refused. It was initially considered to be a circuit breaker, offering an immediate response to youth crime. The Government has heard the outcry from the community, and we understand that an immediate response is still required in order to combat the issue. The bill is in no way a bandaid over a bullet wound. Section 22C will remain a time-limited and targeted test. Youth crime is a highly complex and important problem with serious impacts for the young person.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome all our guests to Australia's first Parliament and the beating heart of representative democracy in New South Wales, the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. I hope they have a wonderful time while they are here. I extend a warm welcome to Andrew Clark, Faith Clark, April-Jean Averling, Zanita Pratt and William Warren, guests of the member for Wollongong. I also welcome to the public gallery Mr Bob Stewart and Mr Greg Hill from Central Darling Shire Council, who are guests of the member for Barwon. I welcome Sam Stewart, an apprentice and trainee from the Department of Education, and his supervisor, Elisabeth Gilroy, who are guests of the member from Monaro. I also welcome students and teachers from Sarah Redfern High School in the Macquarie Fields electorate.

I do not know what has happened but, for some reason, the guests of the member for Lake Macquarie have dropped off the list. I welcome members of the Lions Club of Toronto. I had the pleasure of joining some of them on Monday as they made sandwiches for a charity that gives students lunches that they may otherwise not get.

I welcome to the Parliament school students and prefects from high schools across New South Wales who are attending the student leadership program conducted by the parliamentary education team. They are watching question time in the theatrette. It was wonderful to meet and welcome some of those student leaders this morning. Many members joined me and then met with their local students. I acknowledge in the gallery the erstwhile member for Port Macquarie, the Hon. Leslie Gladys Williams. As she knows, she has many friends in this House, if not the other place. It is lovely to have her here with the member elect for Port Macquarie, Robert Dwyer, who was also here yesterday. On behalf of the member for Shellharbour, I also acknowledge Kim Bush from Eurobodalla Council. It was very nice to meet Kim earlier and I am very pleased that she can be here.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ORDER FOR PAPERS: MINISTERIAL VEHICLE LOGBOOKS

The SPEAKER (11:05): I advise the House that I received correspondence from the Secretary of the Cabinet Office last night regarding the Legislative Council order for papers and the documents under that order that relate to my office. The documents contain personal information and information the public disclosure of which may pose safety risks and that should be confidential. I have asked the Cabinet Office to provide the documents in a redacted form to deal with this sensitive and confidential information before I formally receive the material. At that point, I will further advise the House.

Question Time

ELECTIVE SURGERY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:09): My question is directed to the Premier. In the last year elective surgeries are down, the elective surgery waiting list has increased to nearly record, pandemic-era levels and the number of elective surgery patients waiting longer than clinically recommended has more than tripled. Will the Premier apologise for what his Government's real cuts to health spending, two years in a row, have done to elective surgery?

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will put away the props. I warn Opposition members. It is too early in question time for such behaviour.

Mr Michael Daley: I didn't know you could read.

The SPEAKER: The Attorney General will come to order. Do members not understand what it means when the Speaker stands in his place? It is the ultimate sanction against misbehaviour in the House. Members will come to order immediately and remain silent. The Attorney General knows better, as does every other member in this place. I will not tolerate such behaviour in question time. If it continues, members will be directed to leave the Chamber. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:10): I remember when we were in opposition, it was a case of if you are in trouble, pull out the prop—the front pages. The big question we all want answered is: Did Sue Higginson draft that question? The National Party and the Liberal Party are on the rocks after Port Macquarie. Speako is after a new partner—The Greens. The Greens are going to join the Coalition. Jenny, come on down. Mark, shove over; Jenny can sit down there. There is a new Coalition in the House—the Liberals and The Greens. Members will notice that a lot of the information referenced by the Leader of the Opposition was cherrypicked.

The most egregious example is his suggestion that people are waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery in New South Wales public hospitals. It is true that the number waiting is 6,842, which is too high. It is higher than we want and higher than it was last year. What the Leader of the Opposition did not disclose to the House is that under the Coalition that number was nearly 18,000. Where is the front page now? We have brought it down from 18,000 to 6,842, and the Opposition's question is: Why haven't you fixed up our mess quickly enough? They are like a teenager complaining about an untidy room.

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order: My point of order relates to direct relevance. A hundred thousand people are on the waitlist under this Government.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Premier has been directly relevant. I take into consideration the nature of the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: From 18,000 to 6,800 is still not where we need to be, but the idea that we will take a lecture from the Leader of the Opposition is ridiculous.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

Mr Mark Speakman: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. I asked about the Premier's record, not our record of investing in reducing waiting lists. The Government cancelled the COVID funding. It has ripped money out of the health system.

The SPEAKER: I have ruled on the point order. The Premier is being directly relevant.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The first part of the Leader of the Opposition's question is wrong. The second part was about real spending in health. It is up 1.2 per cent, even accounting for inflation. So there is more in health and more in relation to those waiting longer than clinically recommended. The building of Rouse Hill Hospital, Fairfield Hospital, Eurobodalla hospital, Shoalhaven hospital, Bankstown hospital and Canterbury Hospital means there are more than 600 beds for Western Sydney. What do we get if the Coalition is returned in New South Wales? We get a GP tax, a wages cap on medical workers and, most shameful of all, more privatised hospitals.

WORKERS COMPENSATION

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:14): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the New South Wales Government's plan to reform the State's workers compensation scheme to ensure that it is sustainable and fit for purpose?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:14): This is an urgent question and an issue that all Government members are worried about—the reform of workers compensation in New South Wales. The intention of the Government in the coming weeks is to shift the workplace injury system towards solving the root causes and preventing injuries in the workplace rather than having a cycle of payment, premiums increasing and then the status quo in either the public or the private sector across New South Wales. The statistics are stark when it comes to the amount of money paid by both the Government and the private sector for icare premiums impacting regular businesses, which, in a very difficult economic environment, are trying to make ends meet.

I report to the House that payments from the Nominal Insurer, which cover workers compensation for private sector employers, have risen 80 per cent in four years from \$2.1 billion to \$3.8 billion. This impacts all New South Wales businesses—every single one of them—that have to pay higher premiums to cover the increases. Currently premiums are increasing by 8 per cent a year and public sector employee payments have increased 220 per cent in four years—these are massive numbers—from \$630 million a year to \$1.4 billion a year. The largest reason for that cohort change is psychological injury in the workplace. The Government does not turn its back on that, but the problem at the moment is the compensation scheme fosters an environment of a status quo within workplaces. In other words, nothing changes.

Because of provisional acceptance of liability claims, the payment may go out to any worker in New South Wales but the workplace does not change at all. As a result, the Government intends to give the Industrial Relations Commission a bullying and harassment jurisdiction, requiring those claims to be heard first before compensation is applied for and paid out. The statistics on payments for psychological distress in the workplace show that although 88 per cent of workers with physical injuries are back at work within 13 weeks, just 40 per cent with psychological injuries are back at work in the same time frame. Furthermore, the cost of psychological injuries is five times more than the cost of physical injuries. On average—and these are big numbers—\$288,000 is paid for psychological injury compared with \$57,000 for physical injury in the workplace. [*Extension of time*]

The truth of the matter is that the system of workers compensation in New South Wales was set up to ensure provisional acceptance of liability claims, particularly for those who had a physical injury. Extending that to workplace psychosocial injuries has resulted in an explosion in the amount of money paid by both the public and the private sector. If nothing is done, if no reform takes place in New South Wales, we will see employers charged an additional \$2.5 billion over the next five years. These are liability and premium increases for all workplaces in New South Wales, all employers, all small businesses and everybody who has a stake in the modern marketplace in this State. The Government will need to fund \$3.8 billion over the same period. These are massive increases. The icare numbers show that the proportion of people seeking psychological claims under 40 per cent has risen by a massive 90 per cent in four years.

One of the questions this House will have to grapple with is the argument about whether a young person best benefits from a workers compensation payout or being reintegrated in the workplace instead. Reform of workplaces and a proper jurisdiction in the Industrial Relations Commission will fix these problems root and branch, rather than paying people out and hoping the problem goes away. This has been supported by Business NSW, which has said:

Many employers with perfect safety records have been seeing huge increases in their workers compensation premiums ... Without significant changes the weight of the scheme will crush businesses ...

Business NSW supports changes to the system and supports the Government's reform efforts. I have been asked quite a few times by Opposition members about the crushing costs for small businesses in New South Wales. They can get on board in a bipartisan way and pass this legislation. It will do good for New South Wales.

HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (11:19): My question is directed to the Premier. Around 4,000 more patients left emergency departments without completing treatment in the December quarter compared with a year before. Will the Premier apologise to patients left untreated because of his Government's real cuts to health spending?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:20): The member for Vaucluse is misleading the Parliament. She is having another go, but just repeating an untruth in the Parliament does not make it correct. Real health spending has increased under the Labor Government year on year. That is incontrovertible. Members only have to look at the budget papers.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Members will notice this claim is made repeatedly in the Parliament, but members opposite never make reference to the inflation rate, the amount of money the New South Wales Government is spending or the amount it is investing in public health in the State. Again, I point members to cherrypicked figures. Previously the Opposition was focused on bed block in public hospitals. I report to the House that, as a result of changes that the Minister for Health has made, 83 per cent of patients were transferred from paramedics to emergency departments within 30 minutes. That represents a near 4 per cent increase on the previous Bureau of Health Information data. Members will remember that bed block was a massive issue in the New South Wales election. This means paramedics are back on the street quicker under a Labor government change than under the previous Coalition Government.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Elective surgery waiting times are still too high but, again, they are down from the 17,000 under the previous Government to the number recorded in the Bureau of Health Information data. I make this point sincerely: Whatever challenges are in the health system, they will not be fixed by reintroducing a wages cap on health staff. Yet that is the stated policy of the New South Wales Opposition.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: If that is not the case, members opposite should say, "We thought for 12 years that this was the economic policy for New South Wales, but we have now had a latter-day conversion and that is no longer our position." I suspect that is not the case. We will not reintroduce a wages cap in New South Wales, and we will discontinue the project of privatising New South Wales public hospitals.

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the member for Vaucluse.

Ms Kellie Sloane: It goes to direct relevance. We are talking about patients leaving emergency departments untreated. A third of them need urgent care. The Premier cannot ignore that question.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Premier is being directly relevant to the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Let us remember the first contribution from the member for Vaucluse, where she said the choice was made by the Government to get rid of the wages cap. One of the first contributions from the member for Vaucluse was criticism of the Government for removing the wages cap. There are 1,200 COVID nurses permanently employed in the New South Wales health system. I think most shamefully—

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: There has been an end to the practice, designed and implemented by the previous Government, of privatising New South Wales public hospitals.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have made those changes.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: There are challenges in the health system, but we are in a far better position than was left to us by the Liberals and The Nationals.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:23): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister update the House on what the Government is doing to ease pressure on our hospitals?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:23): What an excellent question from an excellent member. The community in his electorate is served by Liverpool Hospital. For those who do not know, Liverpool Hospital has one of the busiest emergency departments not just in the State but in the country.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: At Liverpool Hospital we have seen a reduction in ramping by about 8 per cent. That means that more people are able to get out of the ambulance and into the hospital to get their treatment and paramedics are back on the road. Today we have seen some promising signs in relation to ramping. There has been a 25 per cent reduction in ramping at St George Hospital, one of the biggest trauma facilities in the country. We have seen around a 22 per cent reduction in ramping at Blacktown hospital, which is in an area where the community is growing literally by the week.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: At Campbelltown Hospital, which has one of the top three busiest emergency departments in the country, we have seen close to a 10 per cent reduction in ramping. As the Premier has outlined, we have seen an increase in elective surgery. Let me talk about the elective surgery figure that the Opposition is coming around to today. I had the "pleasure" of being the shadow Minister for Health for four years. Every now and again I made a rookie error, and Minister Hazzard was, most times, reasonably kind. On this occasion, I too will be kind.

Let us talk about the 100,000 figure that members opposite are talking about today. I hate to tell everybody that the 100,000 that members opposite are out at press conferences talking about today has been in place for many years because, respectfully, when someone is determined to need surgery, they go on that surgery waiting list straightaway. Unless the plan is to stop knee replacements, hip replacements and back operations, we will have a problem changing the 100,000 figure. What we are focused on is people who have been waiting longer than clinically recommended. That is the pressure point. They are the people we have to focus on. When we came to office, that figure sat somewhere around 17,000 to 14,000. [*Extension of time*]

We brought that figure down substantially. There is absolutely more work to do. I know better than anyone that we need to continue to focus on driving that down. But I will tell members what will not drive that figure down, and these are proven facts: bringing back a wages cap, cutting 1,100 nursing positions, or the privatisation of—at one stage—five hospitals in New South Wales.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: Those on the northern beaches know what a fantastic success that model is! It is incredible what is happening there.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier will come to order.

Mr RYAN PARK: We will not be addressing these challenges by bringing back a wages cap. I will not be addressing these challenges by cutting 1,100 staff. I will not be addressing these challenges by taking to Treasury a plan to privatise more hospitals.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: We will address these challenges in multiple ways: firstly, by continuing to expand our urgent care services; secondly, by recruiting additional healthcare staff, which for nurses sits at 7,000 since we came to office; thirdly, through a targeted program to increase the number of paramedics in the bush by 500; fourthly, by making sure we can expand virtual care services so that people who do not need to go to emergency departments can get access to emergency treatment; and, finally, by making sure GPs who bulk-bill get an incentive to keep bulk-billing. We are not bringing back a cap, we are not privatising hospitals and we are not cutting nursing staff.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members could learn a lot from the example set by the member for Oatley, who has been so good today. I give a little shout-out to the member for Oatley.

BUS SERVICES

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (11:29): My question is directed to the Premier. Since the opening of the Rozelle interchange, the 437 bus service, which runs through Leichhardt and Lilyfield to the city, has become increasingly unreliable during the morning peak, getting caught up in the congestion along City West Link and the Anzac Bridge. What can the Government do to ensure that vital public transport route is prioritised so that commuters do not give up in frustration, ditch the bus and take the car into the city instead?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:29): I acknowledge the advocacy of the member for Balmain on this issue in the House, in her electorate and in the media over a long period. As I revealed to the House in December 2023, the previous Government knew, prior to the opening of the interchange, about the concerns that the WestConnex opening would have on local streets. It had concerns about the impact of the final part of WestConnex on the broader road network well before it opened, but mitigation measures that should have been put in place in relation to traffic flow and management of the lights, as well as reporting on the amount of traffic that moved through the intersections, were, according to the then Government and to a report in the Herald, "deprioritised in the lead-up to the last State election".

In other words, the previous Government saw the car crash coming but, rather than trying to mitigate it or stop it, it did absolutely nothing. It did not care about The Greens and it did not care about Balmain, but I can promise the member for Balmain that those days are over. Those opposite love The Greens now. The Liberal Party and The Greens are absolute best mates.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: The algae alliance.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: They are the algae alliance. Those days of blithe indifference are completely over. The Liberal Party will bend over backwards for The Greens.

Ms Kobi Shetty: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129. I would like to hear from the Premier about the 437 bus.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The Premier will be directly relevant to the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: As the member for Oxley is fond of saying, "What are you going to do about it?" We are going to do something about it, Mr Speaker. I can report to the House that changes were made to route 437 in December 2024, and I can advise that the most recent data, from February, shows that 95.2 per cent of trips were on time and cancellations were at 0.3 per cent. We will try to get that up to 97 per cent. We do not need to be in coalition with The Greens; we will do it because it is the right thing to do. The 437 timetable was also adjusted to ensure that all services operated at full route and were provided at times when there were capacity issues to reduce overcrowding on the network. It was a perennial problem and the member for Balmain is absolutely right to raise it. When there are large-scale public transport infrastructure projects, the Government needs to anticipate intended or unintended consequences and not leave communities in the lurch. We will do our best when we roll out the unprecedented amount of public transport infrastructure in the years ahead.

TEACHER WORKFORCE

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (11:32): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier outline to the House how the Minns Labor Government is delivering on its commitment to attract and retain new teachers into New South Wales public schools?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:32): I thank the member for Blue Mountains for that important question. She is a respected educator and amongst the most patient of the types of teachers that I meet, the kindergarten teachers of New South Wales. I thank her for her service to the people of New South Wales and to the many students that she has helped shape in her teaching career. I believe that students and their wonderful teachers from seven schools in her electorate are visiting Parliament today for the Secondary School Student Leadership program event. Of all the local government areas in New South Wales, Blue Mountains has the highest proportion of public school teachers living in it, so the member for Blue Mountains certainly speaks with a lot of experience.

Her question was about attracting new teachers into the teaching profession. We speak a lot about making sure that we rebuild public education in New South Wales through the prism of this expert profession. It reminds me of a supplementary question that I received after our estimates hearing recently, lodged by the Opposition, hilariously. It was probably from the former Minister, who is on that committee. It was: How can we uplift morale in the teaching profession? That is an interesting question for an Opposition member to ask. I have a few ideas about how we might uplift morale in the teaching profession. What we should not do is suppress teachers wages for 12 years. That would be a start. The second thing that we should not do is gaslight the teachers of New South

Wales when they are screaming about a shortage by saying, "There is nothing to see here. It is okay that we have got thousands of kids in the COLA and in the hall—if you have got one—while we do not have a teacher to fill that vacant position."

What we have done as a Government, literally from day one, is focus on valuing and respecting the teaching profession by not only removing the wages cap and giving teachers the biggest pay rise in a generation but also trusting their expert practice in the classroom. It is vital to invest in public education in a way that we know works. Teachers have been screaming about that for years and, as a result, for the first time in 13 years resignations are declining and are now at a four-year low. Since we came to government, teacher vacancies are down by 40 per cent. In the electorate of the member who asked the question, they are down by 50 per cent. One of the biggest challenges we faced upon coming to government was what to do about early-career teachers. [*Extension of time*]

Early-career teachers were going into the classroom and becoming so overwhelmed by the level of administration work, the lack of support and the work that vacancies put on them that they were leaving within the first five years. It was a trend that we had to arrest, and we did. As a result of not just the abolition of the wages cap but also a government that values the work that teachers do in the classroom, more early-career teachers are staying in the profession. Targeted investment in mentoring, through the Early Career Academy, has been established in the Department of Education. That targeted funding for mentoring and professional development is to ensure that we invest in centres of excellence for scholarship programs to make sure that expert young teachers stay in the profession, mentored by experienced teachers who are coming out of retirement for that purpose.

We need to encourage year 11 and 12 students to enrol in teaching degrees. Degree offers are up 30 per cent in New South Wales, which is more than anywhere else in the Commonwealth of Australia. Once they get in, we need to make sure that they are mentored by our wonderful expert teachers, who are now valued in the classroom. Once they stay, we need to give them a pathway of advancement so that they can see that there is a career of choice in public education and that they can make it their life's work, and so that they, in turn, can encourage their own students to enrol in teaching degrees. We absolutely need them in society. The health Minister was talking about health care and education. As a government, we need to deliver them for the future. I am proud that we are doing that for our expert teachers.

REGIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:37): My question is directed to the Premier. Lismore Base Hospital's emergency department statistics are in freefall under the Premier's Government. Fewer than half of the patients start their treatment on time and only half leave within four hours. Those statistics are well below the State average. Will the Premier commit to increasing the regional health budget so communities like Lismore can expect equitable health care?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:38): The regional health budget, like the NSW Health budget in general, has risen under Labor.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Less than inflation.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: No, that is wrong. I don't know who is telling you that, mate. I know that you get fed your lines but you're wrong. It's not true.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: It's in your budget papers.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: You don't understand what you're talking about.

The SPEAKER: The Premier and the member for Coffs Harbour will come to order. That is not how we transact in this Chamber.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: If you do some basic mathematics in inflation versus the budget result, the spend on the health system has increased in real terms. That is accounting for inflation.

Mr Dugald Saunders: It's gone backwards in real terms.

The SPEAKER: Members will cease interjecting and come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am honestly baffled by it. Are you talking about health inflation or are you talking about actual inflation?

The SPEAKER: The Premier will direct his comments through the Chair.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: They don't understand.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That is probably the answer. Introducing new concepts rapidly is not their strong suit. According to the latest Bureau of Health Information data, New South Wales emergency departments saw 74 per cent of patients inside benchmark times. We would like that number to be higher, but let's put that in perspective. The next best after Western Australia is 57 per cent. That is the best number in Australia, and we want to do better than that.

We are investing in the health system. We are not sacking COVID nurses. We are not privatising public hospitals. We are adding to the number of beds, both in Western Sydney and regional New South Wales. We are recruiting 500 paramedics for regional communities so that there is no bed block at Coffs Harbour and Lismore and Byron Bay hospitals. We are building the Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla hospitals. Eurobodalla hospital will be at level four on day one. Compare any of those indices, any of those statistics, any of those facts, any of those investments against the previous Government—

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

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

Mr Gurmesh Singh: The question was specifically about Lismore, where there has been a 10 per cent drop in these statistics under this Government. It is not about all those other hospitals; we are talking about Lismore hospital.

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The Premier is answering the question directly.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Compare it with a decade of broken promises under those opposite. I know the member's best mate, the member for Kellyville, is in the Chamber.

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Who could forget his immortal lines about Rouse Hill Hospital? The member for Kellyville said, "Rouse Hill will get a hospital if we're re-elected, I swear to God." That was in 2015.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order. I call the member for Coogee. She will be heard in silence.

ANTISEMITISM LEGISLATION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (11:41): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General update the House on the community reaction to the New South Wales Labor Government's hate speech laws?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:41): I thank the member for Coogee for her question and her interest in this subject. I stood in this place yesterday and spoke about the importance of the laws we passed through Parliament in the last sitting period. I spoke about my motivations for introducing the laws and how the caravan incident was completely and utterly irrelevant to the actions of the Government in introducing those three bills. However, there is still the possibility of an inquiry in the other place, which is driven by political motives.

The community has every right to be concerned about what the hell is going on in this Parliament in relation to this most important issue. Context matters. Yesterday I was pleased to see the Leader of the Opposition put this issue strongly in context—or so I thought. It was reported in *The Australian* that the Leader of the Opposition said he:

... would not support bids to repeal the laws, saying the Jewish community faced "unprecedented anti-Semitism".

"(The laws) were passed in the middle of a crisis and there is still an anti-Semitism crisis."

There is more antisemitism in New South Wales than we have ever seen before. The laws were passed in the middle of a crisis; therefore, they deserved to be supported. We are still in the middle of a crisis of antisemitism, the likes of which we have never seen before. That is the context given by the Leader of the Opposition. I was bewildered to hear him go on and say:

Mr Speakman said he would only endorse an inquiry limited to the Dural incident, to prevent "a wider-ranging trawl or gaslighting by the Greens".

How the hell is the community—particularly the Jewish community—supposed to make sense of those positions? I know that Clinton Maynard was concerned because yesterday he asked the Leader of the Opposition how these

things come about in the upper House. "Do you sit down with Sue Higginson, for instance, who was on my show yesterday, from The Greens, to develop the plan?"

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Attorney General will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

Mr Mark Speakman: I refer to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was about the community reaction to hate speech laws. The question was not about whether or not there should be an inquiry into whether the Premier and the police Minister had misled their colleagues and the general public.

The SPEAKER: The context of the question was broad. The Attorney General is answering the question directly.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: When Clinton Maynard asked, "Do you sit down with Sue Higginson from The Greens to develop the plan?" The Leader of the Opposition said:

Well, I have had absolutely no communication with Sue Higginson or any Green on this. I don't believe any of my colleagues in the upper house have either ... I certainly had no communication with her directly or indirectly.

Weak, weak. But—

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Alister Henskens: My point of order relates to Standing Order 73. If the member wants to make a reflection upon the Leader of the Opposition, he should do it by way of substantive motion. This is completely out of order.

The SPEAKER: That was one of the most modest attacks I have seen in this Chamber. I do not uphold the point of order.

[An Opposition member interjected.]

It is for me to adjudicate on the matter. I have made my ruling. Members will not argue with the Chair. The Attorney General has the call.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Mr Speakman said he had no contact with The Greens, but yesterday Sue Higginson appeared on *Sky News*. *[Extension of time]*

She was asked the question, "Did you work with the New South Wales Coalition directly to agree to terms of reference that were acceptable to both The Greens and the Coalition?" Ms Higginson said, "Yeah, in no uncertain terms. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely, that's what we do. And at the moment it appears we have got an agreement to look into the way these rules were made." In order to allay the confusion, the commentator said, "So, it was a staff member for Damien Tudehope's office who met with your staff member and negotiated the terms of reference. Is that right?" She said—

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the point of order?

Ms Robyn Preston: It is under Standing Order 75, no member shall be referred to by name. The Attorney General called him Damien Tudehope.

The SPEAKER: The Attorney General will consider himself admonished. The Attorney General has the call.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: The commentator asked, "So, it was a staff member for Tudehope's office you dealt with?" Ms Higginson said, "Yes, discussions happen. Documents get sent around, words get changed on those documents. As far as I'm concerned, it's the Coalition that I was dealing with." The Leader of the Opposition in this place does not know what is happening in the other place. The real Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Damien Tudehope, is keeping the Leader of the Opposition in the dark.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Miranda will be heard in silence.

Ms Eleni Petinos: It goes to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. Surely we are now well beyond leave in discussing the bill that was debated in this place. We are now discussing other members of Parliament and their staff. We are well beyond direct relevance at this point.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Attorney General is in order. The context of the question was broad.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I am not sure what bill we are discussing. However, in the midst of an unprecedented crisis of antisemitism in New South Wales, the Leader of the Opposition's move is to lie down in bed with The Greens and two other upper House members who have voted against these laws and are now fighting a rearguard action. I said it yesterday, and I will say it again: The weakest thing you can ever do as a parliamentary leader in this place is to play politics with community safety and, in the midst of an antisemitism crisis, to lie down in bed with people who oppose these rules. You stand condemned, my friend.

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

ELECTIVE SURGERY

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (11:48): My question is directed to the Premier. The number of patients on the Liverpool Hospital elective surgery waiting list has increased by 62.7 per cent. Will the Premier apologise to residents in the Holsworthy, Liverpool and Leppington electorates who are waiting longer for elective surgeries because of his Government's real cuts to health spending?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:49): The Opposition keeps saying that there has been a real cut in health spending. I hope members of this Parliament understand that is simply not true.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The amount of money that is going into the New South Wales health budget is increasing.

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. All members will come to order. I will hear the point of order from the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Mark Speakman: It is under Standing Order 74. The Premier is being quarrelsome. The Government's own budget papers show, in black and white, a 1.5 per cent increase. That is less than inflation. The Premier keeps quarrelling with the questioner.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. There is no point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I make the point that, as I said in the very first answer, under the Coalition 17,000 people were waiting longer than clinically recommended for elective surgery.

Ms Kellie Sloane: That was COVID, and it was our money that reduced it. It ran out, Premier.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Right! The member for Vaucluse is taking credit. It was "our money". There you go.

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for Vaucluse to remove herself from the Chamber until the conclusion of the Premier's answer.

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

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I thought it was the hardworking nurses, doctors, orderlies and paramedics, but it was all the member for Vaucluse. She was not even in Parliament, mind you. What the member for Holsworthy did not disclose to the House is that the latest Bureau of Health Information data, released today, shows that the Liverpool Hospital emergency department saw a 7.2 per cent improvement in ambulance ramping.

Mrs Tina Ayyad: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Minister for Health has just pointed out that Liverpool emergency department—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Premier will resume his seat while I hear the point of order from the member for Holsworthy.

Mrs Tina Ayyad: It is about direct relevance.

The SPEAKER: The Premier has been directly relevant.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order. I will hear from the Leader of the House on a point of order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Under Standing Order 131 (9), members cannot use points of order specifically for the purposes of interfering. The question was about Liverpool Hospital. The Premier was clearly answering it directly, but there have been a number of points of order. The recent one from the Leader of the Opposition came after the Premier had uttered about two words. Opposition members cannot continue to take points of order that deliberately interfere with the answering of the question.

Mr Alister Henskens: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the House for his counsel. I shall now take counsel from the Opposition on the point of order.

Mr Alister Henskens: The points of order have not been interfering at all. There have been two points of order. The question is about elective surgery waiting lists, and the Premier has not addressed that issue.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Wahroonga for his contribution. I have ruled that the Premier was directly relevant. His answer is in order, and he will proceed.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Listen to these statistics: Over the last quarter, the percentage of individuals starting treatment on time at Liverpool health district's emergency department is 66.1 per cent, which is a 5 per cent improvement. The number of people transferred from an ambulance to the emergency department by paramedics inside 30 minutes is at 74.1 per cent, an improvement of 7.2 per cent.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That is Liverpool Hospital. The Opposition wants to get specific about Liverpool Hospital.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. I will hear the point of order from the member for Coffs Harbour.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: The words "ambulance" and "emergency department" do not appear in the question. The question is specifically about elective surgery.

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

Mr Gurmesh Singh: For what reason?

The SPEAKER: I do not have to give a reason. The member for Coffs Harbour can be gone for the day if he wishes. He will not argue with me about why he is being removed.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Coffs Harbour left the Chamber at 11:53.]

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Gurmesh, you are going to have to do better than that if you are going to knock off Dugald, mate. That is not good enough at all.

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The member for Hawkesbury can leave the Chamber also if she wishes. The member does not want to press me right now.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am happy to speak about Liverpool Hospital. The question was about overdue waitlists—those waiting longer than clinically recommended.

Ms Robyn Preston: No, it wasn't.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Yes, it was.

The SPEAKER: All members will come to order and allow the Premier to answer the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We are baffling those opposite with basic facts. I report to the House that 638 people were waiting longer than clinically recommended in December 2024. When the member for Holsworthy ran for election under the previous Coalition Government, the number was 934. We try to get the information in real time, but it goes to demonstrate that there has been a reduction in the number of people waiting longer than clinically recommended, because of investments by this Government. We are not introducing a wages cap, we are not going to chase GPs for payroll tax and we will not privatise government hospitals.

YOUTH CRIME

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (11:55): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is working to address youth crime?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:55): I thank the member for South Coast for her question. She is a tireless advocate for her area. In fact, when I first became the Minister, she invited me to her electorate and we met with the police and had a great time. This Government knows that there are grave concerns about crime in our communities right across the State. I acknowledge that, and I acknowledge any victims of crime because we know how shocking it can be. Recently we were looking back at some of the history of these issues, and I found a valuable contribution from the member for Dubbo. Speaking on 2GB, he said, "We are all too familiar with the pattern: Car stolen from Dubbo, driven all the way to Newcastle, and the offenders posting videos of themselves driving at up to 220 kilometres an hour." "Appalling," he went on to say.

But on that occasion, surprisingly, he did not seem to want to blame the police for their efforts. Perhaps it was because he was in defence of his old mate from Bathurst, who was police Minister at the time. When might that have been? It was in April 2022. That is when he told this very dramatic story. Those were the days. Now, of course, we see The Nationals come into the House and blame everything on our poor, hardworking police. Over the past two years I have had the wonderful opportunity to travel to many regional communities, speaking to local MPs, councillors, mayors, community groups and, most importantly, local police. I talk to them about what they are doing on the ground, because they are the people who give you the best information. They tell me that they are doing everything possible. They are disrupting, they are targeting and they are investigating all crimes.

I am pleased to inform the House today that the NSW Police Force is launching a new operation to address violence by young offenders, especially in regional New South Wales. Operation Soteria will focus on recidivists and ringleaders, and there will also be a strong focus on diverting young offenders from criminal behaviour. Up to 80 dedicated police will target aggravated break, enter and steal offences; stealing motor vehicles; and post and boast offences, where kids use social media to gain notoriety by sharing their crimes online. The initial phase will run for three months from today, and will focus on regional hotspots such as Moree, Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange, Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Taree and Newcastle. [*Extension of time*]

Through high-visibility policing and regular PolAir patrols, officers will target several hundred repeat offenders believed to be responsible for 90 per cent of the youth crime across regional New South Wales. That is targeted policing. The best thing our police do is target criminals. Operation Soteria is just the latest strategy that our police are deploying to tackle crime and reduce fear in the community. It is also about sending a clear message to the people committing these crimes that the NSW Police Force has them in its sights. Everybody has the right to feel safe in their own community. Everybody has the right to feel safe in their own home. That is why last year the Government acted decisively to crack down on kids egging each other on by posting and boasting about their crimes online.

Since the new post and boast legislation came into effect 12 months ago, 53 individuals have been charged, and 27 of them were under the age of 16. Police are also working hard to divert young people away from crime. Under Operation Soteria, officers will aim to identify young offenders and refer them into programs such as Youth Action Meetings. That is where multiple agencies come together and wrap around, helping those kids most at risk and removing them from the justice system. I reiterate that police are doing everything they can to keep our communities safe across New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government backs them 110 per cent. I say this to those opposite: Start backing them and stop bagging them.

TIMBER INDUSTRY AND GREAT KOALA NATIONAL PARK

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (12:00): My question is directed to the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast. In December, Forestry Corporation sent a letter stating that it would not be able to meet timber delivery targets this financial year due to the establishment of 106 koala hubs as part of the Great Koala National Park. Based on that, did the Minister mislead the House yesterday when she said that lower timber supply is not a result of any Government decisions? Come on, Janelle. It directly caused—

Mr Edmond Atalla: Point of order—

Mr MICHAEL KEMP: Come on, Minister. It directly caused—

The SPEAKER: The member for Oxley will resume his seat. I will hear the point of order from the member for Mount Druitt.

Mr Edmond Atalla: The member for Oxley should withdraw that remark and refer to the Minister by her correct title.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The member for Oxley will—

Mr MICHAEL KEMP: I will rephrase it.

The SPEAKER: And acknowledge that the comment was inappropriate.

Mr MICHAEL KEMP: I acknowledge that it was inappropriate. Come on, Minister. It directly caused 38 job losses on the North Coast this week.

Mr Michael Daley: Point of order: Under the standing orders, questions must seek information. The question finished off with some strange exhortation to the Minister to do something esoteric. I ask that the member for Oxley withdraw the question or redraft it so that it complies with the standing orders.

The SPEAKER: The member for Oxley will rephrase his question so as not to offend against the standing orders. I feel that the offence is marginal, but the question could be put differently.

Mr MICHAEL KEMP: In December, Forestry Corporation sent a letter stating that it would not be able to meet timber delivery targets this financial year due to the establishment of 106 koala hubs as part of the Great Koala National Park. Based on that, did the Minister mislead the House yesterday when she said that lower timber supply is not a result of any Government decisions?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (12:02): In answer to the question, no. I reiterate some of the points that I made yesterday. I started off by saying that the closure of the timber mill in Koolkhan is disappointing, particularly to the member for Clarence and to the North Coast. I said that I would meet with representatives. I will also meet with Timber NSW, which is headed up by Andrew Hurford. Hurford Timbers is in my electorate, so I am well aware of what is going on. I also know that Pentarch, formally known as Boral, had a particular contract awarded under the former Government. There is a long history to this and I know some of it. The issue is that the mill has been receiving less timber than its contracted supply. It is not as a result of any decision—

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister will continue.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN: It is not as a result of any decision regarding the Great Koala National Park, which has not been decided yet, and there is a process for that. Timber NSW, the unions and other stakeholders are involved in that process. I have had meetings on it. Senior members have met with Hurford representatives and talked to them. The member asks me whether I am misleading the House—really? Seriously? Get real.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Minister has concluded her answer.

PARKLEA CORRECTIONAL CENTRE

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (12:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Corrections. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's decision to bring Parklea Correctional Centre back into public hands?

The SPEAKER: I place the member for Davidson on two calls to order.

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) (12:05): I thank the member for Riverstone for his question and his keen interest in Parklea Correctional Centre, which sits in the heart of his electorate. I am very pleased to inform the House that the Minns Labor Government will bring Parklea Correctional Centre back into public hands in October 2026. It is one of the largest de-privatisation moves in New South Wales history. The decision is a clear demonstration that this Government is delivering on its commitment to publicly owned assets and to providing secure jobs and long-term career opportunities for working people in Western Sydney.

The return of Parklea Correctional Centre to the public sector will provide 400 secure, well-paid jobs for workers in Western Sydney. The 1,576-bed facility is Sydney's second largest remand centre and has been managed by MTC Australia since 2018, with its existing contract expiring in March 2026. In order to allow sufficient time for the transition to occur in October next year, the contract will be extended by six months.

Corrective Services, along with Justice Health and my colleague the Minister for Health, will work with MTC, current employees, the Public Service Association and the local community towards that important transition. I assure the House that a transition team will also be established to provide timely updates and additional support to current staff throughout the transition period. I make it very clear that frontline staff who work at Parklea today will be offered a job at Parklea once the transition happens to Corrective Services NSW.

I also point out that unlike private sector management, the Corrective Services operating model is not based on a profit motive; it is driven by the public interest in keeping our community safe. A critical component of community safety is reducing reoffending through rehabilitation and education programs, as well as the safe reintegration of offenders back into the community. A public corrective services system with community safety at its heart, rather than profit, is the best way to deliver on those objectives. The transition to Corrective Services will also provide opportunities for officers to progress their careers via promotions and transfers within the wider Corrective Services network, as well as other opportunities across the New South Wales government. *[Extension of time]*

I thank the member for seeking an extension of time. I am also very pleased to remind the House that the Parklea Correctional Centre will become the second New South Wales prison to return to public ownership under this Labor Government after Corrective Services also took over Junee, which will come online on 1 April 2025 following a similar 16-month transition. I thank Corrective Services for its hard work on the plan to bring Junee Correctional Centre back into public ownership because we now have a blueprint for success, which we will follow closely to ensure the smooth transition of Parklea back into public ownership.

Since announcing in November 2023 that Junee Correctional Centre would come back into public hands, the Minns Labor Government has ensured that the majority of current Junee staff who want to remain working at the prison will be offered roles once it comes back to Corrective Services. The officers at Junee have shown commendable dedication to their work over the years. I look forward to them joining the New South Wales Corrective Services system, with the shared goals of reducing reoffending and improving rehabilitation. The Government is also looking forward to maintaining valuable relationships with local community partners, including Junee Shire Council.

At the last election Labor told the voters of New South Wales that it opposes privatisation. The Minns Government was then elected with a clear mandate to ensure publicly owned assets remain in public hands. Returning Junee and Parklea to the public sector is a clear response to that mandate. By bringing both of those centres back into public hands, the Government is securing hundreds of jobs for the people of regional New South Wales and Western Sydney, while delivering better value for taxpayers, improving outcomes for workers and inmates, and, most importantly, keeping our community safe.

HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:10): My question is directed to the Attorney General. Today I gave notice of a bill for a human rights Act for New South Wales, with a view to consulting with the community and parliamentary colleagues over coming months. Will the Attorney General update the House on any efforts the Government has made or is planning in relation to establishing a human rights Act for New South Wales?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:11): I thank the member for Newtown for her question and acknowledge her interest in this matter. I think I was asked a question about this a couple of budget estimates ago, but I will repeat what I have said publicly. The Government is always open to considering the issue and working constructively to determine whether this proposal is a course of action that is in the best interests of the people of New South Wales. I look forward to seeing the member for Newtown's bill.

The development of a human rights Act, a charter of human rights or a bill of rights is a complex undertaking that has not been a priority for this Government to date. It is not because of any principled objection to the promotion and protection of human rights or codifying them with any such instruments. Rather, the legislation and the process required to codify those rights must be carefully designed to ensure that, firstly, they are effective; secondly, they do not hinder the Government from responding to the immediate needs of the community; and, thirdly, they do not result in arduous bureaucratic processes that pull vital and important public resources away from the ventures that advance the interests of the people of New South Wales. I must consider whether the codification of human rights will enhance protections in real terms, given the stringent framework of common and statute law that already exists in New South Wales, with many Acts containing built-in protections.

A human rights Act is worth considering as a matter of principle, but there are complexities that need to be worked through. Across jurisdictions around the world, including several in Australia, different statutory models have been adopted to protect human rights. Any potential model must be fit for purpose for New South Wales. We would not want to simply lift something from another State. Similar Acts in place in Victoria, the

Australian Capital Territory and Queensland all adopt different mechanisms and have slightly different ways of working. One of the issues we would need to consider is how the Act would apply and intersect with existing legislation in New South Wales.

The Government is open to looking at potential ways to strengthen human rights. A human rights Act, bill of rights or the like, may be one of the ways of achieving that. But, as I said, the Government must ensure that any policy settings adopted in New South Wales are appropriate for our jurisdiction and allow the Government, keeping in mind the primacy of Parliament, to best serve the people of this State. I say again to the member for Newtown that I look forward to seeing her bill, on which the Government will engage in good faith when it sees the details.

SPORTS TICKETING

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:14): My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport. Will the Minister update the House on the introduction of integrated ticketing for all NRL and A-League matches at CommBank Stadium in 2025, making it easier for fans to support their teams?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism) (12:14): I thank the outstanding and hardworking member for Parramatta. She is no doubt a disappointed Eels fan, given their slow start to the season. The member is right that we have made it easier and cheaper for fans to get out of the house and to the stadium to support their team. For too long sports fans in the west have had to do the hard yards, while those in the east have had it easy. Fans in the east were trusted with full-strength beer, but the member for Riverstone and his mates in the west were denied the same choice. This Government changed that, and the six-month trial is going well.

Sports fans in the east also enjoy free public transport to matches at Allianz Stadium and the Sydney Cricket Ground, but the same right has not been afforded to fans of the A-League and the NRL when they want to attend CommBank Stadium. This Government has changed that as well. Together with my good friend Minister Graham, formally known as "Disco John"—and, since he became transport Minister, he is now known as "Conductor John"—we announced that sports fans will be able to use their integrated ticket to travel for free on public transport to all NRL and A-League matches held at CommBank Stadium in 2025, making it easier for fans to get out and support their teams.

In the first week sports fans absolutely loved it. CommBank Stadium hosted three matches in three days this weekend, with Penrith Panthers taking on Sydney Roosters on Friday night, followed by Western Sydney Wanderers against Melbourne Victory on Saturday night and Parramatta Eels against Wests Tigers on Sunday afternoon. The over 40,000 sports fans who attended those matches were able to jump on the new Parramatta Light Rail and access trains, local bus services and ferries to Parramatta wharf free of charge. There is now no need for fans to tap on and off. They simply need to show their match day pass and they can enjoy travel to and from the game stress free. This is a fantastic result for sports fans. [*Extension of time*]

This is how the world should be. Fans should be able to commute without stress. The Leader of the Opposition should not have to worry if the front bench, as reported in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, are doing the numbers to overthrow him. The member for Lane Cove should not be wrought with stress when he comes into work about whether he will be attributed as the Liberals source or the senior Coalition source. The member for Ryde should not have to make the difficult decision between Purina and Whiskas every day—both are very nutritious. And speaking of the by-election, the member for Dubbo should not have to worry about people coming for his job after he flubbed the candidate election. He should be able to enjoy the view from the RFS plane. Isn't that right, Dugald? It does not matter if you are a member of the Coalition or a sports fan wanting to see the Eels lose, everyone who has a ticket to CommBank Stadium now gets a free ride on our fantastic public transport network.

Committees

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

Inquiry

Mr JASON LI: As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Public Accounts Committee has received a referral from the Minister for Health to conduct an inquiry into the safety and quality of health services provided by Northern Beaches Hospital, the full details of which are available on the Committee's home page.

*Petitions***PETITIONS RECEIVED**

The SPEAKER: I announce that the following paper petitions signed by more than 10,000 persons have been lodged for presentation:

Wee Waa Health Service

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to restore onsite doctor access and 24-hour operation at Wee Waa Hospital, received from **Mr Roy Butler**.

Bathurst Regional Council Cemeteries

Petition opposing the closure of rural cemeteries in the Bathurst area, received from **Mr Paul Toole**.

The SPEAKER: I set down discussion on the petitions as an order of the day for a future day.

RESPONSES TO PETITIONS

The CLERK: I announce that the following Minister has lodged a response to a paper petition signed by 500 or more persons:

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—South West Rail Link Infrastructure—lodged 11 February 2025 (Mr Nathan Hagarty)

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

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—Road Safety—lodged 11 February 2025 (Mr Michael Regan)

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison—Sydney Harbour Pollution—lodged 11 February 2025 (Ms Kobi Shetty)

The Hon. Prue Car—Lawson Public School—lodged 11 February 2025 (Ms Trish Doyle)

The Hon. David Harris—Greyhound Racing Industry—lodged 11 February 2025 (Ms Kobi Shetty)

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

The SPEAKER: I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 general business order of the day (for bills) Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Affordable Housing Statutory Condition) Bill 2024 will lapse tomorrow.

*Bills***BAIL AMENDMENT (EXTENSION OF LIMITATION ON BAIL IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES)
BILL 2025****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:21): As I was saying, the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025 is in no way a bandaid over a bullet wound. Section 22C will remain a time-limited and targeted test. Youth crime is a highly complex and important problem with serious impacts for young people and the community as a whole. In order to combat it, we need strong and effective long-term policy action. The extension of the temporary legislative measure gives the broader long-term policy plans time to make a significant and lasting impact on those who need it most. The extension will allow for youth support programs in regional New South Wales to be wholly and effectively implemented so that their impact can be felt where it is most needed.

Last year \$900,000 was allocated to additional after-hours activities for the youth in Moree. These include sports and arts activities, and mental health peer support programs. Youth Justice NSW has boosted resources for caseworkers in Moree so that they can more effectively supervise young people on bail. In February this year the New South Wales Government announced \$2 million of funding over the next four years so that Moree can better address youth crime and strengthen community safety. Bourke and Kempsey, in addition to Moree, have also received place-based funding to invest in the Stronger Places, Stronger People program, which supports community-led, place-based responses to local issues.

The funding for the Stronger Places, Stronger People program will be used to fund backbone teams to facilitate local planning, inclusive engagement, measurement and evaluation, joint decision-making, governance, and local action. This will result in better outcomes for the youth in these areas of regional New South Wales. The extension of section 22C of the Bail Act until April 2028 will provide more time for the broader diversionary and community-based initiatives to be implemented effectively and will lead to long-term, positive outcomes for communities and their youth across New South Wales. Over time, the extension of the temporary legislation will also allow for a much longer and more comprehensive analysis of the provision. The additional analysis will be paramount in informing future action taken by the Minns Labor Government to reduce youth offending.

The Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025 is a vital step towards ensuring that communities in New South Wales have peace of mind and are protected from youth crime. By extending the legislative measure in section 22C of the Bail Act, the Government is making known its commitment to tackle this ongoing problem of youth crime. In commending the bill to the House, I acknowledge all government departments that have contributed to this important work, including NSW Health, the Department of Education, Youth Justice NSW, the NSW Police Force and the PCYC. I acknowledge the contributing NGOs and community organisations for their commitment to addressing youth crime and youth welfare. I also acknowledge the Attorney General and his staff for their hard work on this difficult issue. Their compassion, empathy and balanced point of view has ensured that youth and community are front and centre in this equation. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (12:25): I speak in debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I will not beat around the bush on this matter. It is no secret that crime in this State, especially in regional New South Wales, is a real problem. It is no secret that law and order has become out of control under the New South Wales Labor Government. We are now at crisis point, and this bill will not suffice. I am very pleased that the shadow Attorney General has foreshadowed sensible amendments. If this Parliament is serious about addressing crime across New South Wales, members will see that the amendments will put victim's rights first. They will provide safe environments that will allow community members to walk down their streets and enjoy the places where they live.

Let me set the scene. In the first year of the Labor Government, the 2023 statistics from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research reveal that 9,104 children fronted courts across the State, with 4,319 granted bail—the highest number in the past decade. A further 3,538 had their bail "dispensed with" after their first appearance in court. A massive 2,324 children breached conditions while on bail, and 1,931 were then once again allowed to roam free in the community. Communities are not just scared; they are actually terrified. When reoffending occurs, it usually happens less than 48 hours after a young person has been at court and released on bail.

On the North Coast frustrated residents are threatening to patrol streets and make citizen's arrests due to rising youth crime so they can attempt to prevent an unprecedented amount of car thefts and knife-related incidents. In the west of the State, locals say the youth crime crisis is "at its worst ever" and are pushing for serious change to stop the kids responsible. Even they think these bail laws are failing. I know Labor has a preference for Western Sydney, so let us not forget that area. A Kingswood pizza shop owner has said, "It's a daunting task just to come to work after an alleged dispute with a gang of youths over a can of Coke." The florist next door to him now shuts her doors and refuses to stay in her store after dark. Store windows are constantly smashed by young troublemakers. Other locals have said that they feel unsafe and that they are in constant fear that violent juveniles would attack them on the job. They are scared and do not want to work anymore.

Under the changes made to the Bail Act by the New South Wales Labor Government, magistrates need to have a high degree of confidence that a youth will not reoffend in order to grant them bail. Despite this, magistrates are still consistently releasing repeat offenders on bail. Between April and September last year, 123 youths were charged under section 22C, and only 97 of them were refused bail. The victims of these young offenders are telling members of Parliament, the cops responding to their incidents and the magistrates they appear before in court that young offenders repeatedly being given bail is a real problem with the system. How can we justify to a victim why she was attacked when the boy allegedly involved in the attack was on bail and had 40 prior offences on his record? It is just crazy.

Those facts matter. Victims of crime are horrified to know that the people given bail are the ones who are breaking into their homes, stealing their cars and terrifying their communities. Those offenders are continually let out on bail, and frustrated communities can see that the laws of this State are not working. It has got to the point where New South Wales police officers are so fed up with the situation that they are speaking out. One officer made it clear that these are not kids, but "hardened criminals who know what they're doing". He stated:

Kids are taught from a very young age the way of the streets. For them, it's all they know and all they have.

When you work those streets and get to know these kids, it's heartbreaking to know that the path they are on is the only path they have and know. Older kids recruit them, and after not too long, they are major players in the cycle of youth crime tearing our communities apart.

Yes it's sad ... but there comes a point where they have a choice. They become old enough to know what's right and wrong.

That is a statement from a New South Wales police officer. We are not talking about an 11-year-old kid who stole a packet of chewing gum. We are talking about organised crime and hardened criminals who are covering their faces and breaking into houses with their mates to bash victims and steal cars.

Instead of going to school and playing sport, these kids are being recruited by criminal gangs. They are planning what car and what house they will break into tonight. Anyone in their right mind knows that these actions are wrong, regardless of the person's age. If you break into a home, assault a person or steal a car then you should be off the streets. Full stop. It is as simple as that. I ask any member who thinks that is not reasonable to come to this House to debate the matter and tell me why they think those actions are right. They are certainly wrong. The Opposition and the shadow Attorney General seek to amend the bill with a number of changes, including extending the proposed subsection until 1 October 2026. This will mean that youth crime will remain on the Government's agenda. It will also ensure that the legislation will be reviewed appropriately.

The Government's plan is clearly to kick the issue down the road. We should be looking at this legislation year after year so we can adjust it and make changes. We need to look at statistics and make sure it is working in communities. By coming back on 1 October 2026, we can ensure that it is being assessed appropriately. The "post-and-boast" laws are clearly ineffective. Today the Minister said that 53 people have been charged under post-and-boast laws. That is nothing to hang your hat on over a 12-month period. Facebook pages are still being established showing people in communities breaking into homes. They are filming people while they are asleep in their bed. They are filming themselves stealing cars and while they are driving at speeds of 160 kilometres per hour.

This week we finally heard about one of the first teens to be sentenced for post-and-boast crimes. The teen claimed in court that the cool thing to do with his friends is to commit crimes and boast about it on social media. I do not know about other members, but the cool things to do when I was 16 was to go to school, play sport and hang out with my friends. If a young thug is granted bail, then the following measures should be implemented: a curfew from 8.00 p.m. to 6.00 a.m.; electronic monitoring; and, if bail is breached, it is immediately revoked and cannot be granted again.

Enough is enough. It is time for real action to stamp out youth crime in New South Wales before we have a generation of thugs that rule our State. Communities are scared, and locals are taking matters into their own hands. The lack of action from the New South Wales Labor Government is a disgrace. This legislation should be amended and strengthened so that the safety of our residents is put front and centre. The amendments will ensure that victims of crime have their voices heard when it comes to dealing with crime in New South Wales.

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:36): I speak in support of the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I thank the Premier, the Attorney General and the Department of Communities and Justice for all the work they have done to prepare the bill. It is worth noting that both the Attorney General and the Premier have been heavily involved in dealing with the increasing amount of youth crime throughout New South Wales and not just in Moree. We have inherited this problem after 10 years of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government that failed to do anything. The Nationals in particular did nothing in country areas, and country people know that. It is why the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party picked up so many electorates. It is why so many Independents, including the member for Orange, hold their electorate so strongly. The people of rural New South Wales know that The Nationals failed them. In the by-election last weekend, country people booted The Nationals for the Liberals, which really says something.

I turn now to the bill. Last year the Government listened to calls for action on youth crime. We acted by implementing firm and effective measures. We responded to concerns that young people were committing motor vehicle theft and break and enter offences, including young people who were on bail for those offences. We introduced a multifaceted response to combat youth crime, including legislative reform and therapeutic and community-based initiatives. We intend to continue those measures to ensure that offenders are punished while providing support to deter reoffending and to address the root causes of youth crime in rural New South Wales.

The bill bolsters our response to concerning crime rates in regional New South Wales. It addresses the high risk of serious and repeat offences by young people. The bill seeks to amend the Bail Act 2013 by extending the temporary additional bail test for young people. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data shows that New South Wales regions experienced higher rates of crime than metropolitan areas in 2022-23. It highlighted an increase in offending by young people under the age of 18 in motor vehicle or break and enter related offences. Moree notably recorded the highest rate of motor vehicle theft in New South Wales and the second highest rate

of break and enter offences. While we have seen a recent change to these numbers, it has not been significant enough to signify that the issue has been solved. A key concern echoing across the country is that young offenders are committing serious offences whilst on bail. New South Wales police have been able to identify, arrest and put young offenders before the court. However, following their court appearances, these offenders are put back into the community on bail, and often the crime continues and they reoffend.

Across regional New South Wales, in places like Moree, Bourke and Kempsey, our communities are reeling from the impacts of youth crime. In Moree on 7 February this year, an 80-year-old woman woke to find three young people in her house, wearing masks and demanding her purse. As they fled the scene, they stole her motor vehicle. On the same night, a couple staying at a motel in Moree had their door kicked down. They awoke to find two persons in the room. A confrontation occurred, with offenders stealing their Toyota LandCruiser. In Moree, again, a local caravan park owner recorded three break and enters just last month, one resulting in a 63-year-old woman having her arm broken. On 28 January the McNamara family was devastated when their son and brother, Daniel, was killed in a hit-and-run. Daniel had been riding his motorbike in Gunnedah when a ute hit him from behind. The ute was being driven by a 14-year-old offender fleeing from New South Wales police.

In the past year, the NSW Police Force has undertaken more than 30 surge operations in Moree alone, with Operation Regional Mongoose identifying some 255 offenders, including 75 ringleaders across the western region. This is a 32 per cent increase on the figures in 2023. New South Wales police are working hard to investigate and apprehend individuals responsible for such heinous acts. It is crucial that once they do, these young offenders are not released back into our communities to reoffend. Last year, to address this concern, we introduced section 22C to the Bail Act. This legislative reform introduced a temporary additional bail test, with a higher threshold for young people. Section 22C ensures that, for young people alleged to have repeatedly engaged in break and enter or motor vehicle theft offences, bail should be refused unless the bail authority has a "high degree of confidence" that they will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail.

This test was intended to be a circuit breaker. It provided a firm and immediate response to combat offending whilst community-based programs were being implemented. The additional bail test in 22C was initially intended to sunset 12 months after commencement, on 4 April 2025. However, as this end date approaches, it is evident that the additional bail test is still needed to keep our community safe and to further assist young offenders to rehabilitate and not continue their path towards further crimes. The additional bail test is working. Since being implemented, 90 per cent of young people covered by the laws have been placed on remand, rather than released on bail. By eliminating the opportunity for reoffending, the additional bail test is working. As such, this bill seeks to continue its operation as we continue to roll out rehabilitation programs and additional care services to assist young offenders to break this cycle of criminal behaviour.

I now address amendments in the bill. I will be brief, as it is a very straightforward bill. Schedule 1 replaces the current sunset provisions in section 22C (5) with a new provision specifying that section 22C will be repealed at the beginning of 4 April 2028. The decision to extend the additional bail test has not been considered lightly. As a government, we recognise the very real impact this has at both an individual and a systemic level. We hoped, initially, that 12 months of operation would have been sufficient to address community concerns and disrupt the cycle of recidivism but, unfortunately, more time is required. To ensure that the additional bail test continues appropriately, we have maintained relevant safeguards. Section 22C remains a time-limited and specifically targeted test. The two-step bail assessment for child offenders under section 22C requires a bail authority to apply the unacceptable risk test first. The bail authority may only consider the additional bail test after determining if there is an unacceptable risk, and whether any bail conditions could reasonably address the risk of a further offence being committed. The section 22C test remains limited for use in specific circumstances: a serious break and enter, or a motor theft offence.

The extension of the additional bail test provision aims to keep the community safe, while efforts continue across government and community agencies to reduce youth crime and assist young offenders to break the cycle of criminality in which they are involved. As a government, we recognise there is no single answer to solving youth crime. The additional bail test is just one part of a multifaceted approach to address youth crime in New South Wales. We know that the best outcome for young people is to avoid engagement with the criminal justice system, and we are committed to addressing the causes of youth crime at their core and working with communities to implement long-term local solutions to deter children and teenagers from these pathways. We will continue working to deliver community-based initiatives to address offending behaviour, with the ultimate aim of reducing youth crime and minimising long-term contact with the criminal justice system. [*Extension of time*]

As the deputy chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety, I have visited many communities over the past few months and have seen these efforts firsthand. We visited a number of places in New South Wales to see firsthand the youth crime problem and to talk to local police, the local PCYC, Indigenous leaders, community leaders, and councillors and mayors. Last year the Minns Labor Government announced a

\$26.2 million community safety package, including an expansion of New South Wales police-run Youth Action Meetings, the expansion of the Youth Justice NSW Safe Aboriginal Youth patrol program, and place-based funding for Moree. In February we announced a further \$6 million to continue community safety in Bourke, Moree and Kempsey. These programs are progressing, with many already implemented. We are continuing work with local community groups to ensure we get this right, and to create meaningful programs that are long term and will work.

Today almost \$900,000 of the \$1 million funding in the Moree place-based initiative has been allocated for additional after-hours activities. More than \$225,000 of the small grants program has been distributed to deliver 21 after-hours activities. These programs are seeing strong engagement, such as the Miyay Birray Street Beat bus in Moree, which completed over 3,500 pick-ups since October 2024. A new bail accommodation program is being established in Moree to provide 24/7 informed child-safe care. It aims to connect young people to Indigenous organisations, Elders and familiar supports from their own communities to provide guidance and care. We are pleased that a consortium of local Aboriginal organisations has been chosen to design and deliver this program, including the Miyay Birray Youth Service, Pius X Aboriginal Medical Service and the Sports Health Arts and Education Academy.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth are over-represented in regional crime rates. To ensure we do not see a continued increase in youth incarceration, we are working with the community to ensure focus remains on prevention and not just punishment. We are also pleased to see further initiatives due to roll out this year, including the Casework Support Program to help young people meet practical goals such as enrolling in education, getting an ID, sourcing employment or applying for Centrelink support; a new Legal Aid office with two Aboriginal-identified roles and four permanent lawyers based out of Moree; and an additional NSW Health adolescent court and community clinician at the Children's Court to help young people access diversion services. A permanent magistrate has been appointed, with further resourcing to the Moree and Inverell circuit of the Local Court.

On 22 March last year, four young males were alleged to have committed a break and enter and vehicle theft in Bourke. One of the offenders was five years old. Police believe a kindergartener joined three 12-year-olds in this break and enter. They stole a Mitsubishi Outlander. With the involvement of such a young offender, concerns arise about the level of parental supervision and care being provided. Such an incident truly indicates the need to tackle this issue with a multifaceted approach. We must address the causes of crime, ensure that pastoral care is given to families and provide education initiatives to deter young people from exposure to early indicators such as intermittent school attendance, alcohol, drugs, domestic violence, sexual abuse and homelessness. We must prevent further crimes occurring while ensuring that young offenders still have an opportunity for rehabilitation.

In conclusion, the bill will continue efforts to improve community safety and reduce rates of reoffending. The additional bail test is working, and to help tackle youth crime we need it to continue. The test will work hand in hand by preventing cycles of recidivism for the most vulnerable members of our community. The Government is committed to addressing causes of youth crime, curbing offending behaviour and eliminating contact with the criminal justice system. But at the same time the Government cannot ignore the terror, frustration and anxiety that communities are feeling from exposure to youth crime offenders. Extending the additional bail test will help to safeguard our communities whilst we work on the ground to comprehensively address youth crime. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:50): I make a contribution to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I start with putting a few facts on the table rather than dealing with assumptions. Locking up Aboriginal youth in New South Wales is one of our areas of greatest expenditure. That is how we spend the most money in looking after our young Aboriginal people in this State. Whether it be in remand, custody or other forms of detention, the Treasury's Indigenous Expenditure Report highlights that locking up Aboriginal young people is the area of highest expenditure. We know that the sooner and the longer a young person interacts with the criminal justice system, the worse off it is for them and the State. Yet here we are today, further extending a failed policy that has done nothing towards community safety.

