

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 20 March 2025

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Bills

ROADS AMENDMENT (WILDLIFE IMPACTS) BILL 2024

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Tamara Smith, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (10:19): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I introduce the Roads Amendment (Wildlife Impacts) Bill 2024. I acknowledge the Arakwal people of the Bundjalung nation, particularly their over 60,000 years of custodianship of our wild places and their management of all things to do with our own survival. Species in general are not doing well, and that includes humans. But the balance is absolutely skewed towards extinction of our wildlife and biodiversity, which I will be talking about a lot. I acknowledge in the Chamber with me today the member for Newtown and the member for Balmain.

The authors of the 1972 report *The Limits to Growth* wrote about the tension between the exponential growth of capitalism and population, the desire for material things, and the finite resources of the planet. We have seen all of their 1970s simulations come to bear and much, much worse. We are told that we need three planets to sustain where we are now. Unfortunately, we know that the trifecta of a warming planet and rampant economic and population growth means that our wildlife is facing extinction. This bill will give the Government an immediate and practical way of taking wildlife into consideration regarding roads, which we all rely on, and regarding future development, which is going gangbusters at the moment. We know that an estimated 10 million-plus animals die on Australian roads every year. I give a shout-out to Talia in my office who has done this research, our stakeholders whom I will talk about and my research officer Audrey, who is here today.

The bill amends the Roads Act 1993 to require Transport for NSW to consider the impact of motor vehicle strikes on wildlife when making decisions about new roads and reviewing speed zones. Like most MPs, I am involved in my local traffic committee. It was mind-boggling to learn from community members and environmentalists that speed zone reviews do not take into account the loss of wildlife, in particular koalas, which are projected to be extinct by 2030. The idea that there is no requirement to look at the impact on wildlife and biodiversity when building or upgrading roads is very shocking to my community and many people across the State.

Roads have become the biggest killer of animals. The estimate that 10 million-plus animals die each year on our roads is not the full picture because the majority of car and fatal wildlife interactions are not usually reported. These numbers reflect a crisis that we can act on now. In deadly combination with rampant habitat loss and a warming planet, roads are directly aiding and abetting species extinction. Returning to *The Limits to Growth*, we seem unable to comprehend where we are going. We seem unable to understand that we will be responsible for causing the extinction of species that our children and grandchildren will never forgive us for. We have the opportunity to do something about it. It is no longer good enough to just let rampant growth wipe out species, including ourselves.

The NRMA is not a left wing think tank. Its 2022 *Wildlife Road Safety* report stated that, on top of vehicle damage and environmental impacts, the societal costs of road trauma because of animal collisions are approximately \$7 billion a year. Particularly in an area like mine, people who have little education about driving safely to navigate wildlife are having accidents. Not only are wildlife are being injured and killed but also human interaction with wildlife on the roads is costing residents of this State an estimated \$7 billion per year. Insurance companies are making a fortune.

We simply cannot afford to remain in denial about the complex interplay and battle between development, progress and the protection of species within the context of an extinction crisis. We get called the extreme Greens but, honestly, who speaks for nature? No-one has standing to speak for nature. However, this bill will require that Transport for NSW has to speak for nature. Motherhood statements are no good. It needs to be in law. To date, there has never been New South Wales legislation that refers to the protection of wildlife from road strikes. It is staggering. Transport for NSW states that it has a statutory responsibility under the State Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, henceforth the EPBC Act. Transport for NSW has a responsibility to consider the impacts of its activities on the environment, but this obligation is not measured by any government processes, and there is no consequence for failing to protect wildlife from road strikes.

As with most things, we have seen biodiversity offsets go off into never-never land. However, people in amazing communities in Newtown, Balmain, my electorate and across the State are paying attention. They see that, unfortunately, it is a set and forget situation, including mitigation strategies. Millions are sometimes spent on optics saying that we are doing so much to protect wildlife, but mitigation does not work. Environmentalists say it will not work and ecologists say it will not work, but it still goes ahead and then we are all meant to forget about it. Any mitigation efforts, effective or not at protecting wildlife on our roads, appear to be seen as satisfying the responsibility under both Acts. Let us just think about the logic of that. It means that doing anything satisfies the responsibility. That is a joke. Transport for NSW and the Minister need to be compelled and answerable to the Land and Environment Court or to other forums when it does not happen.

There is absolutely no detailed, systemic data kept on the number of wildlife strikes on our roads, or the species killed or injured. That is important data. When speed reviews are undertaken in New South Wales, accidents involving people are considered, as they should be. No-one is suggesting otherwise; we need to look at the impacts on people. My colleagues and I would like to see pedestrian-first principles everywhere. My brother was just here from Seattle in the United States for my daughter's wedding. Seattle is in a pedestrian-first state, which means that if you start putting a foot out on the road, cars have to stop. It is wonderful to see the balance tip the other way, but I also understand that in regional New South Wales, where we have no public transport, people are heavily reliant on their cars and our country roads. The bill strikes a balance in that it is not suddenly banning cars overnight or demonising drivers, but it is saying that the Government has a responsibility. It cannot talk the talk around protecting species but do nothing to truly mitigate harm and protect wildlife from road strikes.

I turn to the detail of the bill. There is not a lot to explain because it is a very simple amending bill. The object is to amend the Roads Act to provide for an additional object that impacts on wildlife be considered, including that the impact of motor vehicle strikes on wildlife be taken into consideration, when making decisions about roads and for related purposes. The bill will allow all MPs—who are on our local traffic committees—police and other stakeholders to have a conversation with representatives from Transport for NSW about the impacts on wildlife. I believe that every member of this House wants to protect wildlife, but they often do not know how. There are opportunities during the design phase of building new roads, during the phase of upgrading new roads after the impact of climate-fuelled disasters, during the betterment phase, and particularly during reviews of speed zones.

I like driving fast as much as the next person does. But when motorists see the koala road signs and are directed to slow down because of the presence of wildlife, we do. Australians do care; they just need education, guidance and leadership from government. Schedule 1 [1] inserts proposed section 3 (i) into the Act to give effect to the object of the bill. Schedule 1 [2] inserts proposed section 261AA into the Act to require Transport for NSW, when exercising a function under the Act about a road, to consider the impact of motor vehicle strikes on wildlife. Without limiting that obligation, Transport for NSW must consider wildlife strikes when reviewing speed zones and, more broadly, take actions to mitigate the impact of motor vehicle strikes on wildlife on all new roads, including through the use of speed limit reductions as well as works, including fauna underpasses, fauna overpasses, fencing and virtual fencing. I will talk more about the colossal amount of taxpayer dollars being spent on so-called wildlife mitigation around roads that simply does not work. Under the bill, Transport for NSW will have a mandate to measure the impact.

The Greens are introducing the bill because we want the impacts of our roadways on native wildlife to improve to the point where, rather than occurring daily, vehicle strikes on wildlife become an anomaly. That is what the extinction crisis requires. The more I read about the adaptation measures that we need to make, the more I realise we need to radically phase out fossil fuels and radically roll out the renewables boom to lower our emission levels. But we also need radical adaptation projects, and part and parcel of that is making tough decisions about how to protect vulnerable species and native wildlife. One thing is certain: We cannot take the necessary steps to truly protect and conserve our wildlife, particularly our endangered species, when there is no requirement that Transport for NSW keep data about the number and types of wildlife impacted and when there is no mechanism for local government or community members to make the case for the protection of wildlife on our

roads. There is also no way to stave off the extinction of wildlife on our roads when there is no consequence for not doing so.

As a member of The Greens, I got involved in politics because of the environment—plain and simple—and social justice issues. The idea of just turning a blind eye to the impacts of roads on our wildlife is heartbreaking. I give a shout-out to all of the incredible wildlife hospitals, wildlife vets and wildlife carers in my electorate, who are slowly but surely seeing more and more endangered species dead on the roads. It is hard to forget seeing a dead koala on the road. If we said to any child or young person that that is what we will see in this State by 2030, they would not believe us. They would not believe that we would let it happen. That is because koalas are gorgeous, fuzzy and cute, but so many other species are also on the edge.

While the bill does not provide a mechanism for penalising Transport for NSW for a failure to protect, it strengthens its obligation under the law. Potentially, matters could be brought to the Land and Environment Court when failures occur. The Greens have introduced the bill because wildlife carers, wildlife vets and frontline conservation organisations are telling us that our roads are the biggest killers, and I believe them. Apart from a vague responsibility, the law is silent on the impacts of our roads, and nobody has power over State roads or has eyes on the magnitude or frequency. If we could have that holistic view, I think we would all be truly and deeply shocked. We see it in spots and then go on with our normal business. It is true that Transport for NSW must consider wildlife, but the piece of the puzzle that is missing is that there is no specific legislative requirement for Transport for NSW to recognise the problem and do something about it.

There are approximately 180,000 kilometres of public roads in New South Wales. However, we do not know anything about the statistics on wildlife strikes. How can Transport for NSW effectively consider wildlife without access to those facts? The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment released its *Koala Vehicle Strike Fact Sheet 4* last year, which states, "Monitoring can be costly and emphasis should be on mitigation structures for which we have little data." That is in the department's own document. That statement highlights the need for more data. Surely, evidence-based decision-making is the antidote. How can consideration be effective if it is based on estimates—or, rather, guesstimates? It is time for the impact of motor vehicle strikes to be counted.

Koalas as a vulnerable species have been at the heart of Government strategies aimed at reducing road impacts, and The Greens commend those. But despite those efforts, koala numbers continue to decline and vehicle strikes will remain the key factor in their extinction by 2030. I was speaking to conservationists this week. Just as climate change is defying all the statistics, those conservationists fear that the same thing is happening with koalas. We cannot hurry the Government along enough to do what it needs to do to protect koalas in this State by ending native forest logging once and for all. The decade between 1992, when koalas were listed as vulnerable, and 2022, when koalas were listed as endangered, has seen the release and update of the NSW Koala Strategy. The *Northern Rivers Regional Koala Conservation Strategy* states:

For riverine and coastal areas, the management of disease, injury and vehicle hotspot strikes provide the most effective slowing of population decline.

It is not rocket science. The role that roadways play in wildlife mortality unfortunately has not received the level of attention it deserves. It is my hope that, moving forward, the bill ensures that vehicle strikes are thoroughly considered by Transport for NSW in all actions relating to roadways.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The time for consideration of general business notices of motions for bills having expired, the House will now consider general business orders of the day (for bills). I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

PORTS AND MARITIME ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (WHITE BAY CRUISE TERMINAL—SHORE POWER) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 15 November 2024.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (10:39): The Government opposes the Ports and Maritime Administration Amendment (White Bay Cruise Terminal—Shore Power) Bill 2024, introduced by the member for Balmain. The bill proposes to amend the Ports and Maritime Administration Act 1995 by inserting a new section to require cruise ships to use shore power while berthed at the White Bay Cruise Terminal in Sydney Harbour from 1 January 2027. The private member's bill proposes to insert new section 105D into the Ports and Maritime Administration Act 1995 to impose a duty on the Port Authority of New South Wales to only permit cruise ships to berth at White Bay if the ship is equipped to use shore power. It also legislates the Port Authority to require a cruise ship using a berth at White Bay to use only shore power during the berthing period under new section 105D (4).

The new sections 105D (3) and (5) provide that the master and owner of a cruise ship are each guilty of an offence if they use a berth without the ship being equipped for shore power, or if they use a source of power other than shore power during the ship's berthing period. As the member for Balmain knows, the New South Wales Government made an election commitment regarding this. We announced the installation of shore power at White Bay Cruise Terminal in September, fulfilling our election commitment to mandate the use of shore power at White Bay for all cruises and bulk shipping, meaning that any ship that docks at White Bay that can use shore power will be required to do so when shore power is available. We expect shore power to be operational by the end of 2026. It will be installed at berth 5 of White Bay Cruise Terminal, where the Port Authority advises the vast majority of cruise ships berth.

The private member's bill differs from our election commitment by introducing duties on the Port Authority to only permit cruise ships to use a berth at White Bay Cruise Terminal if the ship is equipped to use shore power. It creates offences for the owner and the master of the cruise ship to use a berth at White Bay Cruise Terminal unless the ship is equipped to use shore power and for failing to use shore power while using a berth at White Bay Cruise Terminal. Introducing this legislative requirement is an unnecessary addition, as nearly 80 per cent of vessels accessing White Bay are already shore power enabled.

The Port Authority of New South Wales advises that a legislative approach to mandates is not recommended due to the following reasons: potential inconsistencies with this proposal and existing and potential Commonwealth legislation, the perceived conflict with the Port Authority administering the legislation to require the use of shore power while also being the owner and operator of the shore power infrastructure, and the inflexibility of the proposed model. Legislating a mandate to allow only ships with shore power capability to utilise White Bay Cruise Terminal will have unintended consequences for the cruise industry in New South Wales. As an alternative to a mandate, a clear policy approach that will serve to promote shore power use by industry and deter avoidance will be effective for ensuring a high uptake of shore power usage at White Bay Cruise Terminal without significantly impacting cruising in New South Wales.

A policy approach is currently used for minimising the impacts of noise at White Bay Cruise Terminal, and it is an effective mechanism to minimise the risks of poor outcomes for community and the environment. Shore power mandates that have been legislated in overseas ports are generally applied after a port or jurisdiction has already used incentive-based schemes to encourage ports and/or vessels for some time to start implementing shore power. Further, mandates are typically introduced on a national or statewide basis with grant programs to ensure a level playing field for port operators. For example, in February 2024 the European Union launched a €1 billion funding facility for alternative fuel projects in the transport sector, including for shore power infrastructure.

Maximising the number of ships connecting to shore power will achieve greater environmental benefits. However, it is acknowledged that some ships that are not shore power capable will berth at White Bay Cruise Terminal. A mandate applied to all ships berthed at White Bay Cruise Terminal will likely have an unintended consequence that will see some vessels having to avoid Sydney completely, as they will be unable to secure alternative berthing slots at the Overseas Passenger Terminal. The Port Authority estimates an average of \$23 million in lost economic benefit to New South Wales annually if ships that are currently not shore power enabled are refused access to White Bay Cruise Terminal. This outcome would also likely result in a reduction in visitation in the regional destinations of Eden and Newcastle, as an inability to call into Sydney will see cruise companies design itineraries that avoid New South Wales altogether.

Most cruise lines are increasingly sourcing food and other supplies from local destinations. For example, Carnival Corporation sources an enormous quantity of its food and beverage from local suppliers. Given its volumes, and to maximise freshness, much of its fresh produce is picked, packed and put on pallets directly from the farm, then loaded onto trucks and taken straight to its ships for loading. Any loss of cruise visitation in New South Wales would directly impact a range of New South Wales primary producers and other suppliers, and ripple through the supply chain. It would be felt from the farm gate to the delivery trucks, from forklift drivers to the ports. With every ship carrying around 2,500 passengers, that is a lot of New South Wales eggs, milk, oranges and beer—to name just a few of the fresh produce staples being restocked onto cruise ships at White Bay Cruise Terminal.

The Port Authority advises that any proposed new or amended New South Wales legislation to mandate the use of shore power at White Bay Cruise Terminal could conflict with the Commonwealth National Energy Retail Law (Adoption) Act 2012, which regulates the selling of energy to customers, with conditions attached by the Commonwealth regulator—meaning it may not be able to be implemented, or could be challenged by the cruise industry, as happened with the Environment Protection Authority regulation seeking to regulate low sulphur fuel for cruise ships in Sydney Harbour. The Port Authority is in the process of assessing and liaising with the Commonwealth regulator on how to maximise the uptake of shore power while remaining compliant with its

requirements. However, this is a nuanced process that may not be effective if the solution implemented is a blunter New South Wales legislative mandate. We propose an alternative approach.

As mentioned, the Port Authority of New South Wales proposes a policy approach instead of a legislative mandate whereby vessels would be required to use shore power at White Bay Cruise Terminal when a vessel has the capability to do so. This approach would be like the Port Authority's current approach to managing avoidable noise from the cruise ships at White Bay Cruise Terminal, including music played on deck, which is managed under the noise restriction policy. There are two elements to the noise restriction policy: a charge that applies for making unnecessary noise, such as non-safety-related deck announcements or music, and a three strikes approach to engine noise above the required decibel volume at evenings. Either of those mechanisms could be effectively applied to implement the Government's shore power election commitment. The noise restriction policy is currently facilitated by imposing a good neighbour charge on all vessels, which works like a bond and is rebated to vessels for good behaviour or for not making unnecessary noise. A similar approach may be used for shore power to charge a further good neighbour charge for connecting a shore-power-capable ship, whereby a ship forfeits the charge if it does not connect, unless the failure to connect was beyond the reasonable control of the operator.

The good neighbour charge is already enabled by the Port Authority's schedule of charges for site occupation. In addition, the Port Authority intends to amend its cruise booking policy to prioritise the booking of the White Bay Cruise Terminal berth by shore-power-capable vessels over non-shore-power-capable ships. The Port Authority advises that it is confident that is the right approach to mandating shore power based on a number of factors: firstly, the level of agreement already reached with industry regarding its commitment to use shore power and bring shore-power-capable ships to Sydney; secondly, the industry's increasing use of shore-power-capable ships globally; and, thirdly, the International Maritime Organization's international requirements for ships to become more sustainable. The proposed policy would also establish an increasing set of consequences—or "three strikes"—for repeatedly breaching the shore power requirement, as follows: a warning for the first strike; a loss of good neighbour charge for the second strike; and a loss of booking privileges and good neighbour charge for the third strike.

The Port Authority has met with all major cruise lines, accounting for over 90 per cent of future visits to the cruise terminal. Cruise lines support the use of shore power at the White Bay Cruise Terminal for the sustainability and community benefits it provides and considers the policy approach to be practical and achievable. Industry values the contribution by the Port Authority to provide shore power infrastructure, and it notes that this is a first for our region. Over time, as more ports in Australia and in the region provide shore power facilities, more ships in the region will be deployed to utilise it. That will increase the uptake at White Bay Cruise Terminal.

Across the cruise line member fleet of the Cruise Lines International Association [CLIA], the number of cruise ships equipped to connect to onshore power has more than doubled since 2018 and continues to grow. By 2028, some 239 ships that are able to connect to shore power are expected to be in service. That is based on the number of ships scheduled to be retrofitted and new ships on the order books specified for shore power connectivity. In 2022 the CLIA announced that its ocean cruise line members made a commitment that all ships calling at ports capable of providing onshore power supply will be equipped to either use shore power by 2035 or use alternative low-carbon technologies, as available, to reduce emissions in port.