The bill is nothing new. The principles behind just locking up people and thinking the problem will go away are not new. They are the fundamentals of how this place has dealt with those concerns. The bill is a continuation of a failed policy that has caused untold damage to young people in New South Wales, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Here are a few other facts: We have committed to Closing the Gap and reducing the number of young Aboriginal people in detention by 30 per cent. We have increased it by 34 per cent. The representation of Indigenous young people in detention is increasing, whereas the representation of non-Indigenous people is decreasing. Surely, that tells us how these laws have fundamentally failed. The Parliamentary Secretary rattled off a whole list of tokenistic, short-term funding plans of the

Government, which do not even scratch the surface of early intervention or keeping communities safe. It costs \$3,000 a day to lock up a young person in New South Wales. That is how we are spending our money in this State, not \$900,000 of \$1 million for one pilot project. That is, quite frankly, a joke.

We should never give up on young people or tell them there are no options but to lock them up. Some young people offend. They do things they are not meant to do. That does not mean that they are bad or evil, or that there is no hope for them. When those young offenders are sent to prison or juvenile detention, or have any exposure to the criminal justice system, we are telling them, whether they are Indigenous or not, that we are giving up on them. The bill is about giving up on young people, ensuring that they have a longer interaction with the criminal justice system. That will have hugely detrimental impacts on them, their families, their communities and New South Wales.

The bill extends for another three years the provisions introduced last year that make it harder for young repeat offenders of certain motor vehicle and break and enter offences to get bail. It was promised that those laws would expire in April. The Government says more time is needed to implement its programs to reduce youth offending, including new after-hours activities and engaging additional caseworkers and Legal Aid officers in regional communities where youth crime has become a big problem. I accept that early intervention and prevention programs take time to have effect, but that does not justify locking up more young people in the interim. That also does not justify diverting more funds into locking up that cohort.

We must stop pretending that these laws can make the community safer. They have not done so to date. There are no safety benefits to the laws. We know that detained young people are more likely to reoffend when they are released. Incarceration exacerbates the complexities that lead to youth crime, such as disadvantage, child removal and lack of opportunities. The trauma and the messages reinforce a young person's negative feelings about themselves and their future that contributed to their offending. Incarcerated young people meet other offenders, who may encourage them into more serious crime. It creates a vicious cycle that locks our youth into long-term offending, making the community less safe in the long term.

Two centuries of dispossession, racism and loss of self-determination has left many First Nations people disadvantaged. First Nations young people are more likely to be affected by these laws. Locking young people up will take us back across multiple Closing the Gap targets, including in health, education, employment, child protection and justice. Young people in contact with the justice system represent some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. They deserve to be kept safe and nurtured, to be given opportunities out of disadvantage, and to get the health and mental health support they need. That is where the money should be going.

I believe that most members of this House understand that community-led therapeutic responses to offending, plus early intervention and prevention programs, are the answer. But, while Parliament continues to also push "tough on crime" rhetoric, there will always be barriers to evidence-based reform. I understand that it can be difficult when the people we represent are scared, but we need to be truthful with them about what is effective and stop kneejerk reactions to crime. I welcome the programs the Government is establishing but cannot support this backward step, which will harm vulnerable youth facing challenges, while providing no community safety benefit. It continues the shocking misappropriation of taxpayer funds that sees one of the areas of greatest expenditure on young Aboriginal people in this State going towards locking them up.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:58): I am delighted to make a brief contribution to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I acknowledge the member for Sydney. Whilst I do not share his whole position, he is a man of integrity and conviction, and what he said comes from a very good place. I agree that the process of incarceration should be about rehabilitation. The Reiby Youth Justice Centre is in my electorate. Whenever I go to that place, it breaks my heart. It is right next door to the Briar Road Public School. I remember visiting the school when I was elected in 2015. During the school's morning tea and lunch breaks, the kids who were running around the school grounds were looking straight into the exercise yard of the Reiby Youth Justice Centre. I organised some shrubs to be planted, and we put a stop to that. If I had my way, the whole thing would be removed. That is my personal view—not the Government's view—relating to my electorate.

The member for Sydney made the point that it is cost worthy. I support the legislation and believe we need to continue it. But it is important to note the point made by member for Sydney that incarceration needs to be about rehabilitation. Incarceration begins the downward spiral for children as they continue to be incarcerated. The member for Bathurst said that young people are reoffending within 48 hours, which tells us that something is wrong. It tells us that while young offenders are incarcerated, they are not being shown a different path. We must remember that these are kids. When they become disengaged, they get to a T-intersection in their lives when they have to make a decision. They can go down one of two paths—the good path of engagement or the bad path.

In remote and socially economically challenged communities, most young offenders go down the wrong path, which leads to other terrible sociological law-breaking circumstances, such as violence, self-medication through alcohol abuse and other substances. That in turn leads to mental ill health, poverty and homelessness. I believe there is an opportunity to engage with kids when they are first incarcerated to help set them on the right path. A lot of good people do that.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): It being 1.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for orders of the day (committee reports). I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

Committees

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

Reports

Debate resumed from 19 February 2025.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (13:01): In commenting on the report of the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales, I firstly thank all members who participated in the inquiry and all those who gave evidence. Obviously it was a waste of time, because the Government has not listened. The Government's response to the inquiry has been woefully inadequate. I am a member representing a regional electorate with an affinity for our local regional conservatoriums. Recommendation 26 states:

That the NSW Government increase funding to regional conservatoriums and review key performance measures and service ... especially around engagement with schools, under the Regional Conservatorium Grants Program, to ensure sustainable future growth.

The response by the Government to that recommendation is appalling. Recommendation 26 simply asks the Government to increase funding through the well-established Regional Conservatorium Grants Program to ensure the viability of music education. Debra Batley from the Australian Society for Music Education said during the inquiry that music tuition is one of those things that gets cut from the family budget when there is a drought. The response from the Government to review is a pathetic and weak response. One conservatorium stated:

... we are disappointed that the recommendations are not supported.

Regional Conservatoriums are a crucial part of their local communities providing employment, access to music education and services, fostering creativity and connectedness.

Increased funding to our regional conservatoriums is crucial to ensure sustainable future growth.

The committee's report also states at Recommendation 27:

That the NSW Government formalise and strengthen the partnership between the NSW Department of Education ...

Ra-ra, blah, blah. That recommendation is bureaucratic rubbish because the Government is committed to doing nothing and has chosen to rest on its laurels in the belief it is doing enough. Another regional conservatorium commented on the Government's response:

The NSW Government response shows a lack of commitment to taking up the recommendations and we are extremely disappointed by the response. This is an opportunity missed, especially to extend the work of Regional Conservatoriums to reach more young people and communities in regional NSW with many of the recommendations simply "noted". It is disappointing that Music continues to be seen as a fringe subject, when we know Music is crucial for Children's optimal holistic development and supports learning across all key development areas.

It is incredibly disappointing that on one hand the Government is creating a MusicNSW department and drafting creative community policy while on the other hand is taking no action to support regional conservatoriums that are the backbone of music education in regional areas of New South Wales.

I thank members of the committee and I particularly thank all those who gave evidence, many of whom I contact regularly as the shadow Minister for the Arts and Heritage. We will not give up in our push to get appropriate funding for regional conservatoriums in New South Wales.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:04): I join in debate to comment on the report of the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales. I acknowledge the work of the chair, the member for Granville, and of my co-committee members. I will make general comments on the report's recommendations, which I believe are solid and provide a pathway forward. It is disappointing the Government has noted 14 of the 29 recommendations. I make the observation that it is clear in the public school system, students are missing out on the value of music education. The committee heard clear scientific evidence that music education is important for students' brain development. Frankly, I suspect the lack of music education in Australia

is one of the factors that we are not able to shift NAPLAN results and that the Programme for International Student Assessment [PISA] results continue to drop. We are focusing so much on particular subjects and passing NAPLAN that we are missing the value of music education.

In that context, I will comment particularly on the Government's response to the recommendations related to regional conservatoriums. My colleague the member for Tamworth commented on that earlier. The report's recommendations include that the Government increase funding to regional conservatoriums, review their key performance indicators and formalise and strengthen the partnership between the New South Wales Department of Education and regional conservatoriums. The Government's response is to note those recommendations and assert it is working on the 2025-28 triennium agreement, which gives me no confidence that the Government will increase funding and develop more realistic key performance indicators.

I urge the Government to focus on the work of the report, acknowledge the immense value of regional conservatoriums to regional communities and the immense opportunity for a government that is committed to supporting arts and music to leave its mark on our regional communities while improving education. Funding for the regional conservatoriums probably needs to double, but it is a modest investment in the future of regional communities. Recommendation 27 states:

That the NSW Government formalise and strengthen the partnership between the NSW Department of Education and regional conservatoriums ...

The Government's response basically is that the New South Wales Department of Education currently chairs a quarterly meeting with associations representing 17 conservatoriums that currently receive funding. The evidence received by the inquiry was pretty clear. The Department of Education does not regard regional conservatoriums as part of the Department of Education; they simply administer a grant for Treasury. That explains why it has been so difficult for years to engage with Ministers and with the Department of Education about the role of regional conservatoriums. Essentially, regional conservatoriums are orphaned within the current education system. It is just so sad that organisations with such potential are basically left out on a limb without support, and that this Government is not prepared to change that. That is very disappointing.

I acknowledge that the current Minister for Education and Early Learning at least met with representatives of regional conservatoriums. The previous Minister did not meet with regional conservatoriums for their entire ministerial term. We need to do more. We must ensure that the quarterly meetings are genuine and that regional conservatoriums are linked into and embedded in the Department of Education's strategy and the strategy for arts development within regional New South Wales. I urge the Government to take this opportunity. I thank the committee and the people who worked with me on producing an excellent report.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:09): In reply: As the Chair of the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training, I am really proud of its work. Contrary to what the member for Tamworth said about it having been a waste of time, I think the committee has achieved a lot. The Government has taken on board a number of our recommendations, including the first:

That the NSW Government explore opportunities to build further partnerships between artists and musicians and external arts organisations and schools.

That recommendation is important to counteract the demise of arts and music in schools over a very long period, made so much worse under the previous Government. Many other recommendations were supported. The third recommendation, supported in principle, was:

That the NSW Government explore introducing arts and music as areas of primary specialisation in initial teacher education courses to allow primary teachers to specialise in individual creative arts subjects and strengthen employment pathways for specialist music teachers.

We found that training in arts and music for primary school teachers was woefully inadequate, particularly the nine hours of instruction in music. We think it is very important that the Government strengthens that training. In addition, the Government is supporting the following recommendation:

That the NSW Government work with University Admissions Centre to develop a "myth-busting" awareness campaign targeted at students, parents and schools to provide accurate information about HSC creative arts subjects in relation to the ATAR and scaling.

For too long kids with abundant talent have avoided those subjects for fear that their ATAR will be scaled down and they will not be able to get into their preferred university courses. It is a reputation that is not deserved, and we need to address that. We also recommended:

That the NSW Education Standards Authority consider the reintroduction of Visual Arts Extension in their upcoming review of the Stage 6 Visual Arts curriculum.

That important recommendation was supported. For decades there has not been an additional challenging pathway for people who are passionate about visual arts. The National Art School recommended that to us after finding that many of their students were disappointed that they did not have that opportunity. [*Time expired.*]

Report noted.

COMMITTEE ON THE HEALTH CARE COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Reports

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

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:12): As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House today as Chair of the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission. On 16 December 2024 the committee tabled its report entitled *Review of the Health Care Complaints Commission's 2021-22 and 2022-23 annual reports*. Reviewing the commission's performance through the examination of its annual reports is a core function of committee's oversight role under the Health Care Complaints Act 1993. This review is the committee's first of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. During the course of our review there was a change in the commission's leadership, with the appointment of a new commissioner in July 2024.

Noting those changes, we sought written responses from health sector stakeholders to gather external evidence on the commission's performance, in addition to the information contained in its annual reports. Those responses provided us with important evidence to inform our review. In my time on the committee, which has involved this Parliament and the previous Parliament, the collection of external evidence in relation to the commission's performance had not been done. I think it was incredibly timely that we did so on this occasion. In 2022-23 the commission saw a return to the expected level and types of complaints that were more in line with historical patterns following a significant COVID-related spike in complaints. However, there was also a significant reduction in the timeliness of assessments and investigations during this period.

The commission told us that it was rolling out a new case management system in late 2024 to enhance the complaint management process and improve timeliness, data management and user experience. We recommended that the commission evaluate that system within the first six months of its use to determine whether it is achieving its anticipated benefits. A key focus of our report was the complexity of the commission's complaint process and the need to improve accessibility, particularly for vulnerable groups and complainants with experiences of trauma. We found that there were also additional barriers for complainants from First Nations communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities. To address this, we recommended that the commission implement trauma-informed options to support complainants who may, for example, prefer to make a verbal complaint.

Our review also focused on the impacts of complaints and investigations on health practitioners, and the support available to them. We heard that infrequent communication from the commission is a cause of significant distress among health practitioners who are subject to complaint or investigation, particularly when complaints are unfounded or vexatious. We were particularly concerned to hear that this distress can result in self-harm. I note that this issue has also been recognised at a national level with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency and its processes. For this reason we recommended that the commission introduce targets around the frequency of its communication with health practitioners, and that it improve its capacity to recognise and respond to vexatious complaints. We also recommended that the commission develop a program to support practitioners, including monitoring of and reporting on their wellbeing.

The commission's stakeholder engagement and community outreach work was another key focus of our report, noting that awareness of the commission's role remains low. In particular, engagement with First Nations communities remains an ongoing concern for the committee. I sincerely hope that we see progress on that. It was an issue that I raised in committee work in the previous Parliament. I think progress has been slow, and I really hope that we see some significant progress on that. Similarly, the committee is concerned that the commission does not have an appropriately reasonable, standalone engagement and outreach function, which has limited its capacity to engage with culturally and linguistically diverse communities. I note that the member for Fairfield is in the Chamber today. He made that point strongly to the committee. For these reasons we recommended that the commission establish a First Nations advisory group to improve its engagement with First Nations communities, and that the Government consider providing additional funding for standalone positions and outreach activities.

We are hopeful, given the work that is currently underway at the commission, that we will see improvements across the commission's case management, stakeholder engagement and outreach functions, and improvements in the way that it supports both complainants and health practitioners. We look forward to seeing what progress has been made against our recommendations when we commence our next annual report review later this year. I thank the commission staff for their work in improving our health care complaints system, which is an important part of ensuring that we have a robust health system. It stands at arms-length and independent

from NSW Health, for example. I believe it is a critical component of making sure that our system is as good as it possibly can be.

I also acknowledge the diligence of the new commissioner and his engagement with staff, stakeholders and the committee since he commenced in the role. I think that has been important because of the transition that has taken place. I am happy that level of engagement is taking place. It is something that we will monitor. Finally, I thank my fellow committee members for their support and engagement, and committee staff for their work during this review. I commend the report to the House.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (13:17): I make some comments pertaining to the report entitled *Review of the Health Care Complaints Commission's 2021-22 and 2022-23 annual reports* by the Committee on the Health Care Complaints Commission. The Health Care Complaints Commission [HCCC] plays an important role in protecting public health and safety by investigating complaints about healthcare providers. The committee has an important role in the oversight of the HCCC under the Health Care Complaints Act 1993. I also acknowledge that there has been a change in the commission's leadership, with Mr John Tansey, PSM, taking over as the commissioner in July 2024. Before I turn to the report, I thank the commissioner and his staff at the HCCC for the work that they do, the healthcare sector for its work in the provision of critical health care across the State, my colleagues on the committee, and the committee staff.

While unpacking some of the findings and recommendations, it was found that the percentage of complaints assessed within the statutory 60-day time frame significantly decreased, while the percentage of investigations that took more than 12 months increased. It was also found that the new case management system will be critical to bolstering the capability of the HCCC to promote its investigative role. One recommendation is that the evaluation of that case management system will be important to ensure that it is fit-for-purpose and that improvements can occur where required. In addition, the complexity of the complaints process is important to acknowledge. We know that people that need to seek the assistance of the HCCC are particularly going through quite a traumatic process with respect to their health care and the nature of the complaints that they are raising. It was noted that complaints in writing, which is required by the commission, may not be the best avenue to ensure that the complainants can put forward their complaint so it was recommended that the commission pursue more accessible, trauma-informed options for complainants, such as being able to make complaints verbally.

Another finding was that infrequent communication with healthcare practitioners that are going through the process can cause significant distress so it is important for the commission to engage with healthcare practitioners on the status of an investigation and, where possible, provide updates. A further recommendation was that the HCCC bolster its capacity to recognise and deal with unfounded and vexatious complaints so that they can be dealt with as soon as possible to allow practitioners to move forward and deliver the critical healthcare services required in this State. An additional recommendation is related to the provision of mental wellbeing supports to those practitioners.

I note that time has escaped me, unfortunately; I could speak about this for another hour. The key point I want to address is the work in the culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] space. We know that people from CALD backgrounds do not necessarily have the best in English literacy nor do they have the best digital accessibility. Therefore, ensuring there is a mechanism for them to engage with the commission is important for the work that it does. I commend the report to the House.

Report noted.

MODERN SLAVERY COMMITTEE

Reports

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

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:22): As Chair: The statutory review of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 marks a significant milestone for the Modern Slavery Committee. It was a first opportunity to examine the Act since its commencement in 2022 and engage directly with individuals with lived experience of modern slavery, who the Act is designed to support. Over the course of the review it became clear that the views of individuals with lived experience of modern slavery needed to be central to the work of the committee and the broader response to modern slavery. The committee undertook an initial report, as the House would be aware, that was tabled in December 2023. That report recommended that the committee continue its review to hear from individuals with lived experience who had not been part of the committee's evidence in that first report.

In 2024 the committee resolved to continue the review and heard from a number of individuals with lived experience of various forms of modern slavery, such as forced labour, sexual servitude, debt bondage, deceptive recruitment and forced marriage. In speaking with those individuals, the committee gained a deeper insight into

the realities of modern slavery, including its impact, and the challenge that many face in coming forward to access support and seek justice. Their testimonies were invaluable to the committee's review and played a significant role in shaping our recommendations to the New South Wales Government.

I acknowledge the work of the secretariat and the members of the committee in coming up with a framework to engage with people with lived experience. The committee crafted a framework, discussed it and underwent its own briefing in relation to engaging with people who have suffered trauma. We constructed the hearings to be as welcoming and as appropriately supportive as we could. We have had some feedback, which was very much appreciated, but I acknowledge that it is an area of ongoing development for the committee. I cannot thank the secretariat enough for its work. I also thank my deputy chair, the member for Newtown, and the other committee members for genuinely engaging that process.

The Act plays a critical role in efforts to combat modern slavery and it establishes the role of the Anti-slavery Commissioner. I commend Anti-slavery Commissioner and the ongoing work of his office to implement his statutory functions. It is evident that in the short time that he has been in that role he has been very active. The House will be aware that we currently have an inquiry afoot in regard to temporary migrant workers, which is a result of a report that the Anti-slavery Commissioner provided. I acknowledge his work on the due diligence guidance for government agencies and local government; it is probably best in class in the world and it is well ahead of the reporting obligations on many companies. I hosted the commissioner last week in my electorate, where he met with community groups and survivors of modern slavery. I have to say, that was very welcome. He has been to our region on many occasions and his work has been very much appreciated.

Notwithstanding the commissioner's work, the committee heard that there are issues that impede the effectiveness of the Act and broader reference was made to combat modern slavery and support victim-survivors. For example, the Act limits the commissioner's ability to detect and expose modern slavery and more training is required for government and non-government frontline organisations on how to identify and respond to victim-survivors. It is a new area for many agencies so we need to continue to raise awareness. The commissioner is not an investigator and is not there to investigate incidents. It is not a police function. The commissioner's role is to prevent modern slavery and raise awareness about it so a greater capacity to get information from agencies is quite important.

The committee made 12 recommendations that we believe will go a long way to strengthening the Act and the commissioner's ability to prevent, detect and expose modern slavery. We want the Government to seriously consider strengthening the commissioner's information-gathering and sanctioning powers. We also want to support lived-experience expertise and ensure that that is at the centre of the commission's work and the work of our committee. We have made a number of other recommendations about the broader response to modern slavery, including seeking to amend the Victims Rights and Support Act 2013 to improve access to support services for victim-survivors and provide mandatory training to government and non-government frontline organisations.

Given the infancy of the Act, the report also makes an important recommendation to allow the committee to continue to scrutinise the Act and the broader response to modern slavery once every parliamentary session. It was clear that it is very much a new area on the world stage and in Australia. The Federal Government has only just appointed an Anti-Slavery Commissioner. It is clear from the evidence from our engagement with lived-experience expertise that there are opportunities for the Act to evolve, and we believe that there should be a review of the Act and how it operates in the next parliamentary session. I extend my thanks to the committee and to the engagement of the secretariat, who supported the committee. Their work has been outstanding in an area where we are all learning. I particularly thank those witnesses who came forward to share their experience; it was invaluable to the committee. It took considerable strength and bravery, and I recognise the importance of the efforts that they made. Once again, I thank my fellow committee members. I commend the report to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:28): I make a brief contribution to debate on the report entitled *Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 – Part 2* and thank the chair of the Modern Slavery Committee for his comprehensive summary of where things are at. I wholly endorse the chair's comments. As deputy chair of the committee, I add my thanks to the witnesses who participated. I also appreciate the willingness of the committee to take on board a commitment to change the way that we approach the review of the Act in order to centre people with lived experience in that review.

I put on record my acknowledgement and thanks to the survivors from Azadi, a survivor-led organisation in Kenya. They sparked the initial discussion with me and the chair about how we could ensure that witnesses were able to participate in the review. I particularly thank them for taking me out of the formal proceedings of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference in Kenya on modern slavery supply chains. They drove me to their wonderful survivor-led organisation hub, which allowed me to meet with survivors of modern slavery. It demonstrated how crucial it is that we empower survivors to have the agency to participate in the solutions that will address the issues of modern slavery around the world.

I acknowledge and thank those people for sparking the interest we then brought back with us from Kenya to New South Wales to try to shape the way our committee worked in undertaking the review of the Modern Slavery Act. It demonstrated the power of learning from our international partners and international jurisdictions about how we can respond and continue to lead the way when it comes to addressing modern slavery in New South Wales.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): It being 1.30 p.m., the time for the committees take-note debate has expired. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Bills

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

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (14:31): I am delighted to continue my contribution to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. When I left off, I was referring to the speech by the member for Sydney, who acknowledged the importance of incarceration being about rehabilitation so that kids can change the paths of their lives. Sadly, that does not always happen. I generally get on well with the member for Bathurst, but I do not agree with his referring to specific cases. It is important that we do not disrespect or undermine the judiciary. The judiciary does the best it can with what it has. There are many good lawyers out there, both prosecution and defence. In our democracy we know that the separation between the legislature, which is us, and the judiciary is important. We must be mindful of respecting that separation and of making respectful contributions. Many members know and understand that their contributions in this place matter, particularly when establishing common law. I draw that to the House's attention.

I also acknowledge the member for Northern Tablelands, his predecessor and other regional members who work collaboratively, side by side with government and the community, to get preferred and better outcomes to address this serious issue. Many members know that I was born and raised in Dubbo in the Central West of New South Wales. I left there when I was 17 and never moved back. My parents and my brother still live there, and I know they are facing similar problems. Taking a collaborative approach in all areas, including Dubbo, will ensure that everyone is engaged to get better outcomes to address this serious issue. There are so many differences and new difficulties now compared with when I packed my bags to leave Dubbo in 1989—whether it is the types of drugs on the streets that are destroying people's lives, accessibility to those substances, or social media and other influences that are driving and motivating criminal acts. They were not around back then and we had leadership within the town and across regional New South Wales.

Nationals members may recall a fellow called Gerry Peacocke, whom my father was very good friends with. He was a well-respected, senior member of The Nationals and then member for Dubbo, and my dad used to shoot with him and enjoy other activities when they were younger. The point is to take a collaborative approach, which is why this bill is so important. I will go through the specifics of the bill because, as we know, it is extending the strict bail test that applies to young people who are accused of stealing cars and breaking into homes amid growing concerns about youth crime. People deserve to be safe in their communities, and this extension will ensure that we have better measures in place. I commend the Attorney General for taking a pragmatic approach to addressing this issue, because there are few things in society more important than personal safety. It is our role and responsibility, through legislation, to provide our authorities and, indeed, the judiciary with instruments to support that. Ultimately, that is why this bill is before us today.

More specifically, the bill amends the Bail Act 2013 to extend the operation of the temporary bail test in section 22C for an additional three years, to expire on 4 April 2028. Section 22C will sunset on 4 April 2025 unless it is extended, which is a matter for future consideration. Section 22C was introduced in 2024 to provide an additional bail test for young people aged between 14 and 18 who commit a serious break and enter offence or motor theft offence while on bail for another offence of that type. The test requires a bail authority to refuse bail unless the bail authority has a high degree of confidence that the young person will not commit a further serious indictable offence while on bail, subject to any proposed bail conditions. The extension of the provision is intended to address ongoing community concern about youth crime, particularly in regional New South Wales, and to allow sufficient time for the continued implementation of broader community-based initiatives to respond to that crime. It will also enable analysis of the impact of the provision over time. [*Extension of time*]

As a Western Sydney MP who was born and raised in the Central West of New South Wales, I note that the member for Bathurst said during his contribution that the Labor Party is obsessed with western and south-west Sydney. I can honestly say that this Government has an obsession with helping each and every electorate in New South Wales, irrespective of where it is. Many of the electorates where we are taking action are not held by Labor.

Mr Gareth Ward: Name them.

Mr GREG WARREN: Northern Tablelands, Dubbo, Orange, Barwon and all over the place. It is a very valid point, and it gives me the opportunity to display that the Labor Party, as my colleague Minister Aitchison constantly states, is the party of the bush. I go further than just saying that Labor is the party of the bush; it is the party for all. I am proud of my colleagues and I am proud to be associated with this Government because good governments govern for all. We move legislation and we do everything we can to help each and every community in New South Wales. That is displayed. Funding and grants were not just allocated to Labor electorates; they were allocated to every electorate in New South Wales.

My Parliamentary Secretary colleagues and my ministerial colleagues, and in fact all of my colleagues, travel to electorates far and wide to visit communities and help them. One only needs to look at Minister Aitchison's social media pages to see how far she travels. I was talking to a good mate of mine, who will remain nameless, and he was commenting on how well respected the member for Maitland is around rural and regional New South Wales. That is because she is one of them and she cares. I am done embarrassing the Minister. I make that valid point because the them-and-us approach is very unhelpful, and I do not believe it is good leadership.

Members in this place are from all over the place. There are members who live in country New South Wales but who spend a lot of time in the city. The member for Orange was a police officer at Macquarie Fields. He spent a lot of time in the metropolitan area while he was keeping us all safe during his service as a New South Wales police officer. He now finds himself in the beautiful City of Orange, which I am very familiar with as well. The bill is necessary because communities need to be kept safe. On this issue, we need to focus on delivering the outcomes for those communities, because we are stronger together. This Parliament's role is to serve each and every electorate equally and provide legislation that gives the judiciary and the authorities the powers and what they need to keep local families safe.

To conclude, I reiterate my point. I know many members agree with incarceration and the Government is very determined to achieve that, but it needs to be about rehabilitation to change the course of the direction of a young person's life that is otherwise going in the wrong direction. That is so important, because it can ruin their lives. That is on display in some of the remote areas of New South Wales that most of the time feel very disengaged. The bill shows that the Government is determined to engage with them.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (14:42): I always enjoy listening to the speeches of my good friend the member for Campbelltown in this Parliament. They are always very interesting and very enlightening. I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025, which is probably one of the shortest bills that has come before the House—essentially, three lines. The bill extends the operation of section 22C of the Bail Act 2013 for a further three years to 4 April 2028. It was perhaps optimistic for the Government to think that 12 months would be sufficient to address the issues and set up the programs. I will focus on that issue. I have listened to a number of members' contributions to the debate on the bill. The nuts and bolts of the bill are quite succinct. I will read section 22C of the Bail Act, which the bill applies to, because the contextual background of the matter is important. It states:

(1) A bail authority—

which could be a police officer, a police sergeant or it could be a court—

must not—

not "may not"—

grant bail to a relevant young person—

which is defined as anyone between the ages of 14 and 17, which is also important—

for a relevant offence alleged to have been committed while the young person is on bail for another relevant offence ...

We need to look at what a relevant offence includes. Section 22C (6) states:

relevant offence means—

(a) a motor theft offence, or

(b) a serious breaking and entering offence ...

The offences that the section pertains to are quite specific. It further states:

serious breaking and entering offence means an offence under the Crimes Act 1900, Part 4, Division 4 that is punishable by imprisonment for a term of 14 years or more.

That is on indictment, and that would include offences like home invasion and aggravated break, enter and steal, where people force entry into a premises knowing that the occupants of the premises are home at the time. That is one circumstance of aggravation. Those are the serious types of offences we are talking about. We are not talking about stealing lollies from the corner shop or stealing the bike of some kid down the street. We are talking about serious criminal behaviour which a person is already on bail for. We are not talking about someone who has been detected committing those offences for the first time. We are saying they are already on bail for the offence and they have committed another relevant offence which has brought them to the attention of the police and to the courts.

I think that is important—and I have spent a lot of time in children's courts over my time prosecuting many matters on behalf of New South Wales police—because often by the time they end up in court, a young offender has had numerous interactions with the police and has been dealt with usually by way of cautions or warnings under the Young Offenders Act and Youth Justice Conferences. There are often a couple of pages of antecedents, and they have just been diverted through the criminal court process and been dealt with under the Young Offenders Act and by other means to rehabilitate, reform and get them into education and on the straight and narrow, which ideally we would all love to see.

I listened to the contribution of the member for Sydney. In some cases where a person is on bail for breaking into somebody's home when they are at home, or for stealing cars, which are the most serious types of matters, they probably should not get bail a second time. That is my personal view on the matter, and I think it is a view shared by many in my communities and regional communities that have borne the brunt of a lot of this type of offending behaviour. I am a member of the Law and Safety Committee, of which the member for Mount Druitt is the chair and the member for Prospect is the deputy chair. We have been going around the State listening to communities. We have been to Kempsey, Coffs Harbour and more recently Wagga Wagga, as well as Bourke and places in far western New South Wales, where we have spoken to a number of stakeholders, not only police but also community groups, those delivering diversionary programs and councils.

Getting out to those areas to consult with and listen to the local communities, and hear what they have been going through, has been a very thorough process. I have heard stories about people whose homes were broken into while they were asleep. Their car keys were stolen, their wallet and phone were pinched, and their car was taken. They have not realised that their houses have been broken into until the morning when they wake up. Their cars were involved in pursuits or, in some cases, serious accidents, or they were burnt out. Communities have had a gutful. These are not isolated incidents; this is a real problem right across rural communities.

I commend the Government for taking strong action through these reforms to the Bail Act. In a perfect world, had magistrates originally applied their judicial discretion appropriately in the case of Moree, this legislation probably would not have needed to come before the House. Unfortunately, the Government has been forced to intervene to tighten up bail laws to ensure that young offenders who are already on bail for serious conduct are not granted bail unless there is a high degree of confidence that they will not reoffend. But "high degree of confidence" is a subjective term. A lot turns on it, and it is a question for the decision-maker at the time. Yesterday I listened to the speech by the member for Wahroonga, who is a respected silk. I respect his commentary in relation to a lot of these issues. He said that there has been concern from judges in relation to the interpretation and definition of a "high degree of confidence".

But using the normal, everyday meaning of "high degree of confidence" and taking into account a person's age, background, circumstances and antecedents—whether they have a history of this sort of thing—you do not need to be a rocket scientist to have confidence that they will commit further offences. While the Bail Act has strengthened bail laws, it has also unfortunately probably seen a rise in the number of young people being incarcerated. But at some point the community needs to be protected. I am not talking about minor, trivial offences or young people who are interacting with or getting in trouble with the police for the first time. These are often young people who have been in the system for many years. There needs to be a special focus from police to clamp down on the ringleaders of these groups, who are often older members who use their influence to try to recruit younger people, lead them astray and get them to commit crimes.

Looking at the nuts and bolts, this is a very simple bill. It extends the operation of section 22C of the Bail Act by three years. I want to see diversionary programs in place, especially for younger people who are connected with the criminal justice system. In a perfect world, it would be good if they could be placed into a program that encourages education, positive role modelling and mentoring to get them out of an environment that is often conducive to this type of behaviour. But that will take time, and 12 months is simply not long enough for

that to occur. It makes perfect sense to extend the timeline of the provision in section 22C by a further three years so that programs can be implemented and to monitor this legislation further. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (14:52): I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. It is a fact that there is continued and justified community concern about youth crime. I know that the focus has recently been on the magnitude of youth crime, especially in regional communities. However, no electorate is immune. The increasing incidence of motor theft, break and enter and assault offending by young people, and those young people then being released on bail despite repeat offences of these types, warrants the extension proposed in the bill. Communities have rallied publicly to demonstrate their frustration and express their outrage over the impact of youth offending. There have also been recent deaths allegedly arising from circumstances where young people have stolen vehicles. We must act on this level of community outrage.

People are sending us a very clear message, and this bill is but one aspect of the Government's response. It is not a kneejerk response but recognises that more needs to be done, which is why the Government is seeking to extend the bill. I am extremely disappointed in the contribution by the member for Bathurst. It is quite disingenuous to come into this place and selectively cherry-pick media grabs about a dreadful tragedy that happened in my electorate recently as justification for opposing the bill. I personally found that abhorrent and, quite frankly, outrageous. In 2024 the Government introduced a multifaceted response to combat youth crime, including legislative reform, which the bill seeks to extend; and therapeutic and community initiatives, which continue to be implemented. It included a targeted package for Moree to address crime, support young people and improve community safety. The multifaceted action was introduced as a response to community concerns at the time about young people committing motor theft and break and enter offences.

The legislative reform included the enactment of section 22C of the Bail Act 2013 in April 2024, which was originally intended to sunset 12 months after commencement, on 4 April 2025. But the Government has heard loud and clear the ongoing community concern about young people committing break and enter and motor theft offences, particularly in regional New South Wales, and considers it appropriate to extend this measure so that those issues can continue to be combatted. The extension of the provision is intended to support public safety perceptions and address ongoing community concern about youth crime, and to allow sufficient time for the continued implementation of broader community-based initiatives to respond to that crime. More time is also needed to fully implement and expand on the programs the Government has targeted, especially in regional areas, to address local youth crime. It is vital that there is sufficient time to enable the analysis of the impact of these programs.

The bill replaces the current sunset provision so that the section 22C temporary bail test will sunset on 4 April 2028, four years after it commenced. Section 22C remains a specific, time-limited and targeted test. It is a temporary additional bail test for young people aged 14 to 17 who are charged with committing a serious break and enter or motor theft offence while on bail for another offence of that type. Under this test, unless the bail authority has a high degree of confidence that the person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail, as the member for Orange has said, bail is to be refused. The temporary bail test was intended as a circuit breaker to offer an immediate response while the broader, community-based programs were implemented. A bail authority must refuse bail if satisfied that there is an unacceptable risk the accused person will, if released from custody, fail to appear at any proceedings for the offence; commit a serious offence; endanger the safety of victims, individuals or the community; or interfere with witnesses or evidence.

A bail authority may impose bail conditions to address those bail concerns to satisfy the unacceptable risk test. In the relevant circumstances, the bail authority then applies the additional section 22C test as the last step of the process. The Minns Labor Government has backed the legislation with important funding. Just last year it announced a \$26.2 million community safety package, including the expansion of New South Wales police-run Youth Action Meetings, the expansion of Youth Justice NSW's Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol Program, and additional funding for a targeted response in the town of Moree and surrounds. This month the Government also announced over \$6 million to support community safety across Bourke, Moree and Kempsey. Across the Western Region, the New South Wales police's Operation Regional Mongoose continues. It has already identified 255 offenders, including 75 ringleaders. We are making progress.

It must also be noted that the Australian Government Department of Social Services is planning to undertake an evaluation of the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative to capture learnings and insights from the first phase, inform the forward approach and understand the effectiveness of community-led collective impact measures. This will be undertaken in partnership with Stronger Places, Stronger People, communities, and State and Territory governments. We need a multifaceted approach. I agree that it is problematic to lock up children. It needs to be recognised that, overall, the New South Wales youth crime rate has declined. However, there has been a significant spike in break and enters and car thefts. As a government, we cannot turn a blind eye. As previously

stated, we need to be realistic. Section 22C is a temporary additional bail test for young people aged 14 to 17 charged with committing a serious break and enter or motor vehicle theft offence while on bail for another offence of that type. That is why I support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (14:59): On behalf of my community, I contribute to debate on the Government's Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. Communities across regional New South Wales, including the communities I represent, are deeply concerned about the escalating seriousness and frequency of crime and in particular youth crime in our communities. I have had many conversations with people living in Tamworth, Gunnedah and other locations who have been the victims of serious crime. They have found themselves awoken in their own homes by an intruder or have woken in the morning to find that their most treasured possessions have been stolen. They have had sentimental jewellery lost forever, found their expensive electronics gone and had vehicles that they worked hard to purchase senselessly burnt out on the side of the road. In addition to that, a deep sense of violation and intimidation has caused long-lasting psychological effects on victims and families.

In the debate we have heard a lot about the perpetrators, but the victims of crime also need to be remembered during these conversations. People feel unsafe and vulnerable in their own homes, with some considering leaving their location as a result. They are forced out of their home and the area they love. It is deeply concerning that the rates of criminal offending are persistently higher in the regions. According to the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, people who live in Tamworth are 3.5 times more likely to be broken into than the State average and 3.1 times more likely than if they live in Gunnedah. People who live in Gunnedah are 2.6 times more likely to have their car stolen than the State average. Those statistics are an urgent call to action for the Government. The Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety is yet to commit to visiting the New England North West. I know it has visited other areas in regional New South Wales, but my area is being targeted by crime. The committee must hold an inquiry to hear firsthand what is happening. It must also hear of the solutions that could be on the table to assist those looking for solutions to committing crime.

More needs to be done to protect our communities and keep them safe. That concern is encapsulated in an ePetition started by Tamworth's Phebe Furneaux that is currently collecting signatures. It has already received 20,000 signatures, and I look forward to a debate on it in the very near future. A local woman, Phebe started the petition because she is a victim of crime. She has experienced multiple break and enters in Tamworth and ultimately been seriously assaulted and left bruised, battered and angry. Sadly, Phebe's story is not unique in regional New South Wales.

The Time for Change! petition calls on the Government to do three things: strengthen bail laws to prevent violent young offenders from reoffending, provide increased resources and support for police officers to effectively apprehend and prosecute offenders, and review the judicial system to prioritise community safety. There has already been some movement on points one and two of the petition, which is still to be debated. It is right that this Parliament should be focused on law and order in regional New South Wales and on protecting people and supporting victims of crime. It is right that we should be focused on this very important problem.

The community has been let down by the system and has deep concern about repeat offenders being allowed back on the streets to terrorise the community time and again. This bill looks at an extension, but it does not go far enough. The Government's bill extends for an additional three years section 22C of the Bail Act, which provides for a temporary additional bail test for young people between 14 and 18 charged with serious break and enter or motor vehicle theft offences while on bail for another offence of that type. The Labor Government measures its success by the bail refusal rate, which sits at 74 per cent, but that is not in line with community expectation. The effective measure of success for these laws must be the sentiment of our communities and the overriding premise of putting community safety first.

It is of great frustration to regional communities that the Government repeatedly points to its place-based solution in Moree when discussing regional crime. I note the member for Northern Tablelands is in the House, and he knows all too well the difficulties facing Moree. The support provided by the Government in some areas is not cutting through or doing its job. In fact, in his second reading speech, the Attorney General spent more than three minutes speaking specifically about Moree. There is no denying that there are significant concerns in that town, but the Labor Government needs to take a much broader approach and deal with the systemic issues that are facing communities right across New South Wales.

Police and local communities know that our regional towns and villages are intrinsically linked culturally, socially, economically and, sadly, in criminal offending. Pouring resources into one town will not be effective in dealing with the issue on a broader scale. While that town welcomes the support, many other towns across regional New South Wales are crying out for their support. Today the police have launched an extensive operation, which will involve a significant, targeted, laser-like focus in several regional locations for three months to crack down on crime being committed by those in the 11 to 16 age group. Tamworth is in the cohort of towns. Police will not

only be locking up recidivist offenders but also looking at community solutions for those who are being coerced into crime but want to get on the right side and get away from a life of crime. It is not one single approach that will solve this problem.

I commend the police and those who are on the front line, doing their best to keep our communities safe. The judicial system must keep pace with the current needs and expectations of our community in relation to dealing with crime. They want tougher consequences. They want those who commit these crimes to be held responsible for their actions and feel the consequences of what they have done, which relates to point three of the Time for Change! petition that calls on the Government to review the judicial system to prioritise community safety. These are significant points. Again, I commend the police for the operation that was launched today to focus for the next three months particularly on 11- to 16-year-olds.

We are seeing the crimes become much more serious as young groups of offenders dare each other to go further and to go to the next level. That increases the seriousness of crime. Once upon a time people used to break in and maybe steal the television or an electrical appliance. Now there is "post and boast" and "Creepin While Ya Sleepin". It is getting so much more sinister, and the boundaries are being pushed further and further. Ultimately, someone will bear the brunt of those serious offences. We have already seen that in Gunnedah, when a man lost his life as a result of a group of young offenders stealing a vehicle. These issues need to be addressed. They need to be talked about, and the Parliament should rightly be focused on law and order not only in regional areas but right across New South Wales.

We call on the Government to do more to support regional communities and listen to the voices of the more than 20,000 people who have signed the Time for Change! petition. In coming weeks, we will bring the petition to the Parliament to give members another opportunity to focus on what needs to happen in terms of youth crime. It is about locking up repeat offenders, but it is also about providing solutions and opportunities to those agencies that receive significant amounts of government money to provide services to young people in our community. They need to step up and be part of the solution so that we can provide pathways for young people who want to get away from a life of crime. It is about community expectation and about putting community safety at the top of everything we do. I commend the police for the work they do. We want the judicial system to be able to keep pace with the current environment in which we live. This bill, in our view, does not go far enough. It is a good start, but much more needs to be done.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (15:09): I support the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025 and thank the Attorney General for bringing the bill to the House. There is considerable ongoing concern expressed by regional communities such as mine in Shellharbour about ongoing youth crime. Every MP in this Chamber would have crime very high on their list of priorities, because without community safety we do not have very good communities. That is certainly a priority of mine. The concerns include that young offenders currently out on bail continue to steal motor vehicles and break into houses.

I am concerned not only for the victims of these crimes but also for the young people who are putting themselves in grave danger whilst driving stolen cars at ridiculous speeds on roads not designed to be racetracks. My own road is like a racetrack. Any responsible parent, which most parents are, would say the same thing. Their concern would be for the health, wellbeing and safety of children that are doing this. As a mum, I am worried for those children who put their lives at risk whilst hooning around in stolen cars. No parent should have to suffer the pain of having a child seriously injured or killed in such a heartbreaking manner. My heart goes out to all those families who have lost a child in such tragic circumstances.

Last year, in this Chamber, we heard about a son and daughter who were killed in a hit-and-run accident. It was tragic. No innocent bystander, either in a car or walking down the street like those two kids were, should be put in danger by those who choose to steal cars and drive in an absolutely reckless manner. We must do everything in our power to protect these people. This is what we are in this place for and that is why, last year, the Minns Labor Government introduced a much-needed legislative reform to combat youth crime. This bill will extend a key element of those reforms.

The legislative reform included in the enactment of section 22C of the Bail Act 2013 in April 2024 was originally intended to sunset 12 months after commencement on 4 April 2025. This Government listened to the communities impacted by young people committing break and enters and motor theft offences, particularly in regional areas of our State, and considered it appropriate to extend this measure beyond April this year. The extension is intended to support public safety and address ongoing community concern about youth crime. It will give more time to implement broader community-based initiatives to respond to these crimes. It will also enable the analysis of the impact of these legislative changes over an extended period of time.

The bill replaces the current sunset provision so that section 22C, the temporary bail test, will sunset four years after it commenced, on 4 April 2028. Section 22C remains a time-limited and targeted test. The temporary

bail test was intended as a circuit breaker that offered an immediate response while the broader community-based programs were implemented. Bail authorities, including police officers and authorised justices or a court, will be required to follow the usual steps under the Bail Act 2013 before considering section 22C. I give a shout-out to police in Shellharbour and the Lake Illawarra Police District. Craig Ireland is a fantastic commander, and the hardworking police do a phenomenal job. I am very grateful to have them there. I know many people say, "The police this, and the police that", but when you or someone you love is in trouble, or when there is a community disaster, the first people you are pleased to see are your local police. I certainly want to acknowledge mine in Lake Illawarra. I have the utmost respect for each and every one of them.

Section 22C was introduced as an immediate legislative measure to accompany the rollout of non-legislative community-based responses to address youth offending and support regional communities. The Minns Labor Government is expanding assistance to communities struggling with youth crime, including regional communities right across New South Wales. In February 2025 the New South Wales Government committed \$4 million over five years in Bourke and Kempsey, matching the Commonwealth Government's investment in the Stronger Places, Stronger People program, which supports community-led place-based responses to local issues. It is a sensible and appropriate move to make. The funding for Bourke and Kempsey will establish "backbone" teams to facilitate programs such as inclusive engagement, measurement and evaluation, joint decision-making, governance, and local action. The backbone teams will work with local community leadership groups, and support the community in developing and implementing their tailored strategy and plan of action.

The Australian Government Department of Social Services is planning to undertake an evaluation of the Stronger Places, Stronger People initiative to capture learnings and insights from the first phase. This will inform the forward approach and help in understanding the effectiveness of community-led, collective impact measures. This will be undertaken in partnership with Stronger Places, Stronger People communities, and State and Territory governments. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (15:16): I oppose the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. This bill is about jailing kids. At worst, this bill will jail the most vulnerable kids, and members on both sides of the House know it. This bill is not about stopping crime. It will only make it worse over the longer term. No youth justice system anywhere in the world has been able to jail young people into better outcomes. From New Zealand to Canada, models that recognise, respond to and address young offending with a purpose of turning lives around always secure better outcomes over the long term.

In 2022 the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] found that 64.4 per cent of young people released from detention were convicted of another offence within 12 months, often for more serious offences. These numbers do not lie, but the politicians propounding the ridiculous notion that this bill will address youth crime certainly are. In 2023 BOCSAR statistics showed that 31.7 per cent of children in the Children's Court were either acquitted or had their matter withdrawn or not proven. Under the extension of this law, some of these children could spend weeks or months on remand in detention centres waiting for their cases to be heard whilst making criminal connections inside the system, only to go straight back home from a detention environment after having spent time with other detainees. Does this Government believe that, in spite of all of the evidence, this approach makes things better?

I have listened to some members talk in this debate about the variety of crimes allegedly committed by young people that are not covered by this law at all. I deeply appreciate the need to tackle youth crime, but if members are going to speak and vote on this legislation, they should apprise themselves of what this law actually does. This bill is an excoriation of an individual's right to the presumption of innocence, which guarantees that a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty according to the standards of Anglo-Australian criminal law. It infringes a child's right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention contained in article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provides that holding accused persons in remand should not be the general rule.

I speak to this bill as a former Minister with responsibility for children and young people in New South Wales and for youth justice. As Minister with responsibility for youth justice, I undertook major reform, hit my Closing the Gap target, and oversaw a major reduction of young people in detention. I also secured investments in system change that reduced the number of children coming into the care of the State as well as programs focused on keeping families together that addressed offending behaviour and helped people to become better parents.

As a regional member of Parliament, I am acutely aware of rising crime rates in regional areas. To be clear, I do appreciate the views of some members who have contributed to this debate out of sheer frustration. I hear their concerns about crime in regional communities being out of control. People have a right to feel safe and to live free of fear, and that includes children and young people. I deeply appreciate the rights of genuine victims. Genuine victims should always be supported, but the evidence from Youth Justice Conferences shows that most victims want a young offender's interaction with the youth justice system to be a learning experience that brings

remorse for actions, an appreciation of the impact of crime and the realisation that this behaviour cannot reoccur. We betray victims if we adopt responses that deliver headlines but no real reduction in crime or reoffending. Something needs to be done, but those labouring under the misapprehension that this bill is part of the answer are fooling themselves and their community.

This bill will create more hardened and connected criminals. It will cost taxpayers more. Young people will face a harsher approach for a small category of offences that we presently apply to adults. Targeted early intervention in regional communities addressing youth crime, greater collaboration between government agencies and evidence-based systemic reform will drive down youth crime. Young people are not born criminals. Young people are not born bad. Young people find themselves on the wrong side of the law for a variety of reasons, but the cause of criminogenic behaviour is often due to diagnosed or undiagnosed disabilities, intergenerational disadvantage, poverty, poor parenting and a lack of strong and responsible role models that institute discipline and self-respect.

We need to be clear about what this bill will do. It will extend the operation of section 22C of the Bail Act for three years. When Parliament passed section 22C last year, the Government made it clear that the bill would have a sunset clause for 12 months. In his second reading speech, the Attorney General said that a three-year extension will allow for the collection of more comprehensive data. He has not relied on any evidence or data collected since this provision was introduced to justify the extension, nor has he cited any jurisdictional examples where similar models have actually worked. His speech was full of woolly political rhetoric about getting tough on crime without any evidence to back it up. In fact, the only reference to data was the distinct lack of it. This is apparently a fine and proper basis to continue to trash fundamental human rights while actually making crime in regional communities worse.

The Government decided to propose this amendment without waiting for the findings of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety inquiry into young offending which may have helped to inform this debate. I will now go back to April last year to look at what this so-called progressive Labor Government did. It introduced section 22C so that:

- (1) A bail authority must not grant bail to a relevant young person for a relevant offence alleged to have been committed while the young person is on bail for another relevant offence unless the bail authority has a high degree of confidence the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail subject to any proposed bail conditions.

That section does not apply to all offences. It only applies to a handful of categories, including motor vehicle theft, serious breaking and entering offences and serious indictable offences. In fact, it requires a person between the ages of 14 and 17 to satisfy what would otherwise be called the show cause test, which is contained in the Bail Act.

For members who are unfamiliar with the Bail Act, there are two tests for a grant of bail. Whether one or both tests apply will depend on the offence. The unacceptable risk test applies to all bail decisions. For the most serious offences, the show cause test applies. Examples of offences where accused persons must show cause include the possession or use of a military-style weapon, the commercial supply of illicit drugs or the infliction of grievous bodily harm. These are just some of the most serious offences to which this test applies. If you are under 18 and are accused of committing break and enter offences or a motor vehicle offence, you have to demonstrate factors to the court. An adult defender over the age of 18 who is accused of exactly the same offence does not have to do this. I will say that again—the Government is imposing full bail requirements on children that it does not impose on adults. The Government position is, "Go to jail. Go directly to jail."

Do members believe that jailing children without first trying to turn their lives around is the best approach in 2025? Putting more young people in jail makes some people feel safe, but it perpetuates a blind faith in a broken system. It ignores the evidence and the need for major system changes that other States such as South Australia have adopted in an effort to target early interventions, to turn young lives around and to stem the tide of reoffending. South Australia has the second lowest rate of young offending in Australia, after the Australian Capital Territory. Over the past financial year, 20 young people were responsible for roughly 11 per cent of all matters before the court. They were responsible for a disproportionate rate of offending and reoffending. Spending money on jailing children also cost taxpayers lots of money. Youth incarceration costs \$2,814 per child per day according to data from 2023-24. That is just the start of the real, long-term cost to taxpayers, victims and communities.

In November 2015, the former New South Wales Coalition Government commissioned Mr David Tune to conduct an independent review of the out-of-home care system in response to the growth of out-of-home care populations and continually poor outcomes for the most vulnerable children and their families. According to the Government's own data, around 64 per cent of young people in detention reoffend within 12 months. Almost two-thirds of those children have had an interaction with the child care and protection system. Around half of those young people are First Nations children. The former New South Wales Coalition Government released a response

to the Tune review in November 2016 called *Their Futures Matter*. The vision of *Their Futures Matter* was to create a service system to deliver coordinated, wraparound and evidence-based support for children and families to transform their social outcomes.

Central to that vision is an investment approach that will direct and prioritise whole-of-government funding to deliver prioritised solutions that achieve measurable and meaningful outcomes. An actuarial model of the future outcomes and costs of providing key government services to children and young people in New South Wales underpins this approach. Taylor Fry was commissioned to build an actuarial model and to assist with the identification of vulnerable groups who were likely to have poorer outcomes. Of the 3.1 million young people assessed over this longitudinal study, just 7 per cent comprised 50 per cent of the welfare budget by the time they were 40. [*Extension of time*]

Just 1 per cent of the studied group made up 32 per cent of future justice system costs. Used properly, this data could allow us to make predictions about young people that come into contact with government agencies. For example, students with disabilities accounted for almost 48 per cent of all students suspended in New South Wales in 2023 despite only making up 18 per cent of enrolments. More than 80 per cent of children in Youth Justice have been suspended from school and/or have a disability. At present, privacy legislation prevents agencies from sharing data to make predictions about the future of a young person based on their interactions with government agencies. This Parliament could tear down these privacy legislation walls right now. We make the rules, and we should change them to build brighter futures for young people rather than cancelling them.

We should be able to ask basic questions if a child is suspended from school, including if the student has a disability, if they have a parent in jail, if they are they Aboriginal, if they are they from social or affordable housing and if they are the product of a teen pregnancy. One or some of those indicators can ensure a timely response before a costly justice system response. The Government has a range of targeted early intervention programs, and many of them were funded during my time in the ministry. Programs like Youth on Track and Restorative Justice, and PCYC programs like RISEUP, have made a huge difference. Community corrections orders allow services to work with young people outside of a detention centre environment.

If this Government is serious about stopping youth crime, it needs to invest in short-term, medium-term and long-term solutions. The Attorney General's second reading speech was appallingly short on facts and detail in this regard other than a poxy pilot. The Government should follow the lead of South Australia and convene a round table of key Ministers and department heads to come up with an information-sharing framework that allows for targeted early intervention programs based on touchpoints with young people who are indicated as being at risk. Better collaboration is needed between State and Federal governments and their agencies that are funding social services investments. So much money is being spent in regional communities by taxpayers, but it is not often coordinated or properly assessed. Whilst the spend may look good in a media release, investments need to be measured against outcomes. If programs are not working then they need to be stopped. We need to put valuable resources behind programs that actually work. While there are great examples of very successful Indigenous-led organisations, there are also examples of those that are failing.

All social services need to demonstrate that they are achieving outcomes, including family preservation and restoration, and addressing criminogenic behaviour where it arises. When it comes to managing young offenders, youth justice conferencing works. Whilst I appreciate that young people need to acknowledge their wrongdoing to participate, we need more youth justice conferences, not fewer. The bill kicks the problem of young offending down the road. It means that young people are more likely to be jailed than reformed. I am the first to acknowledge that we cannot turn every life around, and crimes need to have consequences. But if we are leaving the task of deterring youth recidivism to the youth justice system without evidence-based debate focused on systems change and reform, we have not only given up on this fight but also shown that this Parliament does not have the capacity to think beyond the sound bite. We are ignoring the evidence and outcomes obtained in other jurisdictions, and we are giving up on young lives whose futures deserve a chance.

What is so sad about the bill is it says to the world not only that New South Wales does not know how to effect real change, but also that we just do not care. The bill enshrines an attitude that locking up young people will fix youth crime. Young people grow up one day to become adults. If we make hardened criminals out of young people, how on earth do we think they will behave when they grow up and become adults? The bill does not fix youth crime; with respect, it entrenches it.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (15:30): I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. There is considerable ongoing concern being expressed by communities, especially regional communities like mine, about the magnitude of youth crime. I do not think there is an electorate in New South Wales that does not have pockets or suburbs where youth crime is a major problem. That includes motor theft and break and enter offences by young people. Young people are being

released on bail despite repeat offences of that type. Listening to the member for Kiama, one would think we are going to lock up every person who comes before a court. That is not the case.

The issue is evidenced by the recent community rallies in regional towns expressing concern about the impact of youth offending. Tragically, recently there have been deaths allegedly arising from circumstances where young people have stolen vehicles. In 2024 the Government introduced a multifaceted response to combat youth crime, including legislative reform, which the bill seeks to extend, and therapeutic and community initiatives, which continue to be implemented. That response included a targeted package for Moree to address crime, support young people and improve community safety. The multifaceted action was introduced as a response to community concerns about young people committing motor theft and break and enter offences at the time.

I want to be clear: The legislative reform of section 22C was introduced as an immediate measure to accompany the rollout of non-legislative, community-based responses to address youth offending and support regional communities. It is an additional measure introduced to deter young people from engaging in crime while the multifaceted, place-based projects are designed and implemented. That point is critical. I spent many years working in the community services sector for the New South Wales government, and I cannot stress how important it is that services and projects are designed to best suit the youth and/or demographics in a particular area. What may be appropriate in one town may not work in another.

Last year the Government announced a place-based response in Moree, which continues to be implemented. Almost \$905,000 of the \$1 million funding for additional after-hours activities has now been allocated and, most importantly, the programs are seeing strong engagement. The Miyay Birray Street Beat bus has completed over 3,500 pick-ups since October last year, and both the PCYC and the Moree Sports, Health, Arts and Education [SHAE] Academy programs are attracting dozens of children per night, keeping them off the streets and taking them home. Additionally, the small grants program has distributed \$225,000 for the delivery of after-hours activities, from sports and arts activities to mental health and peer support programs. The Safe Aboriginal Youth, or SAY, program being delivered by the SHAE Academy from next month for a two-year period will provide activities and transport for Aboriginal people between 12 and 17 years of age. That is the age group we need to target to turn their lives around.

Miyay Birray will deliver the Casework Support Program for a five-year period. It will help young people meet practical needs and goals as part of their case plan, such as enrolling in education, obtaining ID, finding work and applying for Centrelink payments. Many people might think those are really simple tasks, but I have worked in remote Aboriginal communities that find those things extremely hard to do. Even not having ID puts up so many barriers. We need ID to enrol in TAFE and in school. We need lots of ID to get Centrelink payments. They are major barriers for people in those communities. When they cannot access those services, they turn to crime.

The Government is also expanding assistance to other communities struggling with youth crime, including other regional communities across New South Wales. In February this year the Government committed \$4 million over five years to the communities of Bourke and Kempsey. That funding is matched by the Commonwealth Government's investment in the Stronger Places, Stronger People program, which supports community-led, place-based responses to local issues. The funding for Bourke and Kempsey will be used to fund backbone teams to facilitate planning, inclusive engagement, measurement and evaluation, joint decision-making, governance and local action. The backbone teams work with, and are accountable to, local community leadership groups. They support the community in developing and implementing their tailored strategy and plan of action.

The legislative reform introduced last year included the enactment of section 22C of the Bail Act 2013 and was originally intended to sunset 12 months after commencement, on 4 April this year. However, we have heard loud and clear the ongoing community concern about young people committing break and enter and motor theft offences, particularly in regional New South Wales. We consider it appropriate to extend the measure so that those issues can continue to be combatted. Addressing the issue of youth crime will take time. In many cases, the causes are multigenerational. I agree with the member for Kiama that there are many factors, including disability or multigenerational factors in that a family does not know any other way of life. It will take the will and commitment of all sides of government at all levels to address this ongoing issue. That is why we must amend the Bail Act to extend the operation of the temporary bail test in section 22C for an additional three years, now expiring on 4 April 2028.

More time is needed to fully implement and expand on the measures in Moree and other regional areas to address youth crime. Remember that the aim is to deter youth from engaging in crime in the first place. Section 22C is a temporary, additional bail test for young people who have committed a serious break and enter or motor vehicle theft offence while on bail for another offence of the same type. It is not designed to incarcerate our youth. The extension of the provision is intended to support public safety and address ongoing community concern about youth crime, particularly in regional New South Wales, and to allow sufficient time for the

continued implementation of broader, community-based initiatives to respond to that crime. I thank the Attorney General, the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and the Minister for Families and Communities for their ongoing work in this space. We will continue that work. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (15:38): I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. There has been a lot of discussion about my home town during this debate. I have the advantage of having lived in Moree for 22 years and having raised my family there. I can talk with some authority about Moree and what is going on in my beautiful town. At the outset, I express support for the extended operation of section 22C because this particular section targets the worst offenders. As the member for Orange very aptly pointed out, the section does not capture the kids who are "stealing lollies from the corner shop". This section targets the worst of the worst. It is a brave section. It is a good section. We could possibly do more but, for the purpose of this debate, I support the extension.