Before outlining the details of the shore power project, I briefly explain to members what shore power is. Shore power is an emissions control measure used in ports that provides ships with a connection to the local landside power grid rather than utilising the ship's engines when at berth. Once a ship is safely alongside a berth, some of their engines or generators continue to run as ships require power to carry out their operations—whether that be for cargo unloading or to provide electricity for the ship's crew and passengers, including for lighting, heating and cooling, refrigeration, cooking and food preparation, or communication systems.

When ships can plug into renewable electricity from the shore, it allows them to power down their auxiliary engines, reducing CO2 emissions, noise and air pollution. To support the long-term viability of the New South Wales cruise industry, the Government is installing shore power facilities at White Bay Cruise Terminal. The project will provide a landside electricity supply for ships, powered by renewable energy. It will be the first project of its kind in Australia and something this Government is incredible proud of. By committing to this investment, the Government aims to promote environmentally sustainable practices and reduce carbon emissions and noise from cruise ships. That reinforces the Government's dedication to responsible and sustainable maritime operations in Australia.

The Port Authority of New South Wales has advised that the supply of certified renewable energy for shore power at the White Bay Cruise Terminal is estimated to achieve a reduction of up to 4,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum. The project will mean cleaner air and less noise for the residents of Balmain and Rozelle, with the precinct and population expected to grow in the coming decade once the Bays West metro opens. Phase one of the project will commence with shore power to the primary berth for cruise ships at White Bay Cruise

Terminal. The project puts Sydney on par with other global cities adopting the technology, such as in Europe, where shore-side electricity will have to be installed at all main ports by 2030.

With that critical equipment in high demand internationally, the White Bay Cruise Terminal Shore Power project is targeted for completion by late 2026. Once operational, it will be mandatory for any ship that docks at the terminal that is shore power enabled—which currently includes the vast majority of ships that use White Bay—to use shore power. That was the commitment the Government members made at the last election, and it is exactly what we are delivering. The installation of shore power will benefit the community by reducing both local air and noise emissions. The Port Authority of New South Wales will also continue investigations into how shore power may be developed at other port locations in the future. The supply of certified renewable energy for shore power at White Bay Cruise Terminal is estimated to achieve a reduction of up to 4,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum. That would be equivalent to taking 1,100 cars off Sydney's roads or planting 20,000 trees each year.

As well as the significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, the introduction of shore power would see a reduction in noise from cruise ships of up to 10 decibels. Powering down the ships' engines, which normally burn diesel fuel, would also reduce local air pollution and associated odours. Introducing shore power to Bays Port precinct is one way the New South Wales Government is helping to contribute positively to addressing climate change and reducing impacts on the local community. The Government is leading the way in shore power development. Following the Government's shore power announcement, New South Wales has been leading the way, with Port Authority being instrumental in establishing the Australian standards committee for shore power. The new national body will develop the technical shore power standards for all vessel types in Australia. Port Authority is also playing a crucial role in the development of international standards for shore power by supporting the development of the main global shore power standards.

Port Authority also chairs the international shore power working group responsible for preparing technical papers and global shore power guidelines for future projects by other ports and the maritime industry. The working group has direct participation from more than 30 key ports from around the globe. Shore power has been implemented at cruise berths at ports globally. The number of ports around the world implementing shore power is rising. Given the increasing need to respond to climate change globally, shore power availability at ports will continue to increase. With the increased availability of shore power, ships will continue to take up the technology.

Community expectations and environmental and sustainability goals have been the main drivers for the installation of shore power, both here and globally. Port Authority is continuing to transition the Bays Port's assets, infrastructure and operations to align with Port Authority's net zero targets, as well as maritime industry, government and community sustainability expectations. Port Authority's partners Cement Australia, CSL, Carnival Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean Cruises and MSC Cruises are committed to the future use of shore power in the Bays Port precinct. Port Authority has co-signed letters of agreement with its key industry partners, who have indicated a willingness to invest in retrofitting vessels for scheduling existing—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): 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.

Members

MEMBER FOR BARWON

The SPEAKER: I wish the member for Barwon all the best for his upcoming birthday. I struggle with that; I thought you were ageless. I did not think things such as birthdays applied to you, Roy.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome everyone in the gallery to question time in the Legislative Assembly. I warmly welcome the year 11 legal studies class from Trinity Catholic College, guests of the member for Charlestown. I also welcome to the Chamber organisers of the Lebanese Film Festival Jessica Khoury, Julia Lattouf and Priscilla Fayad, guests of the member for Fairfield. I acknowledge Clifford Munro, Geoffrey James, Terry Maunsell, Kathy Neilson, Patricia Reid, Margaret Morscheck and Ferghus Browner, guests of the member for Coogee. I also welcome Dr Keri Spooner, Deputy Mayor of Waverley, who, I understand, is a life adviser to the member for Coogee. I welcome students from schools in Hawkesbury, guests of the member for Hawkesbury. I acknowledge Vickie Burkinshaw, Candice Neilson, Janet Killgallon, Olivia Wighton and Delilah Grove from Wollundry Dreaming Youth Hub, who are guests of the member for Wagga Wagga.

I welcome students and teachers from Jamison High School, Cambridge Park High School, Penrith Selective High School, Penola Catholic College, and Nepean Creative and Performing Arts High School,

guests of the member for Penrith. I welcome Chloe Howley, a guest of the member for Riverstone. I acknowledge teachers and students from St Joseph's College, Lochinvar from the Maitland electorate, Trinity Catholic College from the Charlestown electorate and Inner Sydney High School from the Sydney electorate. I welcome teachers and students from Sarah Redfern High School from the Macquarie Fields electorate. Finally, I welcome to the Parliament school captains and prefects from high schools across New South Wales who are attending the Secondary School Student Leadership program conducted by the parliamentary education team. They are watching question time in the theatre. I had the pleasure of meeting some of those young student leaders with the member for Strathfield earlier. We welcome you to the Chamber.

Announcements

DEATH OF BRUCE EDWARD MACCARTHY, FORMER MEMBER FOR STRATHFIELD

The SPEAKER (11:07): I advise the House of the death of Bruce Edward MacCarthy, affectionately known as Mac, a former member for Strathfield. I extend the deepest sympathies of the House to his family on their loss.

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

Question Time

ELECTIVE SURGERY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:08): My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Nurses and Midwives' Association official Shaye Cavendish said that blaming nurses for elective surgery delays is "highly inappropriate and it really talks to the devaluing our members are feeling from this State Government". The Government promised nurses in March 2023 it would not be "dicking people around". Is that not exactly what the Government is doing?

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time. That is a bad start.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:09): Normally the Dixers come from this side. So that those in the gallery are aware, I will deal with the substantive part of the question first.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: I acknowledge the Nurses and Midwives' Association members who are in the gallery once again. In relation to comments about elective surgery, we said at the time—and this is a fact, believe it or not—that industrial action where the largest part of the workforce takes action over a couple of days will have an impact on health services. One generally cannot have elective surgery without nurses. When nurses decided to take industrial action, I was transparent and said that would lead to many hundreds of people not being able to get elective surgery. That is a fact. As a result, the Government made a commitment to invest around \$200 million into trying to catch up on that elective surgery over the course of time.

I know—as local members know, as healthcare professionals know and as nurses know—that people need that important elective surgery. I acknowledge that. That is the first part. Secondly, the question from the Leader of the Opposition is incredibly ironic, given that, on this side of the Chamber, we are not committed to the following three things. We are not committed—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr RYAN PARK: No, no, no.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: What we will not do, because what we do not believe addresses the challenges in our health system—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was not about the Government.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat.

[Interruption]

I know what the question was about. There is no point of order.

Mr RYAN PARK: I have fielded about 30 calls from across the Chamber about the Leader of the Opposition's day yesterday. This is what we will not do to fix the healthcare challenges: we will not introduce a wages cap, we will not privatise hospitals and we will not have a policy that was going to sack 1,100 nurses from 1 July last year.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will not conduct themselves in that way in the Chamber while I am in the chair. Members who continue to behave in an unparliamentary manner will be removed from the Chamber sooner rather than later.

REGIONAL SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:13): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is delivering vital school infrastructure for regional communities across New South Wales?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:13): I thank the member for Bega for that important question. I am pleased to inform the House that, since we came to government, teacher vacancies in the Bega electorate are down 40 per cent. As the member for Bega is well aware, not only did we inherit government in the middle of a teacher shortage crisis, but also the previous Government left office with fewer schools than it began with. That is true. It is not wrong; it is just the plain truth—which is very hard for Opposition members to hear. That was true right across New South Wales, but the member's question was specifically about regional communities. The truth is that the former Government did not build the schools it promised regional communities. It failed to plan for the future. But while Opposition members are abusing each other at polling booths, Government members are getting down to the business of building the schools that are needed in regional New South Wales.

For the member for Bega, there is an important upgrade to Batemans Bay High School to help the students realise high potential with greater opportunities for gifted education, more food tech facilities, VET kitchen improvements, woodwork and metalwork facilities. The Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education is well aware of the challenges involved with delivering school infrastructure in his community. We are proud to deliver for the Bungendore and Googong communities, which were let down by those opposite. The Government is getting on with the business of building those permanent facilities, which will open in 2027. We have released the designs for both those schools for community feedback. We are powering ahead in Bungendore and Googong. We are also powering ahead in Thurgoona in Albury, where the previous Government did not plan any schools for the growing community. That will open in 2027.

I am also proud of the work that the member for South Coast has been doing with the Government to deliver on a range of school upgrades. Those were not delivered in 12 years under the former Government, which included a previous local member in the Cabinet. I am particularly proud of the upgrade the Government is delivering for Vincentia High School. Demountables will no longer be a fixture there. Thanks to the advocacy of the member for South Coast, the school will get permanent buildings in a brand-new upgrade for that community. *[Extension of time]*

There is no better example of regional communities having been neglected than the community a little north of the South Coast electorate in Calderwood, near Kiama. As the Government announced the other day, a school will finally be opened for the growing community in Calderwood, after a decade of no planning and no work from the previous Government.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Ms PRUE CAR: Even though the member for Kiama had been in and out of the Liberal Party, and at one point was sitting around the Cabinet table, there was still no school at Calderwood until the election of a Labor government. If it was not for the member for Shellharbour, there would be no school even planned there. The member for Shellharbour stood up in this place time and again, but those opposite refused to listen to her saying that Calderwood needed a school for the growing community. It took the election of a Labor government to actually deliver on that commitment. New families are moving into that beautiful community. Why would one not build a brand-new house in a community like that? The former Government never had a plan for a public primary school there. Now, thanks to the Minns Labor Government and the advocacy of people like the member for Shellharbour, that school will be built.

I was so proud to stand with the member for Shellharbour and announce the site and the opening date for the school. The member for Kiama is all talk. He had the opportunity, and he did not come good. Government is an opportunity to do things for people, like delivering on schools in regional New South Wales. The Labor Government gets that. It really is the party of the bush. While Opposition members fight amongst themselves, we are delivering the schools that regional communities need in New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. They showed a lack of respect to the Deputy Premier during that answer. It was not just Opposition members; Government members were also unruly.

[Interruption]

Order! I am admonishing members for their lack of respect, and their response to my ruling is totally inappropriate. Members will be respectful while Ministers answer questions. I have spoken before about the lack of respect shown to the Deputy Premier. My ruling applies to all members, not just Opposition members. Government members will also come to order. This behaviour has to stop.

Mr James Griffin: Very bad.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Manly to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A for 15 minutes.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Manly left the Chamber at 11:19.]

Mr Jihad Dib: He's the best behaved of the lot of them.

The SPEAKER: He may be. Members should not interject in a vacuum because I can hear them clearly.

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (11:20): My question is directed to the Premier. With the Royal Easter Show starting in a few weeks, what measures are in place to prevent chaos for rail commuters if the suspension on Rail, Tram and Bus Union industrial action is lifted early?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:20): I would not fearmonger in the community. That is what Opposition members hope for. They want it to be cancelled. The only hope Opposition members have is industrial chaos, because they are absolutely hopeless in Parliament. They have been shocking all week. I make the point that the full bench of the Fair Work Commission made a decision and a determination about that. The reason it did that is because the New South Wales Government made a decision that it could not hand a blank cheque over to the union. If nurses were taking strike action and we were not paying them, the same rules would have to apply to rail workers. The shadow Treasurer in the other place publicly stated that we should withdraw that industrial instrument and pay them to go on strike. If that happened, what would happen to the industrial situation when it comes to railways in New South Wales? Would there be more strikes or fewer strikes if the Government was paying people to take industrial action? There would be way more.

This was a decision of the full bench of the Fair Work Commission. I am not going to canvass Federal Court rulings but, at the same time, I am not going to foster fear in the community. We will wait for that decision to be made, but the Government's determination in relation to a reasonable wage outcome for rail employees is sound. In my view, it has been validated by the fact that we have been able to negotiate multi-year award agreements with 60 per cent of the public service, right across the public sector. In other places, we have lifted the wages cap and introduced an independent industrial umpire.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (11:22): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health in his capacity representing the Minister for Housing in the other place. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is investing in social housing?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:22): I thank the member for Liverpool for the question. I know that in her electorate—and I speak on behalf of all members in this place—social housing issues and concerns take up a lot of time. I represent Minister Jackson in this place, and I know from discussions with her that it is a challenge. All members would agree that over the past two years the Premier, the planning Minister, the Minister for Housing, and the fair trading Minister have made it clear that housing is the number one issue. When it comes to cost-of-living challenges this Government knows that housing is the biggest burden. That is why we have leaned into trying to resolve this wicked problem that has been around for such a long time.

Part of that is social and affordable housing, and I will discuss that with members today. Part of it is key worker housing, particularly for healthcare workers. In my portfolio, an investment of around \$200 million has been made to improve accommodation for key healthcare workers. I was in the Upper Hunter the other day looking at some of the areas we are going to, like Dungog et cetera. As part of its budget commitment, the Minns Labor Government has made the largest ever investment in social housing, with \$5.1 billion being invested to deliver new public housing on well-located sites. That includes places like the Clothing Store precinct in North Eveleigh, which members would be aware of.

The Government is the largest landlord and, therefore, it has significant responsibilities to the over 250,000 people who require social housing. For those people, these are their homes, and that is important for all of us to remember. Apart from making the largest investment in social housing since I came into this place in 2011, I think all members would agree that the former Government's privatisation of the maintenance system in public housing did not work. It was a failure, and it was leading to problems for our constituents and our community. It was causing social unrest on some occasions, including in my electorate. Through our investment we are bringing repairs back in-house, which has ensured that work on 30,000 public homes that were in desperate need of repair has been carried out. I know that is important to the Minister in the other place, but it is also important to all of us as MPs. I am sure it is important to the member for Liverpool. [*Extension of time*]

In relation to the maintenance hub, we have tried to eliminate the confusion that I think all of us were dealing with for some years under the previous Government. It was confusing, disjointed and, from my perspective, in many cases it simply was not workable. It was not workable for residents and it was also not working for many local members. The new maintenance hub will mean improved responses with trained experts who can better address tenants' questions, coordinate work orders and deliver better outcomes for tenants. We always have to remember that it is a tenant's home, and it is no different to what anyone else calls home. As the largest landlord, we have a responsibility to ensure that we are doing everything we can so those maintenance orders are delivered and kept up to date.

In addition to that, the Government has a whole-of-government, 10-year homelessness strategy. That strategy sets out a vision and new directions to build the capacity of the New South Wales service system to prevent and respond to homelessness as quickly and effectively as possible over the next decade. As a part of that commitment we, as a government, are investing \$100 million into the Homelessness Innovation Fund to bring confidence back to the sector. This Government is not only caring and prepared to invest in this area; it is also determined to be there for the long haul. This 10-year strategy is all about outlining that commitment. We know that the issues of housing and social housing are important to everybody. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Premier and thank him for his determination to work through what is a wicked problem. I thank the planning Minister, the fair trading Minister, and the Minister for Housing in the other place, for their efforts.

CENTRAL WEST FLOODS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (11:27): My question is directed to the Minister for Recovery, Minister for Small Business, and Minister for the North Coast. Will the Minister advise the House on the progress of recovery for Central West flood victims, many of whom are still living in pods more than two years after that natural disaster?

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:28): I thank the member for Orange for his question and for his ongoing care and commitment to the people in not only his electorate but also the broader area of the Central West. Through his leadership within the Central West Community Leaders Forum, he has helped guide people through the process. I understand the challenges of that because I chair one. I will come to the question, because I know that people want timelines, but I will address some other things first. I visited Eugowra for its reflection service in November 2023. It was very moving, but I was also impressed by the strength and solidarity of the community. I met with community members and leaders, as well as mayors and general managers from Cabonne Council, Parkes Shire Council and Forbes Shire Council. I recently met again with those council leaders in my Parliament office with the member.

While in Eugowra I also met with the member for Cootamundra; Sam Farraway; Sarah Mitchell; Andrew Gee, the Federal member; and local leaders like Sean Hayes. I continue to be engaged with Sean and others. The recovery after significant disasters takes many years, even though from a community perspective we want it done quickly and we want it sped up. I have worked with people from all sides of politics to help impacted communities, and I recognise that there is a long tail of recovery. The Australian Red Cross knows this well. It documents just how long it can take. That is not to make excuses for anybody. By its very nature, a disaster creates chaos and challenges, and disruption to not only people's physical environment but also their psychological and emotional state.

Historically, governments have not communicated well during the long tail of recovery after a disaster. That is a work in progress. I am not blaming or singling out anybody; it is just a known fact. I am intensely aware of the impacts in the Central West region. As the Minister for Recovery, I continue to advocate for the best recovery possible. It is what people deserve. I look forward to visiting the region again soon in my capacity as the Minister for Recovery. I assure the people of New South Wales, wherever they live, that I will passionately support the recovery with the competence and compassion they deserve. [*Extension of time*]

It was evident from the 2019-20 bushfires that little preparation was done for such an extreme weather event. That also applied in 2022. We all then recognised collectively and collaboratively that we had to change how we prepared for disasters. That happened. It started under the previous Government and was done in a multipartisan way, and it continues under the Minns Government. That is the way I work, particularly with disasters: collaboration and inclusivity with all members. Previously there was a 97-3 split, where 97 per cent of funding was spent on recovery and 3 per cent on community preparation, mitigation and adaptation. The recent Colvin review report stated that is now down to 87-13. That is a good shift, but I am acutely aware that we need to shift the dial even more. That will not happen overnight; it will happen over the long term. But that is the direction we are going in, and that is the pathway I want to chart while I am the Minister for Recovery.