Regional crime is getting worse. There is no properly decent proposition that could argue against that, particularly in my electorate. Towns like Moree, Inverell and Armidale have a serious youth crime problem. I have three children and my youngest is nine years old. Owing to the size of my electorate, I spend approximately two nights a week at home, so my wife and my kids are at home most nights without me, particularly when Parliament is in session. My nine-year-old has grown up with crime being an issue. Milly will not go to bed until she has gone around the entire house, checked every window, checked every door, and made sure that outside our dog, Harvey, is awake. Only then will she go into her bedroom. Her behaviour is a direct result of the violent crime that the people of Moree and those right across the Northern Tablelands have had to live with over the past few years.

We are so tired of it. I am so tired of talking in this House about crime, particularly crime in Moree, because Moree is a great town. One of my good friends runs a cafe and the Premier spoke to him during a visit. My friend is still suffering the impacts of having been broken into. He and his partner were seriously assaulted. His head is still scarred. When I speak to him, I know he is a different person to the person he was before the break-in. The home of my former rugby coach in Armidale was broken into a few weeks ago. The intruders took out the security cameras and broke in while he and his wife were asleep. They took his car. I think it was retrieved at Kempsey. The offenders stole hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of property and memories. I notice the presence of the member for Oxley in the Chamber.

Last Monday I received a text message from someone in Inverell I had been speaking to. The text message was to the effect of, "Thanks for chatting to me about mum and dad being broken into a few weeks ago. Just so you know, it happened again. This time they assaulted dad and they've got his car." The reason I give those three examples is that each of those offences allegedly was committed by a youth who was on bail. This is what the extended operation of section 22C is intended to address. The police tell me that almost two-thirds of offending in Moree is committed by teenagers on bail. When I attend Parliament, I often think that if we could simply address that issue, we could take out two-thirds of crime committed in Moree and then Moree would not be known as the crime capital of Australia, as it currently is.

We cannot even staff the Legal Aid office in Moree. As part of the Moree package, the Government gave the town a Legal Aid office but we cannot staff it because junior solicitors do not want to move to Moree. I am a solicitor by trade and I practised in Moree. The reality for a junior solicitor moving to Moree is there is no better place in which to begin a career, particularly for those who wish to be involved in advocacy or criminal law, but we cannot attract staff there. We also cannot attract nurses, teachers and accountants because of the crime problems in Moree. A doctor in Moree allegedly was broken into and assaulted by a teenager on bail. A doctor in Armidale was broken into, assaulted, and her car and numerous very important sentimental items of her property were stolen. We lost that doctor because of the crime rate.

Section 22C has been criticised by academics, lawyers and judges, but when I talk to members of my community there is no criticism of section 22C. In fact, most people say it does not go far enough. When I speak to magistrates I formerly appeared before and who I know, they express support for section 22C. When I speak to local police officers, they support it. When I speak to Indigenous Elders in my electorate, they call for curfews. They are calling for curfews because the problems are reflecting poorly on our Indigenous communities. The crime problem is setting us backwards. The job of Parliament is to protect our communities. We talk about Closing the Gap, but the crime problem in Moree and other regional areas of New South Wales is causing that gap to get wider because people are scared and they are wrongly blaming the entire Indigenous community. Now Elders are calling for more police, curfews and the extension of section 22C, in particular.

I respect the member for Kiama and other members who will speak against extending the operation of section 22C, but to them I say this: Come and spend some time with me in Moree, talk to my community, talk to my Indigenous community, talk to the police, talk to the Milly Moylans of the world who are scared out of their wits every night when it is time to go to bed. That is what we are dealing with. I support the extended operation

of section 22C. I also support the foreshadowed amendments that will be moved by the shadow Attorney because I think the amendments are sensible and will achieve the intention this House had 12 months ago when I was not a member. After reading the speeches in *Hansard* for that time, it is clear that section 22C was introduced by the Government to achieve a targeted outcome for the worst juvenile offenders. The shadow Attorney's amendments are sensible and go some way towards achieving that outcome.

Currently the Northern Tablelands electorate is being held hostage by a very small number of offenders. We are not just sitting back and saying, "Lock up all the kids." That is not what we are saying. I am a solicitor and there are not many solicitors who will say that the outcome is to lock up all the kids. We have place-based initiatives, such as BackTrack in Armidale. I acknowledge the presence in the House of the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport. I point to what the Government has done in Armidale. I approached the police Minister, the Premier and Minister Dib for funding for a trial of BackTrack to undertake a night patrol. I again thank the Government for agreeing to fund the trial.

The night patrol has been in place in Armidale for three nights each week and I think this is week four. We have not had one break and enter offence in Armidale while that BackTrack bus is going around. We have kids on the BackTrack bus who went through the BackTrack program. We have kids who were previously on bail and who were breaching the conditions of their bail. BackTrack picked them up, pulled them in and helped them. Now it is those kids who are helping the next generation of kids coming through. [*Extension of time*]

A targeted localised approach has been commenced by the Armidale community and it is achieving some fantastic results. I have invited the police Minister to come for a ride on the BackTrack bus with me and the BackTrack boys. I hope she accepts the invitation. I point out that regional people are not saying, "Lock everyone up." What they are saying is that the very worst of offenders are causing mayhem and are holding our communities to ransom. As one of the police officers said to me recently, after so many strikes and after already being on bail for breaking into someone's house, these are hardened criminals.

These are teenagers who are putting balaclavas over their face, gloves on their hands and socks over their shoes to break in and assault people in their house for the fun of it. An 82-year-old Catholic nun in Moree recently had her home broken into and her car stolen, and then she was assaulted. She did not fight back. She did not want to risk her own safety for the sake of a Kia that was bought for her by the diocese. She was assaulted almost for fun. We have lost that nun—she left Moree even though she had lived there all her life, for 82 years. These are hardened criminals holding our communities to ransom.

As I said, even though section 22C has been criticised by academics, lawyers and some judges—my magistrates tell me it is good section—it goes some way to addressing these problems. Regional communities and members of Parliament, a number of whom are in the Chamber today, are working with the Government to look at diversionary schemes. None of us are saying, "Lock all of these kids up." We are saying, "Please remove the worst of these offenders from our streets so that people can have some level of confidence and safety in their houses." I support the extension of section 22C. I support the amendments that will be moved by the shadow Attorney General. I thank the Government for its support for my electorate and, in particular, for my home town of Moree.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)
(15:50): I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. After hearing the contribution from the member for Northern Tablelands, few members of the community would not be moved by the experiences he has shared, particularly about his daughter. I think it is very good to have a regional member on that side of the House who is trying to work with the Government. The Government is really trying to work with him on the bill. I know that in my own community of Maitland the fear that is engendered by people committing home invasions and other serious break-and-enters is real and palpable. People should not have to live that way.

No-one wants to lock up young people. We want to ensure that every young person involved in the commission of a crime has the opportunity to rehabilitate early through programs as soon as they start exhibiting antisocial behaviours, well before a criminal offence is committed. That is what the Government is seeking to do. I know that sometimes the debate can become all about the legislation. But, as the member for Northern Tablelands said, I think it is important to remember that this bill is part of a suite of measures put together by the New South Wales Government through the interaction of multiple Ministers with a whole collection of responsibilities ranging from youth justice, corrections and law and order, through to social justice and social services.

We know that a lot of kids who are involved in these crimes come from really difficult backgrounds. We need to balance the judicial and legislative responses with support on the ground to try to address the intergenerational trauma of abuse, discrimination and other relevant factors. I do not want to take up a lot of the Parliament's time. People in my community have reached out to me to express their concerns and fears about rural

and regional crime, particularly in this area. I know they are supportive of the legislation and the Government's approach of having that broader suite of social interventions.

I thank the Premier for his leadership on this matter. Having spoken about these issues firsthand with him, the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, the Attorney General and all the other relevant Ministers, I know there is a genuine commitment to change the story to improve the outcomes for the community and to lead those young people who have lost their way back onto a path where they have a future—because, quite frankly, they do not have a future when they are engaged in this behaviour. Whether it is jail or something else, it is a downward spiral. We do not want that for anyone in our community. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (15:55): I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I start by acknowledging the thoughtful contributions that have been made in this place today, particularly by my colleague the member for Northern Tablelands. He mentioned the phrase "the job of this place". I absolutely agree that "the job of this place" is to speak about the concerns of the community and make sure that we are shaping laws that reflect community needs and expectations. The member's speech about his community and the fraying of its social fabric was a very important contribution in this place.

A number of contributions have touched on the point—and we all agree, as the shadow Attorney General said—that the best response to youth crime is to prevent it altogether. A number of contributions noted, as the member for Tamworth said, that there is not one singular measure to prevent youth crime; we need to look at a number of different approaches. In my community, I acknowledge some of the great work being done with our youth by Tim McLaren at the PCYC, and organisations such as Boys to the Bush, which, right across regional New South Wales, are providing mentoring programs focused on values of engagement, respect and community, and helping boys to become good men. I acknowledge fellow founders Adam DeMamiel, Tim Sanson and Richard Leahy, and all those involved in Boys to the Bush.

I continue to encourage government to explore the Albury Project, which is a screening and early intervention project. Although it identifies youth at risk of homelessness, I think it is applicable here because we know about the intersectionality and challenges faced by our youth. The work of our local high schools, in combination with Youth Unlimited youth services, is also worth elevating. Finally, turning to some of our smaller regional communities, Pat at Tumbarumba sports academy is a great example of someone working with and wrapping support around our youth to make sure that, at the end of the day, we are providing pathways and opportunities for them to make a choice not to go down pathways that lead into the justice system.

The other point that I think the member for Northern Tablelands made quite strongly is the bill is targeted at serious offenders. We only have to look at the title of section 22C, "Temporary limitation on bail for certain young persons in relation to certain serious offences". The targeted approach that the Government is taking in terms of section 22C needs to be recognised. In his second reading speech the Attorney General said that these are hugely important and complex issues. He spoke of working with government. I welcome the opportunity to work with government as we seek to provide services for our youth. One theme in the Attorney General's speech that struck a chord with me was about drug and alcohol programs. That it is one of the real gaps in my community. I certainly welcome the opportunity to work with the Government to provide better support programs for alcohol and other drugs to people in our community.

I also welcome having the police Minister in the Albury community a few weeks ago. It provided a really important opportunity to speak with the Minister about some of the cross-border issues that we face. One particular challenge we face in Albury is justice and the response to crime. At the time the Minister offered to speak further with us about that and, on behalf of my community, I welcome the opportunity to meet with her so that we can work together with the Government to work out ways that we can attend to some of the unique issues, nuances and complexities that we face as a cross-border community.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak about the importance of wraparound supports but at the end of the day, when it comes to law and justice, we must set clear boundaries and send the message that it does not matter whether someone is a young person or an adult, respecting the laws is important. They are in place for the safety of our community, and we must ensure that they meet the expectations of our community. It is about shaping them so that, when it comes to expectations around bail, there is a clear understanding that repeat offenders will ultimately face the law. In that sense I support the bill. I also support the efforts of the shadow Attorney General and the amendments that have been foreshadowed. They provide a real way to make sure the bill is strengthened to meet the needs of our community and also provide opportunities for youth and wraparound services while making sure that there is a clear understanding of where the law stands and the repercussions if those laws continue to be broken. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:01): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. From the outset I say that The Greens categorically oppose the bill. In March last year this New South Wales Labor Government successfully introduced legislation to amend the Bail Act 2013 by inserting a new section 22C, which established a strict new bail test for young people aged 14 to 18. Under the new test young people aged 14 to 18—in other words, children—who are charged with break and enter or motor theft offences while on bail for another offence of those types are only granted bail if the bail authority has a high degree of confidence that the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail.

Last year's legislation, which was strenuously opposed by The Greens and several Independent members of the crossbench, was justified by the New South Wales Labor Attorney General as a "time-limited and specifically targeted" response to the uptick of crime rates in regional areas. Accordingly, the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 contained a sunset clause for section 22C with a sunset date of 4 April this year. The bill that we are currently debating seeks to extend the sunset date by three years until 4 April 2028. The Greens opposed the introduction of the punitive and severely restrictive bail test in the first place and we oppose its extension now. As justification for the extension the Premier has highlighted the fact that 90 per cent of children covered by the laws have been locked up on remand rather than released on bail. He highlighted this, I believe, as a sign of success. Apparently we are so far gone down the path of a punitive law-and-order approach to assisting and supporting our children in this State and a capitulation to the far right that NSW Labor is now openly celebrating locking up children in New South Wales.

To be clear, The Greens absolutely do not discount the genuine fear, stress, worry and trauma that has been inflicted on regional communities and what they may be feeling right now about the break and enter and car thefts in their areas. It is completely understandable that those communities want action. I listened closely to the contribution by the member for Northern Tablelands, who talked about the impact and the fear that the crimes have had on young people in his community. That said, we need to recognise the fear of the young First Nations people and young people who are committing the crimes. What are their feelings? What are the traumas that they have been through? Unlike those of us in this place, the parents of those children do not have the privilege of being in here and sharing their stories. They do not have the privilege of sharing in this place the impacts of the trauma that has occurred in young children's lives over generations.

I recognise that the people in our community who have experienced the injustice and trauma of displacement, colonisation and ongoing failures to close the gap in this State do not have the privilege or the luxury of being in this place and sharing the stories of the fears of their children and young people. It is with that in mind that I speak in opposition to this bill. What is not understandable is the New South Wales Labor Government's dogged determination to criminalise children despite all the evidence showing that locking up young people and having them interact with police only increases their likelihood of reoffending as an adult.

What is not understandable is the New South Wales Labor Government's fixation on tough-on-crime solutions like tightening bail laws when data from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research shows that in 2024 rates of youth crime remained steady with only a slight uptick in shoplifting offences. As former magistrate David Heilpern recently told *The Guardian Australia*:

We can't arrest our way out of this problem ...

We are spiralling into a shock-jock, rightwing-driven response to what is an incredibly complex and societal problem.

Many Opposition MPs in this Chamber have talked about the challenges and the need for a more complex solution to those complex problems. In this State a young person of 14 is not old enough to get a licence, vote or work for most fast-food outlets but apparently is old enough to be denied bail and held on remand for non-violent offences and property theft. The Greens want no part in perpetuating that completely perverse situation, and we want no part in perpetuating the widening divide between First Nations and non-Indigenous people in this country, which is exactly what the extension provided in this bill will do. In March 2024, the year the bail test was first introduced, 66.4 per cent of young people in detention were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. That was a shameful record high. The year prior to that First Nations children made up only about half of young people in detention.

The Attorney General, in introducing the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024, acknowledged that tightening bail laws for kids risked increasing the number of young people in detention and would impact the State's ability to meet our Closing the Gap targets. Members have talked about the fact that those young people are not respecting the laws and that we need to be tougher on them, but perhaps we need to consider the level of injustice that those young people have faced as a result of laws that have added to the dispossession, the colonisation and the genocide of their peoples in this country over hundreds of years. There is a reason those young people are not respecting the laws. It is because we have not reconciled the events of the past. If we are not

willing to have a complex conversation about how we genuinely close the gap, then we will never solve these problems.

Ironically, the bill has been brought for debate and a vote just two days before National Close the Gap Day. I look forward to seeing how many members, particularly on the Government benches, will take photos and celebrate National Close the Gap Day while introducing bail laws that the Attorney General admits will impact the ability of New South Wales to meet its Closing the Gap targets. The hypocrisy is mind-blowing. Last year it was not only The Greens and a few Independent crossbenchers who opposed the horrific law. Over 500 legal practitioners, community workers and academics wrote to the Premier with grave concerns, and more than 60 human rights and legal organisations, including the Human Rights Law Centre and the Aboriginal Legal Service, signed a separate open letter opposing the changes. Their well-founded concerns were brushed away by the New South Wales Labor Government, which seemed to think that the "temporary" nature of the law justified its passage.

In briefing the crossbench on this bill, which extends the sunset clause, the Attorney General's office again described it as an "immediate, temporary legislative measure" while longer term solutions are developed. If passed, this bail test will be in place for a total of four years. Can we really describe something that will be in place for four years as temporary? How many young children will be locked up during that time and what has the New South Wales Government done in the interim? We should be ensuring that every option for diversionary measures, funding for youth and community services, and funding for Aboriginal-controlled and community co-designed programs has been implemented before considering an extension to this draconian law. Why fund any of those evidence-based, community-led options when the Government can just grandstand with a punitive legislative change, which even the Leader of The Nationals admits has made no impact on the ground?

The extension of these laws is a sorry example of how sunset clauses are used to garner support—however begrudging—and to justify laws that those in power know will impede human rights. To some representatives in this place, sunset clauses make those infringements more palatable. The trouble is that in some cases the sun never sets. Take, for example, the power to make preventative detention orders—that is, to detain people before they have committed an offence—under the Terrorism (Police Powers) Act 2002. That power was introduced in 2005, as the war on terror dragged on, and was initially meant to sunset in 2015. Instead, it has been extended four times, most recently in October 2023. The sun will not set on that power until December 2026, more than 20 years after it was introduced as a temporary measure. There is nothing preventing the government of the day from extending the sunset clause again before that date. [*Extension of time*]

Weaponising an immediate crisis to justify measures that would otherwise be considered too drastic or unpleasant is nothing new; in fact, it is straight out of the conservative playbook. An economic crisis justifies cutting public spending on health care, schools and housing. A natural disaster justifies accelerating the dispossession of First Nations people and working people of their lands. Rising global tensions justify parroting right-wing, anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies on a national scale. That kind of behaviour is something we have come to expect from conservative governments, but it is more than disappointing to see the Minns Labor Government wholeheartedly embracing the weaponisation of a crisis in an attempt to justify its increasingly right-wing, harmful agenda.

The Greens agree that there is indeed a crisis at the core of youth offending, but it is not the crisis that Labor claims these laws will solve. The crisis is one of over-incarceration and overpolicing of First Nations people. The crisis is a failure to recognise sovereignty and negotiate treaties with First Nations people. The failure is in not adequately funding public education, youth health care, housing and homelessness facilities. The crisis is in the lack of funding for community services and for the community workers who do essential work. It is a crisis of criminalisation and unequal distribution of resources. Kids do not choose to steal cars or break into homes for fun; they do it because there is nothing else for them to do—because they are being left behind as a result of broken systems and because they do not have the support they need. These are kids. They do not need to be locked up; they need care and compassion.

It costs nearly \$1 million a year to keep a kid locked up in New South Wales. Imagine what each of those kids could do if we funded care and compassion with that \$1 million. Imagine if we used even a fraction of that funding for diversionary programs that dissuade kids from offending in the first place—if we used that funding for health care, education, entertainment, stable housing or public spaces and sporting facilities. We need to do so much more to support young people in regional areas, who are feeling the brunt of worsening inequality. This bill does none of those things. We should be urgently passing laws to address the growing inequality and failure to close the gap, not extending bad laws that will further entrench disadvantage and inflict more trauma on young people who need our care, compassion and support. This is a lazy and dangerous bill from the Minns Labor Government. The Greens cannot and will not support it.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:14): I support the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025 for a number of reasons. It is part of a whole bunch of things the Minns Labor Government is doing to address community concerns over youth crime. It is also part of the broader suite of things the Labor Government is doing to reduce the causes of crime in our community. The bill will extend the operation of section 22C of the Bail Act 2013 until 3 April 2028. That section provides for a limitation on when a bail authority may grant bail to a young person for a relevant offence alleged to have been committed while the young person is on bail for another offence of that type.

A relevant offence is defined as a serious break and enter offence or a motor theft offence. The section applies to a young person who is 14 to 17 years of age at the time the offence that is the subject of the bail decision was committed. The limitation requires the bail authority to have a high degree of confidence that the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence within the meaning of the Crimes Act 1900 if bail is granted. My understanding from talking to local police is that the existing provisions, which the Government seeks to extend with this bill, are being used in the community and are having the intended effect. The offences of serious break and enter and theft of motor vehicle are the sorts of offences that are complained about in the community. They are the sorts of offences that are shared by community Facebook groups and cause a real sense of anxiety. Understandably, the community wants to see them addressed.

When Labor was fortunate enough to form government in 2023, one of the first things I did was bring together in one location all those who deal with young people in my area. It quickly became apparent that there had not been much communication between those groups beforehand. I brought together all the principals of the local schools; the Commander of Tuggerah Lakes Police District, Chad Gillies; representatives from the Department of Education's regional office; and representatives from the Department of Communities and Justice who deal with family and community services issues. We formed some very good contacts at that meeting.

I was told that there were some existing public service positions that would help to better coordinate a response to youth issues in the area. I took that message back to the Minister, along with my colleagues on the Central Coast who were having similar problems. As a consequence, we now have a Youth Action Meeting officer, Rachel Kemp, who is based on the Central Coast. I met Rachel again recently and received a briefing on the work she has undertaken. The reports I receive from the Department of Education, police and Department of Communities and Justice staff are that the Youth Action Meeting is a very effective mechanism to pinpoint or identify young people who are at risk of serious offending and then deliver the services to the young person and their family that will make that offending less likely in the future. It is having an effect.

Local public servants have indicated that there is more we can do. They have pointed to an Education Court Liaison Officer program that operates in the Newcastle region. They feel that position is very effective in helping to coordinate services around young people who are offending as opposed to young people who are at risk of offending. I have undertaken to do all I can to help them achieve that sort of support on the Central Coast. I have not achieved it yet, but I am happy that we have been able, in a short period of time, to get the Youth Action Meeting officer on the Central Coast. I am hopeful that we can get some extra support for those young people who are caught up in the youth justice system, because we need some coordination and support in that area as well.

As supporting evidence that these actions are having an effect, I was recently provided with statistics for the suburb of Bateau Bay in my electorate. Bateau Bay has a quite close-knit social media group that reports and shares information on alleged youth offending in the area. There were 30 break and enter incidents in 2023 and 30 incidents in 2024. So far this year, in the first two months, there have been three such incidents. That is quite a dramatic reduction, if we can maintain it for the remainder of the year. I am advised by local police that nine juvenile persons of interest were involved in those break and enters. Five have been charged, four have been refused bail and other investigations are continuing. In my view, the measures we are instigating in this Parliament through the machinery of the new Labor Government are having an effect on the ground. It is a similar result for stolen vehicles.

However, I am completely sympathetic to the community's view that more needs to be done. Last weekend a large public meeting was organised by a member of the community who lives in the Terrigal electorate. It was well attended. The Commander of the Brisbane Water Police District, Superintendent Jobson, attended and gave a report from the police. The police Minister also turned up and gave a very detailed report about what we are doing to address youth crime in New South Wales. That was well received by the community. Superintendent Jobson made one point that we should all remember: On the Central Coast, incidents of break and enter, theft from vehicles et cetera were very much higher 10 or 20 years ago than they are today. Criminal offending on the Central Coast is down to very low levels compared with the not-too-distant past.

His view was that a lot of the anxiety in our community is the result of social media. The sharing of images that show conduct people would not have been aware of in the past has a tendency to increase community anxiety.

He was encouraging, and he went through the statistics for the whole Central Coast to reassure the meeting that the police are doing their job on the ground and that, overall, crime statistics are heading in the right direction—which is down. I support the bill. More than that, I support everything that the Minns Labor Government is doing to build a society where the likelihood of a young person getting involved in crime is low. The supports we are providing in education, family and society mean that young people are living full lives and do not feel crime is something they should be involved in.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:23): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I acknowledge the very real concerns of people in regional communities who are watching with alarm as youth crime seems to be moving out of control in some areas of the State, particularly in the north and west. The problem in my electorate of Wagga Wagga is not as severe, but it nonetheless remains a serious community concern. Just last week I spoke with the distressed owners of a store in the main street whose shopfront window was smashed in by a young person, apparently in broad daylight, alarming staff and escalating community concerns about antisocial behaviour in the CBD. It was not by any means the only incident of youth crime in Wagga Wagga but, due to its high profile, it is emblematic of the problem.

I commend our local police on the work they continue to do to bring crime under control. They work proactively and, in my opinion, effectively. They certainly need more numbers; there is no question about that. I have been advocating for that. I thank them for the work they do, but crime remains a concern in my community. Certainly, elsewhere in the State, as the crimes become increasingly violent, it is understandable that victims and potential victims see a solution in removing offenders from the community by locking them up more frequently and for longer—which is, essentially, what this legislation will continue to provide. I am not opposed to extending the bail limitations for a short period, if the measure is supported by appropriate diversion and prevention programs. I acknowledge that we are in a youth crime crisis and action is needed to regain control, particularly in some parts of the State.

My preference would be to implement a one-year or 18-month extension to the bail limitations to create breathing space and allow for improvements to diversion and prevention programs that will keep children out of trouble in the first place. I am concerned that a three-year extension, as is proposed, is a set-and-forget option that does not address the underlying need to prevent crime from occurring. However, if the full extension is agreed upon by the House, then I call upon the Government to agree to provide a full and detailed report of all measures involving youth crime to be delivered within 12 months. The report should not only assess the effectiveness of bail reforms but also provide extensive details on the measures being taken in prevention and diversion programs.

It should reveal where those programs are working and where they are falling short, and provide a blueprint for a better approach that aims to keep young people out of custody by reducing offending. It should offer a framework for an effective system to manage the small number of repeat offenders because so much of youth crime is committed by a relatively small handful of young people who are not benefiting from the programs that could change their lives. Earlier today, in question time, I was pleased to hear the Minister talk about an initiative to manage that relatively small group of frequent offenders across the State. Certainly, the police in my electorate spoke to me about a handful of young people who, unfortunately, develop a pattern of offending, going into custody, emerging and offending again before reaching the age of 18, and then entering the adult prison environment. And nothing seems to be done to manage them proactively.

I welcome that initiative from the Minister. I will be looking very closely at the outcomes from that pilot program. That is certainly most important. At the same time, we must plan to provide alternatives for the much larger group of at-risk young people. That is done by harnessing the power of government and communities to divert them from trouble and steer them towards more productive lives. We must ensure that they are supported, because the data overwhelmingly shows that simply locking up young people does not work. A revolving door of youth custody does not deter young people from reoffending. As police have told me on so many occasions, the small numbers of repeat offenders do their time and, upon their release, continue to offend. We need to do better to support and manage them by ensuring that we have diversion and early intervention programs.

Ultimately, if we do not have those programs, we end up with juvenile offenders graduating to the adult prison system. Then we have created incubators for more serious and sustained crimes committed by people who have, sadly, become institutionalised by going in and out of custody during their teenage and adult lives. In my electorate, some excellent work is being done in the fields of early intervention and taking a holistic approach. I speak about the Cockatoo Initiative, the short-term bail remand project and the cooperation I see from agencies on the ground in Wagga Wagga. They are examples of the sorts of cooperation that I think can be so effective. I praise the work that they have done, but I acknowledge that is not the experience elsewhere in the State. The pioneering pilot work done in Wagga Wagga is probably at the forefront of the sorts of initiatives we need to take elsewhere in regional New South Wales.

We need our youth crime enforcement and prevention agencies to not work in silos. I mentioned that we have a good pilot initiative in Wagga Wagga, where people are cooperating and working together. But the issue of sharing information between schools, police, social workers, support agencies and community leaders is really important. It seems to be caught up in concerns around sharing data under the privacy Act. From my experience in talking to agencies, it is good to see that there is good sharing of information, but that is not always the case throughout the State.

The idea of a program of managing frequent offenders, supporting youth diversion and early intervention, and ensuring that agencies cooperate, share information and work together is not easy. I get that, but we should not funnel children into detention. We should construct and build alternatives. I agree that it will take a community-wide approach, but with the right measures we can steer our young people out of trouble and deliver them a future that does not inevitably involve a life behind bars. I would like to see a comprehensive, constructive and detailed report within 12 months from the Government, detailing its actions and its clear pathway, so that we have fewer young people in custody and our communities truly feel protected and safe.

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:31): I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. Some 12 months ago section 22C was inserted into the Bail Act, with a 12-month sunset clause. The original bill introduced a new test under section 22C that before bail can be granted for repeat motor theft or serious breaking and entering offences committed on bail, for offenders between the ages of 14 and 18 years, the bail authority must have a high degree of confidence that the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail. While the Minns Labor Government proposed those measures to combat the pressing concern in communities, I believe the response falls short.

The test of a high degree of confidence still has to be developed in terms of what it means, with several Supreme Court judges unfavourably observing that the test is not known to the law. Apparently, in legal circles, for the judiciary to say something is not known to the law is usually not a flattering observation. While the Attorney General has stated that the new bail test has been approached cautiously and that an evaluation would take place after the 12-month provision of the amendment had passed, I note that in his second reading speech to this bill there was no mention of the evaluation and no sharing of any results or information to assist members in their consideration of an extension to section 22C.

It is clear that the amendments and the cautious approach have failed the communities of New South Wales. Every day we hear stories where the justice system has failed. We have seen in the courts an unwillingness to apply the high degree of confidence test. A number of decisions show a judicial opposition to the fact that a different 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 communities of New South Wales deserve laws that are more responsive to the crisis unfolding. Communities are demanding a tougher response from this Government. We have already seen the impact; we have seen lives lost and communities screaming out for more action and for safer communities.

I support the shadow Attorney General in his work to move sensible amendments to improve the bill. The amendments will require that in the event 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, there must be a curfew on the relevant young person in the interest of community safety between the hours of 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m., and the young person must be subject to electronic monitoring in relation to the enforcement of the bail condition imposing a curfew and any other relevant bail conditions.

Electronic bail monitoring for youth offenders is already used in many jurisdictions, including Western Australia, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. It is not simply a reactive measure; it is a proactive approach to safeguarding our youth and our communities. A curfew would provide the structure that many young individuals lack, particularly those at risk of engaging in criminal behaviour. This time-based restriction could serve as a critical deterrent, compelling young offenders to remain in a safe environment during vulnerable hours. Monitoring will not only enhance compliance with bail conditions but also reassure our communities that we are taking steps to hold young offenders accountable for their actions.

We should not shy away from utilising available resources to bolster public safety. Electronic monitoring has dramatically reduced reoffending in domestic violence parole cases as measured by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, the government data agency. It is reasonable to think that a similar result will be achieved with regard to reoffending rates by young persons with a history of committing serious break and enter or motor theft offences. Bail granted under section 22C will be revoked under the proposed Opposition amendments in one of three circumstances: a failure to comply with the bail conditions, the young person being charged with another crime, or any interference with the electronic monitoring device.

There must be real consequences for those who breach bail conditions. Our communities deserve a strong message. If the conditions set are breached, there will be serious repercussions. It is a privilege for repeat serious

offenders to be granted bail, having regard to the seriousness of their circumstances. By imposing clear consequences for their reoffending, the Opposition believes that the existing law will be tailored more in favour of community safety. We have now had the opportunity to see how the legislation is being interpreted by the courts and operating in practice, and whether there has been an acceptable reduction in crime.

The time for half-hearted measures is over. Our youth are facing challenges that require our urgent and comprehensive attention. The Minns Labor Government's response has failed to confront the complete reality of youth crime, from theft and vandalism to serious assaults. We must do better for our communities. We must recognise the critical need for those amendments to the bill. We cannot afford to remain stagnant in our approach to youth crime. By extending the temporary bail limitation, imposing stricter conditions, incorporating monitoring and ensuring robust oversight, we can create a framework that holds young offenders accountable while also offering them the chance for redemption. Let us work together to create a safer future for all, where our communities can thrive and our youth can find hope rather than a path to criminality.

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (16:37): The Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025 is extremely short but has significant consequences for the young people of our society and also for those in our society who are subject to offences committed by such young persons. The original bill was the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024, which was introduced on 12 March 2024 and debated and passed by this House on 19 March 2024. The original bill introduced a new test for offenders aged between 14 and 18. The new test, which is now contained in section 22C of the Bail Act, requires that the bail authority have a high degree of confidence that a young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail. The term "high degree of confidence" is not defined in the legislation. The test has been considered in a number of Supreme Court decisions. For instance, in *R v BH* [2024] NSWSC 1557, Justice Yehia, after having read the Attorney General's second reading speech to the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024, said at paragraph 13:

The "high degree of confidence" required under s 22C may require some probabilistic assessment. It may also import some value assessment based on the evidence. However, "probability" and "confidence" are not completely synonymous.

His Honour later observed at paragraph 17:

It is both curious and troubling that a stricter and higher test applies to children (as opposed to adults), who seek release to bail. On its face, it is inconsistent with the principles set out in s 6 of the Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1987 ...

There have been other decisions where it would appear the court has had some difficulty with how to apply the high degree of confidence test. The shadow Attorney General in his thoughtful and, I might add, very well considered second reading contribution, referred to other Supreme Court decisions. I will not recite them. The concern about how the court will ultimately interpret the high degree of confidence test is, to my mind, a very strong and compelling reason why this House should not extend the operation of section 22C until 4 April 2028, as proposed by the Attorney General. I respectfully say to members that extending the operation of section 22C by one year only will give Parliament the opportunity to consider in a year's time whether the legislation is achieving the object of deterring and reducing crime by young persons.

The Attorney General did not provide data or statistics in his second reading speech around how the section has operated over the past 12 months. The original bill commenced on 3 April 2024 and will shortly have its 12-month anniversary, which is why this piece of legislation is before the House. In his second reading speech the Attorney General said:

While I had hoped that 12 months would be sufficient to address community concerns, as the sunset approaches it has become clear that community concern remains high.

The Attorney General did not say how many times magistrates and judges have found that the high degree of confidence test has been established or how many young offenders have committed further offences whilst on bail. In his second reading contribution the shadow Attorney General stated that it is a shame that data was not provided by the Government. In my view, that statement is absolutely correct. It would have been very helpful had the Government provided such information, not only to members but also to society in general, so that people can make a proper assessment of whether the bill is achieving the objectives for which it was passed.

The Bail Act is a very important piece of legislation to our society. It regulates whether offenders are entitled to be released on bail pending the determination of charges. All members would agree that we should do what we can to keep society safe. I am aware that the shadow Attorney General will propose important amendments to the bill on behalf of the Opposition, which I will support. They include that the bail authority that grants bail will be required to include conditions such as the imposition of a curfew on the relevant young person between the hours of 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. and the requirement that the relevant young person be subject to electronic monitoring by the Corrective Services commissioner.

Community concern about continuing offences by young persons is not new. Further, community desire for curfews to be imposed is also not new. I inform the House that community desire for curfews was raised in

1995, 1996 and 1997. In chapter 12 of *Crime in Rural Australia*, first published by The Federation Press in 2007, author Melissa Bull refers to various public meetings that occurred in the mid-1990s. Regarding the request by the community for curfews, she wrote:

Many of the smaller towns in the north west ran campaigns through local councils and media in an effort to place pressure on the State government throughout 1995, 1996 and 1997.

The meetings were volatile. Later, she wrote:

Demands typically included laws to increase police powers to control drunkenness and disorderly behaviour, remove children from public places and impose curfews; the imposition of tougher penalties, and the removal of special provision and laws on anti-discrimination, civil liberties and legal aid ...

The community has been asking for curfews for a long time. Over the years, this House has endeavoured to design laws that protect our society. This is not a political issue between the relevant parties. All parties have tried to do it. I respectfully suggest that it is time for the Government to stand up for the community and support the amendments that have been proposed by the shadow Attorney General.

We must do more to protect our communities and engage with young persons in the hope of educating them that youth crime is not acceptable. The amendments proposed by the shadow Attorney General, which provide for a curfew and electronic monitoring, will move us one step closer to making communities in this State safe. The amendments also include new section 22C (3A) and (3B) to provide for bail to be revoked where a young offender fails to comply with bail conditions; any further charges are laid against the relevant young person; or there is interference with the device used to electronically monitor the young person. The young person whose bail is revoked will not be granted bail for the same offence unless the failure to comply with the bail conditions was a trivial failure or exceptional circumstances apply. Those amendments to make our community safe are eminently sensible, and I see no reason why Government members would not support them.

As has been said by many members, we must do more to make our communities safe. The Opposition's amendments will do that. The decisions we make in this House on this bill must be based on the protection of our community. The shadow Attorney General's amendments are sensible and have been designed to protect our society. As a former member of the NSW Police Force and a former police prosecutor, I know that the police want sensible laws to make our community safe. They are tired of locking up young persons only to have them released on bail, when they continue to commit offences. The Opposition supports the police. I respectfully say that the Opposition amendments support what the police would want from legislators. I urge all Government and crossbench members to support the sensible amendments proposed by the shadow Attorney General.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (16:47): I speak on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I am deeply concerned about the potential impact of the bill, which risks making lifetime criminals of children who are already vulnerable and facing significant challenges. The reasons behind the introduction of the bill are well known—namely, growing concerns about youth crime, particularly in regional areas like Moree. Moree has seen a spike in youth crime, specifically robberies, break-ins and car thefts, often involving weapons. I appreciate that the Moree community is living in fear. The bill reverses the presumption of bail for 14- to 17-year-olds, imposing a more punitive approach than for an adult. However, I welcome that the bill does not apply to under-14-year-olds. I have spoken to the mayor of Moree, who has reiterated the dire situation her community is facing due to the escalating crime that is happening in her region and in other regions across New South Wales.

I understand that First Nations members of the Moree community have indicated support for a tougher approach, despite First Nations children being disproportionately incarcerated. I note that this legislation impacts young offenders across New South Wales—not only in regional areas but also urban ones. In my community there has been ongoing car theft, at times committed by young offenders. Recently, there was an attempted home invasion in Terrey Hills, which was a stark reminder of the troubling trend of escalating youth violence more broadly. I also note an article today in *The Sydney Morning Herald* identifies that the urban youth crime sprees are part of a broader organised adult crime network, which differentiates it from the youth crime experienced in many regional areas.

I thank the Attorney General for his discussions with me. He is committed to addressing the root cause of this issue as well as the regional ones. We need safe communities. Action needs to be taken, but we must ask ourselves: Does this bill truly address the root cause of crime or is it a kneejerk reaction that risks further harm to our young people? We know that punitive approaches are not evidenced based and do not work. Evidence has instead shown that we need earlier intervention to prevent the criminalisation of children and to address the complexity of the issues that lead to criminalisation.

The National Children's Commissioner, Anne Hollands, has done extensive research, including in the report, *'Help Way Earlier!' How Australia can transform child justice to improve safety and wellbeing*. The report

noted that children in contact with the criminal justice system are generally dealing with multiple complex issues in their lives that contribute significantly to offending and reoffending. These factors include racism, poverty, intergenerational trauma, violence and abuse, homelessness and inadequate health care. We should also look to the Youth Justice Reform Taskforce in Tasmania, which is focused on early intervention to reduce the number of children and young people in detention and on remand through an interagency holistic approach.

The Tasmanian Government listened and responded to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. Although it is in its early days, the impacts of the Tasmanian reforms are promising. I also note that the New South Wales Government's *Forecasting Future Outcomes* report from 2018 was commissioned to better understand how we can break the cycle of youth crime. The report highlighted the importance of early intervention, diversion programs and restorative justice processes. The Audit Office of New South Wales *Their Futures Matter* report also calls for a more integrated and coordinated approach to youth justice with a focus on support services, education and mental health. The report stresses the need for evidence-based programs that address the underlying causes of youth offending such as trauma and disadvantage.

As it currently stands, this bill does not align with the recommendations of any of those reports. Instead, it moves us in the opposite direction by focusing more on punitive measures rather than the preventative and rehabilitative strategies that we know are essential. My concerns about this bill are based on its immediate and long-term implications. Locking up children will do nothing to stem crime; it will set them on a path for adult crime. It is not the solution. It weighs heavily on my heart, because we know that a punitive approach does not work. That brings me to my other concern about cost. We cannot afford to pass laws that contradict the recommendations of experts. Failing to invest in solutions that we know work will be at a considerable cost for the taxpayer. The cost to the taxpayer for children in detention is \$1 million per year per child. That is an extraordinary amount. It is money that could arguably be better spent to give a better return and to reduce crime.

I understand that these programs take time, and that investment has been made in areas like Moree. Time is needed to better implement programs to reduce crime in those areas. There is an ongoing inquiry into the safety of regional and rural communities. Its report will no doubt provide the necessary evidence to guide our decision-making. I urge the Government to commit to addressing the recommendations that will come out of that inquiry and to heavily invest in early alternative intervention.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (16:52): From the outset, I state that I support the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I look forward to discussing the amendments that will be proposed by the Opposition. This bill is very important to the Upper Hunter, particularly for my communities at Gloucester, Merriwa, Singleton, Scone, Muswellbrook and many others. Crime is at the top of mind for many people there. That is not necessarily because there are huge crime rates in those towns. It is because the small number of crimes that do occur have a huge impact on our community.

Only a very small minority of regional youth are involved in these crimes, and yet the impact on the communities of regional New South Wales is enormous. It affects how people feel about safety in their homes and how they go about their lives. A lot of the youths are repeat offenders. Conversations with police officers have confirmed that spikes of crimes in my community have been the result of a few people who are making a big impact. The community is becoming more aware of these crimes, and fear is setting in. This is a direct consequence of social media, which allows criminals to record their crimes and boast about them. Many home owners now have their own security cameras and are able to record any incidents around their house. It is very easy to share those recordings on social media and a lot of information gets spread around in Facebook community groups, which creates a higher level of fear in the community.

This bill must get the balance right when it comes to community safety. We have been raising the issue of regional youth crime for a long time. It is very important to our local communities. At this point I will mention our local police who work very hard to make sure our communities stay safe. I cannot thank them enough for the amazing work they do, particularly in my electorate of the Upper Hunter. We do not just want to see incarceration; we want to see diversion programs and the use of bail halfway houses. This bill is just one part of a broad spectrum of work that needs to be done to deal with youth crime across the board. When the community talks about crime, they do not want to see youths locked up when they break the rules or commit crimes. They want to see people working with these kids in diversion programs to bring them back on track.

I recently attended a crime rally in Kempsey; it was a significant gathering of people. We heard how seriously people from that community feel about crime. The Parliament must heed the concerns of those communities and do something about them. That is one of the reasons why I support this bill. When the initial bill went through last year, I gave my own example of an attempted car theft from my farm at Castle Rock just outside of Muswellbrook. I managed to scare the person away. Most members would be horrified at the thought of me running out onto the deck dressed only in my jocks and chasing someone away. I am sure the five-foot-nothing young teenager was probably not as scared. Looking back, I am very lucky that he decided to run instead of

confronting me. It was very dark, and I was using a few choice words that I would not normally use. I was also alluding to the fact that I had a rifle, which I certainly did not have.

That sort of thing happens. We get over it; we move on. But, since then, I have had a lot of discussions with community and heard stories about what has happened. My place is in the middle of nowhere. Only a week later, my daughter was staying there by herself because I was away. I thought about what could happen when I am not there. What would have happened if that person had confronted me and decided to take me on? What would have happened if that person had come into the house? That is adding to the fear. We fear for our kids at home. Once targeted, we fear that we become a repeat target. That has not happened in my case, but I know it has to many in my community. Just last week I received a phone call from someone very concerned about how kids were breaking into the old theatre at Scone during its renovation, just for an adventure. The person was very concerned that they would light fires and we would lose that building. I am starting to understand how fear can get into the community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): 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.

I welcome leaders hosted by the member for Davidson. Welcome to the New South Wales Parliament, the oldest Parliament in Australia. It is lovely to have you here.

Public Interest Debate

REGIONAL YOUTH CRIME

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): Before I call the member for Dubbo to move his motion, I will set the tone of the debate. I understand that public interest debates are robust in nature; we all love them. However, if any member is disrespectful or unruly during the debate, I will direct them to leave the Chamber.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:01): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Acknowledges the NSW Police Force's high-level youth strategy, including 60 new dedicated police and rapid response units to tackle juvenile crime across New South Wales.
- (2) Recognises more needs to be done to stop repeat youth offenders committing serious crimes.
- (3) Notes the Allen Labor Government's recently announced bail laws in Victoria.

This conversation comes at a crucial time. Interestingly, it is on the same day that the Minns Government's bail extension bill is being debated in this place, and continues to be debated right up until this moment. It has provided a unique opportunity to take a long, hard look at whether the changes introduced last year are making any difference. The jury in the regions is very clear, and the answer is a resounding no. The hard fact is that youth crime is escalating across regional New South Wales. It is getting more frequent and more deadly. Regional residents have had enough of being stuck in a constant state of panic and fear, so much so that they are holding rallies to make sure their voices are heard. Hundreds of people have gathered in places like Kempsey and Moree, and the general feeling on the ground is anger and helplessness. I saw their frustration firsthand when I attended the rally in Kempsey a few weeks ago. I was there with the member for Oxley and several of my other Nationals colleagues, who are in the Chamber. There were more than 700 locals, all calling for real action. If we asked anyone at that rally if they felt that Labor's solutions were making a difference, they would say, "You are absolutely kidding yourself."

There is no doubt that our police are doing an incredible job. That is part of what I want to talk about today. The launch of Operation Soteria by the commissioner and deputy commissioner today demonstrates that the police are firmly focused on addressing the issue. The operation was announced in my electorate of Dubbo, which shows that my community and others—Moree, Tamworth, Orange, Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Taree and Newcastle—are top of mind. Dedicating 60 officers to patrol key hotspots will help to empower our police to do what they need to do more efficiently. It is also great to hear that the operational arm of the operation will see high-visibility policing targeting hundreds of repeat offenders believed to be responsible for 90 per cent of youth crime across regional New South Wales. We see it and feel it every single day. Part of the plan absolutely needs to be around better resourcing of our Police Force Youth Command and utilising existing expertise within each community to run the diversionary programs that are needed. I have always said that a cookie-cutter approach will never work.

The new police operation is a good start. But now we need to back police 100 per cent by giving them legislative support so that when kids get off the streets, they are not constantly sent back to the same place that

saw them offending previously. We know that an alarming number of kids reoffend within 36 hours of being released from police custody. Any regional cop will tell us how frustrating that is. Sometimes they feel like it is a revolving door. It is not good enough, and we need to take a strong next step so that our officers know that their work is going towards something meaningful. The laws that have been put in place by our Coalition friends in Queensland, and those being worked on by the Labor Government in Victoria, show that we are clearly not going far enough.

A year ago, when those opposite put forward their bail bill, which we are looking at again today, the Coalition said exactly that: It does not go far enough. Under the new laws in Victoria, which passed the first hurdle a couple of days ago, those caught committing a serious offence while on bail will face a tougher bail test. For youth offenders who commit serious crimes, remand will no longer be considered a last resort. In the meantime, here it is a year later and serious repeat youth offenders are still holding our communities to ransom. A year later, our residents are still terrified to walk the streets. A year later, our families and friends still do not feel safe in their homes. Why would we just extend the legislation instead of listening to our communities and strengthening it? The Opposition put forward amendments on today's bail bill, because the message from regional New South Wales is clear and simple: If nothing changes, we will keep heading in the wrong direction.

At the end of last month we saw another tragic escalation, with the death of 17-year-old Kallen Murray in Bourke in the west of the State. An allegedly stolen vehicle was involved in a joy ride and led to a police pursuit and a crash that ended his life far too soon. Along with Kallen, a 13-year-old, a 16-year-old and a 14-year-old were in the car. One of them was on bail at the time. I cannot help but wonder if that would have happened if we did more and went further with our bail reforms. We need to do better in the future, because Kallen's death cannot be in vain. His family and friends are struggling to come to terms with his loss. It was wasteful, it was avoidable and it should never have happened. It should be a wake-up call for the Government that we need a circuit breaker to stop those incidents from occurring.

The Nationals have always been clear in its position that the bail laws need to go further, to offer a more robust solution to this crisis. As part of that, we will look at removing the discretion exercised by the courts when it comes to bail because, while that discretion exists, there will be a problem for police and communities. I have talked about how important it is to back in the police. We are also looking at changes to *doli incapax* and reversing the onus because, again, we have had enough of the young ringleaders in our communities—who will now be targeted by police—trying to claim that they do not know what they are doing is wrong. A part of that should include what is called offence-focused work, where tailored video counselling starts the first time a young offender is in contact with the criminal justice system, rather than a year or two down the track, which is currently what is happening.

Legislative changes are not the entire solution, and a holistic approach that is tailored to each community is needed. A one-size-fits-all approach is not going to cut it, because every community is different. They need different solutions based on their capacity on the ground. Giving police the legislative support they need is a massive part of all of this. Diversionary programs and different pathways for different kids, rather than constantly bailing them back to the same environment over and over again, are part of the solution as well. We need to do everything we can to stop repeat youth offenders from carrying out crime sprees across regional New South Wales or the sad result will be more deaths like the 17-year-old I referred to. We know that the time for change is now.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (17:08): In this public interest debate, I highlight the Minns Government's robust and decisive actions in addressing regional youth crime. Before members opposite interject, what did they do when they were in government? Our Police Force is working tirelessly, day and night, to combat these crimes, apprehend offenders and ensure the safety of our communities. This Government is committed to addressing the root causes of youth crime and implementing meaningful solutions that will provide long-term results. We understand that crime prevention requires a multifaceted approach that combines strong law enforcement measures with targeted community initiatives. This is why the community safety inquiry conducted by the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety, which I chair, will complement the substantial work already underway, including our \$26.2 million package aimed at preventing regional crime.

One of the most significant developments in our fight against youth crime is the launch of Operation Soteria, which the Minister announced today. This new police initiative is dedicated to targeting, disrupting and investigating youth crime, particularly among offenders 11 to 16 years of age. Focusing on serious offences, such as aggravated break-ins, vehicle theft, and "post and boast" crimes on social media, Operation Soteria will deploy 80 dedicated police officers to crime hotspots in Moree, Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange, Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Taree and Newcastle over the next three months. This effort will be supported by PolAir and roaming response units to enhance police visibility and response.

Operation Soteria is not just about arrests. It includes preventative measures. Officers will identify at-risk youth and refer them to intervention programs such as Youth Action Meetings [YAMs], which is a multi-agency

forum designed to divert young offenders away from crime. Police will also engage community leaders and crime victims to provide updates and support in impacted areas. This builds on the success of Operation Regional Mongoose, which has already made a tremendous impact across the State. Since its launch, Operation Regional Mongoose has investigated thousands of break-ins and vehicle thefts, leading to the arrest and charging of hundreds of offenders across northern, western and southern New South Wales.

We have also taken legislative action to strengthen our justice system. The section 22C bail test has been introduced to ensure that young repeat offenders charged with motor vehicle theft or serious break-ins while on bail are not granted bail unless there is a "high degree of confidence" they will not reoffend. Early data shows that this measure is working, with the bail refusing rate more than doubling for young offenders charged with these serious crimes. Another important legislative reform is our "post and boast" law, which prevents young offenders from glorifying their crimes on social media. Since its implementation, 53 individuals—27 of whom were under the age of 16—have been charged under this law.

The Government has delivered real action while the Opposition only offers complaints without any positive suggestions. We have expanded Youth Action Meetings to nine new locations, identified thousands of intervention actions, and assessed nearly 1,500 young people, with 74 per cent being placed on YAMs programs for support. Programs such as Fit for Life, RISEUP, and school-based anti-violence initiatives have been instrumental in engaging young people in positive pathways. The Dubbo-based Project Walwaay is another example of our commitment to diversion and rehabilitation. By focusing on education and employment, this initiative has successfully engaged at-risk youth in positive activities. While a lot has been done, we acknowledge that more needs to be done to add to the Government's initiatives delivered over the past two years.

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:13): Youth crime has been dominating the headlines. It is tearing through New South Wales. The member for Mount Druitt thinks regional crime will be fixed, and that we just complain. Some in the Government were listening to some of our suggestions to bring it about, and I thank the Government for the announcement this morning. We think the Minister also needs to change the law. We see it every day in my electorate. It is in the voices of victims seeking help in my office. It is on Facebook and CCTV videos of children in masks with machetes, trying to break into homes. It is on Instagram under the hashtag "Creepin While Ya Sleepin". The announcement of the police rapid response team, with 60 officers under Operation Soteria, is a huge win for the Mid North Coast. More boots on the ground are essential. However, true safety will only come when our laws back our police officers.

As someone who hears about crime in Oxley daily, the increased police presence is not enough. After 12 months of fighting for stronger bail laws, the frustration reached boiling point. Last month 700 people from across the Mid North Coast stood with me on a hot day in Kempsey and demanded action. They were mums and dads, business owners, kids, retirees—the whole community. We need real consequences for serious and repeat young offenders. If you commit a serious crime while on bail, you must be remanded until your court appearance. Community safety comes first. We need a victim-first approach to sentencing, amending the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act so that the harm done to victims outweighs any mitigating or aggravating factors for the offender. Sentencing must prioritise the impact on victims, not just the circumstances of the criminal.

We need to crack down on crime-glorifying social media pages, where offenders try to outdo each other. Who can steal the fastest car? Who can outrun police the longest? Who can get the most views? All the while, they are putting our community at risk. Social media fuels this crisis. I welcome the push for the eSafety Commissioner to remove these pages, but we need tougher penalties for those glorifying crime online. We have already seen the deadly consequences in Gunnedah and Bourke. Those are real people—someone's father, someone's son, someone's best friend. Yet repeat offenders walk free on bail. How can anyone justify that? A known dangerous driver caught stealing cars, goading police, speeding away and taunting the public is allowed back onto the streets only to do it all over again. This is happening now, and it will happen again.

Some argue *doli incapax*, the legal presumption that a child under 14 does not understand their actions. A lot of them do not. But in Kempsey alone, 70 per cent of people charged with motor vehicle theft were aged between 10 and 17, and 71 per cent of people charged with break and enter dwelling were aged between 10 and 17. No-one can tell me that a 10- or 12-year-old fleeing police in a stolen car and terrorising communities does not know what they are doing. The onus must be reversed. If they have been before a judge five, 10 or 50 times and been told not to come before the court again, then they know what they are doing is wrong. Tougher laws alone will not fix this. We also need diversionary programs that actually work. Many of these programs fail to uphold accountability, do not deliver real change and do not set these kids up for a future outside of crime. We need pathways to skills, jobs, trade programs, apprenticeships and training. We need mentors and stable environments so that early intervention works and is not just a tick box exercise.

The people of Kempsey and regional New South Wales are tired of excuses. They do not want more government reviews or another "soft on crime" approach that sees repeat young offenders back on the streets

hours after being caught by the rapid response team. We have an opportunity to follow the Victorian Government and enforce tougher bail laws, but the Minns Labor Government is dragging its feet. Why? We know it can move fast when it wants to. We have seen it. Just look at the swift action taken on antisemitism. It proves that when an issue demands urgency, the Government can act quickly. Youth crime is escalating at a fast rate. We need action in the regions now.

I challenge anyone who disagrees with these points to explain to the thousands of victims of youth crime why they will not put victims' rights over offenders' rights. Let them look into the eyes of our community and justify why a repeat violent offender deserves another chance while innocent families live in fear, terrified to leave their homes or waking up in the middle of the night with nightmares that the criminal is in their house with a knife and threatening their life. It is time to put the rights of victims and communities before the rights of offenders. The people of regional New South Wales have had enough. We need tougher bail laws now.

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (17:19): Right now, police are working around the clock to fight crimes and arrest offenders. They are doing everything they can. To suggest otherwise is absolutely false. Recently I had the honour to participate in the Behind The Blue program and spent a 14-hour day experiencing a day in the life of a police officer in New South Wales. I take this opportunity to thank members of the NSW Police Force for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to policing in New South Wales. It is not clear how members opposite can acknowledge the high-level youth strategy and rapid response units of the NSW Police Force when most days in this House they take any available opportunity to bag the police. What is clear is that the previous Government did not lift a finger when it came to addressing youth crime or recruiting and retaining our cops. They left the Labor Government thousands of officers short.

Government members are laser-focused on supporting our experienced police officers and on recruiting more cops. In 18 short months, this Labor Government has achieved much. Recruitment is up over 67 per cent. Since our announcement in late 2023 to pay recruits, 3,502 applications have been received. We had a full class of recruits at the December attestation. Our next class will have over 300 recruits. That will go a long way towards filling positions in regional areas that the previous Government decimated. This Government also delivered the biggest pay rise in years. After 12 long years of a wages cap under the Liberal-Nationals, the police will receive a 19 per cent pay rise over four years as well as reforms to pay scales and allowances. For those with caring or other responsibilities, it will be easier for them to job share or work part time so they remain in the workforce. In the past, that has been very difficult.

This Government also has launched the Professional Mobility Program so cops from other States can join at rank. We have received nearly 90 applications from experienced cops, even from as far away as New Zealand. We have also started the "You Should Be a Cop in Your Hometown" campaign to encourage people in regional areas to attend the Police Academy and return to where they live. We have created a new health and wellbeing command to bring the police insurance scheme back into public hands to ensure that our police officers recover and return to work. Instead of bagging our police officers, I suggest that you two—

Mr Michael Kemp: Who's bagging the police?

Ms LIZA BUTLER: You do it most days in this place.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. All members will come to order.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: I suggest that members opposite undertake the Behind The Blue program to find out what our men and women in blue truly do each and every day. The police are doing everything they can to target, disrupt and investigate youth crime. Today the NSW Police Force launched Operation Soteria to address an escalation of violence in offenders aged between 11 to 16 years across western and northern parts of the State. There will also be a focus on prevention.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The member for Clarence will come to order.

Ms LIZA BUTLER: Addressing the issue of youth crime will take time because in many cases the causes are multigenerational. It will take the will and commitment of all sides of Parliament and all levels of Government to address this issue. The Minns Government wants to get to the bottom of these complex problems and will seek solutions that the Government can implement to tackle the root causes and drivers of this crisis in our regional communities. There are diversionary projects. Earlier today I spoke in debate on the bill to extend the operation of section 22C. Those projects need to be location based and region based or they will not work. I spent many years in community services.

The New South Wales Government has taken steps to strengthen its response to youth crime, support police operational responses and pass additional legislation. I point out to the member for Oxley that since our new

post-and-boast legislation came into effect 12 months ago, 53 individuals have been charged. Of those, 27 were under the age of 16. In 2022, it was none other than the member for Dubbo who was complaining about the very problem of young people posting and boasting about their crimes online. Yet it took a Labor Government to deliver serious legislative reform.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (17:24): Thank God that cheap contribution by the member for South Coast is over. Why is she politicising this debate? In the gallery we have students from 12 schools from the electorate of the member for Davidson, and we are debating youth crime. We should adopt a bipartisan approach. Everybody should be working together to consider what we can do to combat youth crime—instead of members opposite being inciteful. The Coalition wants to work together. Students in the gallery are hearing about youth crime. We want to ensure the Government is committed to providing a proactive community contribution to them and their schools and communities. The Coalition wants to provide those community solutions and be proactive with supportive programs while supporting those who are being coerced by others. We also acknowledge our police, who do a fantastic job.

Today the police launched a brand-new strategy involving 60 new dedicated police and rapid response units right across regional New South Wales. We recognise that more needs to be done to stop repeat youth offenders from committing serious crimes. In addition to that, we will also examine what other jurisdictions are doing. What is Victoria doing? What is Queensland doing? How can we pick the best of what they are doing to ensure that it will work in New South Wales. Tougher penalties and making sure young people are held accountable for their actions will be examined. The new police operation that was launched today will make sure that repeat offenders are locked up while also providing support for those who need it, as well as programs and community solutions to bring them back to being worthwhile people who contribute to their community.

In recent times, youth crime has spiralled upwards in regional areas of New South Wales. We heard the chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety identify that the new police operation includes locations like Tamworth, which is my electorate. I have repeatedly asked the member for Mount Druitt, who is the chair of that committee, to come to my electorate to listen to members about what is happening in the community—not only from the perpetrators of crime but also from the victims of crime. People have had their homes broken into. They have been violated. Their cars have been stolen and burnt out. Their personal belongings have been stolen. Earlier we heard about "Creepin While Ya Sleepin". I saw some people are smiling, but that is what young people in regional New South Wales call it. They are posting and boasting standing over people while they are asleep in their homes while holding some type of weapon. That is what we are talking about. People in our regional communities are scared, which is why we want the law and safety committee to come to Tamworth. I look forward to the chair of the committee, the member for Mount Druitt, agreeing to visit.

Mr Edmond Atalla: I am grateful that you think the law and safety committee is doing a great job.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: It is, and it should come to Tamworth. We keep asking the committee to come to other parts of regional New South Wales, so I invite the chair again to visit Tamworth. An online petition has been circulated across regional New South Wales and the northern part of the State. Over 21,000 signatures have been collected. The petition is called "Time for Change!". It is aimed at having a significant impact in our regions by strengthening bail laws to prevent violent offenders from reoffending and by providing increased resources and support for police officers to effectively apprehend and prosecute offenders. It calls for a review of the judicial system to prioritise community safety. Our police are doing a great job. We need the judicial system to walk hand in hand and operate parallel to back up those efforts. We are not operating like we were 10 or 15 years ago. New laws need to be framed in the context of what is currently happening.

This public interest debate should cross the divide. We should not be getting cheap shots from members opposite about how to tackle crime because it is a one in, all in situation. We must support those who need help. Certainly our young people need our help, but we must make sure that community safety sits at the top of everything that is being done.

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (17:29): In contributing to today's public interest debate, I move:

That the motion be amended by:

- (1) In paragraph (3) omitting "Allen" and instead inserting "Allan".
- (2) After paragraph (3) inserting:
 - (4) Notes that this Government, unlike the previous Government, has passed significant reforms to tackle regional youth crime such as the "post and boast" offences and changes to the Bail Act 2013 to include a temporary additional bail test for young people between 14 and 18 charged with committing certain serious offences.
 - (5) Calls on the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Coalition to support the Minns Labor Government's policy to limit the granting of bail for certain young persons in relation to certain serious offences for a further three years, instead of 18 months.

We want to get to the bottom of these complex problems and seek solutions that the Government can implement to tackle the root causes and drivers of offending. That requires a holistic approach right across the criminal justice system. It is not limited to any one element; it passes across police, the courts and the incarceration system. The New South Wales Government has taken steps to strengthen its response to youth crime. We have bolstered police numbers. We are supporting police operational responses, passing additional legislation, expanding funding for existing programs and working with community partners to find new initiatives.

Only today police launched Operation Soteria, which clearly shows that police are doing everything they can to target, disrupt and investigate youth crime. Operation Soteria will focus on aggravated break and enter and stealing offences; stealing motor vehicles; and post and boast offences, where kids use social media to gain notoriety for their crimes. As noted by the member for South Coast, we inherited a Police Force that was dramatically underresourced and working under the operational number of police.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Stop the blame game.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: That is sheer fact.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The member for Tamworth will come to order.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: We have recruited more police. There has been a 67 per cent increase in applications. We have delivered the highest pay rise in years. We have launched a professional mobility program to bring more police in. We have started the "You Should Be a Cop in Your Hometown" program. We are trying to rectify the problem. We know that youth often seek validation for their crimes and, as has been noted by the Opposition, use social media to post videos of their criminal behaviour. That is why we introduced post and boast laws. Since that legislation came into effect 12 months ago, 53 individuals have been charged and more than half of them were under 16. As the member for South Coast noted, back in 2022 it was none other than Dugald Saunders, who moved this motion, who was complaining about this very problem—that young people were posting and boasting about their crimes online—yet he did nothing about it.

Mr Adam Crouch: Point of order: The member for Riverstone should refer to other members by their correct titles.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The member for Riverstone will refer to other members by their correct titles.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: We also know that hate speech can be an instigator of crime, which is why we introduced hate speech legislation. But it is hard to say whether Coalition members agree with that, because their actions simply do not match their words. I have read reports in the media that the member for Kellyville allegedly made racial slurs against the member for Coffs Harbour at a pre-poll event for the Port Macquarie by-election. The accusation has not been denied, and the House should know whether that allegation is true.

Mr Adam Crouch: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Riverstone will resume his seat while I hear the point of order from the member for Terrigal.

Mr Adam Crouch: Madam Temporary Speaker, I ask that you draw the member for Riverstone back to the substance of the motion. He has strayed well away from the content of the public interest debate. It has nothing to do with a by-election in Port Macquarie. Obviously, the Government has nothing to talk about other than things that are irrelevant.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The member for Riverstone will return to the substance of the motion.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: The point is that hate speech is an instigator of crime, and comments like those made by the member for Kellyville have no place in our community.

Mr Adam Crouch: Point of order: The member for Riverstone is completely flouting your ruling.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): I have ruled on the point of order. The member for Riverstone has said about three words since my ruling that he will return to the substance of the motion.

Mr WARREN KIRBY: The onus is on the member for Kellyville to come into the House to explain himself, because hate speech is a very strong way for people to move towards violent crime.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:34): In reply: I thought we might end up somewhere reasonable today.

Mr Stephen Bali: No, you didn't.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: I actually did. I do thank all members who contributed to the debate. I thank the member for Mount Druitt, the member for South Coast and the member for Riverstone. They are all fantastic regional New South Wales members. It was awesome that the Government could bring together a team of regional people to talk about regional crime, which is the subject of the public interest debate. The Government has the member for Riverstone, the member for South Coast and the member for Mount Druitt. The Opposition has the member for Oxley, the member for Tamworth and the member for Dubbo. Anyway, I will move on. I thank those Government members for their unbelievably constructive comments.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The member for Blacktown will come to order.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: The member for Mount Druitt made a comment about how the incidence of bail refusal has increased. In statistical terms, it has, but if Government members head to any regional town—Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, anywhere in the Upper Hunter, Tamworth, Dubbo or Moree—and they try to tell people that there is a tangible change on the ground from anything that has happened, they will be laughed out of town. They should go to Casino and say that. Government members mentioned the Fit for Life and Fit for Work PCYC programs.

Mr Edmond Atalla: People are asking, "What have you done?"

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: That is what we did—we set up Fit for Work, Fit for Life and U-Nites, all through PCYC. We uplifted PCYCs right across the State, and Government members know it. Those programs work well. That was all set up by the previous Government. As the member for Oxley said, we need to support victims as well as those committing the crimes. The victims need support now, and that is what we are talking about. The hashtag "Creepin While Ya Sleepin" is a real thing. People do care about it. The Government should care about it with its parliamentary committee.

As far as the member for South Coast goes, pretending that the Coalition does not support police is disappointing and is a slur on her own aspirations. I spoke specifically about supporting the new operation. I will give her a copy of the speech if she needs it. We speak to our local cops every single week, if not daily or hourly when required. Government members cannot tell us what is or is not working for local police. We know it because we live it. They know we care; they know we have got their backs.

As other members and I have said, it cannot just be on the police. They need judicial support, and that is what we are talking about. As the member for Tamworth said, "One in, all in". We should all focus on community safety. The member for Riverstone made bizarre references to me and moved some bizarre amendments. Honestly, there has to be some accountability for current Government members. They are two years into government, and we did more in our last year of government than they will ever do. They should aim up and do the right thing. I oppose the amendment.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The member for Dubbo has moved a motion, to which the member for Riverstone has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes48
Noes36
Majority.....12

AYES

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

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

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

AYES

Doyle, T

Minns, C

Wilkinson, K

NOES

Anderson, K

Hodges, M

Singh, G

Ayyad, T

James, T

Sloane, K

Clancy, J

Kemp, M

Speakman, M

Cooke, S

Lane, J

Taylor, M

Coure, M

Layzell, D

Thompson, T

Cross, M

McGirr, J

Toole, P

Crouch, A (teller)

Moylan, B

Tuckerman, W

Davies, T

Petinos, E

Wallace, J

Greenwich, A

Preston, R

Ward, G

Griffin, J

Provest, G

Williams, R

Hannan, J

Roberts, A

Williamson, R (teller)

Henskens, A

Saunders, D

Wilson, F

PAIRS

Tesch, L

Tudehope, M

Amendment agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.*Bills*

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

Second Reading Debate**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:46): I shall resume where I left off—but perhaps not with the story about running outside in my jocks. I will spare everyone that story. Once told, it should never be retold. I return to the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. Parliament inserted section 22C into the Bail Act with a 12-month sunset clause. The bill was read for the second time 12 months ago, on 12 March 2024. The original bill introduced a new test under section 22C that, before bail can be granted for motor theft or serious break and enter offences committed while on bail by offenders between the ages of 14 to 18, the bail authority must have "a high degree of confidence the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail".

The meaning of the "high degree of confidence" test still needs to be developed. Several Supreme Court judges have observed unfavourably that it is a test that is not known to the law. In that regard, I think the Government could have listened to those concerns from the judiciary and taken the opportunity to respond with revised legislation. That said, the Attorney General said in 2024 that the provision will have a sunset after 12 months, with an evaluation to take place at the end of that period. Nothing in the 2025 second reading speech of the Attorney General seeking to extend the sunset of this new bail provision until 4 April 2028 suggested what the results of that evaluation have been, nor whether it has taken place. [*Extension of time*]

I thank my colleagues for their indulgence. In the second reading speech for this bill, there was no reference to crime data showing the impact of section 22C on the relevant offences, in different localities or on youth crime offending. Let me say the bill needs to be about community safety first, second and third. It is very important to the community that we know that we are moving forward in a positive way. I believe that evaluation is important and should be done. If the courts continue to grant bail in circumstances covered by section 22C in a significant number of cases then, in the interests of community safety, the Government should do everything it can to ensure that conditions are being complied with.

To that end, the Opposition will move amendments to address situations where bail is granted for a section 22C offence. The amendments will impose curfews, which are very relevant; require electronic

monitoring, which is a great use of technology to try to curb crime; and tighten up the conditions under which bail can be revoked. It is absolutely right that bail should be seen as a privilege in our society. Given the seriousness of the circumstances that we have heard about, that privilege should be questioned in some cases. By having clear consequences for reoffending, the Opposition believes that improving the existing law as per the Opposition amendments will better address community safety. More work needs to be done to ensure that youth crime is given the importance it deserves. It is important to recognise the rights of the victim as the key person affected by crime and that we rebalance the rights under *doli incapax*. I hope we will continue to talk about that issue in this place.

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:50): I contribute to debate on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. The legislation focuses on serious offenders but falls slightly short of addressing the legislation around sentencing within The Nationals' plan. The full scope of the youth crime crisis gripping our communities needs legislative change that puts the victim above the offender. I hear about crime in my community every day. It is a beautiful community, with the most beautiful people in the most beautiful valley in the most beautiful environment in the most beautiful State. But a small group of people are making it hard for our community.

Offenders are walking the streets in groups, wearing balaclavas and armed with machetes. A local resident was locked in his bedroom, had a 30-centimetre knife held to his throat and was threatened with death four times. He is now afraid. A 75-year-old woman, who became a friend of mine after standing up time and again for her community, has suffered 17 home invasions and had 20 cars stolen, which is a horrific reality for any elderly person. The Willawarrin post office was robbed. The same proprietors had been there for 25 years. The owner was bashed by four perpetrators, including being beaten repeatedly with a golf club. A small business owner was struck with a baseball bat during an attack. In South West Rocks, the local police station does not operate 24/7 and police can take up to 30 minutes to arrive, leaving residents vulnerable. The police do a fantastic job with the resources they have, but we need to continue to improve their resource availability.

Those incidents show that youth crime is not only property based but is becoming increasingly violent, affecting people's everyday lives. Social media posting and boasting glorifies crime and encourages our kids to be a part of it. We need to remove the glorification of crime and address the social media platforms that incentivise it for kids. Just yesterday a story appeared on social media and in the news about a violent brawl that erupted on a Sydney tram, captured on video for the world to see. A man brazenly boasted, "You're lucky I'm on bail," while kicking and spitting on another person. That is the reality of our justice system under the current laws.

The bill applies only to offenders aged 14 to 17, but what about children in the communities as young as 10 or 12 years old who are stealing cars, breaking into houses and pointing machetes and knives towards people, just because they have been shown how to do it? Last month I stood in Kempsey with 700 frustrated and frightened community members from all around the Mid North Coast. They came from as far as Taree and Bostobrick in the north, near Dorrigo. They came together because they no longer felt safe in their own homes. They were calling for tougher bail laws and sentencing. They were calling for mandatory diversionary programs.

The people of Kempsey, the Mid North Coast and regional New South Wales are tired of excuses. They are tired of the Government putting the rights of offenders over the impacts on victims. There were over 20,000 signatures on a recent public petition calling for tougher bail conditions for violent young offenders. The people of New South Wales have spoken and we must listen. The Government's approach at the moment is not quite enough. I welcome the great announcement by the NSW Police Force this morning of a rapid response team, with 60 officers dedicated to Operation Soteria. That is the result of a 12-month campaign fighting for tougher bail laws, accountability and diversionary programs, and action against social media that glorifies crime.

We need to see, right now, the mandatory diversionary programs that keep those youths out of juvenile detention. The magistrates need the option to send offenders to a mandatory diversionary program, even a residential one, rather than sending them to juvenile detention. Such programs will give those kids a chance to learn life skills in a stable environment, where they can be mentored and learn employment skills that they can be proud of. Giving those kids a way of contributing will prevent future crimes. Over the past 12 months, we have seen firsthand the shortfall of the Government's avoidance approach when it comes to the law. Now the Government asks us to simply extend the provisions for another three years, without addressing the broader systemic failures.

We must amend the bill to ensure that it delivers real change—not simply an exercise in delay, but a genuine effort to tackle the issue at its root cause. The bill must expire before the next election, putting regional people first and allowing us to have a discussion before the election about youth crime. Most kids are inherently good natured; they are not born criminals. That is learned behaviour. Let us divert those kids and give them the skills that they need to flourish in society. The Coalition will propose a shorter extension period, until 1 October 2026. That will give regions like Kempsey—our youth, our residents and our elderly—a voice at the 2027 election.

Youth crime is a major issue. It is being talked about in every regional town in New South Wales. Even some city folk were talking about youth crime in the regions during the public interest debate today. In the city, antisemitic rhetoric was spoken about and dealt with, and the law was changed. But it feels like regional communities are coming off second best. The same speed of response needs to be applied to regional New South Wales. We need mandatory curfews because they are effective. Young offenders out on bail are breaking into our homes and cars when we are asleep. If a curfew is applied, offenders will be remanded on bail and will not be able to perform crimes in the community. The hashtag "Creepin While Ya Sleepin" is designed to instil fear in our community.

The Opposition also calls for electronic monitoring of all high-risk youth offenders. When those criminals break into homes wearing hoodies, balaclavas, gloves and socks over their shoes, and carrying a weapon in their hand—instilling fear in our communities—it is hard for police to identify who the offender is, and the crimes become more violent. Immediate revocation of bail for serious breaches is required, whether it is for a new crime, noncompliance with current bail conditions or, as I said before, tampering with the electronic monitoring process. Those offenders should be immediately remanded in custody. Finally, there must be mandatory crime data reporting every three months. Age-old data cannot be used to make decisions. Transparency is key. We need current data so we can discuss the current trends in crime—the ages, the crimes that are being committed, the response from the New South Wales police and the response from the judicial system. We must be able to discuss the response, and we need the data.

The Government has failed to deliver on its promises. As an admission of that failure, the Government is extending the provisions for bail. However, it is extending the provisions past the next election. That does not give members an opportunity to discuss regional issues. The Government must support the amendments put forward by our communities that are crying out for help. Those communities need to finally see the action they deserve. If the Government refuses, then it should explain to the thousands of victims of youth crime why it will not act. In fact, the Government acted when it put in place some great processes this morning. However, we are still avoiding legislation.

Our judicial system must reflect the will of the people we represent. It must be able to prescribe mandatory diversionary programs rather than impose juvenile detention programs. I urge all members of this House to support the amendments foreshadowed by the Opposition because the people of New South Wales—and the most beautiful people in the most beautiful valley—have had enough.

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (18:00): I contribute to debate in support of the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025. I note that on behalf of the good people of the Central Coast and the Terrigal electorate, I support the amendments foreshadowed by the shadow Attorney General. Sadly, what we have seen recently does not represent the will and concern of our communities. The comments made in the media recently by some Supreme Court judges appear to be out of touch with public expectations around the treatment of youth offenders, and especially youth reoffenders.

I know the Attorney General very well and I welcome the extension of the laws, but as the Opposition said 12 months ago, it needs to go further. There has been a continual growth in youth offending. Let me be the first to say that our cops do the most incredible great work, especially on the Central Coast. I am in constant contact with Superintendent Daryl Jobson and Kurt Vallin, the Youth Command officer at Brisbane Water. The men and women of the Brisbane Water Police District do an incredible job every single day. But as has been noted by the members for Dubbo, Bathurst, Tamworth, Northern Tablelands, Albury, Goulburn, Upper Hunter, Oxley and Castle Hill, the police are frustrated. They keep catching these reoffenders, only to have them released again. That frustration is shared by our communities.

I recently attended a community function on the Central Coast, along with the police Minister, the member for Gosford and the member for The Entrance. It was a bipartisan forum, which was also attended by the outstanding Superintendent Daryl Jobson of the Brisbane Water Police District, and Kurt Vallin, who I mentioned earlier. Our community is scared. They are in fear of the repeat youth offending that has been going on in our region. I spoke to an 80-year-old lady, Annette, only a few hours ago. She was awoken last night by a group of teenagers in her backyard. That 80-year-old woman woke in fear.

That story is being repeated, as it was earlier today. The member for Northern Tablelands was clear in his contribution about the fear that his community is experiencing. Our community expectations have now risen. Unfortunately, our Supreme Court justices do not support community expectations, which is evident in the ongoing issue of reoffenders being released. It is incredibly frustrating. I say to those justices, "Spend some time in our communities and talk with our residents." A few weekends ago hundreds of them attended an event at Erina to share their stories, fears and frustrations. Those frustrations are shared by our incredible Police Force. Young offenders are still being released and the community has had a gutful. They have had enough. I commend the introduction of stronger bail laws for juvenile offenders, but we need to go further. Repeat offenders are still being

let loose on the streets, especially at night. They are literally flouting the laws that have been put in place because they know they can. Sadly, the judiciary allows them to do that.

I highlight the event held in Erina two weekends ago, which hundreds of people attended. I particularly thank Terrigal residents Jo Coleman and David Brooke for helping to organise the event. I also thank Jay Rubie, who helped to facilitate the online streaming, which hundreds of people tuned in to watch. I thank Dave Abrahams from Coast Community News, who helped to moderate that event. It was an interesting session for the entire community. Superintendent Jobson outlined the figures. We know that the Brisbane Water police are doing an exceptional job. He also outlined the concerns around social media and the fear that may sometimes be artificially instilled in the community. However, the fear is still real.

I acknowledge the great team from Regional Youth Support Services, which I have spoken about in this place multiple times. It is headed by the outstanding Kim McLoughry, who spoke about the importance of early intervention. I am also a firm supporter of early intervention with young people. The last thing we want to do is send a young person to a place like Frank Baxter. I have had the displeasure of visiting Frank Baxter. It is not a place we want young people to end up in. Unfortunately, there are recidivist repeat offenders who have to be held in custody because they completely flout the law. They thumb their noses at our police and our community, and almost thrive from the notoriety that they are provided through social media and their antisocial behaviour.

Our police are doing a great job; that is unquestionable. However, we need to provide them with additional legislative supports so they do not have to go through the frustrations that they are still experiencing. The bill goes some way to providing support to police, but we can do more. I have said that so many times before. This is not about the Government and the Opposition; this is about how we can improve legislation to meet the expectations of our community. Those expectations are very clear. The community does not expect young offenders to be roaming the streets at night, which is why it is crying out for the imposition of a curfew between the hours of 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m. We keep seeing the same young people offending during the same hours.

My community also welcomes the use of electronic monitoring to enforce that curfew and any other relevant conditions for bail. It sends a very clear message to the small number of recidivist offenders who are terrorising our neighbourhoods that they are on notice. They are being watched. They will be dealt with and will have their freedom taken away if they treat the community with contempt. Another condition in the foreshadowed amendments is that bail will be immediately revoked and cannot be granted again in the event that the bail conditions are breached, except for trivial and unintended breaches, or if any new criminal charges are laid, or if there is interference with the electronic monitoring device. That is what our community expects. Those are clear and logical reasons for bail to be revoked, which fall in line with regional community expectations.

This is not just a regional crime issue anymore; the crime extends right across New South Wales. It is becoming endemic. The police are frustrated because when they often arrest these young perpetrators, they know exactly who they are. They do not hide their crimes; they boast about it. The frustrating part for the police is that by the time they get young offenders back to the station, their parents are waiting to take them home, and off they go again. The cycle is revisited over and over. People should be able to live without fear in their own communities. No-one is naive enough to think that if they live in a small country town on the Central Coast they can leave their doors unlocked and everything will be wonderful. There are 365,000 people on the Central Coast. The expectation is that we should not be providing opportunity for these young people, and our community gets that. What they will not tolerate is the same people reoffending over and over, and being given the ability to reoffend because they are being released on bail.

The other amendment that my community and I welcome is the provision for the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] to report data every three months. That was sought when the Opposition moved the same amendment to the last bill. Sadly, it was not supported by the Government. It will provide quantitative data and show that the legislation is working to tackle these issues in real time. It is so important that someone—whether it be the Attorney General, the shadow Attorney General or members of Parliament—looks at the BOCSAR figures. We can then back up the great work of the police because information is being reported regularly. It also gives the police a sense of success when they can see that the numbers are being driven down. It is not just about us getting the data; it is about the wider community seeing that the processes are working. That is what we expect. [*Extension of time*]

I have spoken to so many victims of crime in my electorate. Whether it be in Empire Bay, North Avoca or Terrigal, the stories are chillingly the same. Houses have been invaded while people slept and it is only through sheer luck that those crimes did not end in serious assaults or, worse, deaths. Some of the young perpetrators are almost as at risk as the people they are robbing because at some stage our community will push back. We do not want to see a young person lose their life because they tried to steal a high-powered European car. It reached the point where youths were Google-mapping streets and walking those with European cars. If the mirrors on a

European car are out, it means it is unlocked. Then they would check the front door. Many people on the Central Coast do not lock their front doors, so we had these crimes of opportunity.

That has eroded our community's sense of safety. It is unacceptable, and the Government, the Opposition and all other MPs must ensure that is not allowed to continue. People have the right to feel safe in their own homes and communities. The stories are chillingly similar right across my electorate, and the frustration is palpable. We saw that in the session we held at Erina. There was an expectation from the whole community, across all ages, that more needs to be done. That is why these amendments are absolutely crucial to the bill. They improve and strengthen it, sending the message that people will not keep getting away with these crimes. I am feeling a bit of déjà vu, as I am pretty sure I said something similar 12 months ago when we debated the previous bill. I said then that we would find ourselves back here saying the same things—and, sure enough, here we are. We have a chance to make this bill stronger and better right now.

I welcome the Government's announcement of 60 dedicated police who will target regional hotspots including Moree, Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange, Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Taree and Newcastle. Sadly, yet again, the Government has completely forgotten about the Central Coast. That is frustrating because the police Minister attended the session only two weekends ago. But the Minns Labor Government has again completely forgotten about the Central Coast and its locals, who are going through the same trauma experienced in other regions. I call on the Minns Labor Government to extend the announcement to include the Central Coast region, given what we have seen and what we are told regularly. Explain to 80-year-old Annette why our region does not deserve the same level of protection as the other regions mentioned in the announcement. It is a great announcement, but it does not go far enough.

Last night I was on the phone to 80-year-old Annette, who is living in fear in her apartment because she woke up to a backyard full of teenagers. She locked herself in her home, but she lives in fear. She does not know when they will come back. This story has been repeated over and over. That is why we find ourselves in this place again, with every member telling similar stories. We do not want to have to talk about how our communities are being terrorised by a small bunch of recalcitrant young people. None of us wants that, but we do not live in a perfect world and it happens. We have to make sure that young people who see crime as an avenue to fame and notoriety do not get that opportunity.

We have fantastic youth support services on the Central Coast. Recently I attended a function at Banjo's Skate Park, where all of our youth services—including council, the police and regional youth support services—gathered together. We have so many great young people on the Central Coast who engage with those services. That is the message we should be sending. Whenever we can stop young people from going down the wrong path with early intervention, it is a great outcome. We know that it costs \$1 million to send a young person into the youth justice system. That \$1 million could be spent supporting somebody else. Every time we stop a child going into the youth justice system, it is a win. At the same time, the deterrence has to be strong enough to send a clear message that people will not keep getting away with it. They cannot just do a doli and get away with it. That is what has happened. There were stories in the paper recently about places in my electorate that are in a similar situation to other regional areas.

Our community has had a gutful but I do not want to see vigilante behaviour. That would be the worst outcome for our community. It is important that the Government does the right thing and puts the necessary strengthening measures into this bill to make sure it sends a message and gives police the support they need so they do not feel the same frustrations that our community does on an almost weekly basis—over Christmas, it was daily. I implore the Attorney General to consider the amendments. It is important for our communities to have a strong voice, which is why I am speaking today. Our communities expect the Government to do the right thing.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (18:15): In reply: I thank members representing the electorates of Wahroonga, Mount Druitt, Dubbo, Heathcote, Bathurst, Prospect, Sydney, Campbelltown, Orange, Penrith, Shellharbour, Kiama, South Coast, Northern Tablelands, Maitland, Albury, Newtown, The Entrance, Wagga Wagga, Goulburn, Castle Hill, Pittwater, Upper Hunter, Oxley and Terrigal for their contributions to this debate. In my second reading speech on the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025, I ran through the numerous measures that our Government is progressing to tackle youth crime. The single measure in this bill is only one part of a much bigger picture. We have to keep that in mind. We are working, and will continue to work, on a number of multifaceted responses to address youth crime and community concerns.

Extending the operation of section 22C of the Bail Act for a further three years will allow the test to remain in place while this important work continues across government to fully implement and expand on measures being implemented to support young people and their families and to tackle youth crime. We recently announced additional funding for Moree and over \$4 million to support similar place-based responses in Bourke and Kempsey. That funding will bolster successful local teams working with the Government to tackle identified

issues. It will also provide time for our Government to receive and consider the recommendations of the parliamentary inquiry into community safety in regional and rural communities. Finally, it will give us time to undertake a proper, serious review informed by longer term Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] data and stakeholder feedback. Given ongoing community concerns, the continuing implementation of community initiatives and the limited information and data available, allowing 22C to expire on 4 April 2025 would not be in the public interest.

I now address some of the matters raised by members in the debate. The members for Wahroonga and for Upper Hunter criticised the lack of evaluation of the temporary bail test. At the time we introduced the bill, the checked data on youth crime trends since the implementation of 22C covered the six months from March 2024 to September 2024. Whilst that can give an indication of sorts, the time period is not sufficient to track long-term crime trends, and BOCSAR always cautions us to ensure that long-term crime trends are the ones that are relied upon for long-term decision-making. The extension of the test will allow for data on relevant crime trends to be collected and analysed to inform a comprehensive review of the provision. The Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ], with the assistance of the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, will undertake a comprehensive review of the section to analyse the impact and inform the decision as to the provision's future at that time.

Since the introduction of section 22C, the Department of Communities and Justice has closely monitored the provision and engaged with justice stakeholders through a specially dedicated monitoring group that regularly exchanged information and updates on the operation of the temporary bail test. The monitoring group includes representatives from DCJ and the courts, the NSW Police Force, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the Public Defenders, Corrective Services NSW, Youth Justice NSW, the Cabinet Office and the Premier's Department.

The member for Bathurst said he supported an earlier repeal of section 22C. He supports it, he says, because that will keep youth crime on the Government's agenda. I do not follow that, but anyway. The member for Bathurst thinks the best way for something to remain on the Government's agenda, and presumably to keep the community safe, is to have it repealed. Is the best way to keep the community safe to remove a stronger bail test that keeps repeat offenders on remand and not in the community? I believe that he supported this provision 12 months ago, but now he does not. The member for Dubbo and the member for Bathurst claimed that section 22C is not working, young people are still being released on bail and that regional communities are still living in fear a year later. That is a confluence of so many issues.

Of 195 first bail appearances within the scope of the section 22C temporary test, 145—that is 74 per cent—resulted in court bail refusal, so no bail granted, and the young person being remanded in custody. The number of young persons on remand has increased by 34.4 per cent in the 12 months to December 2024. I stress they are not long-term statistics, as I just spoke about, but in that time frame we see that the provision has been able to stop young people charged with repeat offences from being granted bail. They have been removed from the community while they are being dealt with in the courts. Youth crime is a long-term problem that needs to be tackled with long-term solutions, and that is what our Government is doing. Our Government is addressing youth crime in meaningful ways across the State—not just in Moree, as claimed by the member for Tamworth—by introducing comprehensive, therapeutic and community-based initiatives. We are not focusing on Moree alone and have been, and are, extending programs across the regions.

In addition to the multifaceted programs introduced in Moree last year, we announced an investment of \$12.9 million to fund and implement a range of statewide regional crime prevention initiatives, including the expansion of the Youth Action Meetings, or YAMs, in nine police districts that are very valuable; and the expansion of the Safe Aboriginal Youth Patrol program, or SAY, to an additional five Closing the Gap priority locations to be determined in consultation with communities, reducing the risk of young Aboriginal people being victims of crime and the risk they will become persons of interest in relation to a crime. We are continuing to roll out \$7.5 million in the Justice Reinvestment Grant Program, with grant funding available to recipients as early as June 2024. This year we have allocated \$4 million to Bourke and Kempsey to match the Commonwealth Government's investment in the Stronger Places, Stronger People program, which supports community-led, place-based responses to local issues.

Other programs have been developed in other towns, such as the rugby program in Dubbo. It is a simple solution that young Aboriginal people are drawn to in particular. Section 22C does not just apply to the regions; it applies across the State. Extending the temporary bail test for three years will help keep the community safer while the Government continues efforts to reduce youth crime and minimise young people's long-term contact with the criminal justice system. The member for Dubbo criticised section 22C as being too narrow both in terms of the offences it covers and the age of children it applies to. Section 22C was carefully developed to target serious offences that caused significant community concern, particularly in regional New South Wales, and carries

significant maximum penalties. It is targeted to a certain cohort of young people who pose a particular risk to community safety due to repeat alleged offending while minimising broad or unintended adverse consequences.

BOCSAR data shows that young people aged 14 to 17 years old make up the overwhelming majority of young people against whom charges were proceeded with in 2024. That is the reason the test is targeted at that age group. The member for Sydney and the member for Newtown raised the criticism that section 22C has a disproportionate impact on Aboriginal kids and has the effect of increasing the rate of incarceration of young people. The test was introduced to address on a temporary basis real community concern about a specific youth crime trend, particularly in regional areas of New South Wales. It was anticipated the test would lead to a limited cohort of young people being more likely to be imprisoned. That is why the test was carefully designed and appropriately limited to specific categories of offending but, importantly, it is not the only measure being progressed by our Government.

The test was introduced with a package of broader non-legislative initiatives aimed at reducing young offending and supporting vulnerable young people and their communities, especially Aboriginal young people. That includes linking Aboriginal youth to Indigenous organisations, Elders and cultural and family supports with skilled staff providing 24/7 child-safe care. For example, the Moree bail accommodation will be led by three local Aboriginal organisations to provide the most culturally appropriate leadership for this novel facility. The Government remains committed to working with communities and with its Closing the Gap partners to develop long-term therapeutic and community-based approaches to address offending by young people on a broader scale.

Section 22C serves as a temporary legislative measure to support community safety while the range of long-term solutions are implemented, including community-based solutions to divert children from criminal activities and interaction with the criminal justice system. For example, some of the programs that we have implemented in Moree are doing exactly that. Miyay Birray's Street Beat bus completed over 3,500 pick-ups since October 2024, and both the PCYC and the Sports Health Arts and Education Academy programs are attracting dozens of kids per night. The small grants program has distributed \$225,000, excluding GST, for the delivery of 21 diverse after-hours activities, from sports and art activities to mental health peer support.

The member for Tamworth and the member for Oxley asked for more to be done to protect the community and victims of crime. The member for Tamworth referred to the ePetition calling for change and asked the Government to listen to the voices of regional communities. The extension of section 22C is a direct response to ongoing community concerns. That is why I am on my feet now. We are responding to community concerns, particularly those in the regions. However, legislative reform must work alongside therapeutic evidence-based solutions to effectively reduce youth crime.

In support of the bill and the Government response in Moree, the member for Northern Tablelands spoke about the detrimental impact of youth crime on the township of Moree. We note the Moree community-based initiatives continue to be implemented and report positive results to date. The honourable member also noted the positive impact the Miyay Birray Street Beat bus has had in Armidale. The member for Newtown criticised the extension of the temporary bail test when it was to sunset after 12 months. The test in section 22C remains a time-limited and targeted temporary test. The test remains a circuit breaker, but the work is not complete. While I had hoped that 12 months would be sufficient to address youth crime and community concerns, it has become evident that those concerns still remain high. No-one wants that to be the case, but unfortunately it just is.

The member for Wagga Wagga expressed a concern with a three-year extension, preferring a shorter extension. He also stressed the importance of the diversionary programs. I have met with him and spoken to him about this over the past couple of days. He is a good man, and I share his concerns. The decision to extend the test for three years was made exactly for the reason the member raises: to allow sufficient time to implement the diversionary programs. In addition, the Government will receive and consider the report of the parliamentary inquiry into community safety in regional and rural communities.

The member for Oxley spoke about a number of issues, in which vein I take the opportunity to address comments made in the *Legislation Review Digest No. 26/58*. The Legislation Review Committee referred to Parliament its observation that the bill increases the circumstances in which a young person may be remanded in custody, which may have consequential impacts on the presumption of innocence. By definition, remanding a person in custody necessarily involves a person's detention prior to conviction. The bail framework is a balancing act of preserving community safety and recognising a person's general right to be at liberty. Recognising the seriousness of placing a young person into custody, the bill deliberately ensures that the temporary bail test remains targeted and time limited.

It is clear that there is ongoing community concern about youth offending, particularly serious break and enter and motor vehicle theft offences committed by young people on bail. It is also clear that there are competing views in relation to the impact on Aboriginal children, stakeholders and judicial criticism. The Government is not

ignoring those concerns. The test remains temporary and targeted, as it was originally intended. This extension will help keep the community safer while the Government continues efforts to reduce youth crime and minimise young people's long-term contact with the criminal justice system. The Government believes more needs to be done and that the temporary bail test should remain in place while this important work is underway. I commend the bill to the House.

The SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes78
Noes7
Majority.....71

AYES

Aitchison, J	Hagarty, N (teller)	Provest, G
Anderson, K	Harris, D	Quinnell, S
Atalla, E (teller)	Harrison, J	Regan, M
Bali, S	Haylen, J	Saffin, J
Barr, C	Henskens, A	Saliba, D
Butler, L	Hodges, M	Saunders, D
Butler, R	Hoenig, R	Scully, P
Car, P	Holland, M	Singh, G
Catley, Y	Hornery, S	Sloane, K
Chanthivong, A	James, T	Speakman, M
Clancy, J	Kaliyanda, C	Stuart, M
Cooke, S	Kamper, S	Taylor, M
Cotsis, S	Kemp, M	Thompson, T
Coure, M	Kirby, W	Toole, P
Crakanthorp, T	Lane, J	Tuckerman, W
Cross, M	Layzell, D	Vo, T
Crouch, A	Li, J	Voltz, L
Daley, M	McDermott, H	Wallace, J
Dalton, H	McKeown, K	Warren, G
Davies, T	Mehan, D	Washington, K
Davis, D	Minns, C	Watson, A
Di Pasqua, S	Moylan, B	Whan, S
Donato, P	O'Neill, M	Wilkinson, K
Doyle, T	Park, R	Williams, R
Finn, J	Petinos, E	Williamson, R
Griffin, J	Preston, R	Wilson, F

NOES

Greenwich, A (teller)	Scruby, J	Smith, T
Hannan, J	Shetty, K	Ward, G
Leong, J (teller)		

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Alister Henskens and Ms Jacqui Scruby.

Consideration in Detail

The SPEAKER: By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 be agreed to.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (18:45): I move Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2025-045C:

No. 1 Additional bail conditions for grant of bail under Bail Act 2013, section 22C

Page 3, Schedule 1, lines 2–4. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

[1] Section 22C Temporary limitation on bail for certain young persons in relation to certain serious offences

Omit section 22C(1). Insert instead—

- (1) A bail authority must not grant bail to a relevant young person for a relevant offence alleged to have been committed while the young person is on bail for another relevant offence unless—
 - (a) the bail authority has a high degree of confidence the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail subject to any proposed bail conditions, and
 - (b) the bail authority grants bail subject to bail conditions that include—
 - (i) the imposition of a curfew on the relevant young person between the hours of 8pm and 6am, and
 - (ii) a requirement the relevant young person be subject to electronic monitoring by the Commissioner for Corrective Services in relation to the enforcement of the bail condition imposing a curfew and any other relevant bail conditions.

[2] Section 22C(3A) and (3B)

Insert after section 22C(3)—

- (3A) If any of the following circumstances occur in relation to a young person subject to bail conditions under this section, the young person's bail is taken to have been revoked under this Act—
 - (a) the relevant young person fails to comply with the bail conditions,
 - (b) any further charges are laid against the relevant young person,
 - (c) there is any interference with the device used to electronically monitor the relevant young person.
- (3B) If a relevant young person's bail is revoked under subsection (3A), a further decision to grant bail to the young person for the same offence cannot be made unless—
 - (a) the failure to comply with bail conditions that resulted in the young person's bail being revoked under that subsection was a trivial failure, or
 - (b) exceptional circumstances apply.

[3] Section 22C(5)

Omit the subsection. Insert instead—

Clause (1) of the amendment retains the same test that was passed by Parliament last year in respect of section 22C (1) of the Bail Act, which states:

- (1) A bail authority must not grant bail to a relevant young person for a relevant offence ... unless the bail authority has a high degree of confidence the young person will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail.

The amendment adds two new features to that provision. The first is that a bail authority that grants bail under those circumstances must include the imposition of a curfew on the relevant person between the hours of 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m., and the second is that there must be a requirement of electronic monitoring to enforce the curfew and any other relevant bail conditions. As I discussed in the second reading debate on the bill, many reported bail determinations under section 22C have either home detention or a curfew. Under the amendment, it will be possible to have home detention rather than a curfew, but it is anticipated that there will be a curfew in order for the court to have a high degree of confidence that the person will not commit a serious indictable offence. Therefore, electronic monitoring will be required to enforce that curfew.

Consistent with the experience of electronic monitoring of offenders on parole for domestic violence offences, the amendment will have a very desirable impact on both community safety and the young people in question, because electronic monitoring has had the effect of reducing reoffending. That will mean less youth crime for those who are granted bail and it will keep young people out of incarceration, if that is the will of the court. Therefore it will benefit both community objectives of preventing young people from committing crimes and promoting community safety. It is important to note that the young offenders that we are talking about are, as the member for Orange said in the second reading debate, repeat offenders for quite serious crimes—either break and enter offences or stolen motor vehicle offences. It is in that context that we are proposing electronic monitoring. If the courts are going to give bail, and it is quite clear that they are giving bail under section 22C, then it is important that the conditions of bail are enforced.

I now turn to one matter that the Attorney General spoke about in reply. He suggested that 74 per cent of section 22C matters were bail refused. That figure was not entirely accurate. Firstly, it only applied to first bail appearances. It did not include any appeals or reviews of bail. Secondly, it failed to take into account the evidence given by Paul McKnight in a budget estimates hearing on 28 February 2025. Mr McKnight, who is the deputy secretary of the department, said:

Just to be clear, that's 145 bail refusals of children who fit into section 22C. That's not necessarily extra remands that would not have otherwise occurred. The children in that group before the advent of 22C had already been being remanded in custody at a higher rate than others, so it isn't the case that without 22C those 145 children would have got bail. It's because the situation of those children is that they have been charged with serious offences and they are on bail for serious offences, so they're back in front of the court. A group of those children were being remanded prior to the 22C changes anyway. I think our assessment would generally be that 22C has increased that number, but it isn't the case that those 145 children would have been on bail, just to be clear.

Then Sue Higginson asked:

I understand that. Do you have a breakdown, how many, because of section 22C, are—

Mr McKnight said:

No, there's not a counterfactual that you can measure it against because 22C passed.

He went on to say that the remand rate for that group of children prior to section 22C was very high. The 34 per cent increase in people in remand was not just because of section 22C. We need to be very careful how the numbers are being bantered around, because we are talking about a very high bail-refused group that section 22C impacts in the first place. The importance of electronic monitoring cannot be overstated.

The insertion of new item [2] seeks to introduce important further provisions in new subsection (3A), which has the following components. Bail granted under section 22C will be revoked in one of three circumstances. Firstly, a failure to comply with bail conditions. Secondly, that the young person is charged with another crime while they have been granted section 22C bail, or there has been interference with an electronic monitoring device. These are important further provisions that relate not only to electronic monitoring but also to be protective of the community having regard to the seriousness of the repeat crimes. It should be noted that these are offenders who would not ordinarily be given bail, even before section 22C was put in place.

We have now had the opportunity to see how the courts are interpreting section 22C. We can see that there is resistance by the judiciary to section 22C. I referred in my second reading speech to decisions like *R v TW*, *R v BH*, *R v TB* and *R v JS*, and some of the observations of the judges in those decisions. Having regard to the way in which section 22C has been operating, the amendments will further strengthen the intent behind section 22C, assist community safety and hopefully provide a greater deterrent with regard to this cohort of young offenders who are repeat serious young offenders. I ask members to agree to these important amendments to enhance community safety.

During the second reading debate we heard contributions from a number of members, including the member for Dubbo, the member for Bathurst, the member for Tamworth, the member for Northern Tablelands, the member for Albury, the member for Goulburn, the member for Castle Hill, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Oxley and the member for Terrigal, who noted the importance of this issue. The member for Orange made a particularly strong contribution with regard to his experience as a police prosecutor, and the number of interactions that these offenders have before they reach the age at which section 22C applies. The member for Wagga Wagga also made a strong contribution. He noted that to extend the provisions in this legislation for three years was an act of set and forget. I ask that we learn from the first 12 months, we learn from the decisions of the judiciary with regard to this matter, and that we further enhance community safety and deter further commission of crimes by this cohort by agreeing to Opposition amendment No. 1.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (18:58): The Government opposes the amendment. It would impose a curfew and electronic monitoring on young people who are subject to the test in section 22 as mandatory bail conditions. The amendment fails to recognise the need to assess the bail concerns and unacceptable risks that apply in each case and to impose conditions that are reasonably necessary to address those bail concerns. That is what the Act says. Restricting judicial discretion can lead to unjust and disproportionate outcomes. Each child has different needs, has different characteristic and criminogenic risks, and presents different bail risks. Conditions should be crafted to best address those factors. No exceptions are proposed to the mandatory conditions or to the curfew condition even if, for example, a young person might need to attend prosocial activities that continue past 8.00 p.m., such as taking part in a sport, and could do so in a supervised environment. In August last year the Government announced the launch of \$1 million in grants to deliver after-hours activities in Moree to address crime, support young people and improve community safety. Mayor Mark Johnson said:

The after hours activities announced, whilst just one piece of a suite of future actions, will provide safer circumstances for our youth.

But apparently the Opposition is not interested in letting kids in Moree participate in supervised prosocial activities after dark, including activities run by PCYC NSW in partnership with the NSW Police Force. There are also no exceptions proposed to the mandatory electronic monitoring condition, even if, for example, the young person involved has a cognitive impairment. In regional communities there are plenty of young kids with fetal alcohol

syndrome and fetal ice syndrome. No exceptions are made for them, and they are not able to understand the effect of that type of condition.

This amendment also fails to recognise that children captured by section 22C and subsequently granted bail are already receiving strict conditions. The shadow Attorney General referred to Supreme Court bail decisions considering section 22C and acknowledged that those decisions show that courts are imposing not only curfews but also stronger conditions such as home detention. The shadow Attorney General knows that children are already subject to conditions that are stronger than what he has proposed, and yet he is proposing them anyway. The electronic monitoring amendment proposed is substantially and obviously different to the electronic monitoring condition that applies to people charged with serious domestic violence offences, which does not apply to children.

It captures different alleged offending behaviour and does not have close to the same evidence base or rationale for its application. There is, in fact, no sound evidence base to support the effectiveness of electronic monitoring of young people on bail. An evaluation of a Queensland trial of electronic monitoring as a bail condition for recidivist youth offenders found that, due to the low uptake and the lack of available evidence from other jurisdictions, it was difficult to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the efficacy of electronic monitoring as a bail condition for young people.

Electronic monitoring for young people on bail can have a number of negative consequences that ultimately hamper rehabilitation—and I keep hearing that is what we want, which I agree with—and do not make our community safer. Young people involved in the Queensland electronic monitoring trial reported feelings of shame and embarrassment when wearing the device or, alternatively, considered it a badge of honour and requested the device to show off to friends. Neither is a good or sound outcome to help progress the rehabilitation of young people and keep our community safe. Young people also may not have the ability to understand compliance due to their age or other vulnerabilities—and I have just mentioned some of those—or may require considerable complementary wraparound services or supports to assist them to comply. The Opposition amendment says nothing about that issue.

Finally, I note that the amendment proposes to require the Commissioner of Corrective Services to monitor the young people subject to electronic monitoring. Corrective Services is not responsible for young people remanded in custody and is not responsible for monitoring young people on bail. It is not appropriate for Corrective Services, which is currently responsible for electronic monitoring of adults in certain circumstances, to manage children who are proposed to be subject to electronic monitoring whilst on bail. This is the type of amendment that we have come to expect from the Opposition—all optics, but no genuine consideration. Opposition members say they want to make section 22C tougher, but one of the amendments they are moving today—and it has a reasonable prospect of succeeding—would have it repealed next year, making it weaker. They say this is a sensible amendment when really it is a mess, just like the rest of their amendments and just like the Coalition's position on youth crime. The Government cannot and will not support this amendment.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:04): I appreciate the reasons the shadow Attorney General is moving this amendment, but I cannot support it. The amendment will take away judicial discretion in circumstances where a young person's liberty is being considered. At that point, that young person is still entitled to the presumption of innocence, not having been convicted. I make members aware that when a person is charged, there are two possible tests for bail when a grant of bail is being considered. One is the unacceptable risk test. In section 17 of the Bail Act, one of the heads of consideration is whether someone is likely to reoffend. I believe the concerns of the Opposition are already addressed by the existing structure of section 17 of the Bail Act.

Moving to the other Opposition amendments to create conditions such as a curfew and electronic monitoring, I respectfully submit that the Bail Act already provides for a judge to make those orders. Section 25 of the Bail Act, which deals with conduct requirements, allows judges to make orders. I also point to sections 28A and 28B, which deal with residency requirements. Indeed, the very concept of electronic monitoring is already contained in the Bail Act, but it requires the judge to consider the interests of justice as part of a grant of bail.

Whilst I appreciate the shadow Attorney General's view and he argued it incredibly well, if members are concerned about judicial discretion in such matters, particularly when dealing with the very delicate issue of the liberty of a person who has not been convicted of an offence, I would argue that the amendment restricts the capacity of a judge to make decisions based on circumstances that we cannot foresee in this Parliament. When a judge is confronted with a particular matter, they should be able to make appropriate decisions to deal with that young person at the time. They should not be restricted in the making of those decisions. That is why the Bail Act was carefully crafted in the way that it is—to deal with exactly that circumstance.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (19:06): I failed to address new item [2] before the member for Kiama quickly jumped in. That part of the amendment provides that a young person's bail will be taken to be revoked if the young person breaches their bail, they are charged with a further offence or there

is an interference with the electronic monitoring device. It also proposes that the bail authority cannot grant bail for the same offence unless the breach of bail was trivial or there are exceptional circumstances. The proposed amendment simply states that the bail is taken to be revoked but does not clarify the operational implications and mechanisms. It is not clear whether the young person would need to be brought back to court for bail to be formally refused, whether it is anticipated that a further bail decision or detention application would need to be made or whether it is proposed to bypass the court altogether.

Police already have the power to bring a person back before the court if they breach bail. Police also already have the power to make bail decisions for fresh offences if a person is charged with an offence while on bail. Let me assure members that if a young person is charged with another serious offence while they are on bail, particularly if they are subject to section 22C, police take it very seriously. They do regularly refuse bail. Either way, in the circumstances sought to be addressed by the Opposition amendment, there is already a way to get the young person back before the court for their bail to be considered. There is already an avenue available to police to refuse bail if a young person commits a further offence whilst on bail.

The Opposition amendment also does not make clear how the exceptional circumstances test is supposed to interact with the test in section 22C if a young person is charged with a fresh offence and section 22C would otherwise apply. Is it the Opposition's intention that the exceptional circumstances test would apply, and that section 22C would not apply? Under section 22C, the focus of the court is put squarely on the risk that a young person will reoffend. However, the exceptional circumstances test, in another section, albeit an extremely strong test, allows a bail decision-maker to consider other matters. Facts found to constitute exceptional circumstances in the context of a bail application in the past have included the youth of an accused.

There are also real issues with the appropriateness of the exceptional circumstances test applying to children, and applying where a young person is charged with a fresh offence for which they can already be bail refused by police. This test currently only applies to terrorism offences in New South Wales. Recidivist young people are already subject to an incredibly stringent test imposed by section 22C. With respect, the Opposition has not thought this amendment through, and has not explained how it is supposed to interact with existing laws and processes. It is more likely to cause confusion and unintended consequences, and therefore draw the ire of the court rather than make any real difference to community safety. The Government does not support it.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:10): I will deal very quickly with a point that fell from the member for Kiama. The amendment is not inconsistent with the presumption of innocence at all. It deals with the enforcement of bail conditions that are routinely made by courts. That is not inconsistent with the presumption of innocence. Rather, it is entirely consistent with the presumption of innocence. I will deal with some matters raised by the Attorney General. The Attorney General suggested that the amendment did not take into account the possibility of activities after 8.00 p.m. His comment that there is no out clause is consistent with some matters he raised in his contribution with regard to the insertion of new item [2].

If the Attorney General takes some time to properly read new subsections 3A and 3B, he will clearly see that new subsection 3B only applies if bail is revoked under new subsection 3A. It has nothing to do with bail for a new offence that may have occurred while there was section 22C bail, and it does not impact on a bail application for a fresh charge. It deals with a revocation of bail under new subsection 3A and states that if there is a breach of the bail conditions, then that can be excused in exceptional circumstances, which may include an activity after 8.00 p.m. New subsection 3B operates to prevent the inflexibility or injustice of the kind that the Attorney General raised.

The Attorney General also referred to the Queensland review. Unfortunately, he failed to inform the Chamber that an electronic monitoring trial for youth bail, which began in Queensland in 2021, was recently extended by a further two years. Rather than Queensland having concerns about electronic monitoring, it extended it only a couple of weeks ago. Electronic monitoring for youth bail has been operating in several jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth for many years. It enforces bail conditions imposed by the court. It is not a fetter on judicial discretion; it in fact supports judicial discretion and the conditions on bail granted to serious offenders. With the greatest of respect to the Attorney General, I say that the full picture with regard to Queensland and the other jurisdictions has not been put forward.

The amendment is in no way exclusive of or inconsistent with wraparound services. It is important that wraparound services are provided for these young people to ensure that they do not reoffend. One reason that I will move the second Opposition amendment is to ensure that those wraparound services are scrutinised by Parliament within three years, as is the intention of the Government in this bill. I encourage members to support the provision of electronic monitoring and the other measures within Opposition amendment No. 1.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 1 on sheet c2025-045C be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes33
 Noes54
 Majority.....21

AYES

Anderson, K
 Butler, R
 Clancy, J
 Cooke, S
 Coure, M
 Cross, M
 Crouch, A (teller)
 Davies, T
 Di Pasqua, S
 Griffin, J
 Henskens, A

Hodges, M
 James, T
 Kemp, M
 Lane, J
 Layzell, D
 Moylan, B
 Petinos, E
 Preston, R
 Provest, G
 Roberts, A
 Saunders, D

Singh, G
 Sloane, K
 Speakman, M
 Taylor, M
 Thompson, T
 Toole, P
 Tuckerman, W
 Wallace, J
 Williams, R
 Williamson, R (teller)
 Wilson, F

NOES

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

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

Park, R
 Quinnell, S
 Regan, M
 Saffin, J
 Saliba, D
 Scruby, J
 Scully, P
 Shetty, K
 Smith, T
 Stuart, M
 Vo, T
 Voltz, L
 Ward, G
 Warren, G
 Washington, K
 Watson, A
 Whan, S
 Wilkinson, K

PAIRS

Ayyad, T
 Tudehope, M

Dib, J
 Tesch, L

Amendment negatived.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:24): I move Opposition amendment No. 2 on sheet c2025-045C:

No. 2 **Sunset date for Bail Act 2013, section 22C**

Page 3, Schedule 1, proposed section 22C(5), line 5. Omit "4 April 2028". Insert instead "1 October 2026".

This amendment seeks to shorten the extension of section 22C from 2028, as proposed by this bill, to 1 October 2026. All of the members who have contributed to debate on this bill have acknowledged that its subject matter is very important. We are talking about bail for repeat offenders involved in home invasions or motor vehicle theft offences. The Government does not propose that this legislation should go on forever. It is suggesting that the legislation continues until 4 April 2028. Our amendment proposes an earlier date, not necessarily because we think section 22C should not continue beyond 1 October 2026 but because it should be reviewed at that time to determine whether it should be extended in its current form or in an amended form. This will be based upon an assessment of its operation.

By 1 October 2026, section 22C will have been operating for about 2½ years since its original commencement in 2024. That is a suitable time for the Parliament to evaluate its operation. It is appropriate to ask members of Parliament to come back and scrutinise the provision after that period. As the member for Wagga Wagga succinctly put it during the second reading debate, the bill as currently drafted is a three-year "set and forget". Our position on this issue is so important that we should not set and forget. It should be brought back to Parliament in October next year so we can see how the wraparound services are operating. We should see whether this legislative component of the Bail Act is working and how it is interacting with the wraparound services, and we should assess what the appropriate legislative response should be.

The bill was introduced for a 12-month period last year. In his second reading speech, the Attorney General said that a 12-month period would allow an evaluation. But when he introduced this bill into the House there was no data at all to justify either what the extension of time should be or whether it should be extended at all. The Opposition is prepared to support an extension so that the section is operational for 2½ years, but then the matter needs to be evaluated properly. The Attorney General's second reading speech makes it clear that section 22C is not operating as the Government intended it to, which is why it is extending its operation. We have heard members give chilling accounts of youth crime in their electorates and of the fear that community members and families are feeling about the youth crime that is occurring in their communities.

It is entirely appropriate that this matter be dealt with on a shorter leash than a three-year set-and-forget approach so that Parliament can come back and address the problems of youth crime and what the appropriate response is beyond 1 October 2026. That will be ample time for the measures announced by the Government to have an impact. If they have not had an impact or have had some undesirable impacts, that is the appropriate time to assess that. I ask members of the House to support a shorter extension of time to 1 October 2026.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (19:30): The Government opposes this amendment. It would extend the temporary bail test for 1½ years instead of three years. I must say that I do not understand. Having listened to the debate and the contributions of Coalition members of both parties, I cannot see any consistency in approach, measure, offerings or philosophy. I was in opposition for a long time—12 years—but we always had a unified position. When members listened to one Labor Party opposition member, they knew what our policy was. Listening to contributions from a great many Coalition MPs, I still cannot work out what their collegial position is. They have no unity or consistency when it comes to youth crime. In one breath, some of them say that section 22C is not strong enough and they want to move amendments to strengthen it. But in the same breath, they want a shorter sunset period so that the provision will cease operation in October next year. I should not be surprised—

Mr Michael Kemp: That allows us to beat you at the next election.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: No-one asked you. Zip it, bro.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: Those opposite are in complete disarray when it comes to their response to youth crime. Last week *The Daily Telegraph* reported, "The rift within the New South Wales Coalition over youth crime has deepened." There is a Coalition "civil war over youth crime". Just this morning, Mark Levy asked the Leader of the Opposition whether there was a Coalition in New South Wales. *The Daily Telegraph* also reported the Leader of the Opposition saying that a youth crime bill being brought forward by the National Party was notified without even consulting him. That is the consistency. Members on the other side criticise the Government time and again, and their respective offerings today proved conclusively that they are not even talking to each other about their plan for youth crime. We are talking to people on the other side. We had good meetings today with many crossbenchers. We are working across government and across multiple portfolios to develop a comprehensive suite of measures that will keep our community safe.

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

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: We want to extend our temporary bail test for three years because that will allow time for substantial progress on the work continuing across government and the community to address regional and rural youth crime; for the Government to receive and consider the report of the parliamentary inquiry into community safety in regional and rural communities; and for data on relevant crime trends to be collected and analysed to inform a comprehensive review of the provision, along with stakeholder feedback. Shortening the extension period to 1 October 2026 would not allow sufficient time for the broad set of community-based initiatives that already exist and others that will be brought forward to become fully implemented. It would also be unlikely to result in sufficiently comprehensive data to inform a review and any further Government action. The temporary bail test should remain in place to keep our communities safe while that important work is underway. For those reasons, the Government does not support the amendment.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:33): I have to admire the Attorney General, because I know that he does not want to defend this legislation. It only came about because of a thought bubble of the Premier, which had to be backed in by the right faction. He talks about consistency. That certainly was not the case in Labor's caucus room when this matter came up. We know what members had to say about that. The Attorney General talks about consistency. First, it was one year. Now, it is not once, not twice but thrice the amount of time he says he needs to collect data, or is it about keeping the public safe? He talks about consistency but there were about three or four arguments I heard from the Attorney General in that address to the House. The reality is he could have looked at other jurisdictions, but he does not need to look too far to know that locking up more kids will not result in better outcomes.

I know that members of the House will have different views in relation to this, but I support the Opposition's amendment because it means that the Executive is held to account for the decisions it is making, and it gives this House the power to review a very serious condition. If the Government wants to gift the Executive a three-year waiver where it does not have to do much other than impose these laws, or have their auspices impose them, that is fine. But, given the sensitivity and seriousness of the issue, we should make sure that this House has as much oversight as possible over this provision. I do not agree with the Attorney General, particularly given that when he introduced the bill he told the House that 12 months would be enough. Now it is three times the amount of time he initially said he required. He did not talk about the specific data he was looking into or utilising, nor did he reference any interjurisdictional examples. For all of those reasons, I hope that members support the shadow Attorney General's amendment so that we can control the future of this legislation, rather than just believing the Government when it says, "Trust us."

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:35): I support the Opposition amendment. I opposed the bill, and I will be consistent in supporting an amendment that brings it to an end earlier. I outlined the reasons for opposing the bill in my contribution to the second reading debate. I do not need to go through them. I intend to be consistent as an opponent of the bill and vote to hopefully see it come to an end sooner.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (19:36): I indicate that The Greens will support amendment No. 2 moved by the Opposition. We absolutely oppose the bill. We opposed the original bill, and we oppose the extension of the sunset clause. So we support the amendment that seeks to reduce the time during which the actions delivered by that bill are in force. We have heard significant contributions from members, particularly members in impacted regional communities, highlighting the fact that they have not seen changes as a result of the original bill. The Premier has also touted the fact that we have seen more children locked up as a result of it. If that is not reason to be questioning why we are extending the time of the bill, then I am not sure what is. Therefore, The Greens absolutely support the amendment. If we have a very bad law, hopefully we can have it for a slightly shorter time.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:37): Obviously we moved the amendment for different reasons to the member for Kiama, the member for Sydney and the member for Newtown, but we welcome their support. By 1 October next year we may be able to convince the Government that it should agree to electronic monitoring, which would improve community safety and deterrence. We will be in a position to scrutinise the Executive's performance on the wraparound services that the Government says it is providing in conjunction with the bill. We will be in a position to assess the matter.

In response to the Attorney General's contribution, the most credible thing I have heard him say today is that he does not understand. That lack of understanding sums up a lot of what falls from the Attorney General. He cannot understand that bringing forward a sunset clause is enhancing Executive accountability. Apparently, it is beyond the understanding of the Attorney General that the Opposition may wish to bring the legislation back to Parliament to scrutinise the Government's promises and promises. He said that that will not be a sufficient period, but it was the very argument he advanced last year for not having any data.