I have asked the Reconstruction Authority to give me some timelines for the member for Orange and his community. There is always a caveat on them because we have some tradie issues and all sorts of things happening in the Central West, as elsewhere, but we can do it indicatively, and that helps communities. We have to communicate with them because I know people are still living in pods. What we did differently in the Central West, and the member for Cootamundra knows this well, is we learnt from the Northern Rivers and allowed people to live in caravans on their patch—on the land at their homes.

REGIONAL TOURISM

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (11:33): My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier outline to the House the latest attractions in regional New South Wales that the Government is funding and why people should travel to the regions?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:33): People should travel to the regions. One of the newest reasons they should go is the Government's announcement today of a grant to bring the Seas The Day surfing carnival to Kingscliff Beach on the New South Wales North Coast, one of the most beautiful beaches on earth, from 21 to 22 June 2025. I am sure Geoff will be there hanging ten on a surfboard.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Richie will be there with some cream on. The free event includes screenings, live music, entertainment, guest speakers and cold plunges. Anyone up for a cold plunge?

Mr Stephen Kamper: Yes!

Mr CHRIS MINNS: This is the place for you, old mate Stevie. The thousands of people who attend this event will help boost local tourism, which is fantastic for the Northern Rivers after Tropical Cyclone Alfred to help that community get back on its feet. It is part of the \$30 million the Government is spending on grassroots sports, particularly for facilities to turbocharge the growth of women's and girls' sports across New South Wales. This is another reason why everybody should get to the regions. There are some fantastic events taking place right across New South Wales. I say to members on my own side too: Get to the regions. But maybe do not take a ministerial driver to do it. That is important. We have changed the rules in relation to that. Everyone would know about that. I was interested to see that one member took a very hard line. He was pious but I think quite courageous, and that was the Leader of The Nationals. In relation to ministerial drivers, according to *The Daily Telegraph*:

NSW Nationals leader Dugald Saunders said while he welcomed ministers visiting regional areas, it should not be at the expense of the taxpayer.

A very ethical stand, you would say. So, I was interested to read *The Sydney Morning Herald* on 21 February, where it was revealed that the Rural Fire Service provided a taxpayer-funded plane for Nationals leader Dugald Saunders to fly to the Hunter Valley to visit a series of wineries. Mr Saunders was the only passenger on the plane.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Premier will not be surprised that the Manager of Opposition Business rises on a point of order. Members will come to order. The member for Upper Hunter is too excited. He will calm down. The member for Rockdale will come to order. I need to hear the point of order. The Attorney General will come to order.

Mr Alister Henskens: There are two parts to my point of order. The first is under Standing Order 73. If the Premier wants to reflect on the member for Dubbo, he should do so by way of substantive motion. The second relates to relevance. The Premier is not being relevant to the question.

The SPEAKER: I am sympathetic to the second part of the point of order, but the member's call for a substantive motion is not relevant in this context.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: According to the Herald, Mr Saunders was the only passenger on the 34-minute RFS flight, and the trip included a wine tour and gifts of alcohol.

[*Members interjected.*]

Don't be so cynical. The National Party leader insists that the Hunter trip was work related and included meetings about grape fungus and the weather. You people are so cynical.

Mr Tim Crakanthorp: Mr Speaker, I seek an extension of time to hear about these wonderful regions.

The SPEAKER: I am being challenged by the member for Newcastle to grant an additional two minutes. I will do so, but I remind the Premier to be directly relevant.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I want people to get to the bush, and how they do it is important. Anyway, he says it was about the weather and grape fungus. You can imagine him sitting in the Hunter Valley working out whether the grape fungus was in the bottom of this bottle or the next bottle—"What about this bottle? Is it at the bottom of that one? We'd better get through three or four more."

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Botrytis is a very serious issue in the Hunter.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, relevance. Will the Premier come back to tourism and the money that the Government is not spending on tourism in regional New South Wales?

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. I do not uphold the point of order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We would not know any of this if it were not for the upper House inquiry, so thank you very much, Liberals and Nationals. That was a fantastic effort at dirt digging. They got to the bottom of this one, didn't they? This important research trip to get to the bottom of grape fungus involved free alcohol and a trip for the member by himself on an RFS plane. It was so important that I wonder how it went down in the recent by-election in Port Macquarie? The Leader of The Nationals is an optimist. When he was interviewed by the ABC two days before the by-election, he said, "In the last two days I've shaken 2,000 hands, and I'm very confident." Maybe the problem was that he met too many people. Next time he should stay home in Dubbo.

Do not feel sorry for the Leader of The Nationals. Despite one of the worst results that any major party has had in a by-election in 50 years, he reported to *The Daily Telegraph* that he was "stoked by the result". He came in second. It was a strong silver medal for the Leader of The Nationals. It is time that the National Party had a winner instead of a second-place loser like the member for Dubbo. When is Tooley going to step up? If we cannot have Tooley, then we will get that old surfie bodger, the member for Tweed. It is time we had some decent opposition in this Parliament.

The SPEAKER: The member for Tweed will come to order or he will be placed on a call.

Mr Geoff Provest: Oh, come on!

The SPEAKER: For those observing, that was not a genuine threat against the member for Tweed. He is okay for a bodgie surfer.

RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (11:41): My question is directed to the Premier. Does the Premier acknowledge that the Rail, Tram and Bus Union's claim that employers have "reneged on matters already agreed in principle" is an accurate reflection of the current state of negotiations?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:41): No. I am happy to say that I do not. The Government has been in conciliation with the Rail, Tram and Bus Union for weeks now. It is before the Fair Work Commission. I remind the House that moments before the order being granted by the full bench of the Fair Work Commission, the union publicly stated that the two parties were close. Now it is seeking an appeal in court, which is its constitutional right. I will not canvass the court's decision on this, and the Opposition should not jump the gun either. Let us wait for the court to make a call. I remind members that the decision was made by the full bench of the Fair Work Commission with the President presiding. The Government presented its case. Why? Because we cannot hand a blank cheque to the union. Our offer was reasonable. We are prepared to work through the issues that are remaining, but we will not do it by holding a gun to the head of the commuters of New South Wales.

HOUSING SUPPLY

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (11:42): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister explain how the Minns Labor Government's Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy will help address the housing crisis in New South Wales?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:42): I am happy to outline this for the member. He understands that we are going to need more homes if young people are going to live in the suburbs near to where they grew up, rather than having to staying at home for years. Yesterday, the Housing Industry Association put out a media release that said:

Australia's housing crisis is at a tipping point, and one of the answers lies in embracing gentle density to unlock the missing middle housing solutions.

We could not agree more. That is why we have introduced our Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy, which will bring back housing choice and housing types that are banned in many areas. These reforms will allow homes to fill the gap between high-rise apartments and greenfield development. We are talking about types of housing that includes townhouses, terraces, duplexes and small apartment buildings.

Those types of buildings have been part and parcel of the New South Wales housing supply since the earliest days of Sydney, but they have effectively been banned over the past few years. They have been disappearing under lots of local planning restrictions. Councils have effectively outlawed those types of housing. Small apartment buildings were not allowed to be built on over 60 per cent of land zoned for medium-density housing. Builders were stopped from doing the things that have shaped the city we live in. Some local planning controls across the length and breadth of New South Wales stopped simple housing types like dual occupancy. This is crazy stuff. It was a ridiculous situation that had to end.

We have ended up with less housing diversity than we had 100 years ago as a result of these planning rules. The Government's Low and Mid-Rise Policy fixes the egregious mistakes of past planning policies by allowing dual occupancies, townhouses, terraces and low- and mid-rise apartment buildings to be built around town centres, train stations, metro stations and light rail stations across greater Sydney, the Illawarra, the Central Coast and the Hunter. By reintroducing housing diversity, we can increase housing supply and redistribute growth around these well-serviced areas. More homes can be built that suit people with different income levels and people who are at different stages in their life so that they can move in or continue to live in the communities they have grown up in or helped to build over many years. Critical infrastructure capacity was a key consideration for the Government in determining the 171 locations. Issues such as water and sewerage, roads, bottlenecks and public transport capacity were all considered.

Mr Alister Henskens: And electoral margins.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I note that the member for Wahroonga has just chimed in. He does not actually like housing. He absolutely hates young people having the opportunity to get into a home. He will do anything in his power— *[Extension of time]*

The SPEAKER: The Minister will ignore the interjections of the member for Wahroonga and return to his substantive comments.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: I am exploding some of the myths about Government policy that people in this place are trying to create. Our assessment is based on information from planning and infrastructure agencies and from council workshops and submissions. The Government and the HIA are not the only ones that love our Low and Mid-Rise Policy; the industry is also backing it widely. These reforms have been strongly supported. The Property Council said:

The reforms will boost housing supply where it is needed most, increasing density in areas well-connected to transport and close to existing services, to ease housing pressures and provide more affordable housing options.

It went on to say that:

... families, first-home buyers, and downsizers will have more housing options to help them stay in their communities as their housing needs change, close to family and friends.

The CEO of the Urban Development Institute of Australia, who would be familiar to members opposite, said:

The Government is to be commended for taking on the challenge of tackling the missing middle in our housing market.

It is something that, for 20 years, no government past has been able to take on. The low and mid-rise housing reforms are expected to deliver around 112,000 homes over the next five years. These are good reforms that will help us reach our national housing targets.

Mr Adam Crouch: The next five years?

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: It will also mean that we can provide more homes for the next generation. Those opposite do not like this. They profess bipartisanship, but there are plenty of members opposite who hate this. These are big reforms that build on our affordable housing bonus, build on our Transport Oriented Development Program, build on our Housing Pattern Book and build on our other ongoing plans for reform. I hope we get support from the members opposite who have promised bipartisanship. These big reforms build on the work of the Housing Delivery Authority. These reforms are the foundation for recovering housing supply in New South Wales. They will make it easier for homes to be approved. The reforms will make New South Wales the State of "Yes"—yes to housing, yes to affordability, yes to construction, yes to more jobs and yes to more homes. In short, these changes are great for New South Wales, and members should get behind them.

NSW AMBULANCE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (11:48): My question is directed to the Premier. Earlier this week, a type 1 diabetic had to wait three hours for an ambulance after suffering a seizure in Taree. While the young man lay waiting for help, local ambulance crews were an hour away in Port Macquarie. Will the Government commit to directing NSW Ambulance to keep taxpayer-funded paramedic crews in their allocated region?

The SPEAKER: The Premier has indicated that he will refer the question to the Minister for Health.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:48): I have been around a while. I have seen this done 20 times before.

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order—

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

Mr Alister Henskens: The question was directed to the Premier. It was expressed in terms of his Government and asked for a commitment from the Government. He is the head of the Government. It is not a question that can be delegated to a different Minister.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: Before I rule on the point of order, I will hear from the Leader of the House.

Mr Ron Hoenig: The question was asked of the Premier. It is a question wanting a response on behalf of the Government. The Premier has referred it to the health Minister. Mr Speaker, I need only to refer to your ruling from a few weeks ago. Despite the argument from the Manager of Opposition Business, this is clearly a question of the Executive and one that the Premier can refer to the health Minister.

The SPEAKER: I appreciate the contributions of both members. I accepted the referral of the question to the Minister and will continue to allow questions to be referred where appropriate. This issue was canvassed recently. The New South Wales Legislative Assembly standing orders are silent on the matter. I ruled in accordance with the advice of the Clerk that the practice of the House of Representatives can apply. I will apply that practice. I will have further discussions with the Manager of Opposition Business about the earlier example. Prima facie, this question can be referred to the Minister for Health.

Mr RYAN PARK: I thank the member for Myall Lakes for her question. I met with her this week about a range of issues in her electorate. She is a strong advocate for healthcare services in the region, as I am sure all members are. We are having discussions with the Health Services Union [HSU] right now. Yesterday I had a discussion with Commissioner Morgan about these issues. We are working through them, as members would expect. I understand some of the concerns of the Health Services Union, particularly in areas with low numbers of paramedics.

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

Mr RYAN PARK: I assure the member that the Government, unlike members on the other side, adopts this unusual practice of engaging with the workforce and their representatives. We actually meet with unions, and we will continue to do that in relation to the HSU issue. It is resolved in many areas but not across the State. There are pockets where we need to continue to do work. The member has my assurance that we will continue that engagement. I will continue to have those discussions with other members, the HSU and NSW Ambulance about an important issue, as we work through a reform piece.

There are often challenges in reform, particularly in the way in which things are rolled out in rural, regional and remote parts of New South Wales. I take that very seriously. I do not, for one moment, think that something that works in the city can necessarily apply immediately in large regional centres, like where I am from, or in the more rural or remote settings that the member is fortunate enough to represent. I assure the House and the member that discussions with the union and NSW Ambulance are ongoing. As I said, as recently as yesterday I had a discussion with Commissioner Morgan. We will continue to work through that. I will continue to update the House, and members can continue to speak to me about the issue, particularly if they have the kind of local concerns that the member has.

LITHIUM ION BATTERY SAFETY

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (11:53): My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on how New South Wales is leading the way in ensuring the safe use of lithium ion batteries?

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:54): I thank the member for Wallsend for her question. Many members would have heard a press announcement and conference this morning discussing the issue, also involving the Minister for Energy. We have been doing a lot of work together in the energy, environment and emergency services space regarding lithium ion batteries. It would not be the first time that members have heard me talking about them. Technology is powering many items in many parts of our daily lives, and we are seeing more items being used. It could be anything from our toothbrushes and mobile phones to micromobility scooters and power tools. More and more lithium ion batteries are becoming part of our everyday life. But the major issue is the number of fires we are seeing as a result of that use. There is very little regulation, and work is being undertaken with the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading to make sure that we get better batteries. At the heart of the issue is the element of community safety. This Government has introduced nation-leading laws to put the onus on suppliers to play a greater role in battery collection, disposal, recycling and education. All those elements are important.

As things stand at the moment, we do not have full oversight of where the batteries are. Different States can opt in, but we want to be the first State to do it. We want to lead the charge and make sure that we get it right. The other really important piece is education. People generally try to do the right thing. I do not think people go out of their way to do the wrong thing, but they do the wrong thing inadvertently, especially when it comes to the disposal of batteries, what to do with batteries and how to store them. I have said a number of times that even charging the batteries is incredibly dangerous. This year our firefighters responded to 384 incidents relating to lithium ion battery fires alone. Less than a month ago, we heard about a tragedy when a fire started in a home because of an e-scooter. Thank goodness, the fire was able to put out another fire very quickly. We see other fires relating to cars and other dangerous items. But that does not mean that we just say, "There is nothing we can do." We have to do something about it. We have to set up proper regulations, proper rules and a proper understanding of what we can do. There are also expectations on people who manufacture or import the batteries. *[Extension of time]*

There is a big difference between quality batteries and poor quality batteries. In the Northern Rivers area last year somebody had imported a lot of cheap batteries and kept them taped up. The heat and humidity caused a massive fire. We have to make sure that regulations are in place. Over 1,000 people have needed to be evacuated from various properties because of lithium ion battery fires. Fires that occur in rubbish bins, rubbish trucks or waste facilities are much more complex to put out because of the gases that are released. We have heard about a lot of bin fires—there was one last weekend. We do not want any more bin fires occurring.

As I said, the Government will introduce a bill to make sure there are enhancements in design, packaging, importation and storage. We will make the scheme mandatory, not only to ensure that there is a strong foundation but also because we want everybody to be a part of it. It gives New South Wales the strongest powers in the country to ensure that we respond to the lithium ion battery issue. We are working with Fire and Rescue and Minister Whan and his TAFE crew on some great education practices. I always think we should look to the future with eyes of excitement and unbridled joy, but we must accept that there are some challenges, and how we deal with them is important. Lithium ion batteries are here to stay. Let us make sure we deal with them well.

RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:59): My question is directed to the Premier. The Government's Aerotropolis Sector Plan contains a table showing the state of infrastructure in 2027, 2030 and 2040. It shows that in 2040, Western Sydney rail extensions from Bradfield to Macarthur and Leppington, and from St Marys to Tallawong, will be under construction but not yet complete. When does the Premier estimate those extensions will be completed?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:00): I cannot give that figure. The Leader of the Opposition is talking about billions of dollars of capital works investment in public transport, and that will be a massive decision for future governments.

[Interruption]

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. What is that noise? Is it coming from outside?

Ms Sophie Cotsis: It's the Transport Workers' Union. It's the owner-drivers, so don't worry.

Mr Paul Scully: It's Sophie—Sophie's gone over the top.

Ms Sophie Cotsis: They love the Premier. That's a heartfelt thanks to the Premier.

Mr Paul Scully: That's a honk for the Premier.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I have been informed that the noise from Macquarie Street is not a protest; it is an expression of joy. They have a funny way of showing it, but it is fantastic. I make a couple of points in relation to metros. They are decisions for future governments involving billions of dollars of spending. I will be honest with the Leader of the Opposition: The money has not been allocated for construction of those extra links to metro stations. But it is important to put it in perspective. During the previous Government's entire 12-year run, it completed 21 metro stations across the metropolitan Sydney area. Right now this Government is completing 25 metro stations across the Sydney CBD—the largest public transport spend in the history of New South Wales.

The SPEAKER: Opposition members will come to order. I call the member for Hawkesbury to order for the first time. I call the member for Oatley to order for the third time.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am sorry, but these are absolute facts. The former Minister for Transport was happy to report to the House that we had repeated instances of the previous Minister for Transport saying that he would cancel the south-west metro and not go ahead with it. Sydney Metro West, for example, had a \$16 billion budget, but when we came to office the number was, in fact, \$26 billion.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: These figures cannot just be erased from the record.

The SPEAKER: The Premier will resume his seat. 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. The question was not about Liberal-Nationals projects and the ribbons the Government is cutting. The question was about two rail extensions.

The SPEAKER: I understand that the Leader of the Opposition may not like the answer, but the Premier was directly relevant from the very start of it. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I am sorry, but this is the biggest public transport spend in the history of New South Wales. It is one of the largest spends on infrastructure anywhere in the world.

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

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Oatley left the Chamber at 12:02.]

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The idea that the member for Oatley could claim credit for Sydney Metro West—what the hell did he do about it? Absolutely nothing. He kept his head down.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That should be his slogan at the next election—"Mark Coure kept his head down".

TRANSPORT SECTOR GIG WORKERS

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (12:03): My question is addressed to the fantastic Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister please update the House on what the Government is doing to ensure that gig workers and owner-drivers in the transport sector are receiving minimum wages and conditions?

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:04): I give a huge thanks to the member for Riverstone. Honk if you're happy with our fantastic Premier. This is a big day for owner-drivers, who are outside Parliament House today. They are mum-and-dad owner-drivers from Western Sydney. I thank the member for Riverstone for his very strong

advocacy. In November 2023 the Minns Labor Government began the work of restoring the State's industrial relations system. We smashed the wages cap and brought back the Industrial Court, and this afternoon I will introduce another bill to continue the progressive reform of the State's industrial relations system and deliver on another election commitment.

The bill will improve the lives of thousands of New South Wales workers in the road transport industry. I acknowledge that the Transport Workers' Union fought for over 15 years for the bill. I congratulate those who are outside Parliament House today. The bill will do two very important things. First, it will amend the Industrial Relations Act to create a mechanism for transport gig workers to access the protections of chapter 6 of that Act. In its current form, chapter 6 applies to owner-drivers and taxis and provides for the making of enforceable industrial instruments, like awards and other agreements to set pay and conditions. As a result, numerous chapter 6 instruments have been and are enforced throughout the New South Wales transport industry.

The Government's amendments will provide a gateway for transport gig workers in New South Wales to gain the bare minimum terms and conditions for the first time. I acknowledge the important work the Federal Government has done, but it is important that New South Wales provides a mechanism for transport gig workers when workers or industry want to utilise our State system. The Government is creating a mechanism for the industry, the owner-drivers and the workers to go to the independent umpire, put forward their arguments and have the independent umpire set the minimum pay and conditions. Every other Australian has that ability except for those workers.

Our legislation will be complementary to the Federal Government's gig worker reforms and follows extensive consultation. We did a lot of work in opposition. In 2022 the Premier announced that a Labor government would do this if we were elected. We have been negotiating the industry, the platforms and the unions for a very long time. It is important that we achieve this modernisation to ensure that the laws are fit for purpose. As members know, gig workers have very few workplace entitlements. Their status as independent contractors means that they do not have access to the entitlements that any other worker does.

Ms Jodie Harrison: Shame!

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: It is a shame. Gig workers do not have guaranteed minimum wages and working hours, or paid leave provisions. [*Time expired.*]

Mr Warren Kirby: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired. I must be consistent. The member for Riverstone was too late in seeking the call. There was no request for additional information and the Minister's time expired. I call the member for Wagga Wagga.

REGIONAL YOUTH CRIME

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (12:07): My question is directed to the member for Mount Druitt in his capacity as chair of the Legislative Assembly Committee on Law and Safety. I note that the committee recently visited Wagga Wagga as part of its inquiry into regional youth crime. Will the chair provide an update on the committee's work to reduce the rate of youth offending in New South Wales?

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:08): I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his question and for his strong advocacy for his community. I welcome to the gallery our guests from Wagga Wagga, Janet Killgallon and Candice Neilson from Youth Justice.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The member for Mount Druitt will be heard in silence.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: I also welcome Vickie Burkinshaw from the Wollundry Dreaming Youth Hub and note an apology received from Leanne Sanders, CEO of the Youth Hub, due to an illness. We also have with us two of the young participants from the hub, Olivia and Dee. Members may be aware that the Committee on Law and Safety initiated an inquiry into community safety in regional and rural New South Wales in 2024. So far, the committee has conducted public hearings in Bourke, Broken Hill, Kempsey and Sydney. The committee has received nearly 200 written submissions and hosted a number of roundtable discussions. Earlier this month, as the member for Wagga Wagga alluded to, the committee visited Wagga Wagga for a roundtable discussion and met with stakeholders involved in the Riverina Short Term Remand Pilot program. This initiative seeks to reduce the number of young people aged 10 to 17 years—

The SPEAKER: I direct the member for North Shore to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

[*Pursuant to standing order the member for North Shore left the Chamber at 12:09*]

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: —who experience avoidable short-term remand with a particular focus on addressing the over-representation of Aboriginal young people in custody. The program offers outreach and early intervention services, including mentoring and educational support, to divert young people away from the justice system. The committee heard about how the strong collaboration between the New South Wales Government, particularly the Department of Education, is helping to deliver a well-coordinated response to challenges faced by young people in Wagga Wagga. The committee also spent time with young people in the Wollundry Dreaming First Nation hub. We found this program very impressive. This is a community-driven initiative providing skill development opportunities in a culturally safe environment. Children attend after school, share a meal together, participate in cultural activities and receive assistance with homework. Due to space constraints, the hub can only accommodate 40 children at any one time, even though they receive 10 referrals—

Dr Joe McGirr: I seek an extension of time. I ask that members please listen to the answer. We have guests who have travelled a long way to hear this.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for his request. An additional two minutes is granted.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: We were privileged to witness a talent show where the children shared speeches, cultural dance and artwork reflecting their connections to family and country. We were inspired by the speeches given by 10-year-olds Olivia and Dee, who are both in the gallery. Olivia spoke about the values she learned from the hub, and I quote:

...this is what it means to me; respect and kindness to not only the people around you but also yourself and the beautiful world that we live in.

Dee gave an inspiring speech about her aspirations for the future. She said:

...When I grow up, I want to be a youth worker. I want to help make a difference in the lives of Aboriginal young people. I have seen firsthand how hard it can be for young people. My uncle is in State care. It makes me feel sad and worried. I wish I can help him, and I want to help others like him.

These inspiring words highlight how programs such as those delivered at the Wollundry youth hub are working and helping to divert young people away from the justice system. We also visited Wagga Wagga Police Station, where we had discussions about some of the specific issues and challenges in the Riverina police district. On behalf of the committee, I thank Superintendent Spliet and Inspector Jillian Gibson for meeting with us and sharing their insights. The committee is preparing its first report, which will be tabled in May this year. Our visit to Wagga Wagga will help inform the recommendations that the committee makes in its final report. Once again, I thank the member for Wagga Wagga.

TAFE NSW TEACHERS

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (12:13): I was also at the public hearing in Wagga Wagga. I had a wonderful time and I, too, welcome our guests to Parliament today.

The SPEAKER: I will extend that indulgence to the member for Cabramatta. What is the member's question?

Mr TRI VO: My question is addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister please update the House on the progress of converting TAFE NSW teachers from temporary to permanent?

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:14): I thank the member for Cabramatta for his question. I also thank him for being a member who understands the importance of vocational training for the people in his electorate and the great career opportunities that that gives his constituents. I am pleased to update the House on the conversion of casual teaching staff to permanent roles at TAFE NSW as part of the Minns Labor Government's commitment to rebuilding TAFE after a decade of neglect by those opposite. The Government understands that we need a strong and robust teaching workforce to deliver skilled workers across industries in this State, from critical infrastructure like housing and roads to the nurses and support workers who hold our communities together.

That is why we have made building and supporting the NSW VET teaching workforce a strategic priority as part of our reform agenda under the NSW Skills Plan. We have doubled down on its commitment to convert staff. In 2022, in the last year of the former Government, over 50 per cent of the teaching workforce did not have the security of permanent positions in TAFE. I am pleased to say that, as at the beginning of this year, 1,700 casual and temporary staff had been moved into permanent roles—just in time for semester 1. That is only the beginning. The Government will keep working to ensure that staff have the security they need to deliver services.

I highlight a couple of electorates and areas where we have seen really impressive figures. Just by chance, the first one is Port Macquarie, where we have seen 56 new local TAFE teachers start with the certainty of permanent roles since we came to government. I can imagine some of them might have been shaking the hand of the Leader of The Nationals as he campaigned for the by-election.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I note that the Chair is currently the member for Port Macquarie. I have that role as well.

Mr STEVE WHAN: The acting member for Port Macquarie will be interested to know about that. But has the Leader of The Nationals not been quiet this week? He has not asked a question all week. He has hardly taken a point of order and I think he might have received only one warning this week. While we were making great progress with TAFE teachers in Port Macquarie, we saw the Coalition duking it out. If you believe the press, it was something like the Rumble in the Jungle comes to Port Macquarie. It was going to be the big showdown. But what ended up happening is The Nationals did not manage to get off their lowest number of seats in this place in 99 years. Their big talk was not followed up by a win in the by-election, so we have seen a very quiet Leader of The Nationals. [*Extension of time*]

The follow-up from that campaign has been very interesting. We can almost hear The Nationals tooling up for a leadership contest. The machinations are continuing. We have seen other great figures around the State. For example, the member for Tamworth will be thrilled to know that since 2023 there have been 70 permanent positions converted in his area—a great boost in certainty for his TAFE—and 58 positions across the Northern Rivers. I am thrilled to be here this week with the member for Lismore on the front bench. I am moderately jealous that in one week she has had the same number of questions from the Opposition that I have had in 18 months. She has hit them for six, so I doubt those opposite will be following up with many more. What is exciting about the representation the member for Lismore provides is that now the Labor Government has Ministers on the boundaries of Queensland and Victoria. In fact, we are the only party in this place to have that. It is very exciting. That is because, as the Minister for Roads tells us all the time, we are the party of the bush.

Committees

MODERN SLAVERY COMMITTEE

Government Response

Mr MICHAEL DALEY: I table the Government response to report No. 3 of the Modern Slavery Committee, entitled *Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 – Part 2*, dated March 2025.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Wagga Wagga Inland Rail Line Route

Petition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to identify and preserve a suitable easement for a rail bypass of Wagga Wagga, and to commit to suitable safety and accessibility features for associated infrastructure, received from **Dr Joe McGirr**.

Bills

PORTS AND MARITIME ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT (WHITE BAY CRUISE TERMINAL—SHORE POWER) BILL 2024

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:21): I continue my contribution to debate on the Ports and Maritime Administration Amendment (White Bay Cruise Terminal—Shore Power) Bill 2024. I acknowledge the member for Balmain for bringing this private member's bill to this place. It is based on community consultation, which is what good members do. While the Government opposes the bill, I acknowledge that it comes from a position of goodwill and represents the member trying to stand up for the interests of her community.

The Port Authority has co-signed letters of agreement with its key industry partners who have indicated a willingness to invest in retrofitting vessels or scheduling existing shore power capable vessels to connect to shore power facilities in Bays Port, once delivered. Letter of intent signatory partners with current or future vessels visiting White Bay and Glebe Island, such as CSL—ship operator for Cement Australia—and Carnival Cruise

Line, are preparing to invest in their fleet to be ready to connect to shore power facilities in Bays Port, once it is available. The cost of retrofitting vessels for onboard shore power infrastructure is significant, and can be taken as an encouraging sign of their commitment to modernising their fleet in line with government and community expectations of sustainability. The shore power project is a direct response to community feedback in relation to cruise vessels berthed at White Bay Cruise Terminal, aiming to continue to build community trust and confidence in the port's ability to operate into the future in a more sustainable manner.

The investment and the use of shore power will also reduce local particulate matter and noise emissions from cruise vessels berthed at White Bay Cruise Terminal, directly addressing community sentiment and feedback about these issues. This will strengthen the relationship that the Port Authority has with the local community, and continue to build community trust and confidence in the port's ability to operate into the future in a more sustainable manner. The Port Authority's commitment to implementing shore power in Sydney has encouraged other ports in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region to investigate the feasibility of installing shore power infrastructure. If ultimately implemented, it will allow further reduction in global carbon emissions and a potential increase in the deployment or retrofit of shore power capable vessels visiting Sydney.

The shore power project has five key objectives. The first is to support the New South Wales Government and maritime industry net zero target by facilitating reduction of scope 1 emissions for vessel operators and scope 3 emissions for the Port Authority and Port Authority tenants at Bays Port. The second is to contribute to environmental outcomes by reducing noise and local air emissions when cruise ships and bulk vessels are at berth and aid the transition to low carbon maritime supply chains. The third is to highlight the strategic importance of cruise operations at White Bay to industry and the State's economy, and the fourth is to move towards port decarbonisation and operate more sustainably. The final objective is to deliver a world-class, sustainable infrastructure upgrade at the Bays Port precinct that is carbon neutral and delivers efficient management of energy.

The White Bay Cruise Terminal shore power delivery coincides with demand from the cruise industry. Net zero commitments by the Port Authority's partners, in conjunction with the letter of intent, creates strong demand for shore power at White Bay by the start of operations. As a result, the number of shore power capable ships is projected to significantly increase in the coming years as more vessels are retrofitted with shore power connection capability. Conversion of existing vessels may increase White Bay Cruise Terminal shore power utilisation as these ships relocate to the Southern Hemisphere during the European cruise off-season. Shore power at Bays Port will be a first for any port in the Southern Hemisphere for cruise ships and presents an opportunity for the New South Wales Government to be a leader in enabling sustainable port operations.

In 2011 the International Maritime Organization [IMO] released a set of international mandatory measures as part of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships [MARPOL]. The measures require vessel operators to reduce their scope 1 carbon emissions and increase efficiency to achieve short- and long-term carbon reductions. In 2018 the IMO adopted a greenhouse gas strategy that aims to reduce carbon intensity by 40 per cent by 2030, and to pursue efforts towards 70 per cent by 2050. In June 2021 the IMO adopted amendments to the MARPOL annex, introducing an Energy Efficiency Design Index for existing ships in addition to the requirement for new builds, which has been mandatory since 2011.

Also, the Carbon Intensity Indicator requires ships to reduce operational carbon emissions for all vessels above 5,000 gross tonnage. Carbon intensity links the greenhouse gas emissions to the amount of cargo carried over distance travelled. These measures combine technical and operational approaches to improve the energy efficiency of ships. This, along with an increasing global response to climate change and pressure from local communities, has resulted in a growing appetite for cruise and other vessel operators to retrofit their fleet and connect to ports with shore power facilities as part of their initiatives to reduce the carbon emissions of their operations.

Shore power has been implemented at around 35 cruise ports worldwide. Another 30 ports will be planned or funded by 2027. This will increase as ports respond to global climate change. As shore power is mandated in some regions, including Europe from 2030, California and East Asia, we anticipate that the growth in shore power availability at ports will increase in the coming years, and the provision of shore power infrastructure powered by net renewable energy will quickly become an expectation for all major cruise terminals in the world. Shore power is proven technology, currently available and widely seen as a feasible solution to reduce carbon emissions in port operations.

Most other publicised emission reduction alternatives, including zero carbon alternative fuels such as methanol or hydrogen, are years away from commercial deployment at scale. While there is a continued reliance on current vessel fleet and fuels, shore power infrastructure is one of the few currently feasible options to reduce carbon emissions from the maritime industry. Even with the full deployment of alternative fuels, current research concludes that shore power will be a requirement for industry, as the preference will be to switch to electric power while at berth to preserve the alternative fuel stores held on ships. The new European Commission alternative

fuels infrastructure regulation requires European ports that meet the demand requirement to install shore power by 1 January 2030. The regulation also requires passenger ships and container ships that visit those ports to connect to shore power unless they can demonstrate use of another zero emission technology.

The conversion of existing vessels is estimated to increase the use of White Bay Cruise Terminal shore power as these ships relocate to the Southern Hemisphere in the European cruise off-season. The demand for shore power capability in ports is therefore expected to increase. There has been an increase in mandates for shore power across the globe, predominantly by European and North American ports. I now turn to the interaction with Commonwealth legislation. To maintain Sydney's status as a pre-eminent cruise destination, the Port Authority needs to maintain its cruise infrastructure to meet the cruise industry's future needs. The Government is concerned that using the blunt instrument of legislation to mandate shore power for all cruise ships could have the perverse outcome of reducing cruise visitation, which is not what we want for our State. As outlined, a contractual approach between the Port Authority of New South Wales and cruise lines is preferred to require shore power use by ships that are able to connect to shore power.

Transport for NSW advises that, if this legislated mandate is adopted, there is a risk of operational inconsistency with the Commonwealth Navigation Act 2012. Specifically, there is a risk that any new legislation would be operationally inconsistent with section 246 of the navigation Act, which gives the Australian Maritime Safety Authority [AMSA] the power to issue written directions to vessels. The Australian Maritime Safety Authority marine notice limiting sulphur emissions at Sydney Harbour is issued under section 246 and provides options for complying, including the use of shore power. That is different to the proposed amendment moved by the member for Balmain, which would make shore power a requirement. If passed, both the proposed section 105D and Commonwealth legislation may confer a power to issue directions. Those directions may be issued inconsistently, and would rely on cooperation between AMSA and the Port Authority to ensure that directions with different requirements are not being issued to the same vessels.

I also highlight the current legislative framework addressing air pollution in Australia. MARPOL addresses the prevention of ship-sourced pollution, including air pollution. It is implemented in Australia through the Protection of the Sea (Prevention of Pollution from Ships) Act 1983, the Navigation Act and related Commonwealth marine orders. In New South Wales the Marine Pollution Act 2012 gives effect to MARPOL, which requires vessels to use fuel not exceeding 0.5 per cent mass-by-mass sulphur content. In Sydney Harbour, an Australian Maritime Safety Authority marine notice requires certain cruise ships to either use fuel with 0.1 per cent mass-by-mass sulphur content when at berth or an alternative measure including a power source external to the vessel, such as shore power. This requirement is unique to cruise vessels in Sydney Harbour.

However, an AMSA marine notice will likely continue to be desirable in directing cruise vessels berthing at the Overseas Passenger Terminal, and those at White Bay that are not shore power capable, to maintain the low-sulphur emission controls that have been in place since 2016. MARPOL is an international convention designed to prevent ship-sourced pollution. It is administered by the International Maritime Organization. It is enforced in 160 countries, applying to 99 per cent of the world's merchant tonnage. It facilitates global trade by ensuring international ships can access ports under consistent environmental standards. MARPOL includes six technical annexes covering oil, noxious liquid substances in bulk, harmful substances in packaged form, sewage, garbage and air pollution.

Commonwealth legislation gives effect to MARPOL and, except for air pollution, which is solely implemented by Commonwealth legislation, all States and the Northern Territory have complementary legislation giving effect to MARPOL in their respective jurisdictions. Under that legislative arrangement, New South Wales legislation must be consistent with relevant parts of both the pollution prevention Act and MARPOL. Since January 2020 MARPOL has required vessels to use fuel with 0.5 per cent sulphur content, which is a change from the previous 3.5 per cent sulphur content requirement. AMSA surveyors regularly conduct checks of ships visiting Sydney Harbour to ensure compliance with fuel requirements in its marine notice. The marine notice was first introduced in December 2016 and has been extended three times—in 2019, 2021 and 2023—by the relevant Commonwealth Minister at the request of the New South Wales Government.

I now provide some global context to the legislation. Globally, the California Air Resources Board was the first regulatory agency to mandate shore power use for specific ports. Those rules have now expanded to two additional ship classes and a broader set of call criteria. The regulation only applies to passenger ships that cumulatively make five or more visits annually to a single port. However the implementation of a mandatory requirement in California to date has not led to high percentages of ships connecting to shore power. In 2021 China and in 2022 California mandated shore power on every cruise call where landside shore power infrastructure exists. By 2030 the Trans-European Transport Network [TEN-T] core network requires that ports that determine there is utilisation demand, and that the costs are warranted, will have shore-side electricity installed and presumably available for cruise ships. By 2026 Norway will install shore power for all cruise ship calls.