Last year when we sought to amend the bill to require the Government to provide some data, the response was there was not enough time to do that and it was all too complicated. Yet today in his reply, the Attorney General started talking about percentages and refusal of bail under section 22C. Clearly, there is enough time for data and there was enough time for data in the past 12 months. Clearly, there will be enough time by October next year to evaluate the performance of these provisions to see whether they need to be changed or improved or we should have other wraparound services in place. I commend the amendment to the House.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 2 on sheet c2025-045C be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes41

Noes46

Majority.....5

AYES

Anderson, K
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Cross, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Dalton, H
Davies, T
Di Pasqua, S
Greenwich, A
Griffin, J
Hannan, J
Henskens, A
Hodges, M

James, T
Kemp, M
Lane, J
Layzell, D
Leong, J
McGirr, J
Moylan, B
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G
Roberts, A
Saunders, D
Scrubby, J
Shetty, K

Singh, G
Sloane, K
Smith, T
Speakman, M
Taylor, M
Thompson, T
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Wallace, J
Ward, G
Williams, R
Williamson, R (teller)
Wilson, F

NOES

Aitchison, J
Atalla, E (teller)
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, L
Butler, R
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Cotsis, S
Crakanthorp, T
Daley, M
Davis, D
Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J

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

O'Neill, M
Park, R
Quinnell, S
Regan, M
Saffin, J
Saliba, D
Scully, P
Stuart, M
Vo, T
Voltz, L
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A
Whan, S
Wilkinson, K

PAIRS

Ayyad, T
Tudehope, M

Dib, J
Tesch, L

Amendment negatived.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:46): I move Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2025-045C:

No. 3 Reports from BOCSAR

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 5—

[4] Section 22D

Insert after section 22C—

22D Reports from BOCSAR

- (1) BOCSAR must, for each prescribed period, prepare a report about the operation of section 22C and related matters, including the following—
 - (a) the numbers of relevant offences committed during the prescribed period,
 - (b) the number of relevant offences for which the following persons were charged during the prescribed period—
 - (i) relevant young persons,

- (ii) individuals who, at the time the relevant offences were alleged to have been committed by the individuals, were—
 - (A) at least 10 years of age, and
 - (B) less than 14 years of age,
- (c) whether the relevant young persons or other individuals referred to in paragraph (b) were on bail at the time the relevant offences were alleged to have been committed and, if so, whether the bail was in relation to earlier charges for relevant offences,
- (d) whether relevant young persons and other individuals referred to in paragraph (b) were granted bail in relation to the offences with which the young persons and other individuals were charged and, if so, details of the particular offences with which the relevant young persons and other individuals were charged,
- (e) a comparison between the matters mentioned in paragraphs (a)–(d) during the equivalent period immediately before the commencement of section 22C and the prescribed period.
- (2) BOCSAR must, as soon as practicable after preparing each report, give the report to the Minister.
- (3) The Minister must ensure that a report received under subsection (2) is given to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament as soon as practicable after its receipt.
- (4) The Presiding Officer of a House of Parliament—
 - (a) must ensure the report is tabled on the first sitting day after the report's receipt, and
 - (b) may make the report public whether or not the House is in session and whether or not the report has been tabled in the House.
- (5) If a report is made public by the Presiding Officer of a House of Parliament before it is tabled in the House, the report attracts the same privileges and immunities as if the report had been tabled in the House.
- (6) To avoid doubt, this section, including any definitions in subsection (7), continues to apply despite the repeal of the *Bail Act 2013*, section 22C.
- (7) In this section—

BOCSAR means the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research within the department in which this Act is administered.

prescribed period means—

 - (a) the period starting on the commencement of this section and ending 3 months after that date, or
 - (b) each period of 3 months starting on the date the last prescribed period ended.

relevant offence means—

 - (a) a motor theft offence within the meaning of section 22C, or
 - (b) a serious breaking and entering offence within the meaning of section 22C, or
 - (c) an offence against the *Crimes Act 1900*, section 154K, or
 - (d) another serious indictable offence within the meaning of section 22C.

relevant young person has the same meaning as in section 22C.

I will try to be brief, given the time and the extent of the debate. The amendment is an attempt to receive the data we really should have had in the bill last year and which the Opposition sought last year. Last year crossbench members, other than the member for Wollondilly, the member for Kiama and the member for Murray, did not support the provision of this data as amended. I encourage them to reconsider their position. We would certainly be in a much stronger position to analyse matters and effectiveness of this law today if we had had that data last year as part of the original legislation, as the Opposition sought. In the debate last year, I said that a trial of anything is worthwhile only if its results are measured. In his second reading speech when seeking an extension of the sunset clause in this bill, the Attorney General said nothing about the results to date. It was only in his reply that he made any reference to numbers.

Unfortunately, it was a selective account and inconsistent with what the deputy secretary of the department said, which was that we cannot determine whether there had been any additional bail refused under section 22C because the offences would have had bail refused on the grounds of their seriousness. Clearly, there has been no attempt to measure the counterfactual as to the effectiveness of this provision. We need the type of data that is sought in the amendment to be able to evaluate the incidence of crime in relevant offences between the age groups of 10 to 14 and 14 to 18, as sought in the amendment.

I encourage members to support the amendment. Measurement is absolutely essential for us to come back when the sunset clause ends and no doubt there will be an application to extend the provisions of this new section. Although we were promised an evaluation last year when the bill was first introduced, we have had no evaluation from the Government. Clearly it is necessary for us to do the evaluation ourselves. The only way we can actually do that evaluation is to have data from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research about the operation of this section.

Last year it was said to be too onerous upon judicial officers to provide the data but clearly some data has been collected for the Attorney General to be able to spout the figures of 74 per cent and the number of people who have been determined under section 22C. Indeed, he said that a whole evaluation committee, consisting of Legal Aid and whole lot of stakeholders, are looking at this. What are they looking at if there is no data? How about providing it to the elective representatives of Parliament instead of keeping it in some bureaucratic assessment committee? With undue passion at this hour of the night, I ask members to support the provision of information for us to be able to do our jobs properly as elected members of Parliament.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (19:50): It will not come as a surprise that the Government opposes the amendment. The amendment inserts new section 22D into the Bail Act 2013, which would require the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] to prepare reports on the operation of section 22C at three-monthly intervals after the commencement of the section. Those reports would be required to be tabled in Parliament and to contain data in relation to a number of specific matters. The Opposition moved a very similar amendment last year when we first brought legislation before this Parliament to enact section 22C. At that time, we made clear why introducing a provision like this is very problematic. We do not customarily include provisions in our legislation that require BOCSAR to provide data to Parliament at specific intervals and on specific matters.

The shadow Minister did not explain the breadth of the reporting requested by the amendment. He did not say that the amendment would require extensive reporting on people not captured by the test in section 22C. He did not explain how the comparative reporting in new subsection (1) (c) to (e) would inform the Parliament about the effectiveness of section 22C or why the Opposition think they know better than the experts at BOCSAR about how to measure this. When the shadow Attorney General foreshadowed that he would move this amendment yesterday, he again did not provide the Parliament with much detail at all on these matters.

Even though the Opposition is moving an amendment in largely the same form as a previous amendment, and even though it is on notice of the issues with this amendment, including the significant strain it would put on BOCSAR's resources—and I have to tell members that is a concern—and whether this data is even available, the Opposition has made no effort to engage with the Government to try to better frame the amendment. It has made no effort to engage with us to facilitate discussions with BOCSAR about what is possible; it has just moved the same amendment again and lazily tried to pass it off as a good idea. We do not support the amendment. It is a shame that, after having had a year to think about it, the Opposition could not even be bothered to put in the effort to come up with something new and better than this.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:53): With all due respect to the Attorney General, he should have made clear in his bill how the data was going to be collected and measured. The Attorney General has made much of the need to collect data, but he could not do it in the first 12 months. That is why they need another three years. As much as I disagree with it, I accept that the bill will pass. I understand that crossbench members have a youth crime problem in their communities and believe the bill is the best way to address that. I ask them not to vote against a provision that would allow us as legislators to do our job and see what is happening with decisions that are made about bail for young people.

I said in my second reading debate contribution that members would feel the need to support the bill for whatever reason. I do not, but others do, and that is totally understandable. But surely members—particularly the member for Barwon, the member for Orange and the member for Murray—would not be of a mind to exclude a provision that allows transparency and accountability of the Government so that we can do our jobs as legislators and make sure the Attorney General does what he says, particularly when he originally told us in the first iteration of the bill that there would be data, and now there is no data. Without this particular amendment, we are expected to trust the Government that the data will be forthcoming.

I know that the Attorney General would want to deliver on that. I believe he is a good man. But he may not be the Attorney General in three years time after the next election, when the provision in this bill concludes. He certainly may not be Attorney General after the next reshuffle, if members who are briefing the Sydney press as a result of the last reshuffle have anything to do with it. A few members gave cameos for Cabinet positions. I simply ask Independent members to make sure that the Parliament can do its job and get the information it needs. If members support the bill based on the circumstances in their electorates, that is absolutely understandable. That might be their view, and I would disagree. But members should not prevent the Legislature from holding the

government of the day to account by getting the data needed to make an appropriate assessment about the future of this legislation. I beg members not to do that.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (19:55): Apart from the fact that the member for Kiama referred to me as a good man, he is wilfully misrepresenting the facts and the representations that I have made about data and reporting. Having said that, he is doing a much better job than the shadow Attorney General of bolstering the position of a party of which he is not even a member.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:56): I thank the shadow Attorney General and understand the intention behind the amendment. I do not support it. Independent members of the crossbench have been working closely with the Attorney General's office throughout the day on reporting mechanisms and information about the changes we are dealing with in this legislation. That will be the subject of the next amendment members deal with, which I will support.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:56): In brief response to the member for Sydney, I note that the proposed amendment will provide an evaluation, but not necessarily raw data of the kind sought in this amendment, which is important for MPs to make their own assessment of what is dished up to them as a summary of the data. The amendment is consequently superior to the one put forward by the member for Pittwater. In response to the Attorney General, I point out that 12 months ago he promised us an evaluation of section 22C after the first 12 months. There was no evaluation, nor an attempt to make an evaluation in the second reading speech on the bill, so there has been a blatant failure to honour the promise made to Parliament 12 months ago that there would be an evaluation of the operation of section 22C after its first 12 months.

Secondly, we have been told that there is a review group that evaluates section 22C. I assume that group meets more often than every three months, so there must be data produced at least every three months for them to actually meet and discuss section 22C and its operation. I do not accept the Attorney General's reference to the onerous nature of providing the data required by this amendment. Thirdly, the Attorney General said it will take a lot of Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research resources, as if there is a price to evaluating the youth crime crisis confronting our State. It costs a million dollars to incarcerate every youth offender in youth detention centres. It seems to me to be an incredibly false economy for the Government to be unprepared to spend some money to get the data to work out how these provisions and wraparound services are performing.

I must say that I cried crocodile tears at the Attorney General's plea that we did not engage with him enough about the wording of our amendment. Who has the resources of the State of New South Wales? Is it the Opposition or the Government? Give me a break! If there were some problems with the wording of our amendment, it is for the Attorney General to suggest some changes. He cannot just say, "No, nyet, no. You are nay getting any information. You might be elected members of Parliament but we are going to keep all the information to ourselves and you get nothing on an issue as important as youth crime"—even though all the members who contributed to the debate said youth crime is a serious and important issue in this State. The contribution of the Attorney General to debate on this amendment was breathtakingly inadequate.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2025-045C be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes37
Noes50
Majority.....13

AYES

Anderson, K
Butler, R
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Cross, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Dalton, H
Davies, T
Di Pasqua, S
Donato, P
Griffin, J
Henskens, A

Hodges, M
James, T
Kemp, M
Lane, J
Layzell, D
Moylan, B
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G
Regan, M
Roberts, A
Saunders, D

Singh, G
Sloane, K
Speakman, M
Taylor, M
Thompson, T
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Wallace, J
Ward, G
Williams, R
Williamson, R (teller)
Wilson, F

NOES

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

PAIRS

Ayyad, T	Dib, J
Tudehope, M	Tesch, L

Amendment negatived.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (20:07): I move my amendment No. 1 on sheet c2025-053E:

No. 1 **Minister to review operation of amendments made by Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Act 2025**

Page 3, Schedule 1. Insert after line 5—

[2] **Section 22D**

Insert after section 22C—

22D Review of operation of amendments made by Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Act 2025

- (1) The Minister must review the operation of the amendments made by the amendment Act to determine whether—
 - (a) the policy objectives of the amendments remain valid, and
 - (b) the terms of the amendments remain appropriate for achieving the objectives.
- (2) The review must be undertaken as soon as possible after the period of 12 months from the commencement.
- (3) The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, within the department in which this Act is administered, must—
 - (a) be consulted as part of the review, and
 - (b) provide information and data to inform the review.
- (4) A report on the outcome of the review must be tabled in each House of Parliament as soon as practicable after the end of the period of 12 months from the commencement.
- (5) This section is repealed on the day that is 2 years after the day on which the section commences.
- (6) In this section—

***amendment Act** means the *Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Act 2025*.*

***commencement** means the commencement of the amendment Act.*

This amendment inserts new section 22D, which requires the Minister to review the operation of the amendments, and determine whether the policy objectives of the amendments remain valid and the terms of the amendment in the bill remain appropriate for achieving its objectives. That review must be undertaken 12 months after the commencement of the bill. Most importantly, under section 22D (3) the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research

must be consulted and provide information and data to inform the review. The use of data to track outcomes and inform decisions is essential, particularly given the serious and punitive nature of the amendments proposed by the bill.

My amendment will ensure that the Government is tracking the operation of the amendments and making information publicly available to help determine the adequacy and effectiveness of the bill. I have had discussions with colleagues and stakeholders about the importance of the data and it can be acknowledged that there needs to be better data collection, better transparency and better utilisation of evidence to drive the reforms of the future. As highlighted in the Forecasting Future Outcomes report, it is important to track young people's progress and work across agencies to ensure they are supported. The evidence base will demonstrate that interventions can go a long way towards preventing the need for legislation like the bill before us. That is why I have moved an amendment to require a report after 12 months and a review of the impact of extending the sunset clause. After that period, the Government should conduct a thorough review of how the provision is working to ensure that we have a better understanding of its impact.

I note the Tasmanian Government's youth justice reforms, the Queensland Government's announcement of the Regional Reset program and the commitment this Government made with its investment in Moree, acknowledging that those programs take time to get off the ground. In my discussions with the Attorney General, he has expressed the Government's commitment to intervention programs. Statutory reviews of this legislation will include data that relates to not only crimes and offenders but also engagement with intervention programs to assess their efficacy and success. Importantly, under new section 22D (4), the outcomes of the review must be tabled in both Houses of Parliament, which will provide the transparency that the public deserves and allow the legislation to come under the scrutiny of both this place and the other place. This amendment is a modest start towards supporting evidence-based reform.

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (20:10): I thank the member for Pittwater for moving this sensible amendment. I also thank the members of the crossbench for working with the Government yesterday and today on this and other issues so that we could agree on an amendment that will provide helpful, relevant and accurate information. This amendment provides for a statutory review to be tabled as soon as practicable 12 months from the commencement of the measure in the bill. It makes it clear that the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] will be consulted and provide information to inform the review.

I will make sure that the information provided by BOCSAR includes things like the number of young persons who fall within the scope of section 22C who were charged with relevant offences, information about whether those young people were granted bail, and other relevant data. I have had very constructive discussions with the member for Wagga Wagga and the member for Pittwater about the importance of this amendment, and I thank them for their collaboration. They are obviously dedicated to advocating for their communities. The members asked me to remind the House that it is not just young people in regional and rural communities who are causing problems. Young people in suburban Sydney will be subject to these provisions and, because of the circumstances they find themselves in, will need the help and wraparound services that the Government is determined to provide.

The member for Pittwater and the member for Wagga Wagga are dedicated to addressing and preventing youth crime, including through early intervention and rehabilitation measures that will ultimately keep the community safer. I also thank the member for Barwon, who has been a consistent and understated advocate for his community. I will ensure that the statutory review will outline the progress of measures across government to tackle youth crime, including those early intervention and rehabilitation measures. I also thank the member for Sydney. I will ensure that the statutory review also includes relevant financial information about the costs of the measures in this bill. Once again, I thank crossbench members for their constructive engagement. I am happy to support the amendment.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (20:13): The Opposition will support the amendment. However, I inform the House that although the member for Pittwater wants better data, this amendment does not provide that better data and information publicly. Under the amendment, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research will inform the review and provide information and data to the Government, but there is no guarantee that that information and data will be made public, nor that it will necessarily be expressly included within the review. This is a much inferior version of the amendment that I moved, which would have actually provided the information and data publicly to the Parliament, rather than filtered through the Minister and his department with all the political spin and obfuscation that will bring.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (20:14): I support the amendment moved by the member for Pittwater, and I commend her for her work. I thank the Attorney General and his office for their constructive conversations yesterday and today. The Attorney General has provided details on what the statutory review will include. It will be much broader than the proposal put forward by the Opposition. Importantly, it will look at the

financial costs of this legislation. In my contribution to the second reading debate, I pointed out that according to Treasury data it costs \$3,000 a day to have a young person in detention. There are about 1,000 young people in detention in New South Wales. The numbers are clear. We are expending a huge amount of money to lock up young people, the majority of whom are Aboriginal.

It is important that the community knows how we are spending our money. It is tragic that the largest area of expenditure for Aboriginal young people in New South Wales is on locking them up: putting them in detention, putting them in remand and putting them in custody. Surely we can do better. I hope that the information that comes out of the review as a result of this amendment provides us with a pathway to achieve that better outcome. In the short period that the member for Pittwater has been in this Parliament, she has had a positive impact. Just a few weeks after her inaugural speech, she is successfully moving amendments to legislation. I commend her for her work.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (20:16): I indicate that The Greens support the amendment moved by the member for Pittwater. I acknowledge the Opposition's concern about whether the information will be made public. I reassure the Opposition that if the information we require is not forthcoming at any point in time, we can always move a Standing Order 52 motion in the other place.

The SPEAKER: The question is that amendment No. 1 on sheet c2025-053E of the member for Pittwater be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 and 2 and schedule 1 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

The House divided.

Ayes78
Noes9
Majority.....69

AYES

Aitchison, J
Anderson, K
Atalla, E
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, L
Butler, R
Car, P
Catley, Y
Chanthivong, A
Clancy, J
Cooke, S
Cotsis, S
Coure, M
Crakanthorp, T
Cross, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Daley, M
Davies, T
Davis, D
Di Pasqua, S
Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Griffin, J

Harris, D
Harrison, J
Haylen, J
Henskens, A
Hodges, M
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Hornery, S
James, T
Kaliyanda, C
Kamper, S
Kemp, M
Kirby, W
Lane, J
Layzell, D
Li, J
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
Minns, C
Moylan, B
O'Neill, M
Park, R
Petinos, E

Provest, G
Quinnell, S
Roberts, A
Saffin, J
Saliba, D
Saunders, D
Scully, P
Singh, G
Sloane, K
Speakman, M
Stuart, M
Taylor, M
Thompson, T
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Vo, T
Voltz, L
Wallace, J
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A
Whan, S
Wilkinson, K
Williams, R
Williamson, R

AYES

Hagarty, N (teller)

Preston, R

Wilson, F

NOES

Dalton, H
Greenwich, A
Hannan, JLeong, J
Regan, M
Scruby, J (teller)Shetty, K
Smith, T (teller)
Ward, G**Motion agreed to.***Community Recognition Statements***BATCALL BADDIES**

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (20:28): I recognise the incredible fundraising efforts of the team at Sutherland Hospital's emergency department in raising nearly \$25,000 for the Starlight Children's Foundation as the "Batcall Baddies". Throughout February the Batcall Baddies took part in Super Swim 2025, completing over 655 kilometres at the Sutherland Leisure Centre pool. The nearly \$25,000 raised will go to the Starlight Children's Foundation to create the fun and happiness that seriously ill children and their families need to get through their toughest times. I acknowledge the efforts of the Batcall Baddies—namely, Janani Prageshan, Hannah Gladman, Andrea Werts, Melinda Pickard, Chelsea Jackson, Naomi Christie, Ben Crook, Todd Steggles, Janie Bischard, Kealey Pennell, Michelle Murphy, Libby Mackenzie, Olivia Heathcote, Jack Donnelly, Bronte McIntyre, Georgina Thode, Ella Sandrone, Aleisha Fearby, Ryan Powell, Mikayla Ebb, Madeline Murphy, Isabella Korbi, Sanjeet Minhas, Harley Smith, Colette Duff, Marie Hearne, Meagan Wigney, Lexi Jackson, Emily Lavender, Caitlin Anders, Mikayla Kelly, Lilly Chen, Connor Casley, Robyn Featherstone, David Browne and Zoe Hart.

EAGLE VALE ANGLICAN CHURCH

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (20:29): In late February I had the pleasure of visiting Eagle Vale Anglican Church to congratulate it on receiving \$47,300 through the Community Building Partnership program. The funds have gone towards renovating the church's kitchen with new ovens, storage and an improved space for meal preparation. The upgrade will enhance its ability to serve the community in many ways. The church is not just a place of worship. It is a hub for education, social connection and support. Grounded in faith, it offers free English classes to help migrants build connections. It also runs inclusive activities for all ages, from karate and dance to knitting groups. It also offers a hip hop class, which I will not be participating in. Faith plays a vital role in the Leppington community, bringing people together and creating a strong sense of support and inclusion. I am always proud to stand with and support the many faith organisations that make a difference in the Leppington community and beyond. I congratulate Pastor Steven Thurgar and the whole team at Eagle Vale Anglican.

JAN FRIKKEN

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (20:30): I recognise Jan Frikken from Batemans Bay and formerly of Nowra who was a finalist for the 2025 NSW Regional Woman of the Year Award. Jan has dedicated her life to building more inclusive and supportive multicultural communities in the Shoalhaven and Eurobodalla regions, and Jan's nomination is a testament to her unwavering service, compassion and advocacy. Originally from Singapore, Jan worked as a translator for Thai construction and sex workers before continuing her grassroots advocacy in Nowra and later in Batemans Bay, where she established first the Shoalhaven and then the Eurobodalla multicultural groups. Through coffee meet-ups, dinner groups, Harmony Day celebrations and potluck meals, Jan has created a welcoming space for everyone up and down the South Coast. Jan approaches that recognition with characteristic humility, often saying, "It's in my DNA. It's not hard for me to do." I congratulate Jan. She is a winner in everyone's eyes on the South Coast.

TRISH FORD FUNDRAISING EVENT

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (20:31): The community of Woolbrook is a little village with a very big heart. The community recently banded together and hosted a fundraising evening to assist their friend and neighbour Trish Ford. The event comprised an auction of items generously donated by small businesses from around the district, raising more than \$22,000. I congratulate all involved in this incredible act to support Trish and her family, including Kylie Matthews, Councillor Gary Olrich, Rhonda Olrich, Janelle Smith, Margaret Swanton and all of the small businesses that donated items for the auction. I thank the volunteers who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make the event what it was. Events such as this in regional towns and villages cannot function without the wonderful support and commitment of volunteers in regional towns.

ISABELLA CREBERT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (20:32): I congratulate the inaugural winner of the International Women's Day Loretta Baker Scholarship, Isabella Crebert. Named after Maitland's first female mayor, the \$1,000 scholarship supports local women in achieving their professional and academic goals. Isabella, a University of Newcastle PhD candidate, will use the scholarship to further her forensic anthropology research overseas. She will present her findings at the European Academy of Forensic Sciences in Dublin in May. Isabella's PhD looks into how 3D technology can be used to better identify deceased people, particularly when they are skeletonised. From Dublin, Ms Crebert will test some of her results at the University of Zurich, and then continue on to Lazaretto off Venice in Italy to identify people. Isabella hopes her research will help to identify people's loved ones in Australia and around the world. Again, I congratulate Isabella.

JOHN FIELD

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (20:33): I acknowledge the work of John Field, who is in the public gallery, and Speech at the Beach for providing mobile accessibility and support for speech pathology in our northern beaches community. John facilitates the development of an individual's communications, specialising in autism spectrum disorders, in concepts as important as first words, through a variety of low- and high-tech assistive technologies, merging them with traditional language pedagogies. As far as possible, John works in natural settings to maximise the ability of those he works with to integrate new skills in their daily lives. I commend John for his focus on the quality of life for the people he works with and finding new ways forward for them, with their best interests at heart.

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' EMERGENCY CENTRE

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (20:34): I recognise the incredible work of the Women's and Girls' Emergency Centre [WAGEC]. I recently visited one of its centres. For over 45 years, WAGEC has been a pillar of hope and strength for women and children facing domestic violence, homelessness and systemic disadvantage. Its work goes beyond crisis accommodation. It provides wraparound support, including its Helping Children Heal, a pilot program for children who have experienced trauma. Through therapeutic activities, early childhood education and after-school programs, WAGEC helps children rebuild their confidence, heal from adversity and regain a sense of stability. It understands that breaking the cycle of violence starts with giving children a safe and nurturing environment to grow. WAGEC reminds us that a safe community is one where everyone has access to stability, opportunity and a future free from violence. I thank the dedicated staff, volunteers and supporters of WAGEC. Their work changes lives, strengthens our community and moves us closer to a future where every woman and child has a safe place to call home.

SARAH IRANI

Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (20:35): I acknowledge Sarah Irani, who was awarded with the Local Woman of the Year for Winston Hills in 2025. The recognition follows many years of dedication to the Toongabbie East Public School community as president of its P&C committee. During that time, Sarah has been a fierce advocate for the school and its community by securing grant funding, improving awareness for student wellbeing and mental health, and providing healthy food through the canteen. While Toongabbie East Public School is a rather small school, its engagement with the community to improve the welfare of families has been remarkable, and Sarah has played a crucial role in that process. Beyond her contribution to the school, Sarah has been a significant contributor to health research and advocacy for heart health. I congratulate Sarah and wish her the very best for the future.

BLACKTOWN BOYS AND BLACKTOWN GIRLS HIGH SCHOOLS

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (20:36): I congratulate the school communities of Blacktown Boys High School and Blacktown Girls High School on their successful consultations with the Government to ensure that they remain single-sex schools. The school communities led by the P&Cs came together to strongly reject the proposed changes in favour of the proven, successful environment which has produced some of our area's brightest students across generations. In last year's HSC, the two schools achieved 68 distinguished achievements, four all-rounders and one top achievement—rank one in information process and technology. Because of the schools' advocacy, intake areas of nearby co-ed high schools will be adjusted to include students living in the current catchment for Blacktown Boys and Blacktown Girls high schools, expanding parental choice. I again congratulate Blacktown Boys and Blacktown Girls high schools. May they continue their success for generations to come.

COONAMBLE JOCKEY CLUB

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:37): I congratulate the Coonamble Jockey Club which held a Racing NSW Country Championships qualifying heat on Sunday 16 March. The club has an incredible culture and races just four times a year. Led by president Mick Heaney, it boasts a large voluntary committee that works tirelessly to prepare the grounds, the course proper and run events on race days, ensuring patrons have a great time. The championship on Sunday was no exception. It was a cracking day. Sunday was an eight-race program, with the feature the Evergreen Turf WRA Country Championship qualifier. The winner was Gallant Star, ridden by Sydney jockey Jason Collett, trained by Brett Robb from Dubbo and owned by the Ringland family and former test cricketer and now commentator Kerry O'Keeffe, who was on course to celebrate the win. Gallant Star will now contest the final at Randwick on 5 April and will no doubt have a fair following. Events like these mean so much to country racing and country racing means so much to communities like Coonamble.

JANE EWING

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:38): I acknowledge Jane Ewing, an author, advocate for women and incredible local from my electorate of East Hills, who I had the pleasure of chatting to recently. Jane is the author of *Empowering Employers: Strategies for Integrating Skilled Women in Male-Dominated Industries*. Her book is aimed at breaking down barriers for women in the workforce. All proceeds from the book go towards the Elizabeth Ewing Memorial Scholarship for Adolescent and Young Adult Health, ensuring that Jane's hard work continues to support future generations. Jane is also participating in the 2025 UN Women's Trek for Rights. She hopes to raise \$3,000 for women and girls who are living in crisis-affected areas due to war, conflict and natural disasters. I commend Jane for her dedication to empowering women and girls, both in Australia and globally. The world needs more people like Jane. I thank her for everything she does.

GREATER ILLAWARRA VETERANS CRICKET ASSOCIATION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (20:39): Tonight the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Greater Illawarra Veterans Cricket Association and the Australian Veterans over-60s team, who won the Grey Ashes. Kiama resident Tony Panecasio thought his cricketing dream was a thing of the past. However, in the past 18 months he has won the World Cup in India whilst also taking the most wickets. To top it off, he won an Ashes series against England. Mr Panecasio moved to the South Coast 30 years ago with his family. When his kids were older, he decided to join a team in Lake Illawarra. The World Cup took place in Chennai. His over-60s Australian team went on to win the tournament, with Mr Panecasio taking a combined 10 wickets in the semifinal and final alone. He won the World Cup trophy for the most wickets. A highlight of Mr Panecasio's career was winning the Grey Ashes against England in December 2024. Tony Panecasio hopes his story will inspire older generations to give cricket a go. Huge congratulations and well done to the Greater Illawarra Veterans Cricket Association and the Australian Veterans over-60s team.

LOFTUS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (20:40): Since 1986, Loftus Public School has provided a dynamic and inclusive educational environment for its students. Its exemplary academic performance in literacy, numeracy and writing demonstrates Loftus Public School's commitment to quality teaching and learning across all key educational areas. The school's 397 students benefit from its evergreen backdrop of the Royal National Park, as well as a curriculum that has a strong focus on environmental education and sustainability. Interactive technology is evident in all classrooms, providing a modern learning environment for its students. When I visited the school recently with the Premier and the education Minister, we spoke with the bright students of their Leaders of the Future Program, or LOFT, which aims to promote the development of student leadership skills. On behalf of the Heathcote electorate, I thank the students, staff and community members of Loftus Public School for their commitment to excellence in education.

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN SEIDLER, AM

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (20:41): I rise to acknowledge the passing of Brian Seidler, AM, a dedicated and long-time leader and advocate for the building and construction industry. Brian devoted over 40 years to the Master Builders Association of NSW, serving as executive director for 25 years. His unwavering commitment to the industry shaped policies, strengthened industrial relations, and supported the success of countless businesses and workers. Brian was a strong voice for independent contractors, infrastructure development and housing affordability. He championed pathways for young people, advocated for mental health support, and worked to create opportunities for women and Indigenous workers in construction. His leadership was defined by integrity, passion and a deep commitment to those he represented. Beyond his professional achievements, Brian was known for his kindness and generosity, always willing to mentor and support those

around him. His contributions will leave a lasting impact on the industry, and he will be deeply missed. My thoughts are with his family, colleagues and the broader construction community during this sad time.

THE BACHRACH NAUMBURGER GROUP SCHOLARSHIPS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:42): A dinner with a difference was held at the Shoreline in Coffs Harbour to present the Bachrach Naumburger Group's inaugural Hans Abraham Israel Bachrach and Max Israel Naumburger Shoreline scholarships. Bachrach Naumburger Group General Manager Steve Gooley revealed that the scholarships at Southern Cross University were awarded to Esha McCarthy, Cherie Howard and Maya Esfandiary. Esha completed a Certificate III in Individual Support last year during her HSC and is now studying a Diploma of Nursing to become an enrolled nurse. Cherie is studying a Diploma of Nursing to progress from a companion to an enrolled nurse. She has had her sights set on becoming a nurse for a long time. Maya has enjoyed her experience working at the Shoreline so much that she wants to develop her career in aged care and become a registered nurse. I congratulate Esha, Cherie and Maya on their great news. I know their futures are very bright. I also congratulate the Bachrach Naumburger Group on their scholarships.

SUPERINTENDENT ADAM WHYTE

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (20:43): I farewell Superintendent Adam Whyte, who is taking up a new position after seven years leading the mighty Liverpool Local Police Area Command. South-west Sydney has been home to Superintendent Whyte, having served across Liverpool, Green Valley, Wetherill Park, Cabramatta and Fairfield since joining the Police Force in 1988 at age 21, before coming back as area commander of Liverpool in 2018, which he said was a highlight of his career. As members of Parliament, we often work closely with local law enforcement to handle inquiries and work together to promote community safety. I have been fortunate to have Adam, a fantastic member of the NSW Police Force, at the helm of the Liverpool command. His ongoing dedication to the community was admirable, and he will do a similarly fantastic job in his new role running the Radio Operations Group. As the Liverpool police area command readies itself for new leadership, I look forward to welcoming the incoming superintendent, Scott Tanner, who has a fantastic reputation at his current posting in Lismore, having helped guide the Northern Rivers community.

VICTOR VALDES CONCERT

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (20:44): On 15 February 2025 I had the pleasure of attending the Victor Valdes concert at the Club Uruguayo de Sydney, which was an incredible experience. The atmosphere at the event was vibrant and filled with excitement and anticipation, as we eagerly awaited Victor Valdes' performance. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Sinilia Radivojevic for the kind invitation and for introducing me to this special event. Special congratulations go to Victor Valdes for successfully organising the concert. His dedication and passion for music, especially through playing the harp, were evident throughout the entire performance. It was clear that a lot of hard work went into making the event a success. The concert not only showcased his incredible talent but also provided a wonderful platform for cultural exchange and community engagement. Overall, the evening was a fantastic experience, and I look forward to more events like this in the future.

LONG REEF SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (20:45): I congratulate Long Reef Surf Life Saving Club on celebrating its seventy-fifth anniversary last month. The club was founded in 1950 and started with just 29 members. At the time, the club leased part of a bus shelter from the former Department of Road Transport and Tramways to store its gear. How things have changed! In February 2023 I joined members to usher in a new era for the club with the official opening of a brand-new, multimillion-dollar clubhouse. The clubhouse is state of the art, with upgraded public amenities, improved accessibility, storage and a cafe. The new facility will see the club continue to grow and evolve with the environment and its community for many years to come. After three-quarters of a century, the club is still having a lasting impact on the lives of countless beachgoers and local residents. Long Reef Surf Life Saving Club is proud that no lives have been lost at the beach during patrol hours. Here's to many more years of good surf and safety at Long Reef. Congratulations.

CATHERINE CRAIG

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (20:46): It is with pleasure that I acknowledge the remarkable contributions of Mrs Catherine Craig as the 2025 Penrith Local Woman of the Year. Cathy was nominated for her outstanding work in the community as a founder and volunteer. She has dedicated over 30 years to improving lives in Penrith through her tireless work at Penrith Community Kitchen. Cathy's journey with the kitchen began in 1993, when she responded to a local newspaper article calling for volunteers to start a soup kitchen and emerged as a founding member alongside June Woolard and Reverend Alan Jackson. Her devotion extends far beyond daily meals. In 2024 the kitchen launched the Food for Local Kids initiative, which supplies breakfast, lunch and

snacks to 11 local schools and PCYC Penrith. This effort ensures that underprivileged children have access to nutritious meals throughout their school day. I am honoured to recognise Cathy for her continuous and tremendous service to the people of Penrith.

BARBARA MARKELL COOPER, AM

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (20:47): Barbara Markell Cooper, AM, was born in Darlinghurst on 19 March 1925 and turns 100 today. Barbara grew up in Wahroonga, attended Presbyterian Ladies' College in Pymble and married Randal Peter Cooper on 4 February 1949. They had two children, John Cooper and Sue Brown, and five grandchildren. Before having children, Barbara worked in business and later taught leatherwork to children and people with disabilities at Inala. She was also a taxi proprietor and driver from 1976. Barbara was actively involved with the Castle Cove swimming club during her children's younger years. Barbara joined the Dural and District Historical Society in 1986, where her computer skills helped create a comprehensive World War I community record. She served on the management committee, including as secretary, and was made a life member in 2003. In 1965 Barbara founded the Working Kelpie Council of Australia, where she remains vice-president and registrar. She has dedicated her life to the organisation, registering over 130,000 kelpies. In 2003 she was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia, AM, for her service to the pastoral industry. In her nineties Barbara travelled to Africa, New Zealand, Alaska and Canada. Today she remains on the Working Kelpie Council board and still enjoys life at home with her friends, 13 sheep and beloved duck, Freckles.

MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (20:48): I welcome His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj on his visit to Sydney. At the remarkable age of 92, Mahant Swami Maharaj continues to inspire millions worldwide with his wisdom, compassion and profound spiritual leadership. I am incredibly proud that New South Wales is home to several historic firsts for Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha, from the establishment of the first temple in 1984 to the recent opening of the BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir and Cultural Precinct, the first of its kind in the Australia-Pacific region. This vibrant centre of spirituality and community will play a pivotal role in fostering social harmony and uniting diverse communities across New South Wales. His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj's visit embodies the spirit of celebrating peace and the importance of multiculturalism. His leadership continues to nurture harmony, volunteerism, faith and community. I thank His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj and BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha for their positive impact on our State and its people.

LYNNETTE BUICK

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (20:49): Lynnette Buick voluntarily runs HOPE Wollondilly, a thrift store that raises funds for a number of local, national and international charitable causes. Lynnette runs the organisation with the purpose of raising money that she can distribute directly to those in need. Lynnette has focused her efforts on worthwhile groups in the Philippines. That includes Bethany Girls' Home, which operates on the financial support of a small group of people located worldwide to benefit the youth who rely on its services. She also supports a medical and maternity outreach program and local schools. HOPE Wollondilly fundraises locally for groups like the 24 Hour Fight Against Cancer Macarthur, and also helps those in the surrounding community with a free food pantry consisting of donated items available at no cost to those in need. Money is raised through the HOPE Wollondilly thrift shop in Tahmoor, which Lynnette staffs. By taking goods that are no longer needed by others and giving them a second life, she also makes a positive contribution to reducing waste and helping people with the cost of living. I thank Lynnette for her efforts to make a positive impact both at home and abroad.

RIVERSTONE RAZORBACKS

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (20:50): I congratulate the Riverstone Razorbacks as they kick off their incredible 110th year. That significant milestone underscores the club's deep connection to the Riverstone community. The Razorbacks were established in 1915 and have been part of the town's journey, evolving as Riverstone's population grew from 981 at its founding to over 16,000 today. As participants in the first rugby league game played in Australia, the club holds a special place in the town's history. It shares space with other key landmarks such as the first telephone exchange and the cenotaph in the town centre. The club was originally known as the Riverstone Junior Rugby League Club or the Riverstone Butchers and was renamed the Riverstone Razorbacks in 2000, marking an important chapter in its history. The Razorbacks' longstanding success is due to the dedication of many, including Des Cartwright, Ron Bates, Basil Andrews, Charlie Harris, Frank Crowley, Bobby Parkes, Eric Gunton, Geoff Binks, Eric and Barry Crouch, Alan Drayton, Eric Martin, Johnny Judge, Bill Denman, Bill McNamara—[*Time expired.*]

DR ANNE IRELAND

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:51): I congratulate Dr Anne Ireland, our well-deserving North Shore Woman of the Year 2025. Following community nominations, I was delighted to recognise Dr Ireland's admirable dedication to education and advocacy for young women, and her commitment to strengthening our local community. As the principal of two leading girls colleges for over 18 years, Dr Ireland has fostered an environment of empowerment, academic excellence and personal growth. Beyond her leadership in education, Dr Ireland has contributed to the broader community through her published works, including *Consent and Respect* and *Integration of Wellbeing and Curriculum*, which reflect her commitment to holistic wellbeing for young people outside of their academic achievements. People like Dr Ireland are the lifeblood of our community. She has been involved in several local initiatives, participating in events such as the Balmoral Burn and the Balmoral Swim for Cancer. She is also an active member of the North Shore parish council and the Independent Girls' Schools Association. Now retired, she continues to actively involve herself in the lower North Shore community. I again congratulate Dr Ireland on that incredible achievement.

COLIN BUCHANAN

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (20:52): Heathcote local Colin Buchanan has won the 2025 Tamworth Country Music Festival Golden Guitar Award for Bush Ballad of the Year for his song *Laura and Giselle*. A former ABC *Play School* presenter, Colin's award-winning song tells the story of his daughter and her friend road tripping to Broken Hill Base Hospital and exploring the Australian landscape. Colin has been a staple of Australian entertainment for over 30 years. He has collaborated with country music royalty, including Lee Kernaghan, Adam Brand and Troy Cassar-Daley. In the 2000s, Colin aspired to sing some of his homegrown Bible songs. Today he is Australia's number one solo Christian artist for kids. On behalf of the community, I thank Mr Buchanan for his ongoing contributions to Australian music and for encouraging our children to develop a love for music.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE ARMENIAN COMMUNITY

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (20:53): I recognise the vibrant Australian Armenian community in Davidson. The school captains of Galstaun College, Panos Krdanian and Bianca Bozoghlian, are sitting in the gallery tonight. I welcome them to the Parliament. The Davidson electorate is home to thousands of Australian Armenians. In 2023 I was honoured to personally visit Armenia and witness firsthand the amazing country, culture and people. In 1997 the New South Wales Parliament recognised the Armenian genocide of 1915. Genocide denied is genocide repeated. It is the 110th anniversary of the genocide in 2025, and it is vital that we commemorate it. Locally, I am proud to have the Ararat Cultural Centre in Frenchs Forest, which brings our community together. In July 2024 I was pleased to officially reopen the facility with the His Eminence Archbishop Najarian. The archbishop has now returned to Armenia after 12 years of service. I recently celebrated 50 years of his priesthood. Finally, I recognise the Armenian National Committee of Australia, led by Michael Kolokossian, and thank them for the work they do.

JANNA AND YAKOV TERTERIAN

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:54): I ask the House to join me in congratulating Janna and Yakov Terterian, who celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary in January. There is something to be said for 10 years of marriage. It is a symbol of love, loyalty and, no doubt, triumph over the inevitable adversity that is encountered in any partnership. They would have seen significant change throughout the journey of life. Communities evolve, technology develops and people come and go from within our respective orbits. To have the steady presence of a life partner—in Janna's case, Yakov; in Yakov's case, Janna—is to experience that journey to its fullest. Janna has asked me to share these heartfelt words in Parliament:

Happy 10 year wedding anniversary (and 15 together) to my husband. Love doing life with you. Let's continue to laugh till our bellies hurt and create more memories with our cheeky, yet totally adorable, girls.

We can all aspire to Janna and Yakov's example of a lifetime of partnership and the building of an enriching legacy. I ask the House to join me in congratulating them both on their 10-year wedding anniversary.

NELLIE DOUEIHI

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:55): I recognise Nellie Doueihi, who is a very important individual in our community. She was recently announced as our 2025 Local Woman of the Year. As a member of St Declan's Catholic Church in Penshurst, Nellie has supported our community in her role as the coordinator of ministry to the sick and elderly. She currently provides support to just over 300 elderly people with the help of over 130 volunteers. Through Nellie's leadership, she has strived to develop new programs to help our ageing population. That includes the Tech Savvy Seniors program, where students from my old school, Marist Catholic College Penshurst, assist elderly residents with technology-related questions. In addition to being named the

2025 Local Woman of the Year, Nellie was also recognised as the 2023 Westfield Local Hero for Hurstville. As a part of that recognition, St Declan's Catholic Church was awarded \$20,000 in funding to help it continue its vital ministry. I am so proud to offer my sincere congratulations to Nellie on her unwavering and exceptional dedication to our community. She is an unsung hero, and I wish her all the very best for the future.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:56): In recognition of the recent International Women's Day, I acknowledge the remarkable women who have shaped, and who continue to shape, the North Shore community. Their leadership, resilience, and dedication continue to drive positive change. International Women's Day is celebrated on 8 March. It presents an opportunity to recognise some of the remarkable achievements of women and their invaluable contributions to society. My community of North Shore has a very proud history of strong, capable women who make a significant impact across the fields of business, health, education, politics, the arts, community service and raising their families. My predecessor, Jillian Skinner, was an incredibly strong woman who was dedicated to both our community and our State. Our local mayors, Federal members, and business chamber and chamber of commerce presidents are all talented and capable women. We are also fortunate to have many inspiring female school principals, business leaders and volunteers, who uplift our community and encourage younger women to fulfil their potential. Women continue to lead, guide and support others with compassion and strength across the North Shore. I thank all of the incredible women in our community, whether they are leading, mentoring, advocating, supporting others or caring for their family, for all they do behind the scenes and in the spotlight.

MASIS ELECTRONICS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:57): After nearly five decades of dedicated service to the local community of Penshurst, the well-respected small business Masis Electronics has officially closed its doors. Since opening in 1972, Masis Electronics has been a trusted destination for electronic repairs and servicing. It has helped generations of customers from my electorate with their home appliances, from shavers and heaters to toasters and hair dryers. The store's closure marks the retirement of its longstanding owner, Matthew Masis, who has been the face of the business since its inception. He and his late wife built a store that was more than just a business; it was a community staple where customers knew they would receive expert advice, reliable repairs and friendly services. Penshurst has been his home for over 50 years, and he is blessed to have served so many wonderful customers, seeing familiar faces that came back each and every year. Masis Electronics has been a cornerstone of Penshurst, and I thank Matthew for his dedication, quality service and commitment to helping local families.

DR CHEN

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:58): I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the outstanding contributions of Dr Chen and his dedicated assistant, Ms Jaclyn Toring, whose exceptional care and professionalism have been brought to my attention by Fiona Zheng, a constituent of Ryde. Over the past six months Fiona's husband, Kevin So, has endured an extraordinarily challenging health journey, battling a lung infection, stroke, heart failure and impending tumour removal. During that time the expertise, dedication and compassion demonstrated by Dr Chen, a senior consultant heart doctor at Ryde Hospital, and his assistant, Ms Toring, have been nothing short of life changing. Dr Chen's exceptional diagnostic skills and patient-centred approach have provided critical support in Kevin's recovery, while Ms Toring's diligence in ensuring timely adjustments to his treatment has had a significant impact. Their coordinated efforts have given Fiona and her family hope whereas once there was only uncertainty. Their service exemplifies the very best of our healthcare system. I ask the House to join me in recognising their invaluable contributions.

Private Members' Statements

INTERNATIONAL DAY TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (21:00): Tonight I acknowledge the International Day to Combat Islamophobia, which was observed on 15 March. It is a day of international significance, established by the United Nations following the terror attack on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. On 15 March 2019, 51 Muslims were tragically killed while praying, by a perpetrator motivated by hatred. That quiet afternoon of prayer turned into the darkest of hours. Two consecutive mass shootings took place, committed by a single perpetrator—first, at the Al Noor Mosque in Riccarton and then, almost immediately after, at the Linwood Islamic Centre. We will never forget those innocent lives lost. The United Nations General Assembly has since adopted a resolution, sponsored by 60 member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, that designated 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

As we commemorate those who were tragically taken from us in Christchurch, I also acknowledge the struggles of community members, particularly my constituents, who have been victims of Islamophobia. I reaffirm the Government's commitment to stand united against bigotry in all its forms. According to the *Islamophobia in Australia* report, Islamophobia is more prevalent now than at any time in the past 10 years. From January 2023 to November 2024, there was a 250 per cent increase in reported online Islamophobic incidents and a 150 per cent increase in reported in-person incidents. What saddens me the most is that many victims of those attacks are Muslim women and girls, who are disproportionately and unfairly targeted, particularly women and girls who wear the hijab. Islamophobia has a central premise: hatred directed at people based on their faith. I am deeply saddened to hear about the recent incidents targeting the Australian Muslim community and important Islamic places of worship. I stand in solidarity with our Australian Muslim community today and every day.

My electorate of Canterbury is one of the most diverse in New South Wales—and, in fact, in Australia—with Australians who have migrated from the Middle East, the Subcontinent, Europe, Greece, China, Lebanon, Vietnam, Bangladesh and many other countries, now calling my local electorate home. A very large percentage of my constituents practise their faith, whether it is at the local mosque, church, synagogue or temple. That is my community. I reiterate that Islamophobia has no place in our society. Every Australian, regardless of faith or background, has the right to live free from discrimination, threats, fear or violence. I advocate for the continued recognition of 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. I will also be speaking to my local council with respect to recognising that day and holding a solemn vigil next year. In commemorating that day, I call on people of all faiths to respect each other, respect the diversity of beliefs and respect all our multicultural and multifaith communities.

This year 15 March also coincided with the holy month of Ramadan, a period of deep spiritual reflection. I wish the Australian Muslim community a peaceful and blessed Ramadan or Ramadan Mubarak. I condemn Islamophobia, all acts of hate directed at any group or culture, and those who, through word or deed, attempt to set our community members against one another. There is no place for hatred, but there is a place for those who practise their faith in peace, love and harmony.

ST GEORGE HOSPITAL

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:03): I inform the House about stage three of the redevelopment of St George Hospital, which I am pleased to report is progressing very well. I recently had the opportunity to visit the site with the shadow Minister for Health where we saw the exciting new ambulatory care building on Kensington Street, which was recently topped off after reaching its highest point. The new ambulatory care building and outpatient services sections will be a one-stop shop, centralising a number of services in one location and enabling patients to receive the highest quality care from the hardworking nurses, doctors and staff at St George Hospital for many years to come. Thanks to the investments made into stage three by the former Government, local patients will have access to more outpatient services, greater ambulatory care, more beds, specialty units to treat complex conditions and, more importantly for staff and visitors, more parking as well.

It is exciting to see those upgrades taking place. St George Hospital is the jewel in the crown of our local health infrastructure. The upgrades will make it so much easier for patients to access the care they need. Over \$411 million was invested by the previous Liberal-Nationals Government to bring the new building to reality. Unlike Labor, which neglected the hospital for over 16 years, the former Liberal-Nationals Government prioritised health infrastructure, ensuring that St George Hospital continues to serve the community for generations to come. It is this side of the House that promised, funded, built and delivered stages one and two, along with the new and upgraded birthing delivery suite, with stage three now well and truly underway. Since 2011 we invested more than \$740 million to totally transform St George Hospital into a world-class, state-of-the-art health precinct. After 16 years of Labor neglect, we have seen a brand-new emergency department, a new acute services building, a new birthing suite and theatre refurbishment and more parking, with stage three underway.

The Coalition has a proven track record of delivering on health. During our time in government, we built or significantly upgraded more than 180 hospitals and health facilities across New South Wales. When we left office, a further 130 were underway, which Labor members are now happily cutting the ribbons on. However, after only two years of the Labor Government, we have seen elective surgery waiting lists backtrack to peak-COVID levels, with over 100,000 waiting. Nurses and midwives have been waiting two years for a wage deal. Psychiatrists are resigning en masse, throwing our mental health system into crisis. Doctors are threatening to strike for the first time since 1984. It is simply not good enough.

We have also seen that Labor is not afraid to put significant health initiatives on the chopping block. Thanks to the former Coalition Government's strong economic management, we saw record funding in health. Under the Labor Government's economic mismanagement, we have seen shameful cuts to palliative care funding and IVF subsidies. Not only has health funding fallen under this Government, but health programs generally have also been cut. We know that staying healthy means staying active, which is why the cuts to Active Kids vouchers and

seniors exercise classes are so shocking and will have negative impacts on our communities' overall health outcomes. The Labor Government seems to expect nurses, doctors and hospital staff to do more with less. Locally, I will never stop fighting to ensure that local residents have access to the highest quality health care available.

St George Hospital is and always will be a priority of mine. Indeed, I have spoken about the upgrades many times in this House. From a new emergency department to more parking to specialty medical units, the upgrades at St George Hospital are making it easier for patients to get the care they need, when they need it. The stage three redevelopment of St George Hospital is a major boost to our local healthcare system, ensuring that residents have access to state-of-the-art medical services right on their doorstep. Residents in my local area and right across the St George area now have the confidence that, despite the failure to upgrade the St George Hospital when Labor was last in government, we have a world-class health facility that is fully equipped to provide expert care and support when it is needed most. I will never stop fighting on behalf of my community to ensure that this Government does not forget about St George Hospital, as Labor did when it was last in government.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (21:08): I will correct a couple of things the member for Oatley put on record. He spoke about the good economic management of the previous Coalition Government whereas, if my memory serves me correctly, Labor inherited billions and billions of debt—about \$187 billion. In relation to nurses, midwives and psychiatrists, under the previous Coalition Government there was a wages cap. That is why they were denied any real wage increase for 12 years. I correct those two statements.

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY NIRIMBA CAMPUS

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (21:09): Sadly, I report to this House that Western Sydney University [WSU] is closing its Nirimba campus located in the Blacktown local government area. Western Sydney University claims to be the voice of Sydney's west—as long as people are not from Blacktown. Western Sydney University started at Nirimba in 1995, some 30 years ago. But instead of celebrating its thirtieth anniversary, we are commiserating about the closure of the campus. Michael Walls, editor of local newspaper the *Blacktown News*, published a special report in June 2022 that broke the story about the possible sale of the Nirimba campus. A spokesperson for Western Sydney University said that the university has a long and proud history at the Nirimba campus and the surrounding Nirimba Education Precinct. The spokesperson said, "Western Sydney University is committed to a strong educational presence in Blacktown—continuing to optimise its course offerings at Nirimba to ensure it best meets the current and future educational needs of the local Western Sydney community."

I wonder whether WSU teaches ethics in its courses. Obviously, the statements were a complete and unadulterated lie. The university lied to the people of Blacktown and, in less than three years, it is now shutting down the campus. In 1995 the campus offered numerous courses for degrees that included a masters course, PhDs and diplomas. In 2007 the university dropped all the degree courses and created a college model of offering only diplomas. That was the first kick in the guts for the people of Blacktown. The college was successful but, over time, course after course was deleted, which resulted in a corresponding downturn in the number of students. We do not have to be hifalutin economics graduates to work out that, if the college cuts courses, then it will have fewer students.

The key reason for closing the campus is that, last year, student numbers fell to 1,229, which is about half of what they were in 2019 and probably a mere 10 per cent of student numbers back in the early 2000s. Cut courses plus reduced services equals fewer students. Western Sydney University has engineered the death of the Nirimba campus. Let me look at some of the interesting financial decision-making of a university that teaches business and entrepreneurship. First, it changed its name from the University of Western Sydney to Western Sydney University and put "University" at the back of its name and came out with a new red logo. According to 2015 reports, it cost \$20 million just to do that. Advertising costs in the last 10 years alone, apart from the \$20 million rebranding, amounted to \$132 million, which was spent on marketing, advertising and promotion.

Western Sydney University has been the sole university in Western Sydney since its inception over 40 years ago and has spent \$13 million a year to convince Western Sydney students to consider studying there. Greater Western Sydney has a population of approximately 2.7 million but, by the looks of things—such as the closure of the Blacktown campus—it has not been very successful in attracting students. Blacktown City's population is 430,000. According to Western Sydney University, one person in eight in Western Sydney does not deserve to have a comprehensive system of education. I give Western Sydney University a hot tip that will not cost \$13 million a year: It cannot advertise itself and buy support in the area.

I will give another piece of free advice: Western Sydney University might as well change its name to Western Sydney Ex-Blacktown. I note that Ben English from *The Daily Telegraph* is hosting a forum with the title of "The Future of Western Sydney". I will give Ben a hot tip: Why not direct the first question to Western Sydney University and ask why that university does not consider Blacktown to be part of Western Sydney?

Blacktown City has a \$24 billion economy, which is a larger economy than over 70 nations, and a population that will exceed that of Tasmania by 2035. Obviously, according to Western Sydney University, Tasmania does not deserve to have a university.

It pains me greatly to call on the residents of Blacktown City to adopt this attitude: Since Western Sydney University has rejected us, let's reject Western Sydney University. Goodbye, Western Sydney University. Thank God the Australian Catholic University has moved into the Blacktown CBD and offers nursing, teaching, business, law, community services, sports science—you name it. It is the only university in the world that was open during COVID and it supports Blacktown City.

NORTHERN TABLELANDS ELECTORATE WEEDS

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (21:14): The Northern Tablelands electorate is just shy of 60,000 square kilometres, so the local member of Parliament has to do quite a lot of driving. At both ends of my electorate I am seeing an increasing number of invasive weed species that are spreading from Crown lands onto private property. A number of months ago, Temporary Speaker Kemp and I were in the southern end of my electorate, which is where our electorates meet. We were dealing with tropical soda apple, which is a weed that I have spoken about previously in this Chamber. Mr Temporary Speaker, its name sounds like a pleasant drink you might have on a Sunday afternoon, but we both know that it is not. The problem in the southern end of my electorate is equal to, or perhaps second to, the problem in the northern end of my electorate, which is the harrisia cactus.

The harrisia cactus was first brought to Australia in approximately 1890 from South America. Initially, it was used as an ornamental garden plant. In the northern end of my electorate around locations such as Croppa Creek, North Star and Boggabilla, increasing numbers of this particularly nasty and aggressive plant are spreading from Crown land onto private property. The harrisia cactus is particularly nasty. One flower will have approximately 1,000 seeds in it. The barbs of the harrisia cactus will not come out when the plant is disturbed, so livestock and native animals essentially become trapped in the cactus, where they will die a very slow and painful death if they are not found by the landholder or neighbours. The other issue with the harrisia cactus is that it can puncture tyres of side-by-sides, quads and even motor vehicles. This is a particularly nasty plant. It is spread by birds. The birds will eat the seed and fly away. When they pass the seed, after rain we will have another harrisia cactus plant growing wherever that seed germinates. Feral pigs also spread the seeds.

To its credit, the Government currently has a program in place to try to deal with harrisia cactus because it is coming off Crown land and out of Queensland and has crossed the river to get into some very valuable agricultural and farming land in my electorate. The Government's program is due to expire at the end of June. We are approaching the period in which that program either will be renewed or will not. I have written to the Minister for Agriculture and I will certainly write again to implore, beg, plead and grovel to have the Local Land Services [LLS] program extended. The LLS is doing a very good job with limited resources to control this particular species.

At the southern end of my electorate, we still have the tropical soda apple problem as well. This invasive species is coming out of riparian country onto private property. Landholders are losing the battle, despite doing absolutely everything they can, against this very nasty invasive species that is slowly but surely taking over large swathes of grazing land in both the Northern Tablelands and Oxley electorates. Perhaps the programs in place are not keeping up with the encroachment of both particularly nasty weeds onto private property. Our landholders in the north are doing what they can. They are spraying this cactus. They are trying to work it out of the country. But it is getting to the point where it is too much.

NSW Farmers branches in the northern end of my electorate are constantly talking to me about this problem. Similarly, NSW Farmers branches in the southern end of my electorate are talking to me about the tropical soda apple problems there. If we do not get on top of those problems, we will have another problem similar to the prickly pear issue, which I am sure every member in this House would have at least read about at school. The prickly pear overtook large areas of farming country and agricultural country. The job of members in this place is to look after our constituents. This is a huge problem. It may sound like a bit of a joke to our city members and like it is just a weed, but it is really serious. I will be writing to and imploring the Government to extend the program and to do whatever it can to fix it.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): I thank the member for Northern Tablelands and recognise the threat that harrisia cactus poses, combined with tropical soda apple.

JOAN PALMER

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (21:19): I welcome the opportunity to acknowledge and pay tribute to an extraordinary woman, Joan Palmer, who at the age of 102 has been named the 2025 Maitland Local Woman of the Year.

Dr Michael Holland: Congratulations.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I acknowledge the interjection. Joan is a truly remarkable recipient of this honour, having dedicated more than seven decades of her life to serving the Maitland and Hunter communities. Joan Palmer moved to Maitland in 1946 as a young schoolteacher, beginning what would become a lifelong commitment to education, community service and leadership. Over the course of 40 years, she served as both a teacher and principal in schools across the Hunter region, including at Vacy, Morpeth, Mayfield West and Scone public schools. Her dedication to fostering young minds and shaping future generations is a legacy that continues to have a lasting impact on generations of our community.

Beyond her service to education, Joan has been a steadfast contributor to various community organisations. She has been an active member of Legacy as a widow since 1949 and continues to be involved in that organisation. Her commitment to supporting the families of fallen service members is truly commendable. Joan was also a foundation member of the Maitland Repertory Society, further demonstrating her dedication to enriching the cultural landscape of our region. Her passion for the arts has helped to build a thriving local theatre community, providing opportunities for countless aspiring performers and creative minds over the years.

One of Joan's most enduring commitments, however, has been to the Maitland Golf Club. She joined in 1947 and was appointed to life membership in 1999 in recognition of her 18 years of service on the committee, including four years as president and nine years as vice-president, as well as serving as secretary and handicap manager. Even after the amalgamation of the golf club and bowling club in 2003, Joan remained actively involved and her dedication was further recognised when she was appointed joint patron of Easts in 2013, a role that she continues to hold to this day.

Her unwavering commitment to the community, her resilience and her generosity of spirit are qualities that we should all strive to emulate. Upon receiving her award, Joan, with her signature wit, remarked, "It's only taken me 102 years to win!" Her words captured the warmth and wisdom that those who have had the privilege of knowing her have long admired. She is sharp as a tack, although her vision has become impaired over the years. That is the reason she stopped doing the handicapping, but she did pay tribute to the early golf skills of our Federal member, Meryl Swanson, at the awards and had lots of fond memories to share. I also take the opportunity to acknowledge the six other incredible nominees for this year's Maitland Local Woman of the Year award: Montana Duggan, Margaret Enright, Ingrid Heyman, Samantha Kulupach, Angie Ussher and Christine Walmsley. Each of those women has made an extraordinary impact in their respective fields, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations to them all.

The Local Woman of the Year Award is an essential initiative celebrating the achievements of women like Joan who, for too long, have selflessly dedicated their time and energy to making a positive difference to our community without recognition. Joan Palmer is the epitome of this spirit, and I am honoured to recognise her outstanding contribution. Together, we can continue to foster an inclusive and diverse community where women's achievements are celebrated and their contributions acknowledged. I thank the Women's Network (Hunter, NSW) for co-hosting the wonderful celebration event earlier this month and for its ongoing commitment to supporting and empowering women in our region. Most of all, I again congratulate Joanie Palmer, a truly deserving recipient of the 2025 Maitland Local Woman of the Year Award.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE SENIORS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (21:24): Seniors Week is wonderful time to reflect on the many unsung heroes within our Wollondilly community. These seniors continue to give their time, energy and efforts to better the lives of those around them, and I am privileged to speak of the 2025 recipients today. Allan Stiles has been a part of the Southern Highlands Symphony Orchestra since 2014. He has dedicated many years sharing his love of classical music with the world, mentoring young musicians and students to help develop their skills. Allan has also volunteered with a number of community organisations since 1990. I am looking forward to seeing the symphony orchestra next Saturday evening.