I conclude by acknowledging the important contribution of the cruise industry to our State. This year will bring 23 maiden cruise ship arrivals to New South Wales ports, carrying hundreds of thousands of passengers eager to explore Sydney and New South Wales. In 2023-24 the cruise industry contributed around \$4.41 billion to the New South Wales economy, an increase of 60.4 per cent on the 2022-23 financial year. We acknowledge that community feedback has prompted the member for Balmain to introduce this private member's bill, and we make a commitment to continue to work with the Balmain and Rozelle communities to ensure that the shore power project delivers on its environmental and community benefits. As I have said before, the member has brought the bill to the House out of goodwill. However, given that the established alternative model for mandating shore power has industry support and will deliver on the Government's election commitment, the Government will not support the bill.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:40): I contribute to debate on the Ports and Maritime Administration Amendment (White Bay Cruise Terminal—Shore Power) Bill 2024 on behalf of the Opposition. The Opposition supports the need for shore power capability for the cruise industry in New South Wales—in fact, we encourage it. However, we feel that mandating a set date will have negative impacts on the cruise and tourism industry, so the Opposition will oppose the bill. Under the former Coalition Government, it was announced the White Bay Cruise Terminal would be the first shore-powered cruise berth in the Southern Hemisphere; however, we did not mandate that ships use the service. Shore power has the potential to provide a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and could see a reduction in noise from cruise ships of up to 10 decibels. Powering down ships' engines, which would normally burn diesel fuel to use shore power, would also reduce local air pollution and associated odours.

I acknowledge that the member for Balmain has been working very actively on behalf of her community, some of whom are in the gallery. I acknowledge the hard work that they are doing for not just their local community but also the implications globally. I say to them that even if the bill does not pass today, the work they have done to bring it to the attention of Parliament and the voices that are being heard in this Chamber are important. While the current preference of the Government and the Port Authority is for policy solutions, incentives to bring about improvements in the cruise ship industry and penalties for those who create greater noise emissions should be reviewed if they are not working for the community, as we have heard in the Chamber today. There should be a willingness for those to be reviewed.

Already 35 per cent of the global capacity of cruise ships is equipped with shore-powered connections, and I note that the member for Coogee reflected on the Government's data that 80 per cent of ships that attend White Bay have shore power capability. Cruise lines are committed to connecting to shore-side electricity when it is available and to working closely with ports to make that possible. As the global capacity improves, shore power will clearly be an important step towards reducing emissions from the industry. In the past financial year, according to the Australian Cruise Association:

New South Wales saw exceptional growth in cruise tourism, with total economic output reaching \$4.4 billion, a 60.4% increase from the previous year.

As the primary turnaround port, Sydney drove much of that growth with an increase in cruise ship visits, particularly high-value turnaround ships. Cruising offers couples and families a safe, reliable and fun experience that can be more affordable than other options, particularly in a cost-of-living crisis. Part of providing those options is ensuring the availability of cruise ships to service public demand. There is likely universal agreement across the Chamber on the positive aspects of shore power. However, with this bill, there are concerns about how best to implement that capability.

The Opposition is advised that the challenge of bringing in a mandate for shore power from 1 January 2027 would potentially see a reduction in the number of cruise ships available to service the New South Wales economy. Some cruise operators have highlighted that the mandate could see the withdrawal of ships from the market and could therefore have a negative flow-on effect on consumers, workers and primary producers that service the industry. As such, the Opposition is not convinced that this bill is the best approach, and that is why we will oppose it.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (12:44): I contribute to debate on the Ports and Maritime Administration Amendment (White Bay Cruise Terminal—Shore Power) Bill 2024. The New South Wales Government acknowledges the significant role played by the cruise industry in contributing to the economic vitality of the regions. The cruise industry benefits the wider New South Wales economy through employment and the supply of goods and services from a range of New South Wales businesses to the sector. Regional locations such as Newcastle, Eden, Trial Bay and Batemans Bay are increasingly being added to itineraries, providing opportunities for local tourism and hospitality operators and boosting local economies.

Newcastle is well positioned to facilitate growth of the cruise market to bring more cruise passengers to the Newcastle, Hunter and Central Coast regions in the next decade and beyond, providing opportunities for local tourism and hospitality operators and boosting the local economy. In the 2023-24 cruise season there were 16 cruise ship visits to Newcastle. In October 2023 the Port Authority of New South Wales announced it would expand its cruise facilitation offering in New South Wales to include cruise vessel calls within Newcastle Harbour. To enable that, the Port Authority entered a 10-year licence agreement with the Port of Newcastle, under which the Port Authority will facilitate its own cruise operations within Newcastle Harbour at Channel Berth.

Following the signing of the cruise licence agreement between the Port of Newcastle and the Port Authority of New South Wales, a Newcastle cruise memorandum of understanding [MOU] was developed between the Port of Newcastle, the Port Authority of New South Wales, seven local councils and two tourism organisations. The MOU establishes a united and coordinated stakeholder initiative to promote cruise growth and improve the visitor experience in the Newcastle and Hunter regions. It is based on an existing arrangement the Port Authority has in the Port of Eden with Bega Valley Shire Council and Eden Tourism Network that has delivered strong growth in cruises there.

The MOU commits parties to making an annual financial contribution that funds a cruise coordinator to support the growth and development of the cruise industry across the Hunter region. The cruise coordinator will lead the development and marketing of cruise-ready tourism products for cruise lines and cruise ground handlers to support the growth and development of the industry across the Hunter region. I acknowledge the local organisations that are party to the MOU: City of Newcastle, Lake Macquarie City Council, Cessnock City Council, Singleton Council, Port Stephens Council, Maitland City Council, Central Coast Council, Destination Sydney Surrounds North and Newcastle Tourism Industry Group.

The cruise industry has made great strides in sustainability in recent years, understanding that ports need to demonstrate they are prepared to be good neighbours to enjoy the support of their community. The Glebe Island White Bay Community Liaison Group [CLG] is a forum to inform the local community and other stakeholders about activities at the historic working port in the heart of Sydney Harbour. The CLG provides Port Authority of New South Wales and port stakeholders the opportunity to discuss port operations with the community and gather feedback on any initiatives being considered. The CLG is made up of an independent chair and community representatives from the Balmain, Rozelle and Pyrmont areas, and it meets every quarter. Membership of the CLG is for a three-year term and is decided through a community application process. The current CLG membership term began in September 2024.

The purpose of the Glebe Island White Bay Community Liaison Group is to provide a forum for information exchange and consultation with the local community and other port stakeholders about activities at the port. The core objectives of the group are to facilitate discussion between the Port Authority of New South Wales and port stakeholders regarding port operations, provide a forum to inform the local community and other stakeholders about port activities, provide the Port Authority with an opportunity to gather feedback from the local community on any initiatives being considered, and provide a forum at which the community can raise issues of interest with and ask questions of the Port Authority.

For the Port Authority, the CLG offers valuable insights and feedback from the community, facilitating more informed decision-making and enhancing the Port Authority's responsiveness to local concerns. As a forum for information exchange and consultation, this group facilitates discussion and enables the local community and other stakeholders to be involved in communications regarding activities at the port. Specifically, the CLG's functions include: firstly, exchanging information and discussing port operations and activities including port lessee activities at Glebe Island/White Bay; secondly, promoting collaboration between members to foster discussion regarding environmental impacts of port operations—potential and actual—and development of mutually satisfactory solutions that are consistent with the objectives of operating a commercially viable working port; and, thirdly, identifying local residents and providing information about the impacts, issues and concerns pertaining to the local port community.

Membership of the liaison group requires that applicants can verify that they live or work near the port, and have existing communication links with local communities; demonstrate their understanding of, or significant interest in, local environmental, business and community amenity issues within the areas neighbouring the port at Glebe Island/White Bay; demonstrate their ability to understand and articulate local community issues and concerns and exchange information; demonstrate their ability to contribute respectfully to discussion and cooperative problem-solving, and to work constructively with other members of the group; and to recognise the goal is to achieve balance between environmental, social and economic needs.

The latest community update on shore power was provided this month and included notification of demolition work to prepare for the installation of electrical equipment and shore power infrastructure to support future shore power connections. The New South Wales Government expects the project to be completed and ready

for cruise ships by the end of 2026 and will continue to engage with the community as we transition to a lower emissions future.

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (12:51): The Ports and Maritime Administration Amendment (White Bay Cruise Terminal—Shore Power) Bill 2024 will result in lost economic benefit to the New South Wales economy. Furthermore, it threatens to overload important infrastructure and undermine an important long-term government investment. The bill seeks to amend the Ports and Maritime Administration Act 1995 by inserting a new section to require cruise ships to use shore power while berthed at White Bay Cruise Terminal in Sydney Harbour from 1 January 2027. The Minns Government announced the installation of shore power at White Bay Cruise Terminal in September, fulfilling an important election commitment. I am proud to be a representative of the New South Wales Labor Government, which is delivering important long-term renewable infrastructure for our key industries. White Bay will be the first shore-powered cruise terminal in the Southern Hemisphere.

We must not forget that tourism is one of our key industries. The Port Authority's initial estimate is that an average of \$25.9 million of lost economic benefit to the New South Wales economy will occur annually if ships that are not shore power capable are refused access to White Bay Cruise Terminal. Furthermore, this bill would overload Sydney's most significant cruise ship terminal, the Overseas Passenger Terminal, which is already nearing capacity during peak cruise season months. In order to understand why this bill should be opposed, it is important to understand Labor's commitment and what it is delivering at the White Bay Cruise Terminal. The installation of shore power to the primary berth for cruise ships at White Bay Cruise Terminal will result in fewer ships producing air emissions, as the ship's engine does not have to stay running while docked.

When ships can plug into electricity from the shore, they can power down their auxiliary engines, reducing CO2 emissions, noise and air pollution. This project will provide a landside electricity supply for ships powered by renewable electricity supply. Phase one of the project will commence with shore power to the primary berth for cruise ships at White Bay Cruise Terminal. The Port Authority of New South Wales has advised the supply of certified renewable energy for shore power at the White Bay Cruise Terminal is estimated to achieve a reduction of up to 4,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per annum. This would be equivalent to taking 1,100 cars off Sydney's roads or planting 20,000 trees each year.

As well as the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, the introduction of shore power could see a reduction in noise from cruise ships of up to 10 decibels. Powering down ship engines, which normally burn diesel fuel, will also reduce local air pollution and smells. The majority of cruise ships that berth at White Bay are shore power enabled. Vessels at berth continue to run auxiliary engines or generators to supply power to carry out operations, including cargo unloading, and/or providing electricity for lighting, heating and cooling, refrigeration, food preparation and communication and security systems. When ships utilise shore power whilst at berth, their auxiliary engines can be powered down, reducing air and noise emissions from burning marine fuel.

The key benefits from the use of renewable shore power energy are a reduction in air emissions, including sulphur oxides, particulate matter, and nitrogen oxides, as well as odour; a reduction in noise emissions; a reduction in carbon emissions related to the use of clean energy, rather than combustion of fuel in engines; a complementary alternative to marine fuels and new technologies being utilised by vessel operators to meet carbon emission reduction targets and requirements; and a contribution to the net zero carbon objective for Bays West. This commitment to renewable energy shore power will reduce the Port Authority's scope 3 carbon emissions, which is critical to becoming a leader in the port sector and in meeting the authority's net zero goals. Improving environmental outcomes is a priority for the New South Wales Government, which was one of the first Australian jurisdictions to commit to net zero emissions by 2050. The New South Wales Government has legislated emission reduction targets for the State of 50 per cent on 2005 levels by 2030, 70 per cent on 2005 levels by 2035, and net zero by 2050.

The NSW Climate Change Adaptation Strategy sets out an ambitious approach to climate change adaptation for the State, which will support our ability to meet these legislated targets. This commitment is part of a range of environmental initiatives being implemented by the New South Wales Government and the Port Authority. The authority's approach to ensure noise impacts are minimised provides an effective model to facilitate cruise vessels using shore power. The Port Authority facilitates the safe transit, anchoring and berthing of essential commercial shipping in various biodiverse port waters, from the far north of the State in the Clarence River estuary at Yamba to the south in Twofold Bay at Eden. It also manages active port lands and cruise terminals in urban environments with vibrant and distinct port and city interfaces. The Port Authority is leading by example and demonstrating its strong commitment to addressing climate change through ambitious net zero targets and decarbonisation efforts.

The Port Authority also recognises the fundamental importance of adapting to a changing climate and ensuring that the coastal assets that it owns, manages and operates within, including terminals, buildings, landside infrastructure and shipping channels, are resilient. The Port Authority's ambitious net zero targets include: by July 2023, define, measure and make commitments to the reduction of scope 3 emissions; by 2024, operate on

100 per cent certified renewable energy for all of Port Authority's electricity consumption; by 2030, achieve a 75 per cent reduction in absolute scope 1 and scope 2 emissions based on its initial baseline measurements of 2019; and by 2040, reach net zero, meaning an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere.

The shore power project is a significant sustainability initiative and a cornerstone of the Port Authority's transition of the Bays Port into a sustainable port of the future. One hundred per cent of the electricity consumed by cruise ships connected to shore power will be offset by renewable electricity generation. Shore power is an effective way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions if offset by renewable power generation, and will also improve local air quality and reduce noise from the cruise ships while at berth. Providing 100 per cent renewable offset shore power will be an important component in the Port Authority's efforts to reduce its scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions, and one of the few ways cruise ships can dramatically reduce their own scope 1 greenhouse gas emissions. The opportunity to extend shore power to the remaining commercial berths at White Bay or other Port Authority berths will be considered as their long-term operational use is further determined.

Effectively managing community noise exposure and noise levels from commercial ships is key to the successful operation of Glebe Island and White Bay. The Port Authority has the Port Noise Policy—a first of its kind in Australia—and the Vessel Noise Operating Protocol to manage noise proactively, consistently and fairly across its Bays Port operations, providing certainty about noise management for the community, port users and other stakeholders. The Port Authority seeks to manage noise from commercial shipping in a way that is acceptable to the local community. Noise from cruise ships at White Bay Cruise Terminal and berth 4 is controlled by the Port Authority's Noise Restriction Policy. The Port Noise Policy has been effective since January 2021 and ensures noise from the whole port is monitored and managed in a way that is consistent and transparent, with strict consequences. The results of vessel noise monitoring, including any exceedances of trigger levels, are published on the Port Authority's website.

The Port Noise Policy and the White Bay Cruise Terminal Noise Restriction Policy have both enabled effective solutions that would not have been achieved otherwise. The policies drive vessel operators to implement noise mitigation measures and achieve better noise outcomes for the Bays Port community. That has included physical noise attenuation works undertaken on board vessels to minimise noise emissions, and changes to vessel operations to be less noisy, resulting in significant reductions to measured noise levels over time. The Port Authority has also provided acoustic treatments to eligible properties near White Bay Cruise Terminal and White Bay 4 under the Noise Attenuation Program to reduce noise impacts inside residents' homes. The program was completed in 2023 and included works at 69 residences.

I am proud to represent a New South Wales Labor government that delivers reforms that improve environment outcomes and reduce emissions across the whole economy. That is what we have delivered at the White Bay Cruise Terminal. It is vital we work with—not against—the tourism industry to ensure long-term success. This bill does not do that, and that is why I will not be supporting the bill.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (13:01): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate on the Ports and Maritime Administration Amendment (White Bay Cruise Terminal—Shore Power) Bill 2024. I thank my Greens colleague, the member for Balmain, for introducing the bill, and for her continued advocacy around this issue. Despite the Government's claims about reforms to take care of the community, it remains an ongoing issue. Sadly, Labor governments at both the State and Federal levels have failed to act to address it. I will speak more on that later. The bill will impose duties on the Port Authority of New South Wales to only permit cruise ships that are equipped to use shore power to berth at the White Bay Cruise Terminal. It will make it an offence for the owner and the master of a cruise ship to use a berth at the White Bay Cruise Terminal unless the ship is equipped to use shore power. It will also make it an offence to fail to use shore power while using a berth at the White Bay Cruise Terminal.

Shore power is an environmentally protective way of providing power for a ship's essential functions without needing to run the ship's diesel engine. Using shore power, ships can plug into a renewable power source while berthed at shore, allowing them to turn off their diesel engines, and therefore reducing CO₂ emissions, noise and air pollution. Data collected by the Port of Seattle shows that cruise ships can reduce their diesel emissions by 80 per cent and CO₂ emissions by 66 per cent by using shore power. Shore power is estimated to reduce emissions associated with the White Bay precinct by over 4,000 tonnes every year. Currently, cruise ships at White Bay Cruise Terminal need to keep their engines running while berthed as there is no onshore power source. That means that noise and fumes from berthed cruise ships continuously pours into communities close to the terminal in Balmain and Rozelle. To put that into perspective, when not plugged in to shore power, a single cruise ship can emit as much diesel exhaust as 34,400 idle trucks. During significant construction, we consider trucks and where they park because of the impact of air and noise pollution on local communities.

Yet the New South Wales Government is failing to recognise those ongoing impacts on the Balmain electorate, including on young people in schools, and the long-term health impacts to the community. The impact extends beyond the local community. We are in the middle of a worsening climate crisis. International shipping contributes approximately 10 per cent of global carbon emissions. In 2022 alone, European cruise ships emitted more sulphurous oxides into the atmosphere than one billion cars combined. The cruise ship industry is a luxury industry. The member for Vacluse may see it as an affordable holiday option, but that is not the case for people in most communities. I am getting distracted. We need to set out a vision. In the heart of Sydney—a green, global and connected city—in the Balmain electorate, which is represented by a Greens member, we should be leading the world. Internationally, other ports have taken the lead by ensuring that there are regulations and laws in place, as well as incentives to encourage more ship operators to equip their fleets with the necessary shore power facilities.

We have the opportunity to right the wrongs done to local communities. For more than a decade they have endured noise and air pollution. Let us take a step back to the dying days of the former Keneally Labor Government, which ignored the community concerns raised at the time in order to wave this through. In the dying days of the former Coalition Government, the former member for Balmain, Jamie Parker, worked with the community to find an opportunity to finally deliver a long-overdue infrastructure change for shore power. What happened? The Minns Labor Government was elected and there were immediate delays. Why was it delayed? We are not really sure. The member for Balmain continues to ask questions of the Premier. She has asked questions of the former Minister for Transport and she will continue to ask questions of the current Minister for Transport. However, it appears that no member of the Government is setting this as a priority. Perhaps they are more concerned with internal challenges than with delivering for the community.

Sadly, the community has been left behind. Just a few weeks ago, when the member for Balmain was doorknocking in Balmain and Rozelle, this issue was raised time and again as a priority. Yet the past and current Labor governments in New South Wales—and indeed the Labor Prime Minister, who represents an area that is being taken over by a Federal Labor environment Minister—cannot listen to the good people of Balmain and Rozelle and support what they have been crying out for for years. I urge the Government to listen to the community, get its act together and support the bill introduced by the member for Balmain. The Government should hold polluting luxury cruise liners to account and stop them from causing harm to this and future generations.

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (13:08): The Government opposes the Ports and Maritime Administration Amendment (White Bay Cruise Terminal—Shore Power) Bill 2024 introduced by the member for Balmain, which proposes to amend the Ports and Maritime Administration Act 1995 by inserting a new section to require cruise ships to use shore power while berthed at the White Bay Cruise Terminal in Sydney Harbour from 1 January 2027. The New South Wales Government announced the installation of shore power at White Bay Cruise Terminal in September, fulfilling its election commitment to mandate the use of shore power at White Bay for all cruise and bulk shipping. Any ship that docks at White Bay that can use shore power will be required to do so, if shore power is available. White Bay will be the first shore powered cruise terminal in the Southern Hemisphere.

The member for Balmain is introducing this bill based on her concern that ships that are not shore powered will berth at the overflow berth 6. This private member's bill differs from Labor's election commitment by introducing duties on the Port Authority of New South Wales to only permit cruise ships to use a berth at White Bay Cruise Terminal if the ship is equipped to use shore power. It creates offences for the owner and the master of a cruise ship for using a berth at White Bay Cruise Terminal unless the ship is equipped to use shore power and for failing to use shore power while using a berth at White Bay Cruise Terminal. Introducing that legislative requirement is not necessary as nearly 80 per cent of vessels accessing White Bay are already shore power enabled, and the Port Authority will implement the shore power mandate through contractual obligations between the Port Authority and cruise operators.

New South Wales is Australia's cruise capital, and more than half of our nation's cruise spend is retained in this State's economy. In 2023-24 the cruise industry contributed around \$4.41 billion to the New South Wales economy, an increase of 60.4 per cent on the 2022-23 financial year. Importantly, the cruise ship industry is supporting employment for 13,714 full-time jobs in New South Wales. In addition to the economic benefits, the installation of shore power to the primary berth for cruise ships at White Bay Cruise Terminal will result in fewer ship air emissions as the ship's engine does not have to stay running while docked. Shore power is estimated to reduce emissions associated with the White Bay precinct by over 4,000 tonnes per year.

The 2023-24 cruise season saw the largest economic return to New South Wales, surpassing pre-COVID figures. That growth is expected to continue over the summer, with 1.2 million passengers and crew from 312 cruise ship visits set to sail into New South Wales ports. It is not just Sydney ports which benefit from the

cruise industry. The long-term viability of the New South Wales cruise industry is important to the New South Wales Government. Committing to the implementation of shore power facilities in the Bays Port precinct is a sign of that commitment. The Port Authority works directly with cruise lines to facilitate and encourage calls into the State as part of their cruise itineraries. In recent years there has been a specific focus on growing and developing regional ports, with the port of Eden in my electorate now widely regarded as a success story and a national exemplar of how to capitalise on the economic opportunities that exist from growing cruise ship visitation in regional destinations. In New South Wales, the summer cruise season from October 2023 to April 2024 saw a record 40 ships visit Eden, bringing more than 70,000 passengers and injecting over \$19 million into the local economy.

One component of Eden's success has been the Port Authority establishing a memorandum of understanding with Bega Valley Shire Council and Eden Tourism Network to promote and develop cruise ship calls to the port. The memorandum of understanding funds a locally based cruise coordinator, which has played an important role in supporting cruise growth and improving visitor experience. Eden's maritime history stretches back to its whaling days almost 200 years ago, and Eden is now the largest regional port in New South Wales. In conclusion, the Port Authority of New South Wales estimates an average annual loss of \$25.9 million in economic benefit to this State if ships not able to be shore powered are refused access to the White Bay Cruise Terminal. The bill would also overload Sydney's most significant cruise ship terminal, the Overseas Passenger Terminal, which is already nearing capacity during the peak cruise season months. I oppose the bill.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (13:13): In reply: Before I begin, I acknowledge and welcome to the gallery members of our local Balmain community and representatives of the Stop Cruise Ship Pollution group, some who were here earlier and some who are still here, including Kate Horrobin, Chrissie Tucker, Kevin Crawshaw and Loretta Picone. I thank them for staying. I know it has been a long debate with question time in between. I also thank David Gamble, Les Johnston, and Cornelius and Leisja van der Weyden. I acknowledge the many other community members involved in this campaign who are unable to be in Parliament today but who have contributed a great deal of time—for many of them, a decade or more—and effort on this issue. It is an issue that is front of mind for many people living in Balmain, Rozelle and White Bay.

For more than a decade, tireless community advocates have been pushing for an end to cruise ship pollution. Like many in my community, I hoped that this bill would bring us a step closer to achieving that goal. As was outlined when I introduced the bill, this important piece of legislation seeks to introduce a requirement for all ships docking at White Bay to plug into the grid, reducing harmful emissions from diesel engines. The intention is to address a glaring loophole in the New South Wales Labor Government's current approach to shore power at White Bay, which essentially gives cruise lines a free pass to keep polluting our community for years to come. Even though the long overdue shore power installation is finally underway, there is currently nothing in our legislation that stops ships without shore power capability from docking at White Bay and running their diesel engines around the clock. Without fixing that issue, White Bay will remain a dumping ground for the cruise industry's oldest and most polluting ships, meaning our community members will continue to struggle with diesel fumes being pumped directly into their homes, their schools and the Balmain Hospital.

I question the figure of 80 per cent of vessels being shore power capable. The last figure that the Government gave me was that only 65 per cent of vessels coming into White Bay were shore power capable and, more importantly, upon writing to the cruise ship operators to ask which of their vessels were shore power capable, many of the smaller vessels that most frequently stay overnight are not shore power equipped. Without this bill, the impact may not be what the Government anticipates, and we will continue to see the pollution. Our community deserves better than that, particularly after dealing with years of delays and broken promises from consecutive governments, the latest of which saw the installation of shore power being delayed until the end of 2026. Whilst we are appreciative that the Labor Government will see through the former Government's commitment to deliver shore power at White Bay Cruise Terminal, the delay has been incredibly upsetting. I cannot understate how upsetting it is for local residents who are just finishing another cruise season they were hoping to avoid the worst of, and who have at least another season to come.

In light of this, the least that the Government can do is ensure that all cruise ships will be required to use shore power when it is finally installed in two years time. If it is good enough for China and California, it should be good enough for us. I acknowledge the members for Coogee, Vaucluse, Newcastle, East Hills, and Bega, who have contributed to debate today. I also thank my colleague, the member for Newtown, for her support. I am incredibly disappointed to hear from the Government and Opposition members who spoke on the bill today and indicated that they would not support the urgent calls from my community to prioritise people's health and act on cruise ship pollution.

After speaking with members of my community who are impacted by cruise ship pollution, I know that this news is incredibly disheartening. In the past few weeks a number of large cruise ships have been in port at

White Bay. Those ships were docked for a day or two at a time, running their diesel engines all day and all night. In the interim, I have been contacted by residents who were kept awake by the loud engines and intense diesel fumes. Others were forced to keep their doors and windows shut tight against the fumes, even on the many recent hot nights when people would normally want to have their windows open.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. The member for Balmain will be heard in silence.

Ms KOBI SHETTY: On hot days many of these residents, especially those without air conditioning, rely on a cooling breeze in the evening. But it is not possible for people living near the White Bay Cruise Terminal to open their windows while those ships are in port. Earlier this month I met with concerned residents in a park overlooking the terminal. Some of them are here today. The winds that day were blowing ship fumes straight over the park. In the half hour or less that we were there, I and many others felt the impacts of the fumes. It is very hard to overstate how bad it was. We had headaches and nausea just standing in that parkland adjacent to the large cruise ship. I cannot imagine what it must be like for people living adjacent to the facility. If members have not visited White Bay while a cruise ship is in port, I urge them to do so to see for themselves the level of pollution my community is dealing with.

The Government's response is incredibly disappointing. It places the health of the people of New South Wales second. I remind members of the real-world impacts of cruise ship pollution on my community. One resident told me:

With young children I am very concerned about the pollution from the cruise ships. Every time I see a cruise docked I check which way the wind is blowing on a weather app. If it's blowing over our house I close up the windows and we stay inside. I don't let my kids play outside, which is a big deal because we live in a tiny apartment. We don't put washing out either.

Comments around the health impacts of pollution were incredibly common. Another community member with young children said:

My three children all attend the nearby Father John Therry school — throughout their time whenever the cruise ships were docked and spewing toxic fumes into the air, they would often come home with terrible headaches.

Another resident said:

My sleep is being affected. On a weekly basis, I am forced to smell chemical smells that waft into the house, regardless if I have my windows open or not. These smells affect my health, and I work from home. I find myself having dizzy spells, feeling light headed, feeling nauseous, all due to the air pollution caused by the Cruise Terminal.

Another shared her harrowing story of a hospital admission with fluid on her lungs from exposure to air pollution. She said, "In hospital I had level one respiratory failure and was lucky to survive." Those residents are not opposed to living near a working port. In fact, I heard from many who chose the area and love its character in part because of the working port. But the establishment of the cruise terminal has brought with it high levels of pollution, with no regard for the health and wellbeing of current and future residents.

The idea has been put that the cruise industry will not stop in Sydney or New South Wales, as a way of justifying these ships continuing to use the facility. But cities like Barcelona have banned cruise ships from docking near residents because they know the pollution is so harmful. They have completely stopped them coming near the city centre, where they were close to residential homes. We need to find a better way. When the terminal has shore power capability, there is no reason that ships that can use it should not be allowed in while the ships that cannot are made to stay away. My community is well aware that the standards and laws in New South Wales fall well short of best practice standards elsewhere in the world, in terms of both requirements for mandatory shore power use and the standards for fuel use on board those vessels. A concerned resident rightly argues:

Air pollution emissions from cruise ships exceed the levels specified for other plant and equipment using fossil fuels. Air pollution from cruise ships is both visible and cancer causing. The ships in Sydney Harbour are from the 20th Century and are banned from use in developed countries.

A study in Amsterdam found that one ship released as much polluting nitrogen oxide as 370,000 cars driving in the city, so it has moved to stop those ships from coming in. It is not too much to ask that ships coming into White Bay Cruise Terminal must turn off their diesel engines. This point goes to the core of the issue. If we do not step up now and bring our laws into line with the direction the rest of the world is heading, big cruise companies will see New South Wales and White Bay as destinations where they can send their older, more polluting ships that do not have shore power capability. We cannot afford to let that happen.

I would also like to respond to the idea that the way noise breaches are managed can be rolled out to manage this shore power issue by relying on cruise operators to be good neighbours. One cruise ship is a repeat offender with six breaches, far more than the three that are allowed, but there have been no consequences. Its breaches were given leniency and the cruise operator continues to behave with impunity. There are people in the gallery who have reported the operator time and time again. This is not a solution to the problem. I am incredibly

disappointed at the lack of support for this reform. The Labor Government seems content to allow ships to continue to pollute our air. The people in my community, some of whose stories I have shared today, will bear the brunt of this disregard for human health and our environment. Bear in mind that the comments I have shared are just the tip of the iceberg. Similar complaints have been forthcoming for more than a decade.

I urge all members to support the bill. When I asked my community what it would mean to them if the bill were supported, the answers were telling. One said, "It would mean a total change to our lifestyle. We could open our home and enjoy the summer breezes and fresh, unpolluted air." Another said, "We can finally breathe easy and enjoy our own home. Our kids could play outside without worrying about respiratory issues." Another who wrote to me on behalf of her friend, who lives near the terminal and suffers from severe asthma, simply said, "My friend will be safer."

Those are not unreasonable expectations for people living in our city. They should be able to breathe easily, with unpolluted air. They should be able to open their windows at night and enjoy a cooling summer breeze. They should be able to let their children play outside without fear for their health. They should be able to hang out their washing without it being covered in black soot. They should not fear for the wellbeing of their loved ones with asthma. I have a child with asthma, and I am so grateful that I do not live as close to the terminal as some do. It is a real concern.

We could so easily make this a reality. After more than a decade of dealing with the fallout from the poor planning that led to the establishment of the White Bay Cruise Terminal, we could finally give this community some relief. Shore power is to be available from late 2026. I really hope it is delivered then. I urge members once again to ensure that our legislation is in line with global best practice by mandating that only shore power capable ships can dock at White Bay. I ask members to please take the health and environmental concerns seriously, and please stand up to put an end to cruise ship pollution once and for all, to help my community breathe again.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

The House divided.

Ayes7
Noes75
Majority.....68

AYES

Greenwich, A
Leong, J
Regan, M

Scruby, J
Shetty, K (teller)

Smith, T (teller)
Ward, G

NOES

Aitchison, J
Anderson, K
Atalla, E
Ayyad, T
Bali, S
Barr, C
Butler, L
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
Dib, 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
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
Minns, C
Moylan, B

Provest, G
Quinnell, S
Roberts, A
Saffin, J
Saliba, D
Saunders, D
Scully, P
Singh, G
Sloane, K
Speakman, M
Stuart, M
Thompson, T
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Tudehope, M
Vo, T
Wallace, J
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A
Whan, S

NOES

Doyle, T
Finn, J
Griffin, J
Hagarty, N (teller)

O'Neill, M
Park, R
Petinos, E
Preston, R

Wilkinson, K
Williams, R
Williamson, R
Wilson, F

Motion negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): The time for consideration of general business orders of the day for bills has expired. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

*Motions***TRIBUTE TO ROCHELLE PORTEOUS**

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): Before I call the member for Balmain, I acknowledge Rochelle's partner, Aurelio Spagnuolo; her sister, Ginette Porteous; and her other family and friends who are in the public gallery. I express my condolences to them. Rochelle Porteous was a superhero of Sydney.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (14:31): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Records our sadness at the passing of former Leichhardt and Inner West Council Mayor Rochelle Porteous.
- (2) Notes the significant contribution Rochelle has made to Sydney's inner west and New South Wales over a 17-year period as an advocate, councillor and mayor.
- (3) Expresses our condolences to Rochelle's family, friends and community.

The members of Rochelle's family and friends in the public gallery will have to excuse me if I do not look at them too much throughout this speech, because I am feeling really emotional, but I am so glad to have them here. I pay tribute to Rochelle Porteous, who was a very important person to the Balmain community and The Greens, and who was sadly lost to us earlier this year. Many members in this place knew Rochelle personally and many others know of her legacy. I acknowledge the Leader of the House and the Speaker for giving this motion precedence so we can record our sadness in the New South Wales Parliament. It is very much appreciated.

I also acknowledge the presence of Rochelle's devoted partner, Aurelio, and her sister, Ginette, who are in the gallery today. I offer my condolences and deepest respects to them both as I move this motion. I am so glad to see her other friends here as well. Rochelle was a councillor on the Leichhardt and Inner West councils for almost two decades. She was first elected in 2004 and finished up in 2021. During that time she served as mayor three times, in 2011, 2014-15 and 2021. She concluded her time as a councillor in the mayoralty, which was a wonderful and much-deserved way for her to end her career in local government.

Her contribution to local government was extraordinary. She was an absolute champion for the local community. She played a key role in the campaign to preserve and protect Callan Park and fought staunchly alongside locals in opposition to WestConnex. As we continue to see the consequences of that project, particularly the Rozelle interchange, many have come to recognise the foresight of Rochelle's opposition. But she was kind enough not to say, "I told you so," to those who did not realise or care about the impact it would have. Beyond her advocacy, Rochelle maintained strong connections to the local Italian community. She was always ready to support those in need, even when facing her own health struggles and particularly in 2020, when she continued to work with unwavering dedication. She would Zoom into council meetings from the hospital, always prepared to do what was needed and never afraid to speak up and challenge the mayor when required.

I had the privilege of becoming a councillor for the Balmain-Baludarri Ward of the Inner West Council when Rochelle vacated the role in 2021. She was incredibly passionate about that work and cared so much for our local community. She was incredibly generous with her time, knowledge and experience, and she always ensured that new council members had the guidance that we needed. She never hesitated to remind us of the importance of taking a principled approach to every single thing that we did. I know from discussions I have had with the other Greens councillors elected that year that Rochelle's generosity was widespread, widely felt and very much appreciated.

Rochelle was also a driving force behind the Save our Councils Coalition. If they did not already know Rochelle from her involvement in Local Government NSW, many members would have known her from the campaign to stop council amalgamations. It is important to acknowledge the widespread impact of that campaign, which stretched from Leichhardt and her beloved inner west right across the State. To those who knew her,

Rochelle was fiercely intelligent and deeply principled. She was an unstoppable force within The Greens and was actively involved in numerous committees, forums and campaigns, all while balancing full-time work—most recently as an advocate in the disability sector—and she truly seemed to have no intention of slowing down. Many of us believe that her talents and leadership should have seen her hold higher office, but her impact cannot be denied regardless of the positions she held.

She leaves behind an extraordinary legacy that will continue to inspire those of us who had the privilege to know her and work alongside her. I could go on for a long time, because Rochelle did so much, but I also want to make sure I take time to acknowledge the immense outpouring of grief, appreciation and support from the broader community. For those who campaigned alongside her, those whom she mentored and the many councillors and elected representatives for whom she was a true inspiration, her impact was incredibly profound. I acknowledge the members who have joined us in the Chamber to recognise Rochelle's contribution. It means a lot to have them here for the debate on this motion. On behalf of The Greens, I extend our deepest condolences to her partner, Aurelio; to her sister, Ginette; and to all the others who knew her and loved her. Rest in power, Rochelle. Your legacy will be felt for many years to come. Rest in peace. Your dedication, leadership and passion will never be forgotten.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:37): I contribute to debate on this motion. Although it is one of the most significant things that we can do in this place for a citizen of New South Wales, it does not seem enough to mark the contribution that Rochelle made to inner Sydney life, to The Greens and to the incredible campaigns that she was a part of. I acknowledge the presence of Aurelio and Ginette in the public gallery. I have the privilege to speak in this place as a representative of The Greens. I offer my heartfelt condolences on behalf of the member for Ballina; on behalf of Abigail Boyd, who is sitting in the Speaker's gallery; and on behalf of all other past and present Greens MPs. I also offer her family my gratitude for sharing Rochelle with us for so long.