Barbara Edwards has worked in service of her community her whole life. She was a member of the Army Reserve for 37 years and achieved the rank of major. Barbara has organised many ANZAC Day services and is an active member of the Macarthur Sunrise Rotary Club. Beverley Spearpoint has lived in Warragamba for more than 50 years. She has always been involved in her community in one way or another. She was one of the organisers of the original Bold Jack Donohue Festival in the 1970s and has been on many community-focused

committees since. She has always advocated for her community and the whole of Wollondilly. Bev also served with me on council in the last term.

Colin Miller lives at Agros House. He is a quiet gentleman with many life achievements, knowledge and stories about the area. He was in the Royal Australian Air Force for two years and received many awards from the National Trust, Wollondilly Shire Council, Sydney Legacy, Scouts, RFS and Picton Rotary Club. He has been a host for many exchange students and has even written a book. James Whitfield has acted as the eyes of Wollondilly through his years of photography and engagement with a number of groups. He has graced Wollondilly with a series of books, volunteering to share photos from times past online as well as through the historical societies and groups.

Jeff and Cheryl Skinner have been members of Picton Lions Club since moving to Wollondilly. They have reinvigorated the club with new membership, linking to the popular Picton Cars and Coffee, which has enabled funding for charities each month. Last month they raised \$35,000 for Camp Quality. President of the Lions Club of Tahmoor, Jenny Barclay, has been integral in commencing the Lions Eye Health Program in Wollondilly, training screeners, reinvigorating the club with new membership and fundraising for local charities and those in need. Joan Dellit has lived in Wollondilly for 40 years and started as a volunteer at the Wollondilly Library, becoming a librarian staffer. She has worked to maintain the collection beyond her employment there and still volunteers today.

John Churchill has always been a great supporter of his community. He has volunteered for many organisations over the years and has been a member of Wollondilly Shire Council's Australia Day committee almost since its inception. John wrote the Wollondilly poem that is recited every year at the ceremony. John Ross runs the monthly pizza party for residents at Agros House. He also runs the weekly football tipping club and Melbourne Cup sweeps. John has lived at Agros House for nine years and is a funny, friendly man who enriches the lives of residents and staff. He also looks after the vegetable garden.

Michael Goodenough is a wonderful gentleman who lives in the retirement village. He has dedicated his Sunday mornings to holding a devotion service at his aged-care facility as the pastoral carer. He is also involved in the Remembrance Day and ANZAC Day ceremonies. Norman McGhie called bingo and played Santa for the residents for many years until his health and mobility declined. He is a gentleman with a great sense of humour and a kind heart. Norm has had a busy life. He has two children, six grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. He worked for New South Wales Government Railways for 49 years and volunteered with Buxton RFS. I think he also just turned 100 this week.

I also recognise Robert "Bob" Daly for his exceptional contributions and unwavering dedication to enhancing the lives of those around him. His proactive involvement in creating solutions has significantly enriched our organisation and the broader community. I congratulate those deserving recipients. I recognise the 2024 Wollondilly recipients, and there are many of them. I could go on about the many seniors who contribute to our area. I thank each and every one of those seniors for everything they do to contribute to our Wollondilly community and make our lives better.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (21:29): International Women's Day on 8 March is a day to recognise the achievements of women and the ongoing fight for equality and liberation that women have fought for many decades. The early struggles of twentieth century activism to win the vote for women and better working conditions set the stage for the movement that continues today—one that embraces the values of justice, fairness and equality for all women. The first International Women's Day in Australia took place in 1928 in Sydney. Australian women used the platform to demand equal pay for equal work, an eight-hour working day and paid leave for shop girls. In 1931 annual marches began in both Sydney and Melbourne, and those marches continue to this day.

Since those early days, International Women's Day has grown into a global celebration of women's achievements as well as a time to highlight and confront the barriers to gender equality. This year's theme, "Accelerate Action", challenges us to recognise and amplify the strategies, resources and collective efforts that have propelled the advancement of women's rights worldwide. It is a call to acknowledge the progress we have made and actively support and invest in initiatives that break down the barriers to women reaching their full potential. We must remember also that the fight for equality is not one size fits all. Women from different cultural, racial and socio-economic backgrounds face unique challenges.

This International Women's Day, I had the honour of attending several local events and recognising some fantastic women in my community. Those events were run by the Picnic Point Bowling Club, the Canterbury Bankstown Chamber of Commerce and the Revesby Workers' Club. We are fortunate to have many women in

our very own East Hills electorate who embody the spirit of International Women's Day every single day. That includes the nominees for this year's East Hills Local Woman of the Year award. Those ladies represent the full spectrum of women who are achieving in all areas of life, and they deserve recognition. I look forward to meeting with them and celebrating their remarkable achievements at a dinner later this month.

Those women volunteer their time to better our community. They include founder and manager of the Revesby Op Shop, Judy Camac; the Revesby Workers' Club president, Christine Butters, who has volunteered for decades at Little Athletics and does so much in our community; Bettina Vogel, who created Padstow Heights Public School Playgroup, is a Joey Scout leader with 1st Picnic Point Scout Group and much more; Clare Tapp, from the Panania Free Rangers and parkrun, and also a Georges River Life Care volunteer; local legend Sharelle Hurley, who is constantly donating and looking after people in our community; and Lucinda Cooke, who has volunteered her time running the canteen for the Milperra Colts for many years.

Local women are kicking goals in community sports. They include East Hills Bullettes coach Jen Craig; Ashleigh Renton, who has served Bankstown Sports Netball Club for more than three decades; Christine Benham, who has been with the Revesby Workers' Cricket Club for over 25 years and supports many charities throughout the community; Bankstown City Netball coach, umpire and player Ashleigh Daus; and Julia Woods, who has dedicated more than three decades to Padstow Hornets Football Club. Women are also achieving greatness in the business world. They include Nicole Gersbach, who has overcome adversity to run her own hairdressing salon in Revesby; Nina Trad Azam, a businesswoman who has donated countless hours as a social worker as well as an advocate for mental health and Gazan refugees; and mentor and director of Katalyst Construction, Nerva Kay Ghamraoui.

Those women embody the achievements and gains that we have made since the inception of International Women's Day, as well as our strength and resilience. Although we have come a long way, there is still so much work to be done. I give a big shout-out all the women who help and support many others in our community in so many different ways every day.

YALLAMBEE HOME FOR THE AGED

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (21:33): I bring to the attention of the House an outstanding local Gunnedah institution, Yallambee Home for the Aged. Yallambee is a not-for-profit organisation providing essential over-55s accommodation in Gunnedah. The facility consists of 10 self-care units and 14 rooms providing much-needed accommodation and meals for older residents who require lower-cost accommodation in Gunnedah. The organisation prides itself on delivering quality care, compassion and a sense of community to residents. It offers a range of activities and classes to keep residents engaged, active and healthy later in life.

The likelihood of a person living alone increases with age, with a sharper increase for older women than older men. Nearly one in three older women, or 31 per cent, live in a lone-person household compared with almost one in five older men, or 18 per cent. The difference was greatest for the 85 years and over group, with 41 per cent of women compared with 25 per cent of men, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Those statistics clearly show that older people living alone are more likely to experience loneliness due to social disconnection, meaning that their health and wellbeing could be at risk. Yallambee offers residents the opportunity to avoid those things by providing social interaction. Social connections made at mealtimes and on social outings help residents avoid loneliness and promote health and wellbeing. Yallambee is so much more than just accommodation to its residents.

The Yallambee story began in 1962 when two local groups combined to form the Gunnedah Homes for the Aged Association. On 20 October 1963 the first stage of the project was officially opened by Mayor Frank O'Keefe. The name chosen for the complex was Yallambee, an Aboriginal word meaning "to dwell at ease". Yallambee remains a community-owned organisation, run by a board of local advocates. The chair, Colleen Fuller, is also the Mayor of Gunnedah and an incredibly active community advocate and volunteer. The board works hard to ensure that they can continue to provide the accommodation at as low a cost as possible. That means the board and volunteers are constantly fundraising, seeking donations and corporate support and applying for government grants.

Recently I visited Yallambee to announce \$40,000 in funding to allow the organisation to upgrade its meter board and begin the transition to onsite solar power. That is an important step for the facility in the face of rising power costs. Onsite solar will slash the bills, giving the organisation greater financial flexibility in its operations. I know that Colleen Fuller and board member Owen Hasler and others are already looking at the next step for the project: installing a solar battery. I look forward to supporting them in seeking government support. I thank the board for the wonderful work it does to provide Yallambee, the not-for-profit organisation for over 55s and the accommodation that means so much to them.

INTERNATIONAL DAY TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (21:37): Over the weekend the world marked the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. For many of the Muslim faith in the electorate of Liverpool, the day shines a light on the very real prejudice that they face on a daily basis. The date 15 March was officially designated by the United Nations as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia in 2022 and was chosen to mark the anniversary of the horrific mass shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand. On that day in 2018, 51 people were killed in an attack that deliberately targeted observers of the Islamic faith as they engaged in Friday prayer.

It is that reminder of Christchurch that makes the 2025 date even more important. This month the Islamic community in Liverpool was shaken by online threats of "Christchurch 2.0" at the Australian Islamic House in Edmondson Park. The mosque, which opened its doors only recently to the public just in time for Ramadan this year, caters to the growing Muslim community in south-western Sydney. Following the threat, a 16-year-old boy was arrested in Western Australia and charged with creating a false apprehension to the existence of threats or danger. New South Wales police have advised of no ongoing threats to the community. This heinous threat, made during the holy month of Ramadan, no less, serves as a chilling reminder of the dangers posed by rising and persistent Islamophobic rhetoric and actions in our community.

However, let us be clear: This is no isolated incident. The fifth *Islamophobia in Australia* report, published by the Islamophobia Register and Monash University, found that there were 309 in-person Islamophobic attacks between January 2023 and December 2024. Ranging from verbal abuse and threats to physical assault, these attacks are primarily directed at women and girls. The report highlights a 250 per cent increase in in-person Islamophobic incidents, when compared to the previous reporting period. Shockingly, half of those in-person incidents were reported in New South Wales, with our public spaces that should be safe for any members of the community—streets, workplaces, shopping centres, schools and public transport—identified as common hotspots for these cowardly incidents.

There has also been a corresponding increase in online threats, with 366 verified online cases documented in the reporting period. I have previously spoken in this House about the impact of disinformation on social cohesion, especially in the wake of last year's horrific events at Bondi Junction and Wakeley. The report found that a rise in Islamophobia across our social media sites in the immediate aftermath of both cases was often egged along by prominent commentators. The psychological impacts of this on our Islamic community are concerning. Victims of these incidents report experiencing trauma, anxiety and a heightened fear of public spaces. Some alter their daily routines, quit their jobs or avoid leaving their homes altogether. Even more alarming is that 57 per cent of the incidents covered in this report went completely unreported to the authorities. Many victims felt that reporting was pointless and would lead nowhere.

As we respond to repair the damage done to the fraying threads of our social cohesion, it has never been more important for elected representatives, particularly those of us who represent communities with large Islamic communities, to stand with their communities against Islamophobia. Like any other form of hatred, Islamophobia is unacceptable and must be stamped out. It is our duty, as leaders and as citizens, to foster a society where everyone, regardless of faith, background or beliefs, can feel safe and respected. We must not be passive in the face of hatred.

This starts with education, awareness and robust policy measures. We must ensure that anti-discrimination laws are enforced, that social media platforms are held accountable for the content they host and that victims of Islamophobia have access to support and justice. Furthermore, we must challenge harmful narratives wherever they arise and promote a culture of inclusion and understanding. The International Day to Combat Islamophobia is not just a day of recognition; it is a call to action. Let us heed that call and work together, whether in my community of Liverpool or across this great State, to create a future where Islamophobia and all forms of hatred have no place in our communities.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (21:42): I speak about education in Hawkesbury. It has a mix of government primary and secondary schools and several private schools, which provide students with access to high-quality education, encouraging lifelong learning and preparing them for a world beyond school. I enjoy connecting with staff members, students and families at these schools, particularly at events such as open days, school carnivals and end-of-year presentation day assemblies, where students' success is acknowledged and celebrated. Hearing of the academic, creative and personal achievements of students is an honour and always impresses me. Those achievements also showcase the stellar work that teachers and school staff members do in supporting the young people of Hawkesbury.

Recently I was honoured to attend the opening day of Aspect Hills Shire School. Located in the north-west suburb of Gables, the new school is purpose built to eventually cater for 72 students on the autism spectrum, from kindergarten to year 6. With 12 specialised classrooms, a multipurpose hall, a sensory outdoor area and a life skills kitchen, among several other facilities, the school aims to be a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. Access to digital education materials, adaptable classroom equipment and knowledgeable staff members will enable students to access information and succeed, regardless of differing learning styles and cognitive impairments. I look forward to seeing Aspect Hills Shire School progress as students who may not have been comfortable in a mainstream setting are offered the opportunity to grow and learn in an environment geared towards achieving their best potential.

Several primary and secondary schools in Hawkesbury are also inclusive of special education units, where students with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities can receive specialised education programs. Students in those units work in a small class with a specialised teacher and learning support officer to better accommodate their needs and provide individualised learning engagements. The staff of those units do a wonderful job in supporting students with additional learning needs, and the units play a vital role in ensuring schools can run smoothly alongside mainstream classes, particularly during periods of transition for students who are moving from a primary school to a high school setting. It is wonderful to hear of the success of those classes, with students building confidence in an appropriate setting and connecting with their educators. I note that this is particularly evident in the special education unit of Richmond High School, students from which came to this Chamber last year on an excursion to observe and learn about our system of State government.

Schools in the Hawkesbury electorate also offer a quality learning experience in mainstream settings, where students follow the State curriculum and apply it to relevant life experiences. That has been particularly evident in several high schools where senior students have undertaken the NSW RFS Secondary School Cadet Program. The program, run by the Rural Fire Service, aims to provide participants with an engaging experience and educate them on the various skills and attributes held by firefighters. That has been an invaluable experience for many schools and students, offering real-life scenarios and engagement with the community. Hawkesbury High School and Arndell Anglican College are two schools that have embraced the RFS program.

The student population in newer suburbs in Hawkesbury, such as Box Hill and Gables, is bursting. I was pleased to see that the temporary Box Hill primary school, which opened at the beginning of the year, has been well received. The next challenge for the Government is to provide a before- and after-school care facility to operate in conjunction with the temporary school, rather than wait for the construction of the permanent school on Terry Road, which I understand is due for completion in 2028. I would be remiss not to acknowledge the Hawkesbury principals, and in particular two outstanding ones who retired at the end of 2024: Principal Glen Ellis of Colo Heights Public School and Principal Joan Westerweller of Bligh Park Public School. The applause that both principals received at their end-of-year presentation day assemblies was a testament to the admiration and respect that the school communities had for such incredible educators and leaders.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (21:47): It is my pleasure to update the House on how local businesses and organisations in Penrith came together to celebrate International Women's Day this year and to highlight the incredible work being done in our community to support and empower women. First, I take a moment to recognise the significance of International Women's Day. This global celebration honours the achievements, contributions and strength of women across the world. This year's theme is "Accelerate Action", which challenges us not only to recognise the importance of gender equality but also to actively drive progress and change in meaningful ways.

Penrith kicked off the 2025 celebrations with a Zonta dinner and then a breakfast hosted by the Penrith CBD Corporation at a local venue. It was a wonderful morning where 200 locals gathered to honour women and share our collective vision for a more equitable future. The keynote speaker, coaching advocate Lara Wentworth, delivered an emotional and inspiring story of not only her journey through a male-dominated world but also her grandmother's struggles. Lara, a former law firm partner, now excels as an international speaker on leadership, resilience and the future of professional development for women. Her words were truly empowering and set the tone for thought-provoking discussions.

The event also featured a guest panel facilitated by Carli Heald, a senior associate from ALA Law. Panel guests included Gabby Benkovich from Judge Accountants, Krysa Francica from ACS Group and Kelly Samuels from Cirillo Civil Group Australia. It was a privilege to hear from these remarkable women as they shared the challenges they have faced in their journeys toward achieving gender equality and how they continue to break down barriers. I also express appreciation to my special guests, teacher Amy Chaffey and the three inspiring female students from Kingswood High School, who joined us for the event. I also thank Penrith Selective High School for providing the music at breakfast.

A special thank you goes to Gai Hawthorn of Penrith CBD Corporation for organising and hosting such a successful event. It is also worth noting that proceeds from the raffle went to support the Haven, a vital domestic violence women's shelter that provides a safe refuge for women and children in need. This is an example of the collective impact we can have when we come together as a community to support those in need. It was thrilling to receive so many quality nominations this year for the Penrith Local Woman of the Year Award. I congratulate all the outstanding women who were nominated for their exceptional contributions to our Penrith community. I congratulate Kerry Dowding on her volunteer work with Pendragons Abreast and Pink Up Penrith; Elizabeth Spanos on her volunteer work with Penrith Community Kitchen and Pink Up Penrith; Kristine Gaucci on her volunteer efforts and fundraising work for Our Community Cares; and Rachel Carey of Allara Support Services on her tireless dedication to supporting others.

It was a pleasure to announce the recipient of the Penrith Local Woman of the Year Award 2025. This year the award went to a remarkable woman from Emu Plains who has made an exceptional impact in our community as both a founder and a volunteer. I congratulate Mrs Cathy Craig, our 2025 Penrith Local Woman of the Year. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the women who were nominated for this prestigious award. Their work is an inspiration. I have no doubt that each of them will continue to do amazing things in the future. Once again, I thank everyone who participated in our celebrations and continues to work towards a more equal and inclusive future for all women in Penrith.

E-BIKES AND E-SCOOTERS

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (21:51): Tonight I use my private member's statement to talk about the rise in use of e-micromobility transport options, and especially e-bikes and e-scooters, which have rapidly become a topic of controversy across New South Wales. The former Government left a regulatory vacuum, and the Minns Labor Government has been working across agencies to determine the best regulatory framework so that these devices can be safely used within communities. Currently personal mobility devices like e-scooters are legal to buy but illegal to use in New South Wales, except on private property. It is currently legal to buy an e-scooter but illegal to use it on New South Wales streets and roads.

The current legislation is not well known and is confusing to many consumers and residents, who are all trying to understand how and why owners are riding where they are. On top of all that, it is legal to ride an e-scooter in most States and Territories across Australia. This does not make sense. We are exploring options to address these inconsistencies. There are already 1.35 million e-micromobility devices in homes across New South Wales. Almost 460,000 of those are e-scooters, and this has been the case since 2022. But only 22 per cent of people across the State know it is illegal to ride e-scooters on our roads and streets. It is a strange regulatory blind spot and it has to change. I appreciate that many New South Wales citizens have purchased e-scooters for private use, many not knowing they can be heavily fined.

E-bikes and e-scooters are not without controversy, which is exactly why the Minns Labor Government is taking action. We have been actively engaging with stakeholders, industry and community and have developed a whole-of-government action plan that works towards the safe, balanced and regulated use of e-scooters across New South Wales. It is clear we need a regulatory framework that will allow people to make the most of this transport option without compromising community safety. Many constituents have spoken to me about near misses when walking along footpaths in shared spaces as pedestrians.

Riders travel at dangerous speeds and often do not wear helmets, and there are too many riders to one bike or scooter. People have told me they have been bowled over by e-bikes, and some have needed medical attention. One such family told me that they cannot take their elderly family member out along a coastal shared space because he is in a wheelchair, and it feels unsafe. Bikes are not a new thing, and we want people to have fun, exercise and get around without their cars, but we need to make sure that all users of public areas are kept safe. E-bikes and e-scooters can be safe and convenient transport options when the right rules and policies are in place.

The Minns Labor Government is making the legislation clear and accessible through a 58-point action plan. The action plan includes key activities like reviewing how shared e-bikes are operated in local communities and reviewing the Road Rules in relation to e-micromobility, including exploring options for the legal use of e-scooters on streets and roads, and setting new safety standards for lithium ion batteries. In May 2024 Transport for NSW established an E-micromobility Interagency Group with representatives from 14 government agencies. Some of those agencies are Fire and Rescue NSW; the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure; the Environment Protection Authority; NSW Fair Trading; NSW Police Force; NSW Ministry of Health; State Insurance Regulatory Authority; Office of Local Government; Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner; and SafeWork NSW.

Recently I attended the Sutherland Shire Police Area Command Community Safety Precinct Committee, where e-bikes were being discussed. I again reiterate my gratitude to the NSW Police Force officers who are

stopping riders to educate them on the laws and keep everyone safe. The upper House inquiry into use of e-scooters, e-bikes and related mobility options recently handed down its report. The Minns Labor Government welcomed the findings of the parliamentary inquiry and will carefully consider its recommendations. The inquiry process has been thorough, and the Government appreciates all of the stakeholders and community members who shared their experiences and provided evidence for the committee's consideration. I look forward to keeping members updated. In the meantime, enjoy getting around on foot or on wheels, keep safe, abide by the laws and take care of each other.

SOUTH COAST NATURAL DISASTERS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (21:56): With the arrival of Tropical Cyclone Alfred, the people of our State collectively took a deep breath as their eyes and hearts focused on the north of New South Wales, which has suffered through so much devastation. I take this opportunity to congratulate the member for Lismore, who is in the Chamber, on her elevation to the ministry with the responsibility for disaster recovery. I have enormous regard and respect for the member for Lismore. When natural disasters have confronted my community, I have deeply appreciated her advice and support, which come from a wealth of both personal and professional experience.

Whilst the North Coast has had enormous challenges, the southern Illawarra and the South Coast have also contended with some of the most harrowing conditions anywhere in our State. Since 2021 our region has experienced weather so severe that it has been declared a natural disaster area on nine separate occasions. That is on top of the devastation of the 2019-20 bushfires from which our community is still recovering. Such natural disasters are increasing in their frequency and their voracity. Whilst I do not want to single out communities, the localities of Kangaroo Valley, Albion Park and Jamberoo have been particularly hurt by natural disasters. Their impacts are felt by families displaced by flooding; farmers whose fences, assets, crops and livestock are almost effortlessly swept away; businesses who face a lack of patronage due to an enormous reduction in visitations; and local councils whose resources are stretched well beyond their capacity to deliver the road repairs that communities demand.

When the fires and floods subside and the rebuilding starts, the current arrangements mean that local councils can apply for jointly funded State and Commonwealth disaster recovery grant funding, as long as the council area is declared a natural disaster area. The relevant guidelines are the *NSW Natural Disaster Essential Public Asset Restoration Guidelines*. Those guidelines have operated under both Liberal and Labor governments, but the problem with the guidelines is the restrictions they place on works that can be undertaken. The very first paragraph of guideline 3.5.1 reads:

Only restoration works of essential public assets damaged as a direct result of an eligible disaster are eligible for funding assistance in these guidelines.

Where funding is given under these guidelines, damaged essential public assets must be restored or reconstructed to the current relevant building or engineering standards.

Guideline 3.6 states:

Funding will not be provided under these guidelines for improvements to essential public assets such as widening of the road ... increased level of service ... increased flood immunity ... realignment of roads, provision of additional signage ...

Whilst "complementary funding" by councils is permitted in combination with disaster funding, the guidelines provide for a rather opaque statement on how this works. Appendix E of the guidelines provides some eligibility examples and scenarios. But, again, these examples only demonstrate how the Government is simply throwing good money after bad. The summary of this is that, under the current disaster recovery funding arrangements, government funding only provides funding equivalent to the reconstruction of an essential public asset to its pre-disaster condition. Many roads in my community were originally built as far back as the nineteenth century, and the guidelines mandate that reconstruction can only match what was in service before a disaster. But we should not be replacing goat tracks with simply newer goat tracks.

I invite the Minister, as her first task, to pursue a joint review of Commonwealth and State disaster funding arrangements with a view to placing future resilience at the heart of our disaster responses. Taxpayers deserve betterment. When rebuilding after a natural disaster, governments at all levels need to consider how we can not only prevent essential infrastructure succumbing to mother nature but also use this opportunity to futureproof public assets. Betterment funding, for a relatively small additional investment, will save millions of dollars in years to come by making sure that infrastructure is rebuilt to withstand more extreme bushfires, cyclones and floods.

The Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements recommended, among other things, that the principle of "build back better" should be incorporated more broadly into the disaster recovery funding arrangements. Up-front investment for stronger infrastructure and more resilient communities can save money for all levels of government in the long term. I give credit to the Government and the Minister for the Regional

Roads and Transport Recovery Package, which focuses on planning, development and delivery of resilient infrastructure. This approach needs to be business as usual rather than a mere pilot that informs future resilience priorities. States like Queensland are recognised as leaders through the betterment programs that are at the heart of its Reconstruction Authority. New South Wales can, and should, be smarter. We need to embrace betterment and not resist it as a challenge put down by climate change. For the sake of our communities, we need leadership; we also need to be ready.

COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (22:01): The Coffs Coast is enriched by the community organisations that work tirelessly to make our region the best it can be. Whether they are fundraising for a fantastic cause or helping those who need it the most, these local groups and their volunteers put their heart and soul into the community they love. They do it with dedication, passion and conviction, making a positive and sometimes powerful difference to people's lives in the process. A prime example is the good news to come out of the collaboration between the CanDo Cancer Trust and the Pink Silks Trust. The CanDo Cancer Trust is the latest recipient of the Pink Silks Trust's generosity, receiving an \$8,000 donation from one of the major social events on the calendar, the Pink Silks Ladies Race Day. In keeping with Tanya Johnson's founding principle of supporting our local community, the funds will go directly to assisting patients and families at the North Coast Cancer Institute. CanDo Cancer Trust chairperson Julie Jardine is grateful for the ongoing support of the Pink Silks Trust. Julie said recently:

We continue to assist over 120 new patients per year, with our annual support now exceeding \$120,000. Donations like this from the Pink Silks Trust are essential in allowing us to provide practical assistance to those in need.

Tanya Johnson, OAM, has reaffirmed her organisation's commitment to making a tangible difference in the lives of women affected by cancer. She said the Pink Silks Trust was proud to support the CanDo Cancer Trust, knowing that the donation would directly benefit patients in our local community. Appearing alongside Tanya for the presentation were the Pink Silks Trust's Craig Leece and Richard Hinton and the CanDo Cancer Trust's Chris Hines and Lydia Crossingham.

Another heartwarming moment came in the form of vintage cars from the celebrated National Holden Motor Museum taking a drive down memory lane to visit residents of the Legacy on Victoria Residential Aged Care Facility. It was part of the museum's community outreach program. The classic Holdens, driven to the facility's forecourt by their owners, were Victor Rullis's 1954 FJ Holden, Dennis Johnstone's 1961 EK Holden Special, Peter Eckford's 1964 EH Holden ute and Geoff King's 1976 HX Holden ute. National Holden Motor Museum volunteer and event organiser Steve Little said Legacy on Victoria had reached out to the museum to provide the display as a treat for its residents. The National Cartoon Gallery also supplied copies of original cartoons from the recent annual Rotary Cartoon Awards featuring the theme "Football, Meat Pies, Kangaroos and Holden Cars", which was originally an advertising campaign made by Holden in 1976.

Another fine chapter in the Coffs Harbour community story is our annual BookFest, with the Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour predicting a record year. The popular week-long fundraiser is now underway, from 15 March to 22 March, at the Norm Jordan Pavilion at the Coffs Harbour Showground. With a whopping 62 pallets of second-hand books, it is the largest pre-loved book sale on the Coffs Coast. There are fiction and non-fiction books, including children's stories, cookbooks, history, hobbies, politics and adventure. There are also rare and antique books, CDs and DVDs. BookFest coordinator Tony James says the event is a key fundraiser for the Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour, with proceeds directly benefiting local community initiatives, global Rotary projects and charitable causes which make a meaningful impact on the Coffs Coast and beyond.

Community service is also key to the work of Coffs City Rotary members, who donned their high-vis vests for Clean Up Australia Day activities. They walked along Hogbin Drive and covered a one kilometre stretch of road, finding a significant amount of rubbish in a relatively small area of bushland. Club president Bob Carle reported that it did not take long for the 10-strong group of Rotarians to fill several bags with rubbish. He said it was eye-opening to see the amount of waste that had accumulated within a small radius. I am extremely proud of all our community organisations for their outstanding contributions, and I thank them for keeping the Coffs Coast going strong.

NIMBIN RAINBOW WALK

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (22:06): The town of Nimbin in my electorate is a popular tourist destination known for its vibrant main street, lush semi-tropical setting and the hippie history from the days of the Aquarius Festival, and before that it was known for its farming community. This weekend, Nimbin is about to become even more colourful with the grand opening of the Nimbin Rainbow Walk. The Nimbin Rainbow Walk is a 750-metre track, with boardwalk and concrete sections that link the CBD to the new Aquarius Park. The track incorporates artworks

and interpretative signage and was constructed by Lismore City Council with \$2.5 million of New South Wales and Federal government funding as a Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Package grant.

I congratulate the Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre Committee, which, through its reserves and 30 generous donations, purchased private land key to enhancing the precinct. I walked the site in 2021, when it was a muddy trail, with Nimbin Neighbourhood Centre Committee members president David Hallett, vice-president Linnet Pike, secretary Michael Balderstone, treasurer Diana Roberts, committee and steering committee member Dr Wil Polson, committee member Dr Geoff Lynne and centre bookkeeper Helen Lynne. The project suffered delays since being announced in 2021 due to, among other things, the 2022 floods.

There has been a great level of community involvement in the project. I commend the rainbow track volunteers for all their hard work, weeding and planting on the track through working bees, coordinated through a dedicated Landcare group established for the site. I note there have also been a couple of community running events at the track, with the aim of having it eventually become an official parkrun site. That would be yet another drawcard for the area, because Nimbin is a big tourist drawcard. I congratulate the community members who are working on that initiative too. The community has been watching this project develop since 2021, so it is not surprising that there is a big celebration planned for this weekend to mark the opening, with live music, art, performances and family activities. Artists and creators will share the stories behind their installations along the Rainbow Walk. There is always so much going on in Nimbin.

We will officially open it on Friday. The Rainbow Walk also connects to the new toilet block at the Lismore pool. This facility was a commitment of mine, as the community had been lobbying for it for, I think, about 16 years. I cannot repeat what I said in the *Nimbin GoodTimes*, except that people had to wait a long time. I commend the Nimbin Pool Committee, particularly Sue Edmonds and Pauline Ahern, and the Nimbin Advisory Group for their tireless lobbying and their involvement in planning for the much-needed facilities. I secured the \$400,000 in funding from the New South Wales Government, and Lismore City Council agreed to take on the project and maintain the facility, for which I thank council. We ask councils to do a lot, and I know what it means to take another project onto the books. The shiny new toilet block, with disability access, will service the pool, the skate park and the community as well as the adjacent Rainbow Walk. In keeping with the character of Nimbin, both the Rainbow Walk and the new toilet block feature distinctive artworks, adding even more colour to the town.

In other welcome news for Nimbin, residents are on their way to having safer and more reliable drinking water, with funding announced for planning and design work to improve water quality in Nimbin and Casino. I thank the Minister for Water and council. The Minns Labor Government is investing \$123,500 towards the drinking water project, with Lismore City Council putting in \$165,000 and \$68,000 coming from Richmond Valley Council for work to deliver the best infrastructure solutions for treating water to a high standard. Concept designs are moving ahead in Nimbin for a new filtration and treatment system that will produce better quality water for the town's residents. Building a modern, fit-for-purpose plant will enable the town to treat raw water that flows from Mulgum Creek into the D. E. Williams storage dam more effectively. This will eliminate boil water alerts for residential households in Nimbin. The water supply in Nimbin is often affected by weather conditions and organic matter in Mulgum Creek. These funds will get the ball rolling on boosting water quality, which is excellent news for the locals as well as the many visitors who flock to Nimbin every year.

ERARING POWER STATION

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (22:11): Earlier this month I had the honour of attending Eraring Power Station's fortieth anniversary event to celebrate those involved in powering New South Wales for the past four decades. Eraring Power Station was officially opened by then Premier Neville Wran on 29 June 1984. It took its name from the nearby Lake Eraring, an Aboriginal term meaning "that which gleams or glitters". Eraring was identified as a suitable location for a power station in the 1960s due to its land availability and proximity to the lake for cooling water. At the time it opened, the power station had a total capacity of 2,640 megawatt hours. Today it has a total capacity of 2,922 megawatt hours.

Eraring has generated as much as one-third of the State's total electricity at times. Its contribution to the State cannot be overstated and neither can its contribution to the local community. For 40 years Eraring Power Station has brought opportunity and prosperity to Lake Macquarie. Generations of locals have worked at Eraring, with access to skilled employment close to home shaping the community's social fabric and economy. It has allowed workers and their families to thrive on the shores of Lake Macquarie. It has helped local businesses to grow and to meet the needs of Eraring and its employees. It has also developed a pool of local skilled workers, which has benefited other industries as Eraring workers have diversified their careers.

The closure of Eraring Power Station, while inevitable in the State's transition to renewables, will therefore reverberate through our community, not least because a significant number of workers will lose their jobs at both

the power station and Myuna Colliery, which supplies coal exclusively to Eraring. The Government and energy and mining companies must each do their part to ensure coal-reliant communities continue to prosper. I commend Origin's commitment to helping its workforce navigate the energy transition through its Future Directions program, as well as supporting communities impacted by the power station's closure through the Eraring Community Investment Fund. However, the New South Wales Government must act more quickly to help workers and communities who have provided reliable energy to the State for years. I brought the need for urgent attention to this House last September. Unfortunately, workers are still waiting. I look forward to productive discussions with the Minister for Regional New South Wales about the prompt release of adequate funds and how the Government can best support workers and communities.

As we know, Eraring's story will not end in 2027. It will transform from being the largest coal-fired power station in the Southern Hemisphere to being the largest battery in the Southern Hemisphere. With a dispatch duration of 2,800 megawatt hours, the large-scale battery will help ensure the grid remains stable with the uptake of renewables. It will secure Eraring's vital role in meeting the State's changing energy needs for years to come. I take this opportunity to thank past and present power station workers as well as those working on the battery, which will help ready Eraring for the future. They have contributed immeasurably to building modern and resilient communities in this State. Eraring's legacy is their legacy, and it is certainly one to be proud of.

INTERNATIONAL DAY TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (22:15): The International Day to Combat Islamophobia was marked on 15 March, a date of profound significance for our nation and the global community. It serves as a solemn reminder of the horrific Christchurch massacre in 2019, when 51 innocent worshippers were murdered while gathered in peaceful prayer at the Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Islamic Centre in New Zealand. This heinous act of terror, perpetrated by an Australian, was a stark and painful wake-up call to the dangers of Islamophobia. The attack shattered lives and communities, sending shockwaves across Australia and New Zealand and exposing the urgent need for governments, institutions and society to take meaningful action against religious hatred and discrimination. But, beyond the horror, it also highlighted the resilience of the Muslim community, which, in the face of such a devastating loss, responded with unity, strength and grace.

In the wake of immense tragedy, many memorial services and vigils were held across the world, including in my community. Local Islamic centres, schools and mosques opened their doors in a very public and gracious act to all to allow everyone to come together, share in their grief and break down barriers. What was not made public was the rise in Islamophobic incidents in the wake of Christchurch. I am aware of one such incident in my community where a pig's head was thrown over the fence and into the car park of a place of worship. Distressingly, the spectre of Christchurch has recently reared its ugly head. Earlier this month the Australian Islamic House in Edmondson Park on the border of my electorate was threatened with a "Christchurch 2.0" attack. As this incident highlights, Islamophobia remains a persistent issue. Another example I regret to bring to the attention of the House is an ongoing targeted campaign of vilification and hatred against a local family in my electorate. They have been the victims of vulgar taunts outside their home and a series of anonymous letters addressed to "Mr and Mrs Hamas".

Consistent with this experience, Islamophobia Register Australia's *Islamophobia in Australia* report reveals a troubling rise in incidents across the country. Between January 2023 and November 2024, 309 in-person Islamophobic incidents were reported, more than 2.5 times the previous figures. Additionally, 366 verified online incidents mark a 250 per cent surge in digital hate speech. Nearly 75 per cent of victims were Muslim women and girls facing verbal abuse, physical attacks and discrimination in public spaces, workplaces and schools. The report highlights the psychological toll, with 86 per cent of victims reporting distress and 92 per cent experiencing long-term harm. Many now avoid public spaces for safety reasons, yet only 18 per cent of cases were reported to police due to fears of inaction or bias.

Islamophobia is not just an issue for those directly affected; it is a challenge to our collective values of fairness, justice and respect. An attack on one community is an attack on all of us, because a society that tolerates hate will never be truly free, truly safe or truly united. Groups like Islamophobia Register Australia and the Australian National Imams Council [ANIC], through its Action Against Islamophobia [AAI] initiative, stand with victims and communities, shedding light on the scale of the problem and the action needed to address it. ANIC's Action Against Islamophobia initiative is not just a name; it is a movement that empowers Muslims through education, awareness and the fight for a more just and inclusive society. AAI reminds us that Islamophobia is not just about words or actions; it takes a real toll on people's mental health. Its work in providing support, safe spaces and faith-based counselling is a call to action for all of us to push for lasting change.

I encourage every member of the New South Wales community, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, to stand together against Islamophobia, today and every day. I also encourage them to report incidents of Islamophobia to the authorities and to organisations like AAI and the Islamophobia Register. When incidents of Islamophobia are

reported, they can be better identified and dealt with. It is not enough to keep our communities safe, welcoming and inclusive for all; we must also call out and reject acts of hatred. In the words of Surah Al-Hujurat in *The Quran*, 49:13:

O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another.

Our differences in race, nationality and status are not reasons for division but opportunities for understanding and unity—something that we would all do well to reflect upon.

WORKING FROM HOME

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (22:20): For many in the Hornsby electorate, the juggle of career and family life is only made possible by the opportunity that technology provides to work from home on occasion. Working from home is not just a matter of convenience; it makes it possible to succeed at work and raise a family. We all want to give our kids a well-rounded education. That is why parents in the Hornsby area are dealing with school runs, after-school activities and family responsibilities. They are dropping their kids at school at 8.30 a.m. and then commuting for up to an hour to get to work at the office. Well before the workday ends, they are racing back to pick their kids up from after-school care, assuming they are lucky enough to have secured a spot that day. Then it is netball practice on Monday, scouts on Tuesday and dance on Wednesday. That is not a hypothetical scenario; it is the reality for many in Hornsby.

While that is what we do for our kids, we ourselves equally want the chance to grow and thrive in our careers. We do not want our family and parenting responsibilities to be a roadblock to our success in the office. Succeeding at both work and home requires flexibility. Working from home makes that so much easier. Removing a long commute frees up time to care for our kids and get the day's tasks done. For me, my wife and my son, our life simply would not work without the ability to work from home on a regular basis. That is why I cringe when I see headlines from government leaders, Premiers or business lobby groups pushing for a return to the office five days a week. The one-size-fits-all mandated model is outdated and out of touch with the needs of working families.

Of course, there are limits to the work from home mentality, and some are right to criticise those on the extremes like senior public servants working for the New South Wales Government who do not even live in our State. But a simplistic, blanket argument against working from home should be rejected. Working from home reflects the reality of modern work. We have all seen how workdays now extend beyond 5.30 p.m. Many workers in the Hornsby area log back in after their kids are asleep, check emails late at night or catch up over the weekend. The trade-off for that constant connectivity has been the flexibility to work from home.

There is an economic dividend too. A growing body of evidence shows that hybrid work benefits the economy. The chair of the Productivity Commission recently pointed out that hybrid work helps boost participation in the workforce, improving both household incomes and overall economic productivity. By removing barriers to workforce participation, we open the door to a wider talent pool, make better use of our people and drive economic growth. That is why we cannot afford to go backwards. Some argue that work from home arrangements are a luxury that is not available for everyone. I acknowledge that certain professions in health care, education and other areas cannot work remotely, but that does not mean that no-one should. We do not demand standardised working conditions for every profession.

We do not ask that every job comes with the same schedule or flexibility. It is about choice and the opportunity to work in a way that makes sense for the individual, their family and the workplace. Technology has made that flexibility possible, and it is one of the few positives to come out of the COVID-19 crisis. It allows families to thrive and the economy to grow. There is more time for family, more time for community and more time for life outside the office. We need leadership that understands the needs of modern workers and a government that embraces flexible work arrangements and celebrates the benefits that it brings.

COST OF LIVING

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (22:25): Few issues debated in this House have as widespread an impact on the people of our State as the ever-increasing cost-of-living pressures. I stood in this place three years ago and raised the same concerns, but the situation has not improved in any meaningful way. If anything, it has become even tougher. We must acknowledge that what we are facing today is not just persistent; it is escalating. This is not a new problem. We all know that money does not stretch as far as it once did. A simple grocery run proves this point. Countless families are leaving the check-out with less food than they need simply because they cannot afford to fill the trolley.

The rising cost of living is hitting every household, including young parents trying to make ends meet, pensioners worrying about how to stay warm through winter and small business owners struggling as expenses climb beyond their control. The reality is clear: Life is getting more expensive. The longstanding promise that hard work leads to financial stability is slipping away. Wages have barely moved, and yet the cost of essentials

like food, electricity, fuel, rent and mortgages continue to climb. Households are being stretched to the limit. They are forced into making impossible choices between heating and eating, between covering essential medications or paying the rent and between giving their children opportunities or merely surviving each day.

A trip to the supermarket is now an exercise in sacrifice. Families that once shopped with confidence are cutting back on fresh food and switching to cheaper alternatives or simply going without. Many people are now taking the opportunity to get their food at the food banks that have stepped up to address this issue in many of our local communities. Staple items that used to be affordable now come with price tags that make weekly grocery bills a major source of stress and anxiety. Power and gas bills are another huge burden that many just cannot keep up with. How is it right that in a country rich in natural resources people are being forced to ration electricity and are dreading the next energy bill? How is it fair that turning on an air conditioner in summer or a heater in winter is now a financial decision? It is a luxury rather than a basic expectation.

Housing affordability is another growing expense. Rents are soaring not only in our cities but also in regional areas like my electorate of Orange. Families are being priced out of homes. Young people cannot save enough for a deposit, and seniors are being left without stability in retirement. The housing dream, which was once a cornerstone of Australian life, is becoming increasingly unattainable for a generation of hopeful buyers. These statistics represent real people who are facing real hardships. Behind every figure is a family grappling with uncertainty and stress. Despite years of warnings, governments have not done enough to get ahead of the curve. The cost-of-living crisis is not the fault of those struggling. It was caused by a series of policy failures that must be addressed urgently.

While everyday expenses climb, wages have failed to keep up. Inflation is eating away at earnings, leaving people working longer hours or juggling multiple jobs just to stay afloat. We have seen industrial action in recent times born not out of greed but out of necessity. Workers are fighting to keep up with the rising cost of living and are fighting to preserve their dignity and financial security. Even households that were once financially secure are now taking on debt just to cover the basics. I personally know people who have had to take on second jobs in the evenings and on weekends just to stay ahead of the bills. This added pressure is not sustainable. It is hurting families, communities and individuals' wellbeing.

The minimum wage was once a safety net for working Australians, but it no longer provides the security it should. Middle-income earners once had enough to live comfortably but are now struggling to maintain their standard of living. Meanwhile, corporate profits continue to soar, and executive bonuses continue to grow. We are seeing a growing chasm between high-income earners and everyone else. Many middle-income families who once felt secure are now just trying to keep their heads above water. They deserve better. It is our responsibility, as representatives, to ensure we do all we can to support them. Cost-of-living relief must be at the centre of government decision-making for the foreseeable future. This issue is not going away and neither should our focus on fixing it. Immediate and meaningful action is essential. The people of our State expect nothing less from those elected to represent them.

TERRIGAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (22:30): Recently we celebrated International Women's Day, and today I take great pride in recognising the following outstanding women in my electorate of Terrigal. These women have been nominated by their peers, a testament to their unwavering commitment to our community. Judith Wallace is a quiet achiever whose dedication spans over 35 years. As the senior admin officer at Chertsey Primary School for 25 years, she set a benchmark for excellence, supporting four principals and countless staff. Even in retirement, Judith remains actively involved, serving as secretary and treasurer of Chertseydale Community Cottage and playing a crucial role in local committees. She was instrumental in advocating for a park upgrade in Springfield and is the backbone of the Central Coast Kids Day Out committee, where her wisdom and dedication continue to make a difference.

Mandy Eyles has been a key member of the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club, serving as the director of member services for two years. Though she recently stepped down from the board, she continues as the club's communications coordinator, overseeing newsletters and social media. Those behind-the-scenes efforts are essential in promoting beach safety and community events, ensuring that critical information reaches the public efficiently. Mandy's attention to detail and dedication often go unnoticed, but her work is invaluable to the Terrigal community. Cheryl Wallace is a formidable leader within the Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club. She now coordinates and leads the club's entire education program, overseeing the training of new lifesavers, managing first-aid courses and ensuring compliance with Surf Life Saving Australia policies. Cheryl's positive energy and commitment have already made a significant impact, strengthening the club's lifesaving education. A true team player, she even celebrated the club's achievements dancing on stage at the Surf Life Saving NSW Awards.

Jan Steele has spent decades serving her community through volunteering. Since moving to Empire Bay in 2001, she has been an active member of the Rotary Club of Woy Woy, contributing to initiatives such as Opera in the Arboretum, book fairs and humanitarian projects. She has also dedicated time to Camp Quality, supporting children living with cancer. As secretary of the Empire Bay Progress Association, Jan played a key role in organising community events including Anzac Day services and the annual food and fun fair. Though retired from that position, she remains a driving force in community activities. Sharon Tull has been an integral member of North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club since 2015. As a patrolling member with a perfect attendance record, she became a patrol captain in 2020 and now manages the club's inflatable rescue boat racing team. Sharon's passion for mentoring young members is evident in her commitment to education, helping many achieve their Bronze Medallion. As the club's office manager since 2018, she provides vital support to volunteers and committee members, ensuring that the club operates smoothly.

Jackie Sproll is a dedicated lifesaver with an impressive 24-year record of patrolling at North Avoca Surf Life Saving Club. She became the club's first female patrol captain in 2010 and has earned numerous accolades, including the National Medal, the Australia Day Medallion, and Patrol Person of the Year. Jackie's leadership and quick thinking have been critical in major rescues, including identifying swimmers in distress and administering lifesaving first aid. Her experience and commitment exemplify the best of surf lifesaving. Hayley Langwith has been nominated by 12 members of the Joy Project Choir for her extraordinary work as a choir leader and singing teacher. For over seven years she has brought people together through music, creating a welcoming and supportive space where individuals of all backgrounds can sing and connect. In an era where mental health and loneliness are growing concerns, Hayley's choir provides a sense of belonging and joy. She also supports charities like We Care Connect, organising donations and leading performances at community events such as the 5 Lands Walk.

It is now my great pleasure to acknowledge the incredible Tammy Jackett, who has been selected as Terrigal's 2025 Local Woman of the Year. Tammy's dedication to the community is truly extraordinary. This is her second consecutive year being nominated, this time by her colleague Jyden Dunn. Tammy's contributions extend across many areas. She has been a driving force behind the winter and Christmas appeals for Mary Mac's on the peninsula, ensuring that struggling families receive essential supplies. She has long supported the McGrath Foundation and our Central Coast Local Health District cancer services unit, raising awareness and funds for vital services.

Despite working full time at Wiseberry Peninsula real estate, being a devoted carer to her son, and serving as a pillar of strength for her sister as she undergoes treatment, Tammy continues to put others first. Her compassion and dedication were recognised with the Wiseberry Bobbi-Jo Spirit Award in 2024, a testament to her unwavering community spirit. Tammy's kindness, passion and generosity inspire us all. This recognition is well deserved, and we thank her for her outstanding contributions. I congratulate all nominees of the 2025 Terrigal Woman of the Year Award on this well-earned recognition. Their hard work and selflessness strengthen our community and we are grateful for everything they do every day.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:35 until
Thursday 20 March 2025 at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

ROBERT (BOB) KING

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Cronulla's Robert (Bob) King on being recognised for his 60 years of volunteer service to Elouera Surf Life Saving Club as a finalist in the 2025 Cronulla Senior Awards. Since joining Elouera in 2004, he's played a vital role in the club's operations, becoming one of the club's most experienced Inflatable Rescue Boat training officers and serving as IRB captain. Bob has assisted at countless surf carnivals coordinating the safety of competitors and crew. His training officer position has also seen him become an instructor, teaching Bronze Medallion courses to many club members. Through his dedication to the Elouera club, Bob was awarded life membership and has also been recognised with a long service medal. Bob's latest involvement has seen him take on the role of 'Silver Salties' co-ordinator, ensuring mature members are able to meet socially and be educated in community service that sees them educated in things such as cyber safety, home fire protection, exercising activities. The club says Bob is not only an asset to Elouera but the community at large and I join the club in acknowledging his volunteer contribution to surf lifesaving and our community.

ANDY BRITTON

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Andy Britton of Burraneer on being a finalist in the 2025 Cronulla Seniors Awards. Andy was nominated by Surfing Sutherland Shire for his volunteer leadership

as president over the past decade that has helped transform the organisation, elevating it to new levels of professionalism and accountability. His leadership has been defined by a strong commitment to good governance, establishing achievable protocols, and creating successful events. Andy has carefully guided the committee to help promote surfing as a clean and healthy lifestyle for women and men of all ages. His leadership has been essential as the organisation works with stakeholders and be the representative peak body for surfing in the area, advocating for the interests of the entire surfing community. Surfing Sutherland Shire colleague John Veage says Andy has left the organisation in a far stronger position than when he took on the role. Although Andy has recently stepped down as president, he continues to offer his wisdom and support on the committee, helping to guide his successor to ensure a smooth transition. His ongoing commitment to his surfing family is a testament to his generosity and passion for the sport.

LYN BATES

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I recognise the long-time community service of Lyn Bates of Woollooware who was a finalist in the 2025 Cronulla Seniors Awards. Lyn has been an active and valued member of Rotary for 15 years, recently returning to the presidency of Cronulla Rotary and also previously a president of the Como Jannali Club. She is passionate about her community and organises and helps with local BBQs and other events and supports local youth through their leadership programs. Lyn is also president of Oyster Bay Probus and is the Rotary District Probus Chair which sees her help form new clubs and support existing ones. Her international work with Rotary includes supporting projects like 'End Polio Now' in India, the 'Seven Women Project' in Nepal, and delivering water filters to schools in the Philippines. Lyn's significant contribution saw her awarded Rotary's highest honour, the Paul Harris Fellowship. Lyn has also been a long-time volunteer with 'Wrap With Love', serving as vice-chair and treasurer. She dedicates one day a week to help sort and pack knitted wraps for those in need, both locally and internationally. I congratulate Lyn on being recognised for her long-term volunteer commitment.

DR TONY GILMOUR

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises local Kiama resident, Dr Tony Gilmour. Dr Gilmour has spent his career bridging the worlds of finance, housing policy and heritage conservation and he remains an active force in historical research and community advocacy, bringing his expertise to both local and national discussions. With a PhD in Urban Planning from the University of Sydney, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Manchester and a Bachelor and Master of Arts in History from Cambridge University, Tony Gilmour built a career that included investment banking. He focused on not-for-profit community housing helping to shape policies and support providers tackling housing affordability and social housing shortages. His latest project is a detailed history of Kiama's pubs. Dr Gilmour's approach to history is rigorous, drawing on original sources not just secondary accounts. His upcoming book on Kiama's hotels will launch on 22nd March 2025 with two events. Dr Gilmour's passion for history led him to take on a leadership role in the Kiama Historical Society, where he serves as Vice President and Treasurer. Congratulations and well done to Dr Tony Gilmour of Kiama.

MR HILTON BLOOMFIELD AND MR JON PHIPPS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises two outstanding local Kiama residents and Kiama Lions Club members – Mr Hilton Bloomfield and Mr Jon Phipps. Hilton Bloomfield has spent years dedicated to helping children with mobility challenges, driven by a simple yet powerful belief that every child deserves the chance to stand, walk and explore the world. Through the Kiama Lions Club, he and fellow member Jon Phipps have worked tirelessly to collect and auction stamps raising vital funds for the Australian Lions Children's Mobility Foundation. Their efforts provide walkers and mobility aids for children who cannot walk unaided, giving them independence and new opportunities. Hilton's journey into stamp collecting began with a realisation: rather than focusing on individual used stamps, encouraging people to donate entire stamp albums would yield greater impact. These stamps can fetch anywhere from a few hundred dollars to much larger sums. Hilton and Jon's efforts have already contributed to an upcoming walker for a five-year-old child in Kiama Downs, with support from other Lions Clubs – Minnamurra, Gerringong, Shoalhaven Heads, Bomaderry and Nowra. Thank you and well done Mr Hilton Bloomfield and Mr Jon Phipps.

MELISSA SCARR

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises local Warri Beach resident Melissa Scarr, as Kiama Business Network's new Executive Officer and Market Manager. With extensive experience in finance, event management, and administration, Melissa Scarr brings with her a wealth of expertise, experience and a strong commitment to supporting our local Kiama businesses. Based in Warri Beach with her family, Mel will oversee the day-to-day operations of the Kiama Business Network office and manage the Kiama Seaside Markets, a much-loved monthly event that attracts visitors, showcases local businesses, and

strengthens community connections. I know that Melissa is very excited to take on this new role and that she will contribute enormously to the ongoing success of the Kiama Business Network. Managing the already thriving Seaside Markets is a fantastic opportunity, and I look forward to working with her and her team. On behalf of our local Kiama community, I extend a very warm welcome to Melissa Scarr to the Kiama Business Network Team and I wish all staff members and volunteers the best for 2025 and I look forward to supporting our local Kiama business operators to thrive and prosper.

ABORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND CULTURE NEST STUDENT ART COMPETITION!

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—The Aboriginal Language and Culture Nest Student Art Competition celebrates an individual passion for Aboriginal language and culture. Kyla Smith, a talented Year 7 student from Macksville High School has taken out the winner of this competition. Kyla, a proud Gumbaynggirr girl from Stuarts Point, has a passion for creativity, particularly drawing and painting. Her artistic journey is deeply inspired by her mother, from whom she has learned to embrace her cultural heritage and the power of art to tell stories through its design. Kyla's chosen artwork, titled Elements of Country, captures the essence of her connection to Mother Earth. The piece represents the creation of the country and the intricate bond we share with the creatures that roam the land. Through her artwork, Kyla showcases the deep connection between the land, its stories, and the language passed down through generations of her people. As the winner, Kyla's artwork will be reproduced in both printed and electronic forms and used across various Department of Education resources. This achievement highlights Kyla's creativity and cultural pride, and her artwork will inspire many for years to come.

CELEBRATING ZONE 1'S REPRESENTATIVE

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Phoebe Southwell, an exceptional agriculture advocate and Childcare teacher from the Upper Macleay, has been chosen to compete for The Land Sydney Royal AgShows NSW Young Woman title, representing Zone 1. Phoebe stood out among a dozen talented finalists at the Zone 1 competition held in South West Rocks, for her maturity and dedication to the industry. Phoebe's passion for agriculture and education is undeniable. Born and raised on the land, Phoebe has firsthand experience of pertinent issues facing all farmers. Phoebe holds certificates in business services and agriculture, is working towards a Certificate 3 in childcare, and will soon begin university studies in early childhood and primary education. Her love for teaching intertwines with her love for the agricultural industry. Phoebe has worked with her former agricultural teacher at Kempsey High School to create a unique program for primary school students. "Mini-mob"—designed to introduce them to cattle competitions and the fundamentals of beef breeding. Phoebe's dedication to nurturing future agricultural leaders and her commitment to hands-on, real-world learning is inspiring. I celebrate Phoebe's achievements and look forward to the incredible impact she will continue to make.

FREYA PATON HOSTS FUNDRAISER TO SUPPORT LOCAL FAMILIES IN NEED

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Nambucca Heads artist and community fundraiser Freya Paton is once again opening her home for a special fundraising event, continuing her long-standing tradition of supporting both local and international causes. Over the years, Freya and her dedicated group of friends have raised funds for organisations like the Red Cross, Neighbourhood Centres, The Youthie, and schools in Nepal. This year, her focus is on helping local families who may be struggling to purchase school uniforms. To raise funds, Freya host two garden parties over two days in Faringdon Village, Nambucca Heads. Guests have the opportunity to explore her beautifully cultivated garden, featuring two serene ponds, a lush veranda brimming with greenery, and a charming potted vegetable garden. Freya's signature mosaics will also be on display, adding a creative touch to the event. In addition to the garden tour, there is a sale of 150 potted plants and over 100 unique owl-themed items, jewellery, and other treasures. This event is a wonderful opportunity to support those in our community that need it most, celebrating the day with beautiful art, nature, and a selfless personality.

UNITY GRAMMAR MULTIFAITH IFTAR

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—It was an honour to join the Multifaith Iftar gathering at Unity Grammar School on March 4, where people from diverse faiths and backgrounds came together in the spirit of peace, understanding, and unity. The evening began with the breaking of fast, a moment that symbolised shared values of gratitude and compassion that transcend religious and cultural differences. As we shared this tradition, meaningful interfaith conversations unfolded, offering new perspectives and deepening our appreciation for one another's beliefs. The recitation of the Quran also added a spiritual dimension to our evening, enriching our appreciation of Islamic traditions. The iftar feast was a delicious spread of dishes, bringing flavours from different traditions to one table for us to enjoy. This evening was a testament to the fact that harmony is built through shared experiences and mutual respect. Thank you to everyone who made it possible—may we continue to strengthen these connections every day.

OZARAB MEDIA OFFICE OPENING

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—On the 22nd of February, I had the privilege of attending the grand opening of the new Oz Arab Media offices in Milperra. It was a fantastic event filled with celebration, networking, and insight into their impactful work. Oz Arab Media has quickly become a vital platform for ethnic media in Western Sydney, particularly as local newspapers decline. Their radio service plays a crucial role in keeping the Arab community informed, connected, and engaged, especially during critical times like the COVID-19 pandemic. By leveraging online platforms and social media, they ensure important messages reach a broad audience efficiently. I was honoured to be one of the first interviewed in their office – thank you to Remi and Charbel. It's incredible to see how far they have come since. This milestone marks an exciting new chapter, and I look forward to seeing Oz Arab Media continue to keep the Arab communities in Australia connected through multicultural communication and community engagement.

LIVERPOOL QUOTA WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—On the 7th of March at Liverpool Quota's 17th International Women's Day Breakfast, we celebrated the resilience, achievements, and contributions of women in our community—contributions that are too often overlooked. This year's guest speaker, Alison Harle, Director of Allied Health at Bankstown Hospital, shared important messages based on her personal experiences – like how imposter syndrome isn't a barrier—it's an opportunity for growth. Women should never have to choose between their careers and their families, and we must remember to celebrate our achievements rather than rushing to chase the next goal. Alison also reflected on the struggles women faced in past generations, such as losing their jobs upon marriage. While we've come a long way, disparities remain—double standards, the gender pay gap, and barriers to leadership persist. Thank you to Alison and Liverpool Quota, events like these remind us that change is possible, but only if we keep pushing for gender equality and uplift the next generation of young women.

ABBY CONSTANZA

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Abby Constanza, who has been named the 2025 Wingham Rotary Young Achiever of the Year. At just 10 years of age, Abby has made an impressive contribution to the Manning Valley Historical Society through her volunteer work. Abby's passion for history and fashion led her to join the Society under the guidance of Robyn Greenaway. Since then, she has been involved in a wide range of tasks, including data entry, exhibition research, display work, and specialised textile storage. She has also showcased her acting skills at the popular "Night at the Museum" events. Abby's enthusiasm and hard work have made a real impact on the community. I congratulate Abby on receiving the Wingham Rotary Young Achiever of the Year award.

COLIN AND LEANNE WESSELL

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Colin and Leanne Wessell, Local Citizens of the Year for Hallidays Point. Colin and Leanne own and operate FoodWorks Hallidays Point, a business they took over in 2010 when it was struggling. Through hard work and their focus on the community, they have turned it into a valued local hub. Colin and Leanne actively support the community through initiatives like the Hallidays Gourmet product range, which has raised over \$40,000 for local charities. These funds have supported the surf club, Riding for the Disabled, senior citizens, the local school, and other groups during challenging times such as floods, fires, and the pandemic. They bring people together and make a difference in the lives of those around them. Colin and Leanne's contributions are deeply appreciated, and their recognition is well-deserved. I thank Colin and Leanne for their impact on Hallidays Point and for making such a positive difference in the community.