The news that Rochelle had passed arrived in a typical Greens way. Rochelle was the co-convenor for The Greens' Standing Campaign Committee. There is a Federal election coming up, and we had a very full agenda. I was expecting to spend an evening on Zoom with Rochelle and other members of The Greens. For anyone who has not had the pleasure of joining one before, meetings of The Greens can go for quite a while. I do not think that is unusual for political party meetings or other community meetings. When we got the horrible, tragic news, it became completely apparent—it always had been—that so much of what we were doing and where we were headed was held together by Rochelle's behind-the-scenes work, efforts and commitment to the party, and her absolute dedication to making sure that, whether through the local government committee or the standing campaign committee, we set the bar high.

Indeed, before the last State election, Abigail and I were on endless calls with Rochelle as she pushed to make sure that we would not be satisfied with a silver standard of housing accessibility; we should have a gold standard in our policy because we must set our sights on what is needed. To me, that sums up Rochelle's principles, policies and commitment to changing the world: She never wanted to set the bar low. She never wanted to take the reasonable, okay approach. Rochelle put in an incredible effort both publicly and behind the scenes. I had amazing experiences watching her campaigning against WestConnex and endlessly fighting local government amalgamations when David Shoebridge was a member of this place.

Indeed, I think the first time I interacted with Rochelle was with Jamie Parker when I was a Greens candidate in my mid-20s. We were campaigning outside Balmain Woolies for The Greens at the Federal election. It was hard to know whether Rochelle or Jamie knew more people, but they knew pretty much everybody who walked into that Woolies. Jamie Parker, the former member for Balmain, has put his appreciation for Rochelle on record in this Chamber on many occasions. I read a speech that he made in 2015, recognising the contribution that Rochelle had made to local government. I put his words on record again because I know that he would want members to hear them. He said:

I recognise and bring to the attention of the House Rochelle Porteous, who has recently concluded a year as Mayor of Leichhardt Council. Rochelle has served 12 years as a councillor on Leichhardt Council and has been elected Mayor of Leichhardt Council three times. Her many achievements include establishing the Leichhardt Climate Change Taskforce, which in 2012 led to Leichhardt Council becoming the second council in New South Wales to go carbon neutral; assisting Leichhardt Council in becoming a Fair Trade Council; establishing a seniors council, which I met with recently in Parliament House; reinvigorating local International Women's Day celebrations; and introducing Leichhardt's Urban Forest Policy.

Rochelle, who is a tireless and effective advocate for residents, is also a leading figure on a number of local campaigns including protecting Callan Park, expanding light rail and completing the GreenWay, and campaigning against WestConnex. Rochelle is always generous in acknowledging the good work of others, but today I acknowledge Rochelle Porteous for her tireless work, commitment to local residents and effective advocacy on behalf of all of the people in our community.

On behalf of all The Greens, I offer our absolute respect, thanks and gratitude for the contribution that Rochelle made. Aurelio, I will try to make you laugh by saying that I think my favourite comment came from one Greens member who said, "I feel like the fact that I could always fight with her in Greens meetings gave me so much

respect for her." If you are involved in politics and community campaigns, you do not always agree, but we know that Rochelle's efforts and contribution to the community were second to none.

I remember Jamie Parker used to share with me his frustration that Rochelle would want to talk with every individual person and deal with every little council issue while trying to be mayor at the same time. He found that so frustrating—even though that is also notably his style of politics. She cared for every individual. One thing I pledge to do as a mark of respect to Rochelle—I think we will all do different things—is ensure that the Labor Party gets to at least a silver standard of housing accessibility. Aurelio, you have been part of The Greens family for a long time. Please know that we are all here for you in whatever way you need us, now and into the future.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (14:44): I contribute to this condolence motion for former mayor and councillor Rochelle Porteous, who dedicated some 16 years of her life to serving her community in local government. As somebody who also served in local government and crossed paths with Rochelle for about eight years of my time there, I am aware of her commitment and dedication. From memory, Rochelle was also Jamie Parker's campaign director when he was elected as the member for Balmain. When I look at the crossbench—and I see the member for Balmain and the member for Newtown—I know they sit there on the back of the work done by Rochelle Porteous and Jamie Parker, who were able to understand that changing local community and win seats that were traditionally Labor Party seats.

For candidates from a minor, inner-city party to dislodge the proud Labor Party in an area deeply steeped in the Labor tradition requires not only an intelligent understanding of the nature of the people and the changes in that area but also simply hard work. That is what I observed from Rochelle from the moment I crossed paths with her. Serving such a lengthy tenure on an inner-city metropolitan council is most impressive. Rochelle served on Leichhardt council as a councillor for 12 years, first elected in 2004. She then served for four years, from 2007 to 2011, on the amalgamated Inner West Council. She served as Mayor of Leichhardt from 2012 to 2014. She then served as the Mayor of Inner West Council for about three to five weeks when the position was briefly vacated by Darcy Byrne.

Darcy Byrne is an extremely talented and impressive servant of local government who continues to be the Mayor of Inner West Council. It takes somebody of his skill and ability to remain and continue to lead Labor in an area that has experienced such a significant demographic change and, significantly, returned two non-Labor State members. That is the impressive legacy that Rochelle's life has passed on to both her community and The Greens political party that she served so devotedly. She also contributed to the local government sector as a director on the Local Government NSW board in 2012, remaining on the board until the associations merged in March 2013. I venture to say that must have been one of the most frustrating times of her life. Nevertheless, she was prepared to serve to try to make a difference. During her time on Leichhardt council, she led the opposition to the forced merger of Marrickville, Ashfield and Leichhardt councils. That was a cause that members of the Labor Party, including me, repeatedly warned against.

Labor's ferocious position, even though I was ferociously opposed to it, occurred as a result of Save Our Councils—a statewide alliance that Rochelle put together. That really forced the entire Labor Opposition to join the campaign. Initially, whilst Labor was vocal, it was vocal through its shadow Minister for Local Government, Sophie Cotsis, and myself, but I can assure members that it was the statewide campaign led by Rochelle that forced the Labor Opposition to be as ferocious as it was. All the warnings the campaign gave about the likely result of forced mergers actually occurred, and Rochelle foresaw that.

Anybody who came in contact with Rochelle would know how active she was in campaigning on a number of social justice issues. She supported the rights and equality of people with disability and served on the board of the Physical Disability Council of NSW. She was also an advocacy campaign coordinator for Children and Young People with Disability Australia. She worked in the homeless sector with women survivors of childhood sexual abuse and their families, including directing the Stepping Out Housing Program—a domestic violence, childhood sexual abuse and homeless program. Right until her sudden and very sad passing, she continued to fight for better outcomes for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community who she loved dearly.

Rochelle was a fighter. She was used to fighting and was happy to fight and lose because ultimately many of her what appeared to be extreme left-wing views are now probably to the right of modern-day thinking. Society has always needed people like Rochelle to keep fighting and to be happy to keep losing so that the issues that she campaigned on, and which ultimately were shown to be correct, are dealt with. Her lifetime of campaigning on behalf of a community that she dearly loved has left a legacy from which greater society fortunately benefits. Her passing is a very significant loss to her partner, her family and all who knew her. On behalf of the Government of New South Wales and the Australian Labor Party, we extend to her family, to all those who knew her, and to the party she served with such dedication, our deepest sympathies.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (14:52): I make a brief contribution to offer my condolences to family and friends of Rochelle Porteous. I knew Rochelle quite well through my work in local government. After serving 20 years on Penrith City Council, I was elected to Local Government NSW at roughly the same time as Rochelle. I believe James Ryan from Cessnock and Cathy Griffin were also elected at that time, and the member for Oatley was on the executive. For my sins I took over for the member for Heffron at one time and was the convener of the Labor councillors in New South Wales. I do not know what I did to deserve that but it was something I had immense pride in. I had to work very collaboratively across the floor when we were at local government conferences and I had many conversations with Rochelle at that time.

To my mind, Rochelle was an absolute warrior. She was so passionate about what she believed in. She fiercely loved the community that she represented and she took immense pride in representing local government at State level. She achieved so much in her time there. It was absolutely shocking to read of her passing; I could not believe it. Her community will feel such a void after having had someone such as Rochelle fighting for them on so many different fronts, all of which have been outlined today. I have not prepared anything formal to say. I was in my office when I saw the motion come on and felt compelled to come to the Chamber and offer my condolences. I knew Rochelle well. She was a genuine angel. That is how I would describe her. As a member of the Labor Party, I offer my condolences.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (14:56): In reply: Once again, I thank the members who are in the Chamber today for this important motion. I thank my colleagues from the Legislative Council, Dr Amanda Cohn and Abigail Boyd, for joining us in this place. I thank also the member for Newtown and the member for Ballina for being here. I thank the member for Heffron for acknowledging Rochelle's work; it is much appreciated. I am not sure that she would love him giving a whole-hearted endorsement to the current mayor of Inner West Council as part of her condolence, so we will just set that one aside. However, I am sure that Rochelle would appreciate the very generous words about her broad impact in this State; it was obviously very clearly felt. I thank the member for Penrith for sharing her experiences of Rochelle.

We have talked about her widespread contributions but it is hard to capture everything she did. Rochelle did so much on so many fronts. She cared so much not just about our local community but also about social justice and trying to fight for the most principled and right outcomes across the State. It is really hard to capture, in this very short amount of time, exactly how much she did and what she achieved. As the member for Newtown said, it is important to take this time to acknowledge her important work in this place but it almost feels insufficient. I am glad members are here and I am glad we get to take this time, but I feel like it will never be enough. She gave her whole self to the things that she was trying to achieve—she really was unstoppable. Her passing has been a shock to all of us because we thought that Rochelle was completely unstoppable. Her passing was so sudden and very unexpected. We thought that she would be here fighting for what was right for a very long time.

The member for Penrith nailed it when she talked about the void that will be left. At Rochelle's memorial we spoke about how, for all of her front-facing work as a councillor and all the campaigns that she drove, she did so much behind the scenes. The Greens will feel her loss deeply for a very long time. We will start to really feel the amazing impact of all the things that she was working so hard on and the void left by her passing. She did so much across the State for disability access and the rights of the most marginalised people in our community. Her legacy is clear; it will be enduring. The State has experienced a very big loss. I thank members again for being here today to offer their condolences. I thank Minister Hoenig and the Speaker for allowing us to take this time to acknowledge Rochelle's important work. It is rather unusual, but I very much appreciate it. I extend my most sincere condolences to Aurelio and Ginette. We are going to feel the loss of Rochelle incredibly deeply. I am so glad that we could take this moment in this significant place, the New South Wales Parliament, to acknowledge, in a small way, her incredible contribution to our State. I thank everyone so much for being here today.

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

Motion agreed to.

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

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (15:00): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that students across Newcastle have returned to school for term 1.
- (2) Wishes all students and teachers a happy and successful 2025 school year.
- (3) Commends the Government's ongoing commitment to rebuild public education in New South Wales, including rolling out explicit teaching, reducing teacher vacancies, and building new and upgraded schools.

Having been surrounded by many incredible teachers throughout my life, including my grandmother, both my parents and my wife, I would not dare to undervalue the impact that teachers have in our communities. But jokes aside, growing up around educators has given me an invaluable insight and a deep appreciation of all forms of education. I have witnessed firsthand how our teachers go above and beyond for their students—whether it is volunteering to support students at after-hours school events, going to work early to plan classes, or staying up late at night to mark papers.

Data has proven time and again how essential teachers are to the social fabric of our communities. Whether it is in early education, primary schools, high schools or tertiary education, teachers play a vital role in ensuring our kids have the confidence and skills needed to be active members within our community. Let's be honest: Without the support of teachers, none of us would have the skills we need to stand here today. This was further reaffirmed during the COVID lockdowns, during which our teachers went above and beyond to continue supporting and educating students, quickly transitioning all class models and teaching to online platforms.

As a father of four kids in public education during lockdown periods, I can say the online classes were a lifeline, enabling my kids to have a semblance of normality and connect with others while the world was isolating. However, despite all the research and seeing how valuable our teachers were during the lockdowns, the former Liberal-Nationals Government continued to neglect and undervalue the teaching profession, resulting in a statewide teacher shortage crisis. For 12 long years the former Government suppressed wages, positioning New South Wales teachers as the lowest paid educators in the country. This not only completely undermined the hard work of our teachers but also led to a record number of teacher resignations and vacancies, peaking in a daily shortfall of more than 3,300 across the State. Rather than stepping up and taking accountability for the crisis, former education Minister Sarah Mitchell had the audacity to gaslight the teachers who were crying for help, claiming they were "beating up" the situation. As a result, our kids were the ones who suffered, with over 10,000 merged and cancelled classes every day across New South Wales in 2023.

The Minns Labor Government understands the importance of our educators. We listened to their concerns and expertise, and we committed to fixing the mess left behind by the Opposition. Since being elected to government, we have taken huge steps to address the teacher shortage crisis. In October last year, we scrapped the Liberal-Nationals Government's cap on wages to deliver the most significant teacher pay rise in a generation. Further, the Minns Labor Government has implemented several measures to improve attraction, retention and flexibility within public schools, including making 16,000 temporary teachers and support staff permanent to create more stability for students, as well as providing additional support for 700 schools; replacing the former Government's disastrous student behaviour policy to empower teachers and principals to deal with disruptive and persistent misbehaviour; setting clear guidelines for digital communications in school hours; and halving the number of policy procedures and staff meetings to enable our teachers to spend more time in the classroom.

In the short time since the Minns Labor Government implemented those measures, the public education system has seen many record wins, including positioning New South Wales teachers among the highest paid educators in Australia. Permanent teacher vacancies are now at an outstanding four-year low, with teacher vacancies down 40 per cent across the State and 50 per cent in Newcastle public schools. Resignations have fallen for the first time in 13 years, and are currently at a four-year low. In addition, the number of cancelled and merged classes across the State has halved from 10,000 a day to 5,700.

More recently, the agreement by the Albanese and Minns Labor governments to fully and fairly fund New South Wales public schools emphasises our commitment to supporting New South Wales teachers. The \$4.8 billion in additional Commonwealth funding represents the biggest ever new investment in New South Wales public schools by the Australian Government. It will ensure more teachers are at the front of the classroom, supporting the education and wellbeing of our students. Free and accessible education is globally recognised as a fundamental human right, and every person should have access to the opportunities that education creates.

I commend the Minns Labor Government for delivering more equitable and accessible educational avenues for New South Wales. This is in stark contrast to the actions of members opposite. I end with some shocking quotes. When the Premier said to the Hon. Damien Tudehope, "A lot of them can't forget that during COVID you didn't have 2.5 per cent as a wages cap; you put it down to zero. Was it a good decision?" the Hon. Damien Tudehope replied, "A very good decision." The member for Ku-ring-gai has said, "The reality is that teachers have got those substantial increases without demonstrating any productivity improvement." That really sums it up—the lowest paid teachers are now the highest paid.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (15:07): The Opposition will not oppose the motion. The motion started off so well. It notes that students across Newcastle have returned to school for term 1. That is very true; there is nothing truer than that. Students in Davidson have also returned to school for term 1. Students have also returned to school in Oatley, but I will let the member for Oatley speak for himself. Paragraph (2) wishes all the students and teachers a very happy and successful 2025 school year. Nothing could be more true. We are strong supporters

of the work that our teachers do. To echo the member for Newcastle, every student should have access to the highest quality education.

Paragraph (3) is where the motion gets a little disappointing. It commends the Government's ongoing commitment to rebuild public education. I suspect it is rebuilding public education since it was destroyed under the Carr Labor Government and right up until 2011. The Government is continuing to rebuild public education, just like the Liberals and The Nationals continued to rebuild education after the previous Labor Government. I support explicit teaching, which is about a teacher-centred approach where educators clearly and directly explain and demonstrate learning goals and outcomes, providing structural guidance and opportunities for practise and feedback. I think every member in this House supports that. I quote the former Minister:

The Curriculum Reform is continuing throughout the COVID-19 pandemic as we build an evidence-based world class curriculum ...

Through this consultation, teachers are helping build and refine content and outcomes.

The new curriculum removes any ambiguity for teachers and comes with explicit teaching advice.

That Minister was former Minister Sarah Mitchell, speaking in August 2021. Explicit teaching started under the previous Liberal-Nationals Government and has continued under this Government. Credit is due to the previous Government for making sure that it became a teaching method.

The second point is about reducing teacher vacancies. Of course there are vacancies. The COVID pandemic was very tough on everyone concerned. Interestingly, a media release put out in August 2024 titled "More teaching and learning hours as teachers move back on class" said that a review would see hundreds of deputy principals, assistant principals and head teachers return to the classroom to teach. It is fair to say that that is the Government moving chess pieces across the board. Of course they have reduced vacancies, because they are saying that deputy principals, assistant principals and head teachers are returning to the classroom. Let us put that on record.

The third point is about building new and upgraded schools. As I said in my opening remarks, governments since 2011 have had to rebuild public education. How many schools did the Labor Government shut from 1995 to 2011? It shut 83 schools in 16 years. There were 58 schools shut between 1995 and 2005, then eight in 2005. In 2006 it shut three, in 2007 it closed four and in 2008 it closed one. Then there was the year of shame, when in 2009 it closed 12 public schools. So it closed 83 schools. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition came to government in 2011. We opened 37 new schools, including three new schools in 2014 and five in 2015. Then there was a year, in 2019, when nine schools opened. It was great investment in education.

The Labor Party has good form when it comes to shutting schools, including not proceeding with schools. No doubt that is affecting the community of the member for North Shore, who is in the Chamber. An interesting article by Lucy Carroll from February 2025 titled "These North Shore schools have been shelved but thousands of new homes are coming" stated:

The NSW government has shelved plans for new schools earmarked for St Leonards and Chatswood as thousands of new homes are set to be delivered in the area under transport-oriented rezoning reforms.

The article goes on to say that, in estimates, the Deputy Secretary of School Infrastructure said that changing enrolment demand meant there was no "urgent need" for a new primary school at St Leonards. The problem is that when we do not open up new schools with new infrastructure, local area enrolment will continue to shift. My experience on the lower North Shore is that there is no new infrastructure to support those communities, and that is starting to impact on the upper North Shore. It was nothing short of a disgrace when, in February, with little or no consultation, local enrolment areas for Killara High School were changed. That affects families deeply. Those are life-changing decisions and there was zero consultation by the Department of Education.