KIRK OWERS

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Pacific Palms journalist and photographer Kirk Owers for his recent success at the annual AsTW Awards. Kirk's stunning photograph, taken during a trip to South Africa's Cederberg Mountains, earned him the award for Best Travel Photo. He was also a finalist in the Photographer of the Year category. Through his work, Kirk captures the essence of his travels, connecting people to the places and cultures he visits. His winning photo, depicting a traditional riel dance at sunset, beautifully showed the richness of African heritage. Kirk's career began with a passion for travel and surfing, leading him to write and photograph for publications around the world. From chasing waves to documenting cultural experiences, his work has inspired many readers to explore the world. Congratulations, Kirk, on this well-deserved recognition, and best wishes for your future travels, including your upcoming cycling adventure in New Zealand.

CAITLIN MACKENZIE

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I would like to congratulate Caitlin Mackenzie on being among a cohort of 21 Kings Scouts, the first in 70 years following Prince Charles III confirmation of his Patronage of the Scout Association in Australia. The peak award for Venturer Scouts, that is Scouts between the ages of 14 and 17, the Kings Scout insignia is given after candidates complete a broad range of achievements, from outdoor adventure skills to academic interests. Caitlin, from the Third Orange Scout Group, completed a four-day canoe trip from Dubbo to Wellington as the peak task in her Kings award adventure, with several other scouts. As an aside, along the way the team collected rubbish in the river. The King's Scout Award is a significant achievement for a young person within Scouting, often taking several years to complete. It is challenging while also broadening candidate's interest and developing their leadership, resilience, and planning skills. It's a credit to Caitlin's determination and commitment she stayed the course, rising to the challenge to achieve this amazing honour. I congratulate Caitlin on her achievement and the organisation that supported her on this journey, the Scouts.

AMY PROVOST

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate Amy Provost of Orange on being named 'Rising Star of the Year' at the Australian Property Management Industry Awards in Melbourne in November last year. Amy is only 23 years old, and out of 5000 entries in 25 categories, she was the winner. Alongside this, Amy was also named a finalist for 'Inspection Agent of the Year' on the same awards night. Two years ago, Amy found herself torn between real estate and exercise sports science. After juggling her TAFE course and university studies for some time, she ultimately went down the real estate path. Amy recounts studying through TAFE Digital as a "great experience". Amy shows wonderful inter-personal skills, helping those in the local area find what they are looking for. She is a self-motivated and energetic, and these qualities have assisted her greatly in her real estate career so far. They have also helped her clients. I commend Amy on the work she does. I wish her all the best.

ANNE HOPWOOD

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Anne Hopwood has been a driving force behind the expansion of Orange's FoodCare service, which opened its doors in February 2013. The service offers subsidised food to community members struggling to make ends meet, giving them access to quality, nutritional food they may not be able to afford to buy from the major supermarkets. Its relevance and reputation have grown rapidly within the community as lower income families battle cost-of-living issues. That relevance is illustrated in LiveBetter and Anglicare now partnering with FoodCare which has enabled access for more customers, especially since its move to a more central building in March Street in 2019. At its inception, FoodBank was located in the Glenroi Community Centre, opening one day a week and being run by Chairperson Anne and a handful of volunteers. It now involves around 60 volunteers. For 10 years Anne served as the coordinator but stepped down at the end of 2024. FoodCare is also a food rescue service which helps reduce waste by diverting viable products back to the shelves. I thank Anne for her work in this area which now, more than ever, has a proven value.

KEN YOUNG

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I acknowledge the extraordinary talent of Ken Young, a student from Toronto High School, whose remarkable HSC artwork has earned him a place in the prestigious "First Class 24" exhibition at the Museum of Art and Culture, Lake Macquarie. This exhibition showcases the very best of last year's HSC Visual Arts cohort. Ken's triptych, *Echoes of Harmony*, combines traditional Chinese watercolour, paper, and cultural scrolls to explore the complex themes of cultural identity, historical memory, and the lingering effects of war. The left panel juxtaposes serene Australian landscapes with symbols of conflict, reflecting on the impact of World War II, particularly Japan's role. The centre features a yin-yang symbol intertwined with native plants from both China and Australia, symbolizing the harmony of Ken's bicultural identity. The right panel portrays a tranquil Chinese landscape while subtly referencing the atrocities of Unit 731, advocating for the remembrance of history. Ken's work is a beautiful testament to cultural synthesis and reconciliation. "*Echoes of Harmony*" invites us to reflect on the past while embracing unity and understanding across cultures. Congratulations Ken on your talent and well-deserved inclusion in the First Class 24 exhibition.

HUNTER MOUNTAIN BIKE ASSOCIATION

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Members of The Hunter Mountain Bike Association have, once again, ridden the path to success when they represented the Hunter region at the recent Cannonball MTB Festival in Thredbo. Over five days, riders competed in five thrilling events: All Mountain Enduro, Flow, Dual Slalom, Pump Track, and the Cannonball Downhill track. By all accounts, it was a week filled with intense competition and incredible sportsmanship. HMBA Pro Legend, Jack Moir, returned with two silver medals for All Mountain and Flow Trails, while Taj Thornton was named the 2024 15s club champion after bagging an impressive number

of podium finishes. Other noteworthy performances include Harper Nelmes and Oscar Berry in the 17s category, Gary Jones in the 30 plus Men's category, and Samantha Cole in the 30 plus women's category. I also acknowledge the contributions of Tim Butler, Will Ireland, Nicholas Viche, and Ben Bullen-Aslin throughout the festival. These riders and their accomplishments are a testament to the spirit, talent, and determination that define HMBA and the Lake Macquarie region. Congratulations to all HMBA members, your dedication to your sport is truly inspiring. Keep riding and making us proud!

JOELLE COUTET-ROBERTS

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—Racism and the lasting impact it has on individuals and communities is an ugly and deeply important issue. Recently, I was blown away by the sheer talent of 2024 HSC Visual Arts student Joelle Coutet-Roberts from Charlton Christian College, who managed to encapsulate this topic through her work 'A Bag is a Bag; Wrapped in Plastic, Held in Fear'. Joelle's artwork, created through an innovative combination of photo-media, plastic bags, brown paper bags, card, bubble wrap, string, and rubbish packets, is both thought-provoking and visually striking. It's no surprise her work has been selected for the prestigious First Class 24 exhibition at the Museum of Art and Culture Yapang. The everyday items Joelle has chosen symbolise the layers of fear, prejudice, and societal perceptions that are often wrapped around the lived experiences of marginalised individuals. Joelle's work not only showcases her impressive skill as an artist, but also her ability to use art as a platform to inspire reflection and social dialogue. It encourages viewers to consider their role in confronting racism and promoting greater empathy within our communities. Congratulations Joelle on your truly remarkable artwork.

WOLLONDILLY HIGH SCHOOL END OF YEAR PRESENTATIONS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I was honoured to attend many end of year school presentations, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the exceptional students, staff, and teaching leaders of high schools located in Wollondilly: Oxley College, Bowral High School and Wollondilly Anglican College. Oxley College consistently affirms its dedication to student well-being through core values: showing courage, practising kindness, and seeking wisdom. By engaging in genuine conversations, actively listening to diverse perspectives, and fostering empathy, confidence, and clarity, the college empowers individuals to thrive and excel. The Bowral High School presentation night was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the students' outstanding achievements across academics, sports and performing arts. The evening was a true celebration of talent and achievement, with exceptional musical performances by Year 10 and Yr 11 musicians. The students I met at the Wollondilly Anglican College K-12 presentation were not only amazing learners but also demonstrated courage, kindness, thoughtfulness, and compassion—qualities that reflect the College's values. Thank you to the hardworking teaching staff of these schools whose dedication ensures that every student thrives and graduates as a well-rounded, confident, and respectful individual, ready to take on the world.

THE OAKS, CAWDOR, TAHMOOR AND BUXTON SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—A love of learning was on full display at the numerous primary school end of year presentations that I was honoured to attend late last year. The highlight for me at The Oaks PS was the school choir's uplifting performance, and hearing that they had been spreading joy across our community during this festive season by performing at BlueGum Lifestyle Resort in Thirlmere and Queen Victoria Aged Care Home in Picton. At Cawdor PS, a small school located in a rural community, I offered my congratulations to the students for their commitment and the remarkable accomplishments they have achieved in their learning and personal development throughout 2024. At Tahmoor PS the room buzzed with pride and joy as proud parents, guardians, grandparents, and friends celebrated the students. There was plenty of cheering and joy, highlighting the fantastic year these students experienced. Thank you to Buxton Public School for inviting me this afternoon to celebrate with parents, carers, teachers, staff, and the wonderful Year 6 students as they mark the end of their primary school journey. Thank you to the hardworking teaching staff who have helped pupils of all Wollondilly schools to thrive.

MITTAGONG, HILL TOP, WILTON, YANDERRA AND GLENQUARRY SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I thoroughly enjoy attending the end of year presentations, and was delighted to attend Mittagong, Hill Top, Wilton, Yanderra and Glenquarry Primary Schools presentation days. The tight knit community at Glenquarry Public School, with its distinctive character and warmth makes the school feel much bigger than its 23 students. Mittagong Public School continues to shine, thanks to its exceptional teachers and staff who are dedicated to providing opportunities for bright futures for all students. The presentation at Hill Top Public School ended on a high note with a fantastic musical performance featuring the entire school—what a way to wrap up a special event! Congratulations also to students at Wilton Public School for their commitment and the remarkable accomplishments they have achieved in their learning and personal development throughout

2024, and I commend you for sitting so gracefully in the sweltering December heat. Finally, what a wonderful morning at Yanderra Public School, another 'tiny but mighty' Wollondilly school, celebrating the outstanding achievements of students, teachers, and the wider school community was a delight. A heartfelt thank you to the teachers and staff who have committed themselves to nurturing these young minds.

THE ROTARY CLUB OF CASTLE HILL, 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I congratulate the Rotary Club of Castle Hill on its 60th anniversary. Since its founding in 1965, the Rotary Club of Castle Hill has grown into a thriving organisation of nearly 50 passionate members committed to service, connection, and community spirit. For six decades, the club has transformed lives, fostered friendships, and made a meaningful impact locally and internationally. The club's ongoing international projects include providing safe water in Kenya and delivering training programs to the Nepal Community. Closer to home, the club supports a range of initiatives, from building refurbishments, disaster relief, scholarships, youth mental health programs, as well as important annual events like Run for the Hills and the Excellence in Policing Awards. The club upholds valued traditions such as Australia Day flag raising, ANZAC Day wreath laying, and Christmas Day hospital visits. Their club held a Gala Birthday celebration on 7 March 2025. I thank President Juanita Rodrigues, incoming President Jamie Buttigieg and all Castle Hill Rotarians. The dedication and service of the Castle Hill Rotarians ensures the club remains a driving force for good. Congratulations to the Rotary Club of Castle Hill on 60 years of service.

UBAH GABRIS— PAUL HARRIS FELLOW

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I congratulate Ubah Gabris on recently receiving a Paul Harris Fellow which was received at the Rotary Club of Castle Hill, 60th Anniversary Gala Dinner, held on 7 March 2025. A Paul Harris Fellow is Rotary International's highest honour, bestowed on an individual "in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world." Ubah was recently appointed as the Club Development Chair for Rotary District 9685. The appointment acknowledges Ubah's work to foster growth and sustainability within Rotary to ensure that Rotary's mission reaches new communities. Beyond Rotary, Ubah is a passionate advocate for respectful relationships and the fight against domestic violence. Through leadership, Ubah has inspired action and garnered widespread support for the fight against domestic violence. Her outstanding contributions have earned her the Champion Award for Professional Excellence and Community Leadership by Celebration of African Australian Incorporated. As Deputy Director of the Australian Professionals of Colour [APOC], Ubah works to empower professionals from diverse backgrounds, helping them build meaningful connections and reach their full potential. Congratulations Ubah on receiving the prestigious recognition as a Paul Harris Fellow.

PETER RHEINBERGER OAM – PAUL HARRIS FELLOW

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I congratulate Peter Rheinberger OAM, Past President of the Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour on recently receiving a Paul Harris Fellow which was received at the Rotary Club of Castle Hill, 60th Anniversary Gala Dinner, held on 7 March 2025. A Paul Harris Fellow is Rotary International's highest honour, bestowed on an individual "in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world." Peter has a long history of service having served for many years as a Local Court Magistrate. Peter joined Rotary over 30 years ago and has served in multiple clubs bringing leadership, dedication, and service to every project. Since joining the Rotary Club of Castle Hill in 2020, Peter has continued his service as International Chair, spearheading projects in Indonesia, Nepal and Kenya that improve health and education. Peter was awarded the Order of Australia Medal in 2019 for his outstanding community service. The Rotary Club of Castle Hill proudly recognises the service of Peter Rheinberger OAM honouring his commitment to Rotary, commitment to service and passion for making a positive difference in the lives of many. Congratulations Peter!

ROBERT VALE - 2MBS FINE MUSIC

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I would like to acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of Robert Vale, a distinguished presenter at 2MBS Fine Music Sydney in St Leonards, who signed off from his final Jazz Sketches program on 5 February, marking an extraordinary 750 broadcasts. Robert's deep passion for jazz and world music, combined with his vast knowledge and engaging style, has left an indelible mark on Sydney's music community. His ability to curate diverse and immersive musical journeys introduced audiences to an incredible range of artists, styles and cultures, enriching the listening experience for countless jazz enthusiasts. His departure marks the end of an era and his presence on the airwaves will be greatly missed by both colleagues and devoted listeners. I sincerely thank Robert for his years of dedication, artistry and commitment to sharing the joy of music and I wish him all the best in his next chapter.

WILLOUGHBY GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2024

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—The Willoughby Girls High School Class of 2024 excelled in their final year of schooling. The school continues to demonstrate excellence in education, with students delivering exceptional results across a range of subjects. In 2024, 171 students sat the HSC, collectively earning 211 mentions on the Distinguished Achievers list for achieving the highest band in their courses. Additionally a third of students achieved an ATAR of 90 or above. The success extended beyond individual results, with multiple students recognised as All Rounders for excelling across 10 or more units of study. Willoughby Girls also produced Top Achievers in a variety of subjects, including Business Studies, Modern History, Society and Culture and Hospitality. Beyond the classroom, students received state-wide recognition for their major works in Society and Culture, Music, and Visual Arts. I'm proud of these results that make WGHS the best performing non-selective high school in NSW. These remarkable achievements are a testament to the dedication of the students, teachers and school community. Willoughby Girls High School continues to be a beacon of academic excellence, preparing young women for bright futures.

NORTH SYDNEY BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I acknowledge the outstanding academic achievements of North Sydney Boys High School, which has once again ranked as the top-performing school in the 2024 Higher School Certificate. This marks back-to-back years at the top, reflecting the school's commitment to excellence. In 2024, nearly 65% of all exam entries from North Sydney Boys resulted in a Band 6, an extraordinary feat demonstrating the dedication of students and staff. The school also had multiple students achieve top ranks across various subjects, reinforcing its strong academic culture. Notably, eight students were nominated for the prestigious Young Writers Showcase in English Extension 2, highlighting the depth of talent across disciplines. This success is a testament to the school's rigorous academic environment, strong leadership and the support of families and teachers. North Sydney Boys continues to set the standard for academic excellence and I congratulate the entire school community on this remarkable achievement. Their dedication and hard work continue to inspire and bring pride to the local community.

MARRICKVILLE INTENSIVE ENGLISH CENTRE

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I acknowledge the critical work being done by the Marrickville Intensive English Centre, located at Marrickville High School. The Centre provides English language skills to newly arrived migrants, refugees and International Students. It gives students of secondary school age English language skills so they can access mainstream high school courses. The Centre's grounds are spacious with a range of modern facilities, including modern features such as interactive classrooms with electronic boards, access to a commercial kitchen and school garden. Many ex-students have gone on to achieve ATARs over 99, with numerous students being able to complete the HSC and move to their goals of pursuing careers and tertiary study options. A big thank you to IEC Head Teacher Jade Lo, and your team of dedicated staff who not only teach, but support and nurture these students throughout their time at the Intensive English Centre and in life beyond their school years.

MUDCRABS 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to the The Mudcrabs on their 20 year anniversary. The Mudcrabs are a local, ecological volunteer group which cares for Goolay'yari (The Cooks River) and its foreshore environment by collecting rubbish, restoring bush along the river, and so much more. The group holds regular working bees, runs guided walks, and conducts wildlife and bird surveys along this important tributary. I was thrilled to attend the anniversary celebration and launch of the commemorative book for the Mudcrabs, held at Marrickville Golf Club on Saturday 15 March 15th along with my colleague the Member for Canterbury, Sophie Cotsis, Inner West Mayor, Darcy Byrne and Deputy Mayor, Mat Howard. This is indeed a significant milestone for The Mudcrabs, who have contributed so much to restoring the natural beauty of the Cooks River. Volunteers' work in revitalising wetlands at Cup and Saucer Creek has provided native animals with habitat and a natural filter for stormwater. Thank you to Gareth Wreford, Ranjith Evas, Peter Munro, Ann Leahy, Jennifer Newman and all the Mudcrab volunteers who have contributed tirelessly to the last 20 years of care for the wonderful Cooks River.

MORGAN COFFEY, EQUINE SPORTS

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—It is a sheer honour to recognise Agnes Banks pupil Morgan Coffey as she begins the ride of a lifetime, representing Pony Club Australia in a world showjumping competition in China. Morgan's determination, talent, and passion for equine sports have already brought her successive State Showjumping championships and numerous other accolades, and now she receives the wonderful opportunity to represent Australia on the world stage. To ride a foreign country, on a borrowed horse, is no simple task, but

Morgan's tenacity and hard work have set her up for this exciting challenge. Her success is testament to the unrelenting perseverance of her family, trainers, and Pony Club network, who have devoted themselves to building her into the model athlete she is today. Morgan, your community is proud of you. Everybody wishes you all the best in China. This is hopefully the first of many more international victories to come!

WSU FOOD DRIVE

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)—It is an honour to recognise the commitment and philanthropy that has been behind Western Sydney University's food Security initiatives, and most of all the re-opening of the Western Sydney Pantry on the Kingswood Campus. The Dedication and hygiene products are remarkable. A huge thank you to the Food Security and Student Community team, student volunteers, community partners, and Chaplains for all the hard work they have done to provide thousands of meals and groceries to vulnerable students. Your efforts not only impact student wellbeing but also contribute to a sense of community and belonging. Special appreciation to the local farms and organizations that provide fresh fruits and vegetables, your kindness makes this program sustainable and successful. This project demonstrates the power of collaboration in creating a compassionate and diverse university community. Congratulations to all of those involved, your efforts are truly making a difference to students' lives!

LADIES PROBUS CLUB OF GRANDVIEWS

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to pay tribute and acknowledge the Grandview Ladies Probus Club, which, unfortunately, is closing its doors after recently celebrating its 33rd anniversary. For over three decades, this club has served as a space for individuals to develop strong connections, make friendships, and find support in one another. Many local women have benefited from this wonderful initiative. Whilst it is certainly saddening that the Club will cease, their efforts in our community are worth so much and they have had some wonderful achievements over the years. Probus clubs are so important in keeping our seniors engaged, active and socially connected. I encourage all members, past and present, to continue meeting together and staying active in our community. I would like to recognise the leadership of President Jenny Crockett for her years of service, along with her executive team, who have worked tirelessly to keep the club going strong. Thank you to all members, past and present, who have been a part of the club over the years. Our community is richer because of your efforts.

LIONS CLUB OF LUGARNO

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise today to extend my gratitude to the Lions Club of Lugarno for their ongoing commitment to our local community. Recently, the Lions Club of Lugarno generously donated \$1,000 to St George Community Transport. This contribution will be used to replace the batteries on buses that provide localised transport to our community. These buses play an essential role in transporting elderly people, individuals with disabilities, and other vulnerable members of our community to important services and appointments. It is crucial that these buses remain in a safe, roadworthy condition, particularly in case of medical emergencies. Thanks to this funding, they will be able to operate safely for many years to come. I would like to thank Mike Warner, President of the Lions Club of Lugarno and Natasha Stokes, CEO of St George Community Transport for their generosity and dedication to the community. As the Lions Club continues their invaluable work, they are seeking new members to help expand their impact. I encourage anyone who wants to make a meaningful contribution to their community to consider joining the Club.

SMILE SANCTUARY DENTAL VISIT

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to visit a brand-new small business in my local area – Smile Sanctuary Dental in Mortdale. The business is owned by Deanna and Kyriakos Tambassis, two locals who live, work and are raising their kids in our local area. The couple have teamed up to begin their small business journey, with Kyriakos seeing patients and Deanna handling their marketing. From my visit, it was very clear that they are incredibly passionate individuals, committed to providing exceptional patient care. They have also worked very hard to create a calming environment to help individuals who may be anxious about a visit to the dentist. Their facilities are also state-of-the-art, for example, you can pick what music you want to listen to or what show on Netflix you would like to watch during your appointment! Small businesses are the backbone of our local area and contribute so much to the local economy. I will always encourage my community to support local businesses such as Smile Sanctuary. I would like to thank Deanna and Kyriakos for having me. I wish them continued growth and great success.

LIZ DAY

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—It was my honour to name Liz Day Charlestown's Local Woman of the Year in recognition of her outstanding volunteer work for local sport. Liz been involved with

Central Newcastle Rugby League Football Club in a range of official roles for years, while her unofficial commitments run just as deeply. She is involved in organising community outreach events, such as last year's Outdoor Movie Night for Christmas, and serves as secretary, sponsor liaison, gear steward, and manager to the Ladies League Tag team. Liz's service to the community, to Central Rugby League Football Club, and the Ladies League Tag team, proves that her dedication and commitment is second to none. I have experienced and witnessed Liz and her multiple volunteer hats in action many, many times over the last few years, and am continually impressed by her passion and desire to improve this already amazing community of a club. Liz truly embodies the club motto, For the Family—she has given her time, energy, and heart to Central Newcastle Rugby League Football Club in so many ways. Her dedication to the club and the wider community is inspiring, and this recognition is so well deserved.

CENTENARY OF KAHIBAH FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—In February 1924, the Kahibah Progress Association applied to authorities for recreation land. The Association was granted six acres: volunteers cleared the land, named Charlestown Oval, and in 1925 the Kahibah Football Club was born. The Rams entered a team in fourth grade in 1926 and now, as the Club approaches its centenary, Kahibah FC is going stronger than ever, fielding sixty-five teams from under-fives all the way up to Northern League One. The Club's rolls are full of well-known names: A-League veterans; NSW NPL mainstays; and renowned off-pitch talent. In the late 1930s, Ernie "Smoke" Screen was a local legend of the game. Today, Josie Allan and Noah James currently play for the Jets—and Gema Simon is a Jets alumni who took to the field eleven times for the Matildas. Kahibah FC also has a strong community arm, and they're such an important part of the Charlestown electorate. On 3 May, they will celebrate with a gala ball and reveal a team of the century. My congratulations to the Rams on a hundred years of the beautiful game, and here's to many more.

HILLSBOROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL AND CLEAR SKY AUSTRALIA

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Charlestown-based disability services and support organisation Clear Sky Australia has partnered with Hillsborough Public School to support the school's canteen and offer new opportunities for their clients. Due to difficulties securing volunteers, Hillsborough Public's tuck shop was at risk of closing. Clear Sky Australia works to aid people with disability in Newcastle and the Hunter through an integrated, hands-on approach. The school's P&C president, Jack Dundas, drew on his experience in the special education sector, reached out to Clear Sky, and together they took steps to save the canteen. Three participants were trained and received qualifications to begin working in the school's canteen, and now the shop is able to be operated three days a week. Congratulations to Jack, the Hillsborough Public School Community, and to Clear Sky Australia and their participants for this innovative and inclusive approach. I am sure other schools facing similar issues will take note.

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL AND GOALBALL TOURNAMENT

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge Grafton PCYC for hosting the second annual wheelchair basketball and goalball tournament in December 2024. The tournament was held as part of the celebrations during International Day of People with Disability and was organised by Social Futures and Clarence Valley Council. The event started with an entertaining exhibition game between the Politicians and the All Stars, won by the Politicians 6-0. The tournament was officiated by wheel-chair tennis Paralympian and Social Futures NDIS Local Area Coordinator David Johnson. Students from Maclean High School, Clarence Valley Anglican School, St Andrews Christian School, Pacific Valley Christian School, McAuley Catholic College, and South Grafton High School also participated in the event. The tournament was a great interactive event for those with a disability to be involved in. In addition to highlighting how important the inclusivity of sport can be, the event encouraged connection with others in the local community. The event also provided an important opportunity to advocate for acceptance and understanding of the 5.5 million Australians living with a disability. Congratulations to all who organised and attended the event, and I very much look forward to the 2025 round.

NORTHLAND COACH AND TRAVEL 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Alan and Janelle Hale and staff at Northland Coach and Travel on celebrating 25 successful years in business. As a family-owned and operated company, Northland has exemplified the values of dedication, integrity and personalised service that set them apart in the local travel industry. Over the past quarter century, they have built a wonderful reputation for providing safe, reliable, and high-quality transportation services. Their commitment to ensuring every journey is enjoyable reflects the care and pride that come from being a family business. From

school trips and seniors' tours to sporting groups they have consistently gone above and beyond to meet the needs of their customers. This milestone is a testament to the vision and hard work of Janelle and Alan and their family. As well as the dedication of their employees who share their passion for exceptional service. Their strong family values have not only driven their success but also fostered a sense of trust and loyalty within the community. As they celebrate 25 years in business, I congratulate Janelle and Alan on their legacy and look forward to their continued success.

THE FAIR BUTCHER 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to offer my congratulations to Chris O'Connor and the staff of The Fair Butcher in Yamba. December 11, 2024, marked the anniversary of Chris O'Connor's purchase of the retail meat premises The Fair Butcher, located in Yamba Fair. Open seven days a week, The Fair Butcher employs six full time staff, four casuals and four juniors. Since purchasing The Fair Butcher, the business has proudly increased its support and showcasing of local producers, and all beef products are supplied locally straight off the farm in Nymboida. Chris has almost two decades of industry experience, witnessing many changes over the time, lately noticing a significant increase in demand for ready-made meals. The Fair Butcher also supports the Lower Clarence community with sponsorship of local sports clubs. Congratulations on the first ten years, and I look forward to seeing the business continue to thrive.

FLORENCE ELIZABETH NICOL – 100TH BIRTHDAY

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to take a moment to celebrate Florence Elizabeth Nicol reaching a monumental 100th birthday. Ms Nicol is a local resident of the Georges River area, living in Kogarah Bay for over sixty-seven years. Additionally, I would like to thank Ms Nicol for her service in the Australian Army. At the age of eighteen, Ms Nicol joined the Australian Army Medical Women's Service, spending twelve total weeks completing her training and helping to train the next intake of recruits. She was transferred to Goulburn Military Hospital for two and a half years, followed by Concord Hospital before her discharge in 1947. It is an honour to recognise Ms Nicol for her service in the Australian Army and congratulate her for reaching one hundred years of age.

ETHAN GOH

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and congratulate Ethan Goh of Kogarah for his outstanding HSC results. Ethan, a student from Sydney Technical High School, topped the state by achieving an exceptional first-in-course for Engineering Studies, whilst simultaneously earning an admirable ATAR result of 99.75. This brilliant achievement and result is a testament to Ethan's hard work and dedication to his studies. It is magnificent to see commendable HSC outcomes in our local St George area, and Ethan serves as an inspiration role model for all high school students. Ethan will go on to pursue a degree in electrical engineering from the University of New South Wales and I wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

ALEX PONGRASS AM

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and congratulate the late Alex Pongrass AM for his induction into Football Australia's Hall of Fame. Mr Pongrass pioneered the soccer scene in Australia, co-founding the National Soccer League (NSL) in 1977 and laying the foundation for Australia's first national soccer competition. Mr Pongrass led the St George Budapest FC, between the early 1960s and late 1990s, spearheading the club to dominance during that period. The St George Budapest FC won the NSL in 1983 alongside five NSW First Division championships. In addition, Mr Pongrass was a notable patron for the construction of the St George Stadium at Barton Park. For his contributions to Australian Football, Mr Pongrass was awarded the Member of the Order of Australia in 1988 for 'Services to Soccer'. I wish to thank Mr Pongrass, for his unwavering commitment to our soccer community and for inspiring future generations to pursue their passions with the same dedication and heart as he did.

ASHCROFT'S IGA ERSKINE PARK

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate and commend Mr Brad Payten, Mr Brad Halls and their team at Ashcroft's IGA Erskine Park for winning the prestigious NSW & ACT Customer Service & Experience Award at the 2025 NSW & ACT IGA Awards of Excellence which was held on 28 February 2025. The Awards acknowledge and celebrate the incredible achievements of retailers across NSW and Ashcroft's IGA Erskine Park's award reflects their outstanding customer service. The victory progresses Ashcroft's IGA Erskine Park to the National Awards of Excellence scheduled to be held in July 2025, where their fellow nominees are all state category winners from across Australia. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I congratulate the team at Ashcroft's IGA Erskine Park and wish them the very best at the National Awards of Excellence and continued success ahead.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2025

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—The 8th March 2025 marked International Women's Day, a day to celebrate the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women around the world. It was an opportunity to celebrate all women and thank the women who have gone before us for all they have achieved on our behalf. I encourage all women to feel empowered in life, make their mark, take courage to chase their dreams and never give up. I congratulate and commend all women across my electorate of Badgerys Creek for their achievements and wish them further success into the future.

THANK YOUR PHARMACIST DAY 2025

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—Thursday 13 March 2025 was Thank Your Pharmacist Day and I thank all our exceptional pharmacists as we celebrate their important role in our health and wellbeing. The theme of this year is 'Pharmacists Stepping Up', which reflects the important and growing role of pharmacists in meeting the health needs of our community, through the provision of timely, accessible and quality care. I was pleased to visit Assad and Mia at MediAdvice Pharmacy at Glenmore Village last Wednesday and express my appreciation to the pharmacists and fellow colleagues for their service to our community. I wish all pharmacists and pharmacy staff the very best as they continue their important work.

WARM BLANKETS FOR EVERYONE

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the outstanding contribution of Warm Blankets for Everyone [WBFE] during their incredibly successful 2024 delivery season. This vital initiative, spearheaded by two dedicated locals, Susan Bardsley and Tonee Holley Knowles, has been providing warmth and comfort to those in need for the past five years. What began as a heartfelt mission to offer blankets to individuals experiencing homelessness has since expanded its scope, making a lasting impact on countless lives across our region. WBFE now serves the communities of Lake Macquarie, Newcastle, Central Coast, Maitland and Cessnock area, and their work continues to grow with each passing year. From 1 February 2024, WBFE has distributed an impressive 3,500 blankets to a range of charities and non-profit organisations, ensuring those most vulnerable have access to basic warmth. In addition, WBFE also delivered beanies, gloves, scarfs, jumpers, shawls, and socks, bringing essential items to those who need them most, particularly in the Swansea community. I thank Susan, Tonee and all the volunteers who continue to support this noble cause. You are a credit to your community, and I look forward to seeing WBFE's future successes.

BADEN ELLIS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to commend and acknowledge Baden Ellis for being awarded the NSW State Emergency Service Commissioner's Unit Citation. This prestigious Citation was awarded to Baden in recognition of his vital and selfless efforts in responding to the Northern Rivers flood event in February and March 2022. In the face of an overwhelming crisis, Baden exemplified professionalism, delivering life-saving support to those in need during an incredibly challenging time. As a dedicated member of the SES Swansea Unit, Baden has been at the forefront of providing urgent assistance not only to the Swansea community but also to surrounding areas. His committed to helping others is evident in his various roles within the SES, serving as a Volunteer Engagement Officer, Volunteer Strategy Officer and now a Flood Rescue and Operations Coordinator. Baden's commitment to the community extends far beyond his work with the NSW SES. Through his involvement with CatholicCare, Baden has played a pivotal role in providing over 80,000 meals to individuals experiencing homelessness, food insecurity and social isolation. Congratulations Baden. This Citation is a well-deserved recognition of your tireless service, and you are truly a credit to the community.

NORTHLAKES PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2025

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Mattias O'Connell, Sophie Burns, Lochlan King, Summer-Rae Harrison, Maddi Blake, Ava Gault, Curtis Kelly, Faith Benham and Liam Skeen on being named the 2025 school leaders at Northlakes Public School. These students have demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to their school community. They represent Northlakes 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 Mattias, Sophie,

Lochlan, Summer-Rae, Maddi, Ava, Curtis, Faith and Liam on this well-deserved achievement. I also wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

SES AWARDS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—At the worst of times, we usually see the best in people – and our amazing SES staff and volunteers are among the best of the best. Time and time again, in storms, floods and fires, volunteers give up time with their own families to help the families of others and ask nothing in return. That is why it's important to recognise the dedication of our SES volunteers and last month I was honoured to attend an awards ceremony to celebrate the contribution made by members of the Tumut Unit. Congratulations to long service award recipients, Wayne Ward, John Currl, Steven Goode and Lee Halpin for their service of 30, 20 and 10 years. Congratulations also to the entire Tumut unit for its Commissioner's Certificates of Appreciation for their work in the southern NSW flooding event of 2022/2023 and during the Covid pandemic in 2020/2021. I was particularly honoured to present National Emergency Medals to Joseph Calleja, John Currl, Steven Goode, Paul McNamara and the late Athol Price (received on his behalf by daughter Dianne Broad) for their outstanding contribution during the 2019/2020 bushfires. On behalf of a grateful community, thank you to all for your service.

BENN COUBROUGH

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Battling challenging topographical and weather conditions, personal trainer, shoe store manager and North Lambton resident Benn Coubrough has won an epic and brutal 240km ultra-marathon race, running from Eden to Kosciuszko, finishing the invitation-only race in 27 hours, 42 minutes and 56 seconds. In a race held annually since 2004, he was one of only sixty runners approved for the event. Benn reckons it was harder than his 170km trail run around Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in Western Europe, where he climbed 10,000 metres through three countries. Benn, 41, enjoys pushing himself. Starting at sea level on sand, he ran through thick bushland, crossing the Monaro Plains and Snowy River, skirting lake Jindabyne before climbing to 5,000 metres. Benn has been running these long distances for around ten years, averaging more than 6,000 km a year. He trained over nine weeks leading up to this race, running 140km to 190km per week near Mount Sugarloaf. Benn's able crew included his wife Nicole and a few friends. Congratulations, Benn, on your well-deserved win – and all the best for next year's race in New Zealand.

MORNING MELODIES – CARDIFF RSL

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Each Thursday morning at Cardiff RSL, from 10:30am to 12:30pm, the car park is full as there might be a hundred people or more at Morning Melodies. Overcoming hurdles and in the spirit of community, the club made special allowances for patrons wearing hats and bringing individual dietary requirements to the club – all in the name of breaking down barriers for disabled people – and Morning Melodies has slowly gained momentum. So much so, that a second session per week is being planned. The club's main lounge area, so popular it often spills out into the adjacent lounge, provides a welcoming space for people with disabilities and their support workers to enjoy laid-back tunes and to engage in singing, signing, dancing and tapping along to songs performed by entertainer Pete Sneddon. This sensory experience is enhanced through the use of percussion instruments like maracas and tambourines, strengthening links and inclusiveness to a wider proportion of the community. Congratulations to Pete and Cardiff RSL Club for thinking outside the square in relation to community inclusivity and on the success of this wonderful initiative.

CAROL ANN PETERSON

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Carol Ann Peterson, Leader and District Manager at Beresfield - Thornton Girl Guides, has been awarded an OAM in the 2025 Australia Day Honours in recognition of decades of service to youth. In her role at Girl Guides, Carol has empowered hundreds of girls and young women to discover their potential, providing them with opportunities to develop leadership skills and to advocate to make their world a better place. Carol was a Brownie Guide and Girl Guide in her youth and became reacquainted with the organisation as an adult when her own daughter joined up, her involvement now more than 32 years as an adult. She has held many roles - unit leader, state board member Coastal Valley Region guide for the past 6 years, leader of regional events and national and international jamborees, four years in charge of the Taronga Zoo Winter Sleepout, one year in which she cared for 1200 girls, and leader of many snow trips to Perisher. Carol has made lifelong friendships and has enjoyed many wonderful experiences. Congratulations, Carol, and thank you for all that you do for our community.

TERRIGAL HIGH SCHOOL

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is an absolute pleasure to stand before you today to celebrate a remarkable achievement—Terrigal High School has been named the most successful high school in the Sydney North Sporting Region for 2024! Congratulations to Principal Matt Riley, the incredible students, and the dedicated staff who have made this possible. Terrigal High has long held a proud sporting reputation, and this

recognition further cements its status as a powerhouse in school sports. With 59 schools and nearly 59,000 students in the Sydney North region, this is no small feat. It is a testament to the hard work, talent, and commitment of our student athletes who excel across State Knockout competitions, Tuggerah Lakes Zone, Sydney North Regional, and CHS events. Many have even represented at national and international levels, earning prestigious awards and scholarships along the way. A huge thank you to the dedicated teachers and coaches who give their time and expertise to support these students. Your passion for sport and commitment to our school's success do not go unnoticed. Once again, congratulations to everyone at Terrigal High—this is your moment to celebrate!

KINCUMBER ROTARY VOCATION AND WORKMANSHIP AWARDS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is with great pleasure that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the recipients of the Pride of Workmanship and Community Service Awards. Your dedication and commitment to supporting our local community are truly inspiring. A special congratulations to Brenda Booth for her advocacy in stroke and disability services, Dr. David Gilbert for his work in gastroenterology, and Bob Morris for his efforts in mobile home village advocacy—graciously accepted on his behalf by Rotarian Trixie Bennett-Hillier. Charmaine Simpson of Blooms Chemist was well-supported by her team, a testament to her outstanding contribution. The Community Service Awards rightly honour Doreen Mulcahy for her role in the Davistown Putt Putt Regatta and Wooden Boat Festival Dinner, and Neil Mulcahy for his invaluable contribution to these wonderful community events. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Councillor Jared Wright for attending on my behalf. Your presence and support are greatly appreciated. To the Rotary Club of Kincumber, thank you for recognizing and celebrating these remarkable individuals. Their passion and service strengthen our community, and we are all the better for it. Congratulations once again and thank you.

NSW CHINESE DEBATING ASSOCIATION

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Saturday 22 March 2025 the opening ceremony of the 5th Ruiyou Cup took place at the University of Sydney. This prestigious inter-secondary school Mandarin debating competition is organised by the NSW Chinese Debating Association. It highlights the linguistic and critical thinking abilities of some of our state's brightest young Mandarin scholars, while also serving as a platform to promote and foster cultural exchange and intellectual engagement among students. In particular, I commend Ravenswood School for Girls. I recognise the NSW Chinese Debating Association team led by President Zhihe Lucas Chen and CEO Alex Chen. Our local community is so blessed to have a vibrant Australian Chinese community, and I am truly honoured to celebrate and share their great contributions in the Parliament of NSW.

HORNSBY KU-RING-GAI WOMEN'S SHELTER 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Thursday 27 February 2025, I marked and celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter. The Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter was established in 2015 in response to an identified need in the area. They provide a safe place for women experiencing domestic violence and homelessness. The shelter's funding model involves collaboration between businesses, government, philanthropic foundations and our local community. I recognise the Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter Chair Catherine Knox, Deputy Chair Jacquie Murray, Treasurer Chania Rodwell, and board members Kate Giles, Jennifer Teh, Nick Blackwell, and Neesha Eckersley. Thank you for all your important work that is live changing for so many in our community. I look forward to your next 10 years and beyond.

DAVIDSON ELECTORATE YEAR 12 SCHOOL LEADERS 2025

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Wednesday 19 March 2025, I hosted our Year 12 school leaders for 2025 from the Davidson Electorate at Parliament House in Sydney. Our school leaders have an important responsibility to exercise leadership in their local communities. Leadership is about solving problems and having a clear purpose. It is a public service, and I acknowledge their time and dedication to this important work. I am proud to recognise Emilea Wallis and Luci Hudson from Brigidine College in St Ives; David Walker and Saskia Ponniah from Covenant Christian School; Addy Davey and Diego Andrade from Davidson High; Panos Krdanian and Bianca Bozoghlian from Galstaun College; Dong Kim and Sophie Besley from Killara High; Carissa Murphy and Joe Crosbie-Seabourne from Ku-ring-gai High in North Turrumurra; Chase Feldman and Ari Siganos from Masada College; Zara West, Georgia Gray and Billie Fedden from Ravenswood School for Girls; Emma Cummins, Abigail Bland and Isabelle Griffiths from Roseville College and Yesim Kalaycioglu and Rhys Hibbert from St Ives High. My final advice is to make every day count as school leaders in 2025! I am proud to represent you and our local school communities in the Parliament of NSW.

HADIJAH MUNTING

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge an innovative artist of Hawkesbury, Ms Hadijah Munting. Hadijah participated in Hawkesbury Now 2024 exhibition, which depicted over 100 works in a range of art mediums at Hawkesbury Regional Gallery. Having studied at East Sydney

Technical College, Ms Munting was inspired to explore a range of mediums and textures. She was inspired to partake in various courses including Botanical drawing, Folk art classes, polymer clay jewellery and others. Recently, Hadijah incorporated her love for art with her passion for recycling. She created and displayed coffee pod mosaics, being inspired after she was gifted a necklace made of recycled coffee pods. Hadijah did some research and found that only 8-30% of coffee pods are recycled. Being heavily influenced by the idea of saying no to land fill, she began incorporating the coffee pod one artwork at a time. Sourcing used pods from a local school, she used bright pods to form stunning artworks, often depicting animals and nature. Well done to Hadijah Munting on exploring this idea and producing such original and innovative artworks. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

WIRES HAWKESBURY

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)—Mr Speaker, I acknowledge WIRES Hawkesbury for the ongoing support they provide to the community. Team members spread awareness and advice to ensure wildlife safety remains a top priority of the electorate. Operated by volunteers, the branch is consistently proactive in sharing seasonal advice to the community about wildlife. This includes information about habitat, mating seasons and expected behaviours in times of weather events such as extreme heat or flooding. This was particularly evident in the summer period where expectations of animal presence in parks and near water bodies were clearly communicated. WIRES welcomes individuals to call and report sightings of ill or injured wildlife, providing advice on how to capture or protect the animal until volunteers arrive. Volunteer koala coordinator Morgan Philpott has shared with the community how they catch and treat injured koalas at their property in Richmond, caring for up to 4 koalas at a time before releasing them back into the wild. I thank WIRES Hawkesbury for their dedication to our wildlife. I applaud the work they do in caring for injured animals and sharing advice with our community, offering wildlife training and information programs geared towards conservation and rehabilitation. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE COSGROVES

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)—Mr Speaker, I acknowledge the work and dedication of Vincent, or Vin as most people know him and Nancy Cosgrove of Hawkesbury. They are active members of the Vietnam Veterans' Association of Australia at the St Marys Outpost. The Cosgrove's run the Education program, which proudly offers educational programs to students about the Vietnam War Era. The team provide several invaluable experiences and resources to junior and senior students, relative to the History Syllabus on the Indo-China Wars. Students are invited to view an extensive collection of Vietnam War equipment and memorabilia and hear of the personal experiences and memories of veterans. Vin and Nancy advocate strongly for veterans, ensuring that information is shared accurately and meaningfully to the wider community. I sincerely thank Vin and Nancy Cosgrove for their service to the Vietnam Veterans Association, ensuring the history and sacrifice of our veterans is known by our community and in particular, young people. I applaud their efforts in providing quality learning experiences to students, highlighting the importance of comradeship, integrity and service. I note that their work has always been on a voluntary basis, which holds them in an even higher regard.

SID MCPHERSON

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Sid McPherson. Sid was recently nominated as a finalist for the 2025 Australia Day Award, Junior Sports Person of the Year in Goulburn Mulwaree. Sid's innate and learnt skills in hockey have seen him being selected for NSW in the Australian Under Fourteen's Hockey Championships in Perth. Sid has also been selected in the following representative teams: NSW Combined Catholic Colleges. NSWC Hockey Team. ACT Under 14's Futures Talent Academy. Member of the Under 16's NSW Pathways and Performances Program. Co-captain of the Goulburn District Hockey Association Under 14's Representative team. Member of the Goulburn District Hockey Association Under 16's Representative team. Canberra I Goulburn Archdiocese Representative in Cross Country and Athletics. NSW Combined Catholic College Representative in Cross Country and Athletics. Awarded the 2024 Junior Sportsman of the Year - Trinity Catholic College. I take this time to recognise Sid's remarkable success thus far and his dedication to his chosen sport of hockey. Congratulations and all the best in Perth.

JAYDAN COSTELLO

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Jaydan Costello. Jaydan was recently nominated and announced the winner of the 2025 Australia Day Award, Shire Young Sportsperson of the Year in the Upper Lachlan Shire. Jaydan has been recognised for his outstanding performance in golf and one of the youngest nominees ever selected. Jaydan has competed in local and State competitions seeing a remarkable improvement in his handicap over the past three years starting with 54 and now reducing that to 5.4. Jaydan's disposition has provided him with the ability to play with players from across all generations and selected as a representative on NSW Golf Teams, seeing him win several awards, recently being awarded the Archdiocese Canberra and Goulburn Sports Person of the Year in the junior boy's category. Jaydan has had a significant role

in raising funds for the Cancer Council by participating in the Longest Day 72-hole golf challenge, raising \$3,000.00 on his own accord. I congratulate Jaydan on his well-deserved award, achievements and recognise his significant commitment to his chosen sport of golf and his contribution to fundraising activity.

SUE REEDY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Sue Reedy. Sue is well known throughout the Crookwell community for her extraordinary dedication and leadership as the Co-ordinator for Samaritan's Purse - Operation Christmas Child. Operation Christmas Child is a way in which the community can bless children in need across the world by filling shoeboxes with toys, hygiene items, school supplies and other gifts that would delight children. Not only has Sue led an amazing and tireless team of volunteers, also responsible for liaising with the Samaritan's Purse Corporate Team to secure essentials items and organising the delivery and collection of the shoeboxes. Sue's passion and drive has produced a strong community spirit of kindness and giving, which has enveloped many donors giving generously to the cause, and many others giving of their time. Sue retired from her role in late 2024 after more than fifteen years at the helm, inspiring others to become involved and bringing joy to many children worldwide. I thank Sue for her inspiring work and being able to draw upon the generosity of the community in the support children.

RAYMOND CHEN - MEADOWBANK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Mr Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Raymond Chen, who is Meadowbank Public School's recipient of the 2024 Ryde Profile in Courage Award. This esteemed recognition celebrates Raymond's remarkable strength in overcoming challenges and standing by their principles to make a meaningful impact within their school community. By prioritising what is right over what is easy, Raymond has exemplified integrity, leadership, and compassion. Navigating the complexities of youth while remaining steadfast in one's convictions is no small feat. Raymond's courage has not only advanced the values of fairness and justice but also inspired their peers and educators alike. Their actions remind us of the power of a single individual to foster, change and uplift those around them. On behalf of the Ryde community and this House, I commend Raymond for their extraordinary efforts and wish them continued success in all future endeavours. May their courage and determination continue to shine brightly, encouraging others to follow their example. Congratulations, Raymond, on this well-deserved recognition. Always be courageous.

SOPHIA MOLLUSO - ITALIAN BILINGUAL SCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Mr Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Sophia Molluso, who is Italian Bilingual School's recipient of the 2024 Ryde Profile in Courage Award. This esteemed recognition celebrates Sophia's remarkable strength in overcoming challenges and standing by their principles to make a meaningful impact within their school community. By prioritising what is right over what is easy, Sophia has exemplified integrity, leadership, and compassion. Navigating the complexities of youth while remaining steadfast in one's convictions is no small feat. Sophia's courage has not only advanced the values of fairness and justice but also inspired their peers and educators alike. Their actions remind us of the power of a single individual to foster, change and uplift those around them. On behalf of the Ryde community and this House, I commend Sophia for their extraordinary efforts and wish them continued success in all future endeavours. May their courage and determination continue to shine brightly, encouraging others to follow their example. Congratulations, Sophia, on this well-deserved recognition. Always be courageous.

VINCENT MA - EASTWOOD HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Mr Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Vincent Ma, who is Eastwood Heights Public School's recipient of the 2024 Ryde Profile in Courage Award. This esteemed recognition celebrates Vincent's remarkable strength in overcoming challenges and standing by their principles to make a meaningful impact within their school community. By prioritising what is right over what is easy, Vincent has exemplified integrity, leadership, and compassion. Navigating the complexities of youth while remaining steadfast in one's convictions is no small feat. Vincent's courage has not only advanced the values of fairness and justice but also inspired their peers and educators alike. Their actions remind us of the power of a single individual to foster, change and uplift those around them. On behalf of the Ryde community and this House, I commend Vincent for their extraordinary efforts and wish them continued success in all future endeavours. May their courage and determination continue to shine brightly, encouraging others to follow their example. Congratulations, Vincent, on this well-deserved recognition. Always be courageous.

NARRANDERA'S TOWN AND COUNTRY OPEN GARDEN DAY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—Narrandera's Garden Club held their 41st Open Garden Day and thanks must go to those amazing people who opened their gardens for public viewing and to the Community Organisation that helped make it happen. Jennifer Hopwood in May Street, Maree and Craig Johnson at

Nallabooma, Bec Rogers and Dean King of Hall's Cuisine (their amazing garden at the back of their café) Sarah and Brad Morris, located just off Barellan Road, Justine and Dean Nielsen in Douglas Street and Debbie McLean and Mark Carter at Bells Road. The days were well attended with people staying over in Narrandera to attend the Spring Fair on the Saturday evening. Bells Road was the destination for the amazing CWA lunches or Devonshire Teas which were enjoyed under the umbrellas on the lawn as the band, Sticky Fingers played. These days and indeed all community events are a credit to the army of organisers and volunteers, but we must also remember the sponsors who commit to enabling Community Events – for the Narrandera's Town and Country Open Garden Day we must note ProTen, Bendigo Bank, McGrath Estate Agents and Hutchins Bros Engineering.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICES AWARD RECIPIENT BILL SCHWENCKE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I acknowledge the exceptional contributions of Bill Schwencke, former Director and President of the Temora Greyhound Racing Club, who has recently been honoured with the GRNSW Distinguished Services Award. This prestigious recognition highlights Bill's unwavering commitment and years of service to the greyhound industry, particularly his work with the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association and his pivotal role in the growth of the Temora Club. Bill's efforts have been instrumental in transforming the Temora greyhound racing track into one of the best in Australia, a testament to his dedication and passion for the sport. Under his leadership, Temora's greyhound industry has flourished, and the club has grown to become one of the major players in the nation. Although Bill has stepped back from committee duties, his legacy continues to be felt, and he remains deeply involved in training his dogs. On behalf of the community, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Bill on this well-deserved honour. His contributions have made a lasting impact, and we are proud to have him as part of our Temora community.

WEST WYALONG PUBLIC MAKING WAVES

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I am delighted to congratulate the talented students from West Wyalong Public School who recently competed at the Lower Lachlan District Swimming Carnival. Despite the challenging temperatures, swimmers showed incredible determination and sportsmanship throughout the day. Many students achieved personal best times, building on their performances from the school carnival, and our relay teams were particularly impressive, with all four teams advancing to the Western Swimming Trials. A special mention must go to Maicey Maitland, whose outstanding individual efforts saw her win first place in all of her events. Maicey's strong finish in the senior girls' relay secured a victory for her team, and she was named Senior Girls Champion – a remarkable achievement. I also want to acknowledge Sophie Leonard, Jax Lange, Lochie Jamieson, and Aisha Furber, who were named Runner Up Champions in their respective age groups. West Wyalong Public School was named the overall Champion School, an achievement not seen in several years. Seventeen students will now represent West Wyalong at the Western Swimming Trials in Dubbo, and I wish them all the best in this exciting next step. Well done to everyone involved!

MICK BROUGHAN AND FRAN FIFIELD RETIRE FROM HENTY LHAC

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Mick Broughan and Fran Fifield who are retiring from the Henty Local Area Health Advisory Committee [LHAC], after a decade of dedicated service. Their efforts have significantly help shape health services in Henty and the surrounding district. Mr Broughan's dedicated commitment first began in the 1990's when he successfully lobbied to save Henty's hospital from closure. His advocacy led to the establishment of the Henty Multipurpose Service [MPS] in 2004, a model now widely adopted across rural NSW. Fran Fifield's remarkable 61-year career in healthcare, primarily as a community nurse, has supported families and young children. Even in retirement Fran worked on COVID-19 initiatives and maintained a vital directory of Henty Health Services. Mick and Fran, I thank you for your incredible contributions to improve the health and well-being of Henty.

NARELLE MOREY - DALES IGA

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate Narelle Morey, and the team at Dales IGA (Henty), who have received the Vince Camera Award, at this year's annual Awards of Excellence for Victoria and Southern NSW. The Vince Camera Award was created in memory of the Late Vince Camera, which honours the store or team manager for their exceptional leadership, dedication, and commitment to both the IGA band and the community. Narelle and her team were also nominated in the following two categories: Medium Fresh Produce Award and Innovation Award. Narelle, thank you for your tireless work ethic—often staying long hours after closing time to ensure everything runs smoothly—overseeing both the IGA store, the Hardware and Electrical store. This achievement is a collective effort, and I give recognition to Narelle, the entire Dales IGA Team. The loyal community for their continued support over the years, Metcash and Area Manager Gayle for their support and guidance.

PINCOTT FAMILY – BEST LOOKING EGGS IN TOWN

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the Pincott Family - Sam, Prue and their four daughters Amelia, Annabel, Abigail and Arabella - who operate Holbrook Paddock Eggs. Along with their dedicated team of local employees, they continue to provide our community with the finest free-range eggs, even amidst the challenges of the current bird flu crisis. The Pincott's innovative approach to ethical and sustainable farming practices, allows grass fed Bond Brown hens to roam freely across expansive paddocks at a low stocking density of 40 hens per hectare, giving each hen an average of 250 square metres of space. The hens are protected by loyal Maremma dogs, ensuring their safety while they forage on lush pastures. The coops are then regularly rotated onto fresh grass not only to enhance the hen's environment but also enrich the land with nutrient-rich manure. Well done Sam, Prue, the girls and your dedicated team for your vision and dedication producing high-quality eggs for our community, while respecting the land and your birds. Your efforts are truly appreciated, and your eggs are indeed the best-looking in town!

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - BELLAMBI PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—I would like to acknowledge Oliver Clarke, Ashleigh Robertson, Simon Morehu, Shervonne Teao, Jackson Golding, Felicity Martin, Corleigha Toomey and Bowie Redpath who have been named as the 2025 Bellambi Public School leadership team. Through hard work and dedication, they have earned their leadership positions. These students have consistently demonstrated exceptional commitment and involvement within their school community and should feel very proud of themselves for having the opportunity to represent the student body. Their efforts have not only set an example but have inspired others to strive for excellence. I am confident that they will do great things throughout their school years, excelling in both your studies and extracurricular activities. Each of you will spend 2025 acting as role models for their peers, and I have full confidence that they will carry out their new leadership roles exceptionally. I congratulate them on their achievement and wish them all the best for their final year at primary school.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – FAIRY MEADOW DEMONSTRATION SCHOOL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—I would like to acknowledge Simari Ismaili, Dean Touhy, Oliver Demos and Flynn Wells who have been named as the 2025 Fairy Meadow Demonstration School leadership team. Through hard work and dedication, they have earned their leadership positions. These students have consistently demonstrated exceptional commitment and involvement within their school community and should feel very proud of themselves for having the opportunity to represent the student body. Their efforts have not only set an example but have inspired others to strive for excellence. I am confident that they will do great things throughout their school years, excelling in both your studies and extracurricular activities. Each of you will spend 2025 acting as role models for their peers, and I have full confidence that they will carry out their new leadership roles exceptionally. I congratulate them on their achievement and wish them all the best for their final year at primary school.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – MOUNT OUSLEY PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—I would like to acknowledge Steo Lawler, Isabella Cheng, Ella Whyte and Imogen Hurry who have been named as the 2025 Mount Ousley Public School leadership team. Through hard work and dedication, they have earned their leadership positions. These students have consistently demonstrated exceptional commitment and involvement within their school community and should feel very proud of themselves for having the opportunity to represent the student body. Their efforts have not only set an example but have inspired others to strive for excellence. I am confident that they will do great things throughout their school years, excelling in both your studies and extracurricular activities. Each of you will spend 2025 acting as role models for their peers, and I have full confidence that they will carry out their new leadership roles exceptionally. I congratulate them on their achievement and wish them all the best for their final year at primary school.

ALAN CLARK AM AND ROBYN FLORANCE OAM

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—**Mr. SPEAKER:** With great appreciation, I acknowledge Shoalhaven historians Alan Clark AM and Robyn Florance OAM for their dedication to preserving our region's rich history through their latest books, *Pyree – Setting the Standard in Shoalhaven Cricket* and *Pyree Rovers – The Story of a Football Club*. These publications celebrate the sporting legacy of Pyree, a small dairy farming community that once stood as a powerhouse in cricket and rugby league. Alan and Robyn's commitment to documenting local

history is extraordinary, with over 100 books published on the Shoalhaven's past. Thanks to a grant from the Create NSW Cultural Grants Program, these latest works not only highlight the achievements of Pyree's cricket and football clubs but also offer invaluable insights into the broader community's history. Their work ensures that the legacy of players, teams, and local legends like Toby Bice and Artie Smith is never forgotten. Their combined efforts represent an outstanding contribution to Shoalhaven's historical record, preserving the stories of the people and places that shaped our region.

SHOALHAVEN FOOD NETWORK

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—I wish to recognise the Shoalhaven Food Network and the launch of their highly anticipated Autumn Celebration of Food. This celebration of food and hospitality not only highlights the region's rich culinary traditions but also strengthens our local economy, tourism, and community connections. The Shoalhaven Food Network is a group of creative, connected local food purveyors, growers, and hospitality venues. Members host regular food and wine events which are promoted on the network's website, with this year's theme being 'meet the faces behind the places'. Over the past four years, the Shoalhaven Food Network has brought together passionate local producers, chefs, artisans, and hospitality professionals, fostering innovation and collaboration. Their dedication has secured vital support for local businesses, empowering them to thrive while showcasing Shoalhaven's unique food culture. A key initiative, Gaining Through Training, is equipping the next generation with hands-on experience, preparing young people for future careers in hospitality. By bridging education and industry, this program ensures the sector's ongoing success. I proudly support this initiative and remain committed to its continued success. I look forward to celebrating another fantastic celebration in 2025 and to seeing the ongoing impact of this incredible work in our community.

MILTON SHOW 2025

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)—Mr. SPEAKER: The Milton Show once again delivered an unforgettable weekend of family fun, community spirit, and local pride. This year's show was held from March 7 to March 9 at the Milton Showground and featured a packed program, including the ever-popular rodeo, cattle judging, live entertainment, and the much-anticipated Milton Mullet Competition. Families enjoyed pig racing, reptile displays, Matilda's Farmyard Nursery, and the adrenaline fuelled Eljay Freestyle motorcycle and bicycle shows. The showgrounds were alive with energy as visitors explored packed pavilions showcasing an impressive display of farm produce, vegetables, flowers, knitting, sewing, preserves, arts and crafts, cooking, bonsai, and more. The woodchop competition drew a crowd on Saturday, and Sunday's Milton Ute and Auto Show was a highlight for car enthusiasts, featuring vintage cars, hot rods, trucks, and motorbikes. Congratulations to the Milton Show Society and all volunteers, participants, and sponsors for making this event such a resounding success. The Milton Show continues to be a highlight of the region's calendar, bringing people together to celebrate our community and its rich agricultural heritage.

BOB DAVIS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Bob Davis who was recently awarded a Monarch Chevron Award for an incredible forty-five years' service to the Narromine Lions Club. The Monarch Chevron Award is a testament to Bob's commitment to Lions, the Narromine club, and the community. Bob has an unwavering dedication to assisting the community, and he will often be seen on the tools at local events with the club. An exceptional Lions member, Bob was also recognised in 2023 with a prestigious Melvin Jones Fellowship award for his exemplary service to Lions. Organisations like Narromine Lions club make a significant impact in our community, and this is only possible because of the passion and drive of volunteers like Bob. He consistently lends his time to various projects and initiatives undertaken by the club. His dedication to serving the community has earned him the respect of his peers and community members alike. Bob is showing no signs of slowing down, having recently taken on an executive role within the club, Second Vice President. Congratulations Bob, thank you for all you have done and continue to do for the community!

CARL PALMER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Reverend Carl Palmer who recently celebrated a huge milestone - fifty years of teaching! Reverend Palmer is currently the Principal of Wellington Christian School. Notably, his first role as a principal was at this very school before moving on to explore other facets of the education system. Now, he has returned to lead the school once again. As an ordained deacon, Reverend Palmer has leveraged his strong values and leadership skills throughout his career to support his peers, colleagues, and students. Throughout his years in the classroom, he has taught a variety of subjects, including maths and science across both primary and high school levels in NSW and the ACT. Fifty years in a role is a milestone worth celebrating – especially one that plays a pivotal role in shaping lives and guiding the youth of today. Thank you for the positive impact you have made on so many lives throughout your career and for the guidance and understanding you continue to provide. Congratulations!

CAROL MUDFORD

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker, I would like to recognise Carol Mudford who has been named as a finalist in the NSW/ACT AgriFutures Rural Women's Awards. Carol, from Dubbo, is the founder of sHedway, a community led initiative providing mental health and suicide prevention support in the shearing industry. With experience as a roustabout, shearer, and registered nurse specialising in mental health, Carol has a well-developed understanding of the challenges faced in both the mental health sector and the shearing industry. Tragically, having experienced the grief of losing people to suicide, and with a foot in both worlds, her inspiration to help people began as a Facebook page and quickly grew into a registered not-for-profit organisation providing hands on practical support in the sheds. Whilst running sHedway voluntarily, Carol is working in the sheds herself. It is inspiring to see the work that Carol does, the significant contributions she makes to regional and rural NSW, and the lives she continues to impact. I wish her all the best at the upcoming ceremony on 2 May 2025, where the winner will be announced. Regardless of the outcome, Carol you are already a winner to those you help and inspire!

BAM DISABILITY SERVICES – MAKING EVERY MOMENT COUNT

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise BAM Disability Services on their inaugural anniversary, growing from strength to strength over the past year, delivering their unique brand of support services to the disabled. BAM was founded by Jen Philp and Jacob Lute, after identifying the need for greater support to both client and workers in the industry. I congratulate Jen and Jacob on this initiative and for the foresight to adapt their services to meet participant's needs, goals, lifestyles and personalities, whilst tailoring support worker interests to their client's interests, and providing a family friendly working environment for the team. BAM services are encompassing, inclusive, supportive and empowers individuals with disabilities to live fulfilling lives. Such fundamentals have served them well, with the organisation growing to 17 staff, along with having 22 clients across Uralla, Inverell, Guyra and Armidale areas. I commend Jen, Jacob and their team on their hard work and commitment to bringing this program to fruition and importantly for improving the lives of individuals living with disabilities in our community.

LILY GRIEVE

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Glen Innes local Lily Grieves on her selection to play Rugby in the Under 18s Merit Team at the Waratahs Youth Academy Carnival, held at Bathurst recently. Lily also co-captained the side and received the Coaches' Award for the carnival. I congratulate Lily on this impressive selection and many accolades achieved in Rugby. This has included Lily making her debut for the NSW Waratahs U18s Girls Provincial Rugby Tri Series in Sydney. Additionally, being named in the NSW Country Rugby U18s Girls squad, following her outstanding performance for Central North, with the team taking out the U18s title at these championships. On the home front, Lily plays for the Glen Innes Elks Open Women's 10s team, with the team taking out the New England Rugby Union premiership in 2024. I commend Lily on her hard work, practice and preparation leading up to her selection, her excellent performance and importantly, for being a valued team member and role model to others. Thank you to Lily's family, along with the principal and staff at TAS and to the Glen Innes Elks, for enabling and encouraging Lily to achieve her best at an elite level.

MOREE PUBLIC SCHOOL P AND C

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Moree Public School P and C for hosting the 'Support the Now, Paving the Future' long lunch, a major fundraiser to support the school community. The event includes an auction, raffles, guest speaker, performers, Q & A and topped off with a three-course meal and courtesy bus service. I congratulate the driving force behind this initiative, consisting of the P&C Long Lunch Sub-Committee: Casey O'Hara, Kelly James, Karen Bowhay, Rebecca Baker, Daniel Assef, Megan Brazel, Kirsty Tomlinson, Sophia Mulligan, Emma Humphries, Kirsty Reid, Alison Tidmarsh, Crystal Warrener, Sally Woods, Ashlee McCarthy, and Timothy Tesoriero, along with Deputy Principal Lindy Hosegood and teachers, Emily Ryan, Amber Brown and Keira Legg. Thank you also to sponsors, special guests, performers and volunteers, for giving generously to this valuable cause. The aim of the event is to provide for the future progress of the school, via funding programs, infrastructure, and support(s) students to attend sporting/representative events. I commend all involved for their foresight, hard work and commitment to this cause, as well as giving of their expertise and time, ensuring the lunch is a success and an enjoyable experience for the whole community.

CANLEY VALE PUBLIC SCHOOL'S END-OF-YEAR PRESENTATION 2024

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 10 December 2024, I had the pleasure of attending Canley Vale Public School's end-of-year presentation event, where I had the honour of presenting my awards to some truly exceptional

students. It was a wonderful celebration of the hard work, dedication, and achievements of the students throughout the year. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Principal Mrs. Margaret Creagh and Deputy Principal Ms. Suzie Goodall for the kind invitation and for successfully coordinating the event. I would like to congratulate all the students who received my Leadership Awards: Annisa Chhim from Kindergarten; Zoey Lo from Year 1; Casey Yehson from Year 2; Farrah Iseu from Year 3; Aminah So from Year 4; Miranda Ngo from Year 5; and Audrey Chhim from Year 6. These students have truly demonstrated excellence in their studies and personal growth, and I am proud to have been able to celebrate their achievements. Finally, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the dedicated teachers and staff of Canley Vale Public School for their tireless work and commitment to shaping the future of these young learners.

END OF SCHOOL YEAR PRESENTATION DAY AT CABRAMATTA HIGH SCHOOL 2024

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 12 December 2024, I had the pleasure of attending the end-of-school-year presentation day at Cabramatta High School, where I had the honor of presenting my awards to some outstanding students. It was a truly special occasion, to celebrate the dedication and hard work of all the students. I want to extend my sincere thanks to Principal Mr. Lachlan Erskine and Ms. Joyce Tien for their kind invitation and for their excellent coordination of the event. Their commitment to creating a positive and inspiring environment at Cabramatta High School is evident in the success and achievements of their students. The following students received my recognition awards: Year 7: Jon Aaron Garamonte and Gloriana Tang; Year 8: Oliver Maung and Chloe Ton; Year 9: Danny Tran and Julie Chhoeung; Year 10: John Ta and Katherine Ing; Year 11: Anthony Le and Emily Hong; Year 12: Jordan Silva and Cindy Tieu. I would like to congratulate all the students for their hard work, perseverance, and dedication throughout the year. I am excited to see all the students continue to grow and achieve even more in the years ahead!

LES POWELL SCHOOL END OF YEAR PRESENTATION 2024

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—In mid 2024, I had the privilege of joining the Hon Prue Car MP, Minister for Education, to visit Les Powell School in Mount Pritchard, part of my Cabramatta electorate. It was an inspiring visit to a school that provides high-quality, individualized learning programs for students with a diverse range of complex learning and support needs. I was impressed by the commitment and dedication of the staff at Les Powell School, who work tirelessly to ensure every student receives the best possible education tailored to their unique needs. The school's inclusive environment fosters growth, learning, and empowerment. At the end of 2024, I had the pleasure of attending their end-of-year presentation, where I had the honour of helping present awards to the students. It was a joyful occasion that celebrated the hard work and achievements of the students. I was truly moved by their progress and accomplishments throughout the year. I want to extend my sincere thanks to Principal Ms. Greta McCann for the kind invitation and for coordinating the event so smoothly. I also want to express my gratitude to the teachers for their unwavering hard work and dedication.

REGIONAL ACADEMIES OF SPORT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 25th February, I was pleased to address athletes, coaches, parents and volunteers at the Annual Regional Academies of Sport [RASI] Awards Dinner, at Wentworthville Leagues Club. RASI represents eleven member academies, including the Western Sydney Academy of Sport and South West Sydney Academy of Sport. Covering over 100 Local Government areas, they support over 2,000 athletes across NSW. RASI is the delivery arm of pre-elite athlete development programs, preparing our athletes for the Olympic and Paralympic Games. This year's dinner recognised excellence in five categories, including Athlete of the Year, Athlete Leadership, Coach Leadership, Indigenous Athlete of the Year and Athlete with a Disability Athlete of the Year. It was inspiring to hear remarks from Sarah Ryan OAM 4x100m freestyle relay Medallist and Melissa Wu, the youngest Australian Diver to win an Olympic Medal. Thank you as well to Bronte Campbell OAM, four time Olympian and triple Gold Medallist, for delivering a moving keynote address and swim tips for my daughter. Congratulations to Brett O'Farrell, Chairperson, Martin Bullock, Director, and all academy partners, volunteers, coaching staff, athletes and parents. I wish you all the best for season 2025.

CELEBRATING PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF LEBANON

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 20th February, I was delighted to celebrate the Election of the Lebanese President General Joseph Aoun at an event hosted by Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, Maronite Eparchy of Australia, New Zealand and Oceania, in the Parliament of NSW. Our local Maronite community has profoundly contributed to our nation for over a century, sharing values of harmony and mutual respect in modern Australia. Lebanese-Australians excel in private and public life, serving as a beacon for our thriving community. They continue to champion peace in the Middle East and across NSW. Lebanon is a proud democracy that has endured recent hardship, with the country having a caretaker presidency since October 2022. The election of a new President, His Excellency General Joseph Aoun, is a symbol of hope for the entire region, with a renewed effort to uphold Lebanon's national sovereignty and deliver prosperity for its people. At the event, I was pleased

to hear words of hope from Premier Chris Minns, Bishop Tarabay, and Ambassador of Lebanon to Australia, His Excellency Milad Raad. Congratulations to our amazing local Maronite community and all Lebanese-Australians, with best wishes to Lebanon and new President Aoun.

LEGAL AID NSW – PRIVATE PRACTITIONER CENSUS REPORT

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 27th February, I was pleased to address the launch of the National Private Practitioner Census Report, at the Head Offices of Legal Aid NSW, representing Attorney General the Hon Michael Daley MP. Legal Aid funded private lawyers act in over 34,000 matters annually. Private practitioners play a critical role in delivering legal aid, helping to make access to justice possible in NSW. Without the vital work that Legal Aid and private practitioners perform, members of our community would experience greater barriers to justice. In the Report, over 1,000 private lawyers shared their experience delivering legal aid. Telling a story of a workforce that values the opportunity to contribute to clients and communities and make a difference in people's lives. It is timely that we reflect on how we can uplift the critical work of private practitioners who support our community. My thanks go to Monique Hitter, CEO, Legal Aid NSW, Associate Professor Natasha Cortis and Dr Megan Blaxland, Report authors, as well as all legal aid private practitioners for granting greater access to achieving timely, just and efficient outcomes for all persons involved in the NSW legal system.

NSW FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS ANNUAL 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 attend the NSW Federation of Community Language Schools Annual Gala Dinner, held in celebration of the important work being done to promote linguistic diversity and cultural heritage across NSW. This evening provided a special opportunity to acknowledge the Federation's extraordinary contribution of connecting students with their cultural identity and promoting multiculturalism throughout our state. It was inspiring to reflect on the Federation's 2024 successes, especially as the Community Languages Program reached 43,000 primary school students, showcasing the dedication and commitment of the 3000 plus educators working tirelessly after school and on weekends, and the 300 plus organisations that help nurture our students' deep connection to their cultural roots. I was incredibly honoured to speak at the dinner, sharing how our rich heritage and diverse community are the backbone of our community. Together, we will continue celebrating and preserving our diverse cultures, helping to create a more inclusive and vibrant NSW for future generations. Once again, I acknowledge the amazing contributions the Federation has made in building a connected multicultural society, and I'm excited to see it continue to grow and succeed.

CANTERBURY-BANKSTOWN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VIGIL

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On 25 November 2024, my team and I joined the Bankstown community at the Vigil of Remembrance to honour, reflect and show our collective support for the prevention of Domestic Violence. I would like to extend my gratitude to Chief Executive Officer, Mariam Mourad, and the team at Bankstown Women's Health Centre for bringing the community together for such a vital cause. The Centre has been a frontline women's health service delivering health support and advocacy to local women for more than 45 years. Their dedication to empowering women and providing safe spaces for those affected by violence has been transformative. Domestic Violence continues to impact our society as an unresolved epidemic with recent local police reports indicating that 70 to 80 percent of police responses are related to domestic and family violence. This Vigil was a powerful reminder of the work still to be done to combat this crisis and to ensure that women and children are safe from harm. It was heartening to witness the strength and solidarity of our community, coming together to remember those affected, and to reaffirm our commitment to creating a future free from violence.

NSW SES BANKSTOWN UNIT

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I would like to acknowledge the services of the NSW SES Bankstown Unit for their dedication to ensuring the safety of our community was again highlighted. This was evident in their response efforts to severe weather events which left roof damage caused by wind, trees down on houses, cars, powerlines and blocking roads in January. Attending to more than 373 incidents in the Bankstown area, the Bankstown SES Unit have worked alongside a local team of police and fire services to complete a strong majority of its emergency flood and storm damage missions. Their tireless efforts have provided essential relief to residents impacted by severe weather events, ensuring that homes, businesses and lives are safeguarded during times of crisis. As the Minister for Emergency Services, it is a privilege to be a part of the extraordinary workforce of volunteers. I would like to thank the dedicated work of all our volunteers and recognise the hard work of

Bankstown SES unit in supporting my electorate. The efforts of these volunteers exemplify a spirit of service and solidarity, making a profound difference to those who need it most. Thank you and keep up the good work!

AUTHOR FROM COOGEE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—The Coogee electorate would like to acknowledge local author, JJ Comerford, for writing his book, *Tarzan loves Jane*. In his novel, Mr. Comerford draws from personal experiences, reflecting from his childhood trauma and his experiences in adulthood to create the lead character, John Wolf. Mr. Comerford took two courses at The Writers Studio at Bronte which helped him transform his experiences into a book. I acknowledge the courage it takes to write and share about such experiences and encourage anyone in our community facing similar challenges to seek support.

WOMEN'S ART PRIZE EXHIBITION

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—The Coogee Electorate would like to acknowledge the Randwick City Council for hosting the Women's Art Prize Exhibition, an art competition in honour of International Women's Day. International Women's Day is a day celebrated worldwide in honour of the economic, political, and social contributions of women past, present, and future. Each year, Randwick City Council hosts the Women's Art Prize, inviting female artists to share their creative talents and recognize their contributions to the community. The top 50 artworks will be shown at the Lionel Bowen Library Gallery from Tuesday 18 March – Sunday 13 April during library opening hours. I would like to congratulate all the talented artists who participated in this competition.

SYDNEY WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—The Coogee electorate would like to acknowledge everyone involved in organising the 5th Sydney Women's International Film Festival, with this year's theme exploring loneliness and the feeling of fighting alone. The event will showcase over 30 short and mid-length narrative and documentary films created by female filmmakers from all around the world. The films present stories exploring loneliness, resilience, and human connections, providing an opportunity for audiences to reflect and engage with different perspectives. The festival will take place at Palace Cinemas in Moore Park's Entertainment Quarter from April 11th to 14th. I am excited to see the impact this inspiring experience will have on our community.

BATHURST LIVING LEGEND - NOLA RYAN

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—I recognise and congratulate Nola Ryan who has been named as a Bathurst Living Legend. A very proud Bathurstian of more than 80 years, Nola has extended support to local Schools and has also run a used car business for many years. An active member of the Macquarie View Tennis Club for over 55 years, Nola has been the Secretary of the Club for over 24 years and has also been President. At 90 years of age Nola still plays tennis twice a week and continues to encourage older people in the community to also participate and stay active and play for exercise. Nola dedicated tireless hours of support through the Legion of Mary for over 42 years giving of her time to support the Bathurst community for those who are unwell and doing it tough. This year Nola was honoured with a Papal Blessing for her dedication to the Legion of Mary and for her outstanding commitment to her community as a Bathurst Living Legend. I again congratulate Nola Ryan of Bathurst – a truly wonderful lady and an extraordinary Citizen and Living Legend of the City of Bathurst.

BATHURST LIVING LEGEND - PAUL HENNESSY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—I recognise and acknowledge Mr Paul Hennessy who has been named as a 2025 Bathurst Living Legend. Paul has been an integral part of the Scouting community in Bathurst for over 50 years and through his leadership and mentoring the Scout Group has thrived. In 2013 Paul received the Papal Service Blessing 30 years certificate and in 2015 won the WestFund Health Fund Community Service Award, subsequently donating the prize money to Scouts. Acknowledged with a 2019 NSW Premier Outstanding Community Service Award for his contribution to the Bathurst Community and in 2020 he was honoured the highest Scouting Award of the 'Silver Kangaroo', by the Governor General and also the Stan Bales Award. Community participation has seen Paul assist with the organisation of 'Operation Digger' and the dispatch of Christmas gift packs to ADF Members serving overseas, and the commencement of SOCKS-Scouts Outback Community Kids Support – which distributes uniforms to disadvantaged children. From service to All Saints Cathedral Parish, volunteering at ANZAC Services, selling ANZAC day badges and as a Director of the Bathurst RSL Club, Paul Hennessy is a wonderful Citizen of the Bathurst Community and I congratulate him on receiving acknowledgement as a Bathurst Living Legend.

CHANTELLE IRVIN

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—I congratulate Chantelle Irvin who has been recognised as Lithgow's Young Volunteer of the Year. Chantelle Irvin has dedicated her time to helping others in the Lithgow community. She is a valuable volunteer at Portland Central School, Portland/Wallerawang Youth Hub, and her ongoing

volunteer work at Lithgow PCYC. Chantelle is a hard worker and her passion for her community is evident in the volunteering she completes. Volunteers are the backbone of any community and it is fantastic to see young people taking on these roles. I would like to wish Chantelle Irvin every success on her future endeavours and I congratulate her on her commitment and dedication to all she undertakes and the acknowledgement she has received as the Lithgow Young Volunteer of the Year.

IAN WALKER

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Congratulations to Tweed swim coach Ian Walker on celebrating 35 years of service. Ian is one of Tweed Shire Council's longest serving employees marking three and half decades at the Tweed Regional Aquatic Centres. Ian began his career as a 24-year-old pool attendant, going on to teach countless budding swimmers and train national age champions. Swimmers trained by Ian represented NSW and Queensland at state level with some going on to train at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra. Ian is known for his knowledge of stroke technique, advanced fitness and specialist training in race conditioning and technical refinement. Thank you to Ian for 35 years of top-class training for Tweed swimmers.

HANDS ON HEART

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—I commend the Cabarita Beach Pottsville Beach Lions Club for their Hands on Heart initiative which has a goal of training 300 locals in cardiopulmonary resuscitation [CPR]. Twenty residents completed the free course on Monday 24 February and Cabarita Beach Pottsville Beach Lions Club is only the second club in Australia to run the program. The club has committed to providing this training for the next two years, making an important contribution to emergency responses in the Tweed. This training will enable more people to assist in emergencies and save lives. The course runs on the last Monday of each month and Pacific Coast First Aid coordinates the bookings. There is also a plan to train Year 6 students in CPR. I applaud the Cabarita Beach Pottsville Beach Lions Club for bringing this training to the Tweed and making a real difference in how the community can respond in an emergency.

DAISY GRACE BURKE

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Congratulations to Tweed student Daisy Grace Burke for being selected to show her Higher School Certificate artwork in the NSW Art Gallery as part of ARTEXPRESS 2025. Daisy Grace's piece, called Tapestries of Time, is on display at the gallery from 6 February until 27 April. It is an impressive piece of free-motion embroidery work where a thread is woven through time and place, connecting people to their past and shaping their identities. Daisy Grace attended Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School and her artwork was one of only 50 pieces chosen for the exhibition from 8858 submission across NSW schools. Well done Daisy Grace on this inspiring achievement.

URBENVILLE BULLRIDE AND FESTIVAL

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—On February 15 the rural village of Urbenville held its Bullride and Festival at the Urbenville Showground. The festival was revived last year after a ten year absence and it looks like it may return to being a regular event. The day started with a car show from 8am– with categories including Hot Rods, Rat Rods, Aussie Classics, American Classics and Muscle Cars – with some very well polished machines on show. In the afternoon there was the bullride, the dog trials and fencepost ripping events. And later in the afternoon Griffin County performed. There was a jumping castle for the children and mini-golf and community stalls. And there was plenty to eat from soft serve ice cream to hot food at the canteen. The charity auction had more than 70 items. A big thank you to all who donated to the auction for their generosity in supporting this cause. All proceeds from the auction go to the emergency services — Urbenville SES, RFS and Woodenbong RFS. Organisers said everyone in Urbenville was involved from donating auction items to helping on the day of the festival. Congratulations Urbenville – for a small community you pulled off a big event.

CONGRATULATIONS CHILLARA ACKRELL

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—Congratulations to Chillara Ackrell on being awarded one of only 23 Hansen Scholarships to attend Melbourne University. Last year Chillara completed Year 12 at The Rivers Secondary College, Lismore High Campus, and was Dux of her school. I should mention Chillara was also a Lismore Campus Vice Captain. The Hansen scholarship is awarded to high-achieving students who demonstrate a commitment to helping and leading others, and experience financial or other barriers to studying at the University of Melbourne. Hansen Scholarship patron and University of Melbourne Chancellor, Jane Hansen AO said the scholarship program has proven how these students can excel academically, make the most of their time at university and pursue bold career aspirations after graduation. Chillara will be supported with a full scholarship for the duration of her bachelor's degree at the University of Melbourne, alongside a living allowance, mentoring and pastoral care,

academic, cultural, career and other development opportunities, and free accommodation in the purpose-built student residence Little Hall. To be awarded the scholarship Chillara has not only achieved outstanding academic results, but also demonstrated a genuine interest in community and the welfare of others. This is a well-deserved award and a wonderful opportunity.

SCU INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY SCHOLARSHIP

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I commend Southern Cross University for its initiative to award International Women's Day scholarships to support high-achieving female students, enabling them to continue excelling in their studies while contributing to their communities. I would like to congratulate third-year Engineering student Brigid Richardson from SCU Lismore campus on being awarded one of the three IWD scholarships. Brigid is a passionate advocate for accessibility in public spaces. Brigid is pursuing a Bachelor of Engineering Systems (Honours), and is determined to make a lasting impact in the field of civil engineering, particularly in designing inclusive public infrastructure. With her focus on humanitarian design, Brigid says ensuring that all people have the ability to move freely throughout our world is an important facet of civil engineering, especially for people with mobility limitations. Brigid has taken on leadership roles too, leading the Student Engineering Society and serving as a representative for Engineers Australia. She has secured a position with Lismore City Council, where she works in geospatial asset management. Brigid says the International Women's Day Scholarship will give her a wonderful opportunity to network with other women in the community, especially those involved in providing better conditions in our surroundings.

AFFINITY'S NSW PARLIAMENT FRIENDSHIP & DIALOGUE IFTAR

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I would like to acknowledge the work of Affinity, who brought together their 16th Friendship and Dialogue Iftar in the Parliament of NSW recently. I was very grateful to be able to attend this event. It was a wonderful occasion to get together to celebrate Ramadan and take particular note of the many contributions made by people of Muslim faith in our community. It was marked with great food, excellent music and a wonderful atmosphere. At a time where we have seen escalating attacks on multiculturalism and discrimination against members of the Muslim community it is more important than ever to stand up for friendship and dialogue among people of all backgrounds. I would like to thank Ahmet Polat, the Executive Director of Affinity for his hard work in bringing together this event and extend that thanks to all of the staff and volunteers at Affinity who made this event so special. Ramadan Mubarak to all of those who observe and celebrate this holiday.

COMMEMORATION OF THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF UKRAINE

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I would like to acknowledge the passage of the third anniversary of the Invasion of Ukraine. I was very grateful to be able to meet with and hear from leaders of the Australian-Ukrainian community about the ongoing struggle against foreign aggression in Ukraine during a recent commemorative event in St Mary's Cathedral Square. It is always important to support those who stand up to invasion and commit themselves to democracy and freedom. I was very honoured to stand with the Ukrainian community, to mark this occasion and show solidarity from our community. I would like to extend my gratitude to Andrew Mensinsky, the President Ukrainian Council of NSW for his ongoing leadership and for his role in organising the event. I thank also all of those members of our community who have supported their family and friends standing strong in the face of such a terrible war.

INNER WEST TENANTS GROUP

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I'd like to acknowledge the important community work of the Inner West Tenants group, who recently formed the Tenants Committee to assist social and public housing residents in the Inner West. This group represents a vital step in promoting collaboration and constructive dialogue amongst the relevant stakeholders, including tenants, Homes NSW and local community organisations. I was very grateful to be able to attend a recent meeting of this group and see active efforts to address the issues faced by tenants in our area. Tenants in public and social housing, many of whom face difficult circumstances, deserve to be treated with respect and live in dignity and I thank the Inner West tenants group for their advocacy. I would like to extend a particular thanks to Yulika Silva, the Community Project Officer at Together2 for her hard work in organising and facilitating this community group. I extend my thanks to all the attendees, especially the residents of social and public housing in our area who are determined to look out for one another and ensure that tenants get a fair go.

MELISSA KATO A

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt)—I wish to recognise Ms Melissa Katoa, who was recently been named Blacktown City Woman of the Year. Ms Katoa, who is a resident of my electorate, uses her expertise

to help single mothers and domestic violence victims, particularly in the Pacific Islander community. As well as helping women live independently, Melissa has made significant contributions to domestic violence campaigns and women and youth forums. While already having assisted countless women achieve their potential, she continues to seek professional development to increase her impact. Volunteers like herself demonstrate the indispensable value of charitable work on our community, and I take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Katoa for her recognition.

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—I'd like to acknowledge local artists James Boyd, Daniel Mateo, Chantelle Lee Lockhart, Zeak Tass for their incredible performances in Bangarra Dance Theatre's *The Light Inside* at the Civic Theatre last month. Renowned as Australia's leading Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander contemporary dance company, Banagrra Dance Theatre draws on 65,000 years of culture to create powerful dance works. Choreographed by First Nations artists, *The Light Inside* is a visually stunning production exploring the choreographer's cultural kinship with water and sky. For James Boyd, the Newcastle leg of *The Light Inside*'s regional tour was particularly special, giving him the opportunity to perform professionally in front of family and friends for the first time. Congratulations James, Daniel, Chantelle and Zeak on your amazing achievements, and I wish you the best of luck for the rest of your tour!

RISE UP FOR POPPY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—A huge congratulations to Rise Up For Poppy founders, Carly and Tresne Middleton, for being selected as a finalist for the prestigious 2025 Women Changing the World Awards in London. After losing their 20-month year old daughter Poppy to lymphoblastic leukaemia, Carly and Tresne established the Rise Up For Poppy movement to continue Poppy's fight. Since 2021, the not-for-profit movement has saved more than 8,600 lives through blood donations made in Poppy's honour as well as raising significant funds for the Children's Cancer Institute's research into infant leukemia. Carly and Tresne's global recognition are a testament to their incredible resilience and dedication to helping others, and I thank them for their commitment to our community.

MARK WIDDUP

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—A huge shout out to Cooks Hill Gallies director Mark Widdup, for the successful launch of his new project, 432 Gallery and Café. Located in Fullerton Cove, 432 Gallery and Café features a curated inaugural exhibition of 25 artists and will be managed under the flagship of Cooks Hill Galleries. The multipurpose project is dedicated to supporting people living with disabilities and mental health disorders. Set on 35-acre farmland, the rural setting will provide a hub for a myriad of therapy workshops, including horse therapy, art therapy and fitness classes. This unique and wonderful asset will allow for more Novocastrians to foster a deeper connection to art and nature, and I encourage everyone to visit!

SAMANTHA KULUPACH

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to 2025 Maitland Local Woman of the Year finalist, Samantha Kulupach. Samantha's unwavering dedication to the children and families in her community is evident every single day. As an integral part of the Woodberry Early Learning Centre, Sam has always made the children her top priority. She can often be found on the floor, nurturing their growing personalities, and creating a safe and supportive environment where they can thrive. As a devoted mother to three boys, Sam's compassion extends beyond her professional life. She is known for quietly supporting families in need, discreetly gifting large bags of groceries to those struggling in our community. This kind of kindness is a true reflection of her character. In her leadership role, Sam fosters an environment of growth and opportunity, not only for the children but also for her team. Despite recent challenges in the ownership structure, Sam's focus has remained firmly on her staff and the families they serve. Even on the toughest days, she leads with grace, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to the wellbeing of everyone around her. Samantha Kulupach's selflessness and dedication make a profound difference in our community, truly embodying the spirit of this award.

MONTANA DUGGAN

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to 2025 Maitland Local Woman of the Year finalist Montana Duggan. Montana's dedication to our community, particularly through Friends of Palliative Care Inc., is truly inspiring. For nearly a decade, Montana has volunteered with this invaluable organisation, serving as president for the last four years. Despite working full-time in the healthcare sector, she devotes countless hours to ensuring Friends of Palliative Care provides essential support to patients and families. Under her leadership, the organisation supplies hospital-style equipment, covers pharmacy expenses, and fulfils final wishes through its "bucket list requests." It also funds

continuing education for local palliative care workers, strengthening the quality of care in our community. Montana's motivation is deeply personal. Having benefited from Friends of Palliative Care's services when her father passed away 14 years ago, she now gives back with unwavering dedication. She also credits the 23 amazing volunteers who help keep the organisation 100% volunteer-run and not-for-profit. Montana Duggan exemplifies community service, and I congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition. Our community is richer for Montana's compassion and commitment. Thank you, Montana.

MARGARET ENRIGHT

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to 2025 Maitland Local Woman of the Year finalist Margaret Enright. Margaret was recognised for her outstanding service to the Hunter River Agricultural & Horticultural Association over the past 40 years. Her dedication, integrity, and tireless energy have made an indelible impact on the Association and the wider Maitland community. Margaret has served as a director since 1991, and in 2018, she made history as the first female President in the Association's 184-year history—a role she continues to hold. She has also coordinated the Maitland Young Woman Award for 14 years, securing judges and sponsors, organising the gala dinner, and supporting entrants throughout their journey. Her mentorship has helped young women become incredible ambassadors, with three former participants now serving on the Board. At showtime, Margaret ensures the smooth running of the Members Room, preparing meals for 180 special guests, judges, and volunteers daily. She personally delivers morning tea across the showground, always leading by example. Her commitment extends beyond the Show, as she plays an active role in the Maitland Community Markets and the upkeep of the Showground. Margaret's knowledge, passion, and generosity are unparalleled. I congratulate Margaret for her extraordinary contribution to our community.

HERE'S CHEERS

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—We all know the lament about the pub with no beer but what if there was a town with no pub? That was nearly the case for the farming community of Pleasant Hills 25 years ago when the licence for their only pub was sold, leaving locals with an empty building and nowhere to gather for a drink and chat. That was when the community stepped in to obtain a licence, acquire the building and open NSW's first-ever community hotel. The pub is now thriving, open three days a week, staffed by volunteers and employing local teenagers in the kitchen. The hotel provides vital social connections, especially for those working on the land and at risk of isolation, and it is a triumph of the community spirit that created it. On March 8, about 400 people gathered at the pub to celebrate its 25th anniversary as a community-run hotel. It was a great occasion, and I would like to congratulate everyone who made the community hotel idea a reality, including the current management committee, Peter Sharp, Suzanne Forck, Clare Hamsom, Corey Beckett, Wayne Scholz, Adam Lowrie, Julianne Clancy, Dave Grant and Marty Chamberlain. Great work by everyone!

BIYANI HOUSE 3 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—Congratulations to Biyani House as they celebrate their 3-year anniversary. In such a short time, Biyani House has become a lifeline for women and children escaping domestic and family violence, supporting 150 plus women and children, and offering them a safe place to heal and rebuild their lives. During this time, Biyani House has provided 7,756 nights of refuge, with 73% of residents successfully moving into safe, long-term accommodation. To mark its anniversary, Biyani House launched its "Three Years of Hope" campaign, fundraising to ensure they can continue providing essential services such as meals, shelter, and support for families in need. I want to thank the incredible community of supporters in East Hills for making all this possible. Your generosity has allowed women and children to take their first steps toward healing and independence. Once again, congratulations to Biyani House for three years of outstanding work, and thank you for supporting safety and hope in our community.

GABRIELLA BOU FAYCAL AND HILARY NGO

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—Congratulations to two former Mount St Joseph Catholic College students who achieved great success at this Milperra school and have now gone on to pursue university studies. Gabriella Bou Faycal, the 2024 Dux of the school achieved an outstanding ATAR of 98.75. This incredible accomplishment has paved the way for her to pursue a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) and Bachelor of Science (Mathematics) at the University of New South Wales. I would also like to also congratulate Hilary Ngo, who was recognised as the top student in Drama across all Sydney Catholic Schools, an incredible honour. In addition to this, she received an OnStage nomination for both her individual performance and her group performance in Drama. With an impressive ATAR of 97.05, she has chosen to continue her academic journey with a Bachelor of Advanced Science with Honours, majoring in Immunology and minoring in Pharmacology, at the University of New South Wales. Congratulations Gabriella and Hilary. I wish you all the best in your future studies and life pursuits.

KATHLEEN MARY GUERIN OAM

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I sincerely congratulate Kathleen Mary Guerin OAM who has been recognised in the Australia Day 2025 Honours List with an appointment to the Medal of the Order of Australia in the General Division (OAM) for service to Catholic Secondary Education. Throughout her distinguished career, Kathleen has served as the Board Chair, Director and former head of English at Santa Sabina College, Strathfield. Through her service and passion for education, she prepared and nurtured the next generation of leaders for many years. This great honour is a testament to Kathleen's commitment to teaching and the lasting impact she has had on students at Santa Sabina College as well as St Lucy's School Wahroonga, Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta, St Clare College Waverley, Lindisfarne Anglican College Tweed Heads, and Brigidine College St Ives. I sincerely congratulate Kathleen on this great honour and have no doubt her contributions will continue to inspire for years to come. I thank her for her service and I wish her all the very best.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY HIGH TEA

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Congratulations to the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce and the University of New England for coordinating an International Women's Day Panel to discuss a local take on the 2025 theme of International Women's Day "how we can help women in Western Sydney march forward". I had the pleasure of joining with Alison Cui, a partner at Bartier Perry Lawyers; Faith Halliday, Chief Executive Officer of StratWest and Co-Chair of the Parramatta Women's Shelter; and Jan McClelland AM, Deputy Chancellor of the University of New England to speak and participate on the panel. It was an insightful and stirring discussion about advancing women in Western Sydney in their lives and careers. An all-female panel meant we got to speak as women, to women. We all took an opportunity to broach some tough subjects and discuss solutions to problems facing women in the West covering issues ranging from domestic and family violence, education, training, access to transport and women in business. Over eighty people attended the event enjoying a delicious high tea at the Parkroyal Parramatta. Thanks Romina Bousimon, General Manager of the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce, and her team for coordinating this great morning.

MIRANDA MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the Miranda Musical Theatre Company for the incredible production of 'Georgy Girl' which is showing at the Pavilion Performing Arts Centre in Sutherland from the 20th to 23rd of March. The Miranda Musical Theatre Company ("the Company") has been entertaining our community since 1967. Anyone familiar with their productions can attest to the quality of the performances, an impressive feat given the not-for-profit nature of the Company. Making its amateur theatre debut, Georgy Girl tells the true story of Australian folk-group The Seekers on their rise to international fame, the challenges of success and all the laughs along the way. I acknowledge performers and ensemble members Emilie Lawson, Alexi Collins, Will Smith, Jayden Marre, Hamish Wells, Max Fernandez, Mia Fernandez, Murray Baker, Alyssa Abood, Phoebe Barnett, Luke Bevan, Lauren Dennis, Ethan Fuller, Madeleine Gardan, Jeff Mabey, Erin Mathieu, Jacob Minchew, Margaret Short, Hayden Sip, Glen Stelzer, Logan Stone and Natasha Tsafis. I also recognise the production team consisting of Director Tim Dennis, Musical Director Danielle Fuller and Choreographer Chris Bamford. I extend my best wishes to the Miranda Musical Theatre Company as they entertain our community with the tale of Georgy Girl.

KAYLA PUSE

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I recognise Kayla Puse of Menai on having her work showcased as a part of the annual ARTEXPRESS exhibition. The ARTEXPRESS exhibition, currently at the Hazelhurst Arts Centre in Gympie, displays artworks by some of New South Wales' most talented young artists. As part of the exhibition, students push aesthetic, conceptual and formal boundaries, experimenting across a range of expressive forms. Completed as part of her studies at Aquinas College in Menai, Kayla's work titled "the things we frame" investigates the framing that takes place in our lives – through a camera lens and in the pictures we display. Kayla's artwork takes the audience on a journey through each piece to reminisce a precious childhood memory, based on photos taken by her mother. Kayla's selection of mellow colours symbolise the haziness of the past, shaped by the photographer's lens and our own memories. Furthermore, the embroidery represents the connecting thread between her mother and each moment she photographed. I congratulate Kayla on having her work chosen to be a part of ARTEXPRESS 2025 exhibition and wish her well as she continues to pursue her passion for art in the future.

GARRY WILLIAMS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I recognise the incredible Garry Williams of Miranda for his service to our local lawn bowling community. A familiar face to the Taren Point Bowling Club's over 19,000 members, Mr Williams has been a highly active volunteer and committee member during his over a decade with the Club.

This has included a stint as the Club's President, where he ensured all members and visitors had a great experience whether they were bowling or socialising inside the Taren Point Bowling Club. As a volunteer, Mr Williams has proved himself to be someone who is not afraid to put in the hard yards, with a keen focus on promoting participation in lawn bowls at a Club, Zone and State level. These efforts have included participating as a player, recruiting new players and developing the skills of all those involved. I thank Mr Williams for his dedicated service to the lawn bowling community in the Miranda electorate over the last decade and for fostering a love of the sport for all at Taren Point Bowling Club.

ANGELA MASTERS - CARRATHOOL

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)—Today, I would like to commend Angela Masters for her dedication and invaluable contributions to the Carrathool community. In 2024, Angela took on the responsibility of organising the Carrathool Time Capsule Opening Ceremony, an event that was a huge success and was honoured as the Community Event of the Year. Angela has been instrumental in assisting organisation of significant community events, including Anzac Day services, the community bonfire, Christmas parties, and the Carrathool Melbourne Cup Luncheon. Angela has also played a crucial role in the restoration of the Carrathool Golf Club, helping to revitalise this cherished community asset. Thanks to her efforts and the dedication of local volunteers, the club has undergone significant restoration, ensuring it remains a vibrant space for golfers and community members alike. For her tireless commitment and unwavering dedication to her community, Angela was rightfully recognised as the 2024 Citizen of the Year. Her contributions are truly commendable, and Carrathool is fortunate to have such a passionate and devoted member in its community.

LIBERO SOLDATIC

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 Libero (Fred) Soldatic, who passed away on 2nd November 2024. Libero was born in Jesenovik, Croatia on 4th March 1938. He came to Australia as a teenager. Libero arrived in Ingleburn with his wife Daisy in 1968, and they raised seven children. Over time, Libero became part of the Ingleburn community and a local business owner. Libero joined the Ingleburn Chamber of Commerce in 1973 and was an active member until declining health forced him to step back. He was awarded Life Membership of the Chamber for his contributions. During his time with the Chamber, Libero held various positions – President, Treasurer, Secretary and Director. Libero was one of the masterminds of the much-loved Ingleburn Alive festival, which continues to this day and is Ingleburn's opportunity to shine. Libero championed the establishment of the Ingleburn community policing centre and played an instrumental role in Ingleburn's outdoor café culture. Libero supported various charities and sporting organisations. Libero will be fondly remembered for his generous community spirit and contributions to our local area. He loved Ingleburn, and Ingleburn loved him. Rest in peace, Libero.

CHELTENHAM GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I would like to acknowledge Cheltenham Girls High School in the Epping electorate for their notable success in the 2024 Higher School Certificate. The school has set a remarkable standard by ranking 57th in NSW in the 2024 HSC. Cheltenham Girls celebrated several academic achievers in 2024, including Isabella Hulme, Dana Lee, and Marguerite Ryan, each earning six All Rounder Awards across various subjects in the 2024 HSC. A special mention goes to Abigail Lance who secured First in Course in New South Wales for Earth and Environmental Science. These remarkable achievements reflect the dedication, hard work, and passion of both the students and staff at Cheltenham Girls High School. I commend them for their academic excellence, integrity, perseverance, and significant contribution to our community.

REDEEMER BAPTIST SCHOOL

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I would like to highlight the incredible academic achievements of Redeemer Baptist School in the 2024 NSW Higher School Certificate. A special mention goes to Anubhav Ammangi, who achieved a 99.95 ATAR and had achieved First in Course for two subjects—Mathematics Extension 2 and Software Design and Development. His dedication earned him a spot in the prestigious International Science and Engineering Fair. Additionally, Jeffrey Dong achieved the top position in the state for the Construction Examination, a remarkable accomplishment in a subject that emphasizes the practical aspects of construction and project management. In 2024, Redeemer Baptist School's Distinguished Achiever success rate placed them among the top NSW schools; a testament to their commitment to excellence. We commend the Redeemer Baptist School for their hard work, perseverance, and continued success.

MEN'S SHED NORTH EPPING

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I rise to acknowledge the contributions of Men's Shed North Epping to the North Epping and broader Epping community. This group offers local men a space to engage in practical activities, develop skills, and connect with others. It serves as a place for support, reducing social isolation, and allowing men to contribute to projects that benefit the area. Having had a chance to visit the North Epping Men's Shed, I have seen firsthand the impact of its activities. The group strengthens social connections and provides a welcoming environment. President Brian Bailey, along with the rest of the Committee have done an excellent job in establishing the space, sourcing equipment and making it fit for purpose. The Shed also plays a key role in connecting with local schools and other organisations to recycle materials and equipment, giving them a second lease of life. I commend the organisers of Men's Shed North Epping. Their dedication and efforts have made a lasting difference in the lives of many people in the community, helping to create a stronger, more connected Epping.

STORIES OF WONDER

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Stories of Wonder (Wonder of Waste) is a collection of stories authored by members of the Rydalmere Community Hub promoting better waste management in the community. This collection of eight stories is a testament to our community's creativity and talent. This has been a wonderful initiative and outcome of the English classes coordinated by the Rydalmere Community Hub. The storybook was launched at the Hub's 10th anniversary celebration. All the stories are written by women of diverse, non-English speaking backgrounds, and each story is motivating and creative in its own way. Stories of Wonder speaks to the importance of environmentally sustainable waste management and the role we all need to play in achieving this. It is a celebration of our wonderful community and its positive works. Congratulations to Mariam, Kalarani, Ockkyung, Ramya, Humaira, Seetha, Reiko, and Claudia for putting their thoughts to paper especially in their second language. I am enlightened by their own personal stories about their culture and I am even more motivated to be a better eco-citizen.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—On the 3rd March I joined with thousands of people across Australia rolling up our sleeves to remove bags of litter in our waterways, across our parklands, bush reserves and highways. Locally I joined with members of the Parramatta Youth Chapter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association led by supervisor Arun Argawal, to clean up Parramatta Park. Starting out from the Governor's Bath House we got the job done gathering bags and bags of rubbish including muesli bar wrappers, soy sauce fish, clothing, vapes and even a broken traffic cone. Since 1989, Clean Up Australia Day has been an important community action with an estimated 22 million people volunteering to clean up our cities, suburbs, towns and natural areas. While there has been an improvement to the levels of rubbish across the Parramatta electorate, our busy remain littered with rubbish and refuse. It is why the work of Clean Up Australia Day is so important to the community. I was heartened by the community spirit with volunteers joining forces to get the cleanup done across 12 events in the Parramatta electorate. Thanks to all the volunteers including members of the Buddha's Light International Association and BLIA Scout Sydney

GALLERY LANE COVE & CREATIVE STUDIOS

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—I commend Gallery Lane Cove & Creative Studios for their January 2025 exhibitions and workshops. Their commitment to fostering creativity provides invaluable opportunities for our local artists and the broader community.

CARDINIA

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—I congratulate Lane Cove's own Cardinia on her outstanding achievements as an internationally acclaimed musician and dedicated local music school owner. Her passion for music and commitment to nurturing young talent enriches our community and inspires the next generation of Musicians. Lane Cove is fortunate to have such a talented and dedicated individual fostering a love for music through education and performance.

YOUTH UP FRONT

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—Youth Up Front is a registered Australian charity based in Pittwater which is dedicated to empowering young people in their transition from adolescence to adulthood. With over 30 years of experience and a proven track record of having positively influenced more than 100,000 students, this organisation places the needs of young Australians at the forefront. Youth Up Front CEO Samantha King has given over 20 years of service in her role. Programs offered by Youth Up Front focus on engaging students disengaged from learning. These programs include outreach and vocational training initiatives, mentoring,

casework, and personal development support. Their work placement programs connect students with local businesses, gaining valuable experience and skills for the workforce. Its headquarters at Granmas Refuge is an iconic focal point of collaboration which prioritises supporting positive outcomes for youth. The results speak for themselves - increases in school attendance and work placements, better peer relationships and a reduction in suspensions. This impactful work empowers Australia's youth to achieve remarkable things and contribute positively to society.

MEN'S KITCHEN

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—I'd like to acknowledge Men's Kitchen and some of its founding members and long-time contributors – Peter Watson, Peter Rudland, and Christine Chandler. What began as six men, dispossessed from a closed local cooking program in Narrabeen in 2016, has turned into a sprawling non-profit that stretches across three states with over 270 members. More than just equipping older men with the skills to cook, this values-based organisation aims to develop a socially conducive environment and a belonging community – a place you look at and stay for rather than leave. The enthusiasm and zeal brought by the backbone of the operation – Head Chef Christine – encourages the recruitment of instructors from all walks of life and all genders, truly facilitating a community space of mutual belonging and experience, not just a simple cooking class. Without committed founders Peter Watson and Peter Rudland – who has been incurred with a life membership for his dedication – hundreds of men in Australia would be without this impactful support in their lives. Its rapid growth in scope, membership, and common values demonstrates its deserved place in our community.

NEWPORT COMMUNITY GARDEN

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—This year marks ten years since the Newport Community Garden was registered as a not-for-profit community association. It also marks ten years as members for Valerie Long and Karen Bond. Both have served on the organising committee for most of this time. The Garden was established in 2013 as a place for members to grow herbs, vegetables and fruit in a social and friendly environment with the aim of living more sustainably and reducing and minimising waste through composting and recycling. Thanks to grants and member fundraising, the garden has expanded considerably in the last eight years. The number of garden beds under maintenance has tripled, a small orchard has been established, a native beehive introduced, rainwater tanks installed, and active membership increased. The Garden has also become a place for solitude and socialising for nearby families and other community groups. Congratulations and thank you to Newport Community Garden and the volunteers who maintain it, for its positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of Newport residents and the local environment.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR ILONA CUNNINGHAM

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I wish to acknowledge the contributions of Associate Professor Ilona Cunningham, who has recently stepped down from the Board of the Foundation for a Bloody Great Cause. A/Professor Cunningham was a founding Board Member of the Foundation and her contributions to the organisation and to her patients have been invaluable. The Foundation for a Bloody Great Cause is a local organisation committed to raising funds for blood cancer research and clinical trials at the Haematology Department at Concord Hospital. Outside of her work on the Board, A/Professor Cunningham serves as the Clinical Director, Cancer Services and Palliative Care at the Concord Cancer Centre at Concord Hospital. In this role she has overseen the cancer treatment and research departments, making a true impact on the lives of many patients and their families. On behalf of our community, I sincerely thank Professor Cunningham for her outstanding service on the Board of the Foundation for a Blood Great Cause and wish her all the very best in the future. She is a wonderful person who is passionate about people, and about life-saving research and healthcare.

DR EMMA VERNER

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I wish to acknowledge Dr Emma Verner, who was recently elected to the board of the Foundation for a Bloody Great Cause. Dr Emma Verner is the Head of Haematology at Concord Hospital where she began as a staff specialist in 2012. Since then, she has led many clinical trials including leukaemia and lymphoma research, ultimately saving lives and leading to better learning and life-saving treatment of blood cancers. Prior to her appointment to Haematology, Dr Verner served as the Medical Director of the Bone Marrow Transplant and Apheresis Unit from 2014. Her experience, dedication to her patients and outstanding service will undoubtedly serve her well in her role on the Foundation's Board. I sincerely congratulate Dr Verner on her election to the Board of the Foundation for a Bloody Great Cause and thank her for her dedication to cancer research. Every day she saves lives and supports families living with a cancer diagnosis. I thank her for her work and wish her all the very best.

HEAD HIGH TEA AND SCONE SOCIETY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I recognise the incredible work of Head High Disability Service on their launch of the Pop-Up High Tea at Allan Border Oval Pavilion. This initiative, which will run for the duration of March, offers a tearoom experience and provides young adults from Head High an opportunity to showcase their skills in a supportive and inclusive environment. With live music, freshly baked scones, and homemade cakes, the pop-up provides a welcoming experience for all who attend. 50 percent of all profits will be donated to the Humpty Dumpty Foundation, supporting childrens' hospitals and health services across Australia. The High Tea is a wonderful example of how local initiatives can bring people together, foster inclusion and celebrate talents of the community. I commend Julia Ross-Edwards and the entire Head High team for their dedication to empowering young adults with intellectual, neurological, and other disabilities. This pop-up tearoom and other initiatives of Head High help build confidence, independence and connection for young adults. Finally, I warmly congratulate the Head Highers themselves and thank them for their wonderful service and friendly smiles. Their service made the High Tea experience so exceptional.

MOSMAN PUBLIC AND MOSMAN HIGH CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise the incredible efforts of the students from Mosman Primary School and Mosman High School who came together for a Schools Clean Up Day for this year's Clean Up Australia Day. Held at Balmoral to celebrate the 35th anniversary of Clean Up Australia Day, this initiative saw young people take meaningful action to protect their local environment. The event was hosted by Mosman Council, Clean Up Australia, and the Green Schools collective, and gave students the opportunity to connect, collaborate, and engage in hands on learning. The 2024 campaign alone collected an estimated 140,000 bags of litter nationwide, highlighting both the scale of our waste problem and the power of community-led action. I thank Mosman Public and Mosman High for their dedication to the green initiatives and for always looking for opportunities to give back to our community. I commend the students, educators, and organisers at Mosman High and Mosman Public for their leadership in protecting our local environment. Their dedication to sustainability and community action is truly inspiring. I thank them for their efforts in keeping North Shore's beautiful beaches and waterways clean for future generations.

HMAS PENGUIN RUN-SWIM-RUN

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I recognise the incredible efforts of HMAS Penguin in hosting their third annual Run-Swim-Run event at their Middle Head Navy Base. This year was particularly special as, for the first time, the race was opened to the wider community, allowing locals to compete alongside serving Navy personnel in celebration of Navy Week. Participants took on a 4km run and 400m swim, competing across multiple categories, including opens, veterans, masters, youths, and walkers. It was fantastic to see so many people come together to test their endurance and celebrate the strength and resilience that our navy embodies. I enjoyed joining the competitors on the course and sneaking a behind-the-scenes look at the naval base. I congratulate the Opens 1 category winners (18–36 years): Connor Daff and Tyla Douglas-Ramirez, as well as the Veterans' category winners (36–50 years), Rebecca Anderson, and Daniel Robinson, who represents the first civilian to win at an HMAS Penguin Run-Swim-Run event. A heartfelt thank you goes to the organisers, participants, and the entire team at HMAS Penguin for making this event so memorable. I look forward to seeing the continued bond between the community and Defence Force in the years to come.

LOCALKIND HEROICS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the extraordinary bravery and quick thinking of Daniel and Jessica from LocalKind Northern Beaches, whose actions recently saved a life in my community. On the 12 March, LocalKind support worker Jessica was alerted to the fact that a community member was experiencing severe distress. Responding immediately, Jessica located this individual, offering support and contacting emergency services in the process. Daniel, LocalKind's frontline support manager, arrived soon after and acted decisively in a critical moment, working alongside a member of the public to ensure the person's safety until emergency services arrived. I extend my sincere gratitude to Daniel, Jessica, and the LocalKind team for their unwavering commitment to supporting vulnerable people in the Manly community. I also wish to acknowledge and thank the member of the public who heard their calls for help and intervened without hesitation. I am advised this individual was never identified, but his actions deserve commendation. Mr Speaker, these individuals embody the very best of humanity. Their courage, composure, and selflessness in what was an extremely confronting situation was nothing short of heroic. Thanks to their swift and compassionate actions that day, a life was saved.

SHIRLEY MASHMAN

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Shirley Mashman for her outstanding dedication and service in supporting healthcare on the Northern Beaches. Through her tireless advocacy as President of the Manly Hospital Auxiliary, Shirley has been a steadfast champion for both the former Manly Hospital and now the Adolescent and Young Adults Hospice at North Head [AYAH]. Under her leadership, the Manly Hospital Auxiliary has provided invaluable financial support for hospital staff and patients over many years, ensuring access to essential equipment and services. As the hospice embarks on its important work as Australia's first dedicated facility for young adults, I am grateful that the Auxiliary continues to play a key role in community fundraising, complementing the Government's \$2 million in annual funding. Shirley's unwavering commitment has left a lasting impact on healthcare in our region, and I sincerely thank her for her remarkable service to our community.

PENELOPE GREENSHIELDS - NSW REGIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I wish to congratulate 16-year-old violinist Penelope Greenshields, a remarkable young musician from our region, who has been invited to perform with the NSW Regional Youth Orchestra in Germany and Austria this July. Penelope's journey with the violin began at the age of nine, fuelled by an early passion for music that has only deepened over the years. She joined a youth orchestra for the first time in 2022, discovering a love for performing alongside others. Since then, Penelope has flourished earning a Conservatorium scholarship. Other highlights include a workshop with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, performing in her first musical and now successfully auditioning for the NSW Regional Youth Orchestra which we celebrate with this recognition. Her dedication and perseverance are inspiring, and this upcoming international tour is a testament to her hard work. I wish Penelope all the best as she represents our region on this incredible journey, performing in the likes of Berlin, Vienna and Munich – the historical and iconic heartlands of classical music.

AALIYAH GARANG-HALL

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—I rise to congratulate young Bangalow athlete Aaliyah Garang-Hall on her incredible recent achievements in athletics. A member of Ballina Allstars Athletics Club, Aaliyah has demonstrated outstanding talent and determination across not one, but two throwing events. After winning gold in shot put and silver in discus at the NSWCCC State Athletics Championships, she progressed to the NSW All Schools Athletics Championships, where she medalled yet again in discus and shot put. Qualifying for the Australian All Schools Championships in the discus as a result, Aaliyah secured the national silver medal with a personal best throw of 38.54m in December 2024. Aaliyah was also selected for the exclusive NSW LEAP camp, a high-performance program run by Little Athletics NSW, where she trained under top coaches, including Australian Olympian Cameron McEntyre. This experience, along with the support of her family and local community, has provided her with invaluable opportunities to develop as an athlete. I congratulate Aaliyah on her dedication and success and look forward to seeing what she achieves next.

SAM COOLEY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Sam Cooley, from Mt Warrigal. He is a three-time tenpin bowling world champion and spends most of his year travelling the US, Europe and Asia to compete. He's so successful in the sport that, thanks to prize winnings and endorsement deals with companies, he needs no other job to support himself. Sam's competitive career started with local junior leagues and tournaments. Then, he got some coaching and began travelling across the state and the country to compete. He has represented Australia in national teams since 2009 and has won numerous medals for the country, he's won three world titles - the World Youth Championships, the World Cup, and a gold medal at the World Games - and has won two national events on the professional tour and six regional events. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Sam on his amazing achievements and wish him well in his future sporting endeavours.

MARCOS BAEZ

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Marcos Baez, from Flinders, for being awarded the 2025 Service to Sports award at the Shellharbour Community and Australia Day Awards ceremony in January. Marcos is the driving force behind the success of the Southlake BMX Club, serving as president, coach, and an official. He dedicates countless hours each week to support riders, maintain the track, and ensure the club runs smoothly. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Marcos on this amazing achievement and wish him well.

MICHAEL KALUSEK

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Michael Kalusek, from Oak Flats, who is encouraging more Illawarra residents to join him in rolling up their sleeves as the nation's blood donation service makes an urgent plea for donors. Mr Kalusek gives plasma every two weeks and has made over 300 donations at Wollongong's Lifeblood donor centre. Donors of any blood type are wanted, but those with O and A-types are especially needed. Demand for blood products is also rising because of the growing and ageing population. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Michael for his generosity as a blood donor.

BOLTON CLARKE

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)—I would like to acknowledge Bolton Clarke Home and Community Support for celebrating their 140th anniversary in opening a new community hub in Wyong to support local older people with aged care services. The Wyong hub is set to enhance the quality of life for Central Coast residents by offering specialised support and resources aimed at helping them age well in their own homes, providing a dedicated local team focused on the not-for-profit's established home care services. Bolton Clarke started home care with a single nurse stepping out onto the streets of Melbourne in 1885. Today, 140 years on, the organisation now supports 130,000 individuals across the Central Coast and throughout Australia, offering a comprehensive range of connected care services such as home health, specialized nursing, allied health, retirement living, and residential care. The new Wyong hub will provide resources and programs that promote positive living and aging for those aged 60 and older, fostering community engagement and well-being among seniors. Chief Operating Officer Home and Community Support Deidre McGill opened their doors on 6th February welcoming industry partners and locals to explore the many services available to better support the aging population on the Central Coast.

TERRYWHITE CHEMMART NORAVILLE

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 Noraville pharmacy for being awarded the TerryWhite Chemmart National Pharmacy of the Year 2024 at the HEART Awards Gala dinner recognising excellence across the TerryWhite Chemmart community. Owners Lachlan Walters and Robert King of TerryWhite Chemmart Noraville pharmacy, expressed their gratitude for the support they've received from the brand over the past 18 months, highlighting how it has enabled them to enhance their retail offerings and health services for the Noraville community. TerryWhite Chemmart recently celebrated excellence in practice and leadership during its annual conference in Melbourne, attended by over 1,000 delegates. The three-day event highlighted the dedication and achievements of the TerryWhite Chemmart community, emphasizing their commitment to high standards in the pharmacy industry. Delegates engaged in dynamic discussions about the future of pharmacy, focusing on how shifting customer and patient expectations, innovative store designs, and an expanding scope of practice are reshaping the industry. The brand emphasized its dedication to equipping its network with advanced solutions aimed at enhancing efficiency, fostering growth, and improving patient care. Well done to Mr Walters, Mr King and staff for being recognised in our community for this great achievement.

ELVIN CHAN

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 Elvin Chan from Meals on Wheels Central Coast for receiving the NSW Government Community Service Award. Elvin's dedication to volunteering with Meals on Wheels for the past three years highlights his commitment to community service, beginning with his invaluable support during the COVID-19 pandemic. His involvement not only provided essential meals to those in need but also exemplified the resilience and compassion that communities can foster in challenging times. Meals on Wheels launched a new program during COVID-19 to assist clients with online grocery shopping, where Mr Chan would collect the orders from the grocery store and deliver each order to the clients, not only as a service but a welfare check and socialisation for the isolated clients. His commitment shines through not only in his reliable delivery schedule but also in the warmth he brings with each interaction, creating a positive experience. He has been known to "double back" to clients when receiving a call from to collect something from a client that is required, fill in shifts on short notice and assists with packing gifts to distribute on special days. Mr Chan's unwavering support to his clients, volunteers and staff is phenomenal.

PARRAMATTA SWIM CLUB LEARNERS CARNIVAL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—Last month I had the pleasure of attending Parramatta Swim Club's Learner Carnival at Granville Swim Centre where I saw firsthand a huge number of keen young swimmers being taught vital swimming skills whilst enjoying a fun, carnival-like atmosphere. Parramatta swim club has been in operation for nearly 75 years and has cultivated a rich competitive history, whilst also constructing a community-oriented space for all ages. The club offers a comprehensive range of programs designed to cater for swimmers of all different ages and skill levels. From learn-to-swim classes for beginners to advanced squad training to propel individuals to the next level of their swimming goals. In the last few years, the Club has expanded into teaching valuable lifesaving courses. These programs are free for registered pool members and run by volunteers and provide an invaluable service to our community. I would like to recognise the incredible amount of hard work and dedication that has gone into the Swim Club to make events such as the Learners Carnival successful and educational experiences.

CENTENARY OF MERRYLANDS FIRE STATION

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I was honoured to attend Merrylands Fire and Rescue NSW Station No. 072 celebrating one hundred years of service to the people of Merrylands together with my Parliamentary colleague The Hon Jihad Dib MP Minister for Emergency Services and Commissioner Jememy Fewtrell. Over the last century, the station has responded to thousands of incidents from significant structure fires to motor vehicle incidents and animal rescues. I would like to recognise Merrylands Fire Station Captain, Warren Jones who was presented with a certificate of service ahead of his retirement after 29 years of dedicated work at FRNSW. I would like to thank Captain Jones and all the current and former firefighters at Merrylands Fire Station, who routinely put themselves in danger in service to the community. Fire and Rescue plays such a significant role in the local community, not only through its emergency response but also through being a recognisable service associated with safety and reliability. I would like to acknowledge the importance of this 100-year anniversary for the community and the crew at Merrylands Fire Station, and I thank everyone who has contributed to the station's rich history over the last century.