I think members would agree that we want to see best practice in community consultation. One of my deep values is community-mindedness. It is important to talk to communities. Funding is important when it comes to education and achieving great learning outcomes, but the other thing is to build the infrastructure needed for students to reach their full potential. It is so disappointing that the Labor Government has shelved those schools. In contrast, in 2021 the former Coalition Government allocated more than \$7 million for early plans at St Leonards education precinct and a new primary school in Chatswood. We had put the money there; we had it funded and planned. But, sadly, we now have a Labor Government.

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (15:14): I thank the member for Newcastle for moving the motion. The more we can discuss the needs of public schools and the value of public schoolteachers, the better, as far as I am concerned. Many members know that I was a teacher for a very long time—a public schoolteacher by choice. I taught as a chalkie in Walgett, Kempsey, Northlakes and Kurri Kurri. I was never a head teacher or deputy. That was not what I wanted; I wanted to work with children in the classroom. My comment to the member for Davidson is this: As a former chalkie, I have no problem with more head teachers, deputy principals, assistant principals and principals in the classroom because I believe that, as an educator, your role is to be in the classroom, not in

an office. I will leave it at that. I remember the days of a very famous education Minister, a bloke by the name of Terry Metherell. At the time, I was teaching in the bush, in Kempsey. I remember the things he said about public schoolteachers, as my education Minister, and how I had never felt so demoralised in my life. I will not take that any further, but it was a disappointing stage.

Governments need to value all teachers in all classrooms across New South Wales. As I have mentioned before, when I was teaching in Walgett, I saw a great gulf between the kids I taught at Walgett High School and some of the children who grew up in the Walgett area in terms of the opportunities they had. There was definitely a three-tier system in Walgett. I never really knew that because I grew up in West Wallsend, where nearly all kids went to a public school, and thank heavens for that. The richest kids—the cocky kids—went down to Sydney and had schools with 50-metre pools, diving pools and all the mod cons. The parents who wanted to keep their kids in Walgett but could not face them going to the public school sent them to the local Catholic school.

It was really tough for the public school kids in Walgett; it was tough for the teachers too. The resources were very limited and, personally, I thought that was really sad. We did not have a P&C or canteen facilities that ran every day. The kids really missed out, although we did the best we could as teachers. The Government needs to work to ensure that, whether someone is a working-class person living in Bourke and or they live in the northern beaches—and whether or not they want their child to go to the public school—all kids have the same opportunities. There is no way they are born with the same opportunities. A child who is poor is not born with the same opportunities as a child who is born into a wealthy family. I thank the member for Newcastle for moving this important motion. Let us value our public schools and our public schoolteachers forever.

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (15:18): This is an excellent motion where it pertains to our public schools, students, teachers, communities and parents. It is week eight now. Can we believe we have gotten through eight weeks already, considering we had the longest public school holidays in the history of time over the last Christmas period? My own little girl has today got her school photos. Earlier in the week, she had an excursion. She had a St Patrick's Day event. Tomorrow the whole school is celebrating Harmony Day. Those are some of the wonderful things that our public schools put together for our students. That takes work from our teachers, and our P&Cs do so much behind the scenes. Of course, the contribution and involvement of all our students big and small is also vital.

Our public schools are special environments to be involved in. Across my community, I have about 24 schools. I recognise all of those schools, and I particularly thank the educators for their work. I thank the member for Newcastle for allowing us to do that in the Chamber today. I hope that my new school leaders are enjoying their new experiences. We have a newly appointed principal at Neutral Bay Public School with Joann Sayers. We have a new principal at Wenona with Linda Douglas. We have two new principals at the brand-new Reddam House North Shore with Dave Pitcairn and Dee Pitcairn. Dr Nicole Archard is also enjoying her first year as principal of Loreto Kirribilli Senior School. I want to make sure that they all feel very welcome in our educational community across North Shore.

In the past couple of years three schools in my electorate have received significant upgrades, and well over \$100 million has been spent on upgrading education facilities in my community. I acknowledge the wonderful principal Susan Wyatt at Mosman High School. The upgrade at that school includes 15 new classrooms, new administration staff facilities, a library and a rooftop basketball court that is iconic for public education and better than one at any private school—sorry to those paying those fees. It is incredibly important for us to make sure that we do that for public education.

North Sydney Demonstration School has a brand-new hall, 19 new classrooms, a new covered outdoor learning area, a new canteen and upgraded amenities. It also has wonderful new staff facilities and a brand-new accessible entrance so that everyone can get to and from school. Neutral Bay Public School, my own school, has new classrooms, a new library, new administration areas, new out-of-school-hours facilities and improvements to some heritage buildings. That work took many years. I recognise the P&Cs, the school councils and my predecessor, Jillian Skinner, who all worked hand in hand to make sure that we could fund those upgrades through investment from the former Liberal Government.

It is crucial that we recognise the comment in the third paragraph of the motion, where the member for Newcastle wants to commend the Government for its ongoing commitment to rebuild public education in New South Wales. This is not about postcodes, it is not about electorates and it is not about socio-economic status. As the member for Wallsend said, this is about every single student having the best start in life and an investment made in them regardless of their circumstances. We see now that Labor is starting to let down communities like my own. In 2018 it was recognised that we needed a new primary school and high school in St Leonards. The Labor Government kept that in the budget for the last two budgets, but now we have ambiguity about whether those two new schools have been cancelled. Those schools are even more required since the 10-year-old

Cammeraygal High School opened by the previous Liberal Government hit capacity in November last year and turned away students who live on that same street as the school.

This Government needs to take seriously ensuring that we are delivering schools as community assets for students in every postcode across New South Wales. I have reached out to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. I would welcome her coming to see Cammeraygal High School and sites in St Leonards. I want to make sure that every student across our State has the investment needed.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (15:23): As a parent, how good is it that school has gone back? Let us celebrate that, at the very least. Let us celebrate the fact that some students are starting their very first year of school, while other students finished school last year and are starting the first year of the rest of their lives. I acknowledge, very carefully and sensitively, that school is the only safe environment in the lives of some young people. Being back at school gives those students the chance to feel safe for at least six or seven hours a day. For some students, school gives them the chance to have a reliable source of food each day. That is the work that some schools now do in these difficult times.

I am sure that some young people look forward to returning to school for reasons that other students do not always think about. Certainly, in the electorate I represent, wonderful work is being done in our schools to support students who most need the love and care that is provided by their local school. In the Cessnock electorate, there are 24 public schools and three public high schools, four Catholic primary schools, and one Christian school that ranges from prep through to year 12.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Nulkabar represent!

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I could not possibly comment on Nulkaba Public School, because that is where my kids went and that would suggest I was biased. Last year our public schools had seven relieving principals, and I look forward to resolving that situation during the course of this year. In the electorate of Cessnock, Congewai Public School, our smallest primary school, has just five students. Our largest school has 671 students. Our high school numbers are normally around 600 to 900, which is much smaller than some high schools in other electorates. Some 5,500 students were registered in our public schools at the start of 2025, and more than 3,000 students were registered in our public high schools. I give a shout-out to Greta Public School, which will celebrate its 150th anniversary this year.

When the Europeans settled in Sydney, they struck out north. They went around the back of the Hawkesbury, and the Old Great North Road brought them in through Laguna, Wollombi and Millfield. They then went on to Maitland, which essentially became a shipping port to send product back to the new establishment at Sydney. I am looking forward very much to spending some time at Greta Public School. I acknowledge that this Government has announced that it will build a brand-new primary school and high school at Huntlee, where a massive development of about 7,500 homes is coming online. I acknowledge that about 5,000 homes have come online at Cameron Park, but still no school has been built there despite the fact that the development has been underway for about 20 years.

I also acknowledge that the education Minister stood up to the Federal Government and demanded, squeezed, pushed, prodded and poked for the funding we need to fulfil the Gonski funding model that will finally see our public schools recognised with 100 per cent of their funding. I thank Minister Carr, and I commend the motion to the House.

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (15:27): I thank the member for Newcastle for moving the motion today. It is a pleasure to talk about something that is very close to my heart: teachers and education. Education is the foundation of our society, and teachers are the ones who build that foundation. They do not just teach subjects. They inspire, mentor and shape the future. For me, this is not just a general statement. It is something that I see firsthand every day. It is personal to me. My wife is a teacher, as is my mother-in-law in Lebanon. With my wife, I have seen the hard work, the dedication and the passion that she and all teachers bring to the classroom. Teaching is not just a profession; it is a calling. It takes a lot of patience, resilience and an incredible amount of effort to guide students and to help them grow.

I acknowledge—particularly today after a phone call I had with her—Mrs Mateski, the principal of Mortdale Public School, where my two young boys attend. We thank her for her wonderful leadership at Mortdale. We all remember at least one teacher who made a real difference in our lives. I went to St Joseph's, Oatley, and I acknowledge Mrs Flood and many other teachers who taught me during those younger years. At my high school, Marist Catholic College at Penshurst, my former high school teachers include Mrs Frino, who was my very first teacher in year 7 and who is the current school principal at Penshurst. Mrs Frino also put me on my first detention for frequently talking in class. Would you believe it, Mr Temporary Speaker?

Mr Clayton Barr: No!

Mr MARK COURE: Members would not believe it. Not me—I was an angel. To Mr Bird, Mrs McMahon and Mr Kennedy, who were my English and debating teachers, I will never forget you, particularly during tough times when, at a young age in high school, I lost my mum. They are the teachers, like many others, who encouraged us when we struggled. They were the ones who believed in us when no-one else did, or the ones who made learning enjoyable. A great teacher does not just deliver lessons; they inspire confidence. They teach valuable life skills and help students believe in their own potential. Teachers do not just prepare students for exams; they prepare them for life. They teach critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork and communication skills that are essential in any career and in life itself.

In a world that is constantly changing, our education system must evolve too. But one thing that remains the same is that the impact of a great teacher is certainly life changing. Despite their importance, teachers often face enormous challenges. As we know, they deal with overcrowded classrooms, limited resources and increasing responsibilities. They often spend their own money on supplies. They work long hours grading papers, particularly if they teach English. They go that extra mile to ensure that every student gets the attention they need. Yet they do not always receive the recognition and support they deserve. Today I say thank you to all the teachers who made a positive impact in my life—and not just my life but the lives of every member in this Chamber. I thank all the teachers in my electorate, the schools and the principals in my electorate. A strong education really is the backbone of a successful State and nation. Schools are not just places where students memorise facts. They are environments where young minds are shaped, creativity is encouraged and lifelong skills are developed.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (15:30): By leave: I commend the motion moved by the member for Newcastle that highlights the importance of our schools and our teachers. I wish all students and teachers a happy and successful 2025 school year. As someone who is currently counting down the weeks for her youngest child to finish the HSC, I am at the other end of the spectrum to the member for Oatley and the member for North Shore. I am nearly done. I have 25 weeks to go and counting—but who is counting? I spent 23 years teaching. I taught from kindergarten to year 6. I taught from year 7 to year 12 and I taught preschoolers. I taught music, maths, religion, geography and English. If someone wants to be qualified in as many subjects as humanly possible, spend some time in England, where schools are not so inflexible.

Anyone who has spent longer than a minute with me knows that I am a passionate advocate for the importance of safe, happy and loving schools for our students, as well as schools that have been designed with the latest technology and understanding of how students learn. I am very proud of the New South Wales Government rolling out explicit teaching and reducing teacher vacancies. Teacher vacancies can undermine a student's mental strength quicker than anything else. Not having a teacher in front of them is incredibly detrimental to students who wish to be lifelong learners. As a new member of this House whose electorate includes Gledswood Hills High School, I am very proud of the brand-new schools that the New South Wales Government has provided for New South Wales.

We had been screaming out for Gledswood Hills High School for years and years, and now it is happening. We have our first year 7 cohort and there are 80 year 7 students. I am told that last week the school had a year 7 information evening for 2026 and 400 parents attended. The idea that we will have a school bursting at the seams in year 8 is unbelievable. Like the member for Oatley, every single one of us can remember the incredible teachers in our lives. People probably think of that teacher once a year. Please thank them. Please find that teacher and thank them. It will make their year—it will make their decade. Teachers are not seen very often. They are around and they do the work, but they are not seen. That is why I cannot laud this motion highly enough. I thank the member for Newcastle for moving it. I one hundred per cent commend this motion to the House.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (15:35): By leave: I am cognisant of leaving enough time for the member for Newcastle to reply to the debate. I thank him for moving the motion. Today I ran into Mark Morey and we talked about the Teachers Federation, of which I have been a proud member for about 26 years. I said that there has never been a better time to be a former or current teacher because, honestly, what we have seen from the Minister for Education and Early Learning is stellar. Teachers are getting the pay they deserve and teacher vacancy rates are down. With the announcement of Federal funding and co-funding, our students will get the 100 per cent resourcing standard they need. We are on track, and I commend the Minister and the Government for that.

I give a big shout-out to all the schools, all the students, all the teachers and all the parent communities across my electorate following Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, which created a lot of anxiety. We all still have post-traumatic stress disorder from the 2022 floods. There is a lot I could say, but time is limited so I will leave it at that.

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (15:36): In reply: I thank the member for Davidson, the member for Wallsend, the member for North Shore, the member for Cessnock, the member for Oatley, the member for Camden and the member for Ballina for contributing to the debate. I am so pleased that the member for Davidson supports the motion, particularly paragraph (3), which commends the Government's commitment to

rebuilding public education in New South Wales by rolling out explicit teaching, reducing teacher vacancies and building new and upgraded schools. The member for Davidson said that this Government is moving chess pieces across the board, but I would say that facts are facts. The New South Wales Government promised to fix the mess left by those opposite. We delivered to teachers the most significant pay rise in a generation. We took them from being the worst paid to the best paid. As a result, permanent teacher vacancies are at a four-year low.

Under the Minns Labor Government, vacancies are down a whopping 40 per cent and, in regional New South Wales, they are down by an even greater 47 per cent. The number of merged and cancelled classes has halved. For the first time in 13 years, resignations have dropped and now are at a four-year low. The Liberals and Nationals opposed the pay rise for teachers. They have promised to return to suppressing teachers' wages with a wages cap, which will lead to a teacher shortage crisis and our children's education suffering. We can only hope for our children's sake that the Coalition is never re-elected. The member for North Shore said that all students should be treated equally in public education. With the great deal that Minister Car and Prime Minister Albanese have done, we will have exactly that. What a fantastic outcome from those discussions.

I thank the member for Wallsend for her experience and her great support of public education. I thank the member for Camden for her great knowledge and experience. I thank the member for Oatley for his fond recollections, which were very much appreciated. I thank the member for Cessnock, who is always looking out for those less advantaged and younger kids who do not have the same opportunities as many others, and the member for Ballina, who said the education Minister is stellar. Who could not agree with that? She has done an absolutely outstanding job.

Our teachers are essential to the social fabric of this country. Whether it is early childhood, primary, high school or tertiary, they play such an important role in making sure that our kids have the confidence and the skills to be active members within our community. COVID-19 reinforced the important role that teachers play in our community and just how essential schools are for connection and development. Despite that, members opposite created one of the biggest teacher shortages in our history. The 12-year wage cap on teachers led to a record number of resignations. Who suffers? It is our students who suffer. That is the tragedy of those 12 long years.

We, on this side of the Chamber, understand the importance of public education, as does the member for Ballina and The Greens. We listened to the expertise and the concerns, and we committed to fixing the mess. We scrapped the wages cap to give the biggest pay rise in a generation; there is more stability in the classrooms and 16,000 more teaching roles. The huge rate of teacher resignations is going down. Free and accessible education is globally recognised as a fundamental right. It must not be taken for granted. It is the greatest equaliser for our kids. We must make sure that public education remains accessible, equitable and to a high standard so that every child in New South Wales has the opportunity to follow their dreams.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bills

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AMENDMENT (TRANSPORT SECTOR GIG WORKERS AND OTHERS) BILL 2025

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Ms Sophie Cotsis, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:42): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Today the Minns Labor Government delivered on its election commitment to modernise chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act and to extend its coverage to the gig transport economy. Chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act is a longstanding industrial relations legislation. Chapter 6 at present applies to owner drivers—our mum and dad owner drivers—and taxis, and it provides for the making of enforceable instruments that set pay and conditions. As a result, numerous chapter 6 instruments are in force throughout the New South Wales transport industry.

Chapter 6 has been saved from numerous attempts to override or reduce it. Following a Transport Workers' Union campaign, including a convoy to Canberra, the Howard Government was forced to preserve chapter 6, even though other aspects of State industrial laws dealing with independent contractors were overridden following the enactment of the Independent Contractors Act 2006. In 2011 the O'Farrell State Government attempted to incorporate the Industrial Relations Commission [IRC] of New South Wales into a super tribunal. This could have

had the effect of significantly reducing the scope of chapter 6. A union-led campaign led to chapter 6 being preserved in its pre-existing form. Today, the Minns Labor Government will again protect chapter 6 by modernising it and extending its application to gig transport workers. This will ensure that it keeps its relevance as a modern piece of industrial relations legislation.

Last year the Federal Government acted to provide gig workers access to the Fair Work Commission, including giving the Fair Work Commission the ability to make minimum standard orders for gig workers as well as providing workers access to unfair deactivation remedies. This bill does not seek to replace the new Federal jurisdiction or to duplicate the important work that has taken place federally. Rather, the bill creates a mechanism that allows gig transport workers to access the protection of chapter 6 if the transport industry decides that some sectors of the transport gig economy are better left to State jurisdictions. To remove duplication, the bill provides direction to the Industrial Relations Commission about how it must deal with any application made with respect to a cohort of workers who are the subject of a Federal application for minimum standards.

The bill also acknowledges the operation of the Federal deactivation scheme, as I will explain later. In addition to providing a mechanism for transport gig workers to access chapter 6, the bill updates the provisions of chapter 6 so they are fit for purpose in a modern transport industry. The bill expands who is covered by chapter 6, giving the commission the power to examine contractual chains that exist in modern supply chains, improving transmission of business provisions and updating dispute resolution and bargaining under the chapter. In short, this bill protects and supports the men and women who run the small businesses that keep New South Wales moving.

I now turn to the content of the bill. Schedule 1 [1] proposes to insert new objects into chapter 6 to outline the underlying purpose of the chapter. Schedule 1 [2] to the bill permits the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission, constituted by a presidential member of the commission, to declare particular contracts, or a class of contracts, to be contracts of carriage. When making a declaration, the Industrial Relations Commission must be satisfied that the contract is for the transportation of persons or goods and that it is appropriate for the Industrial Relations Commission to make a declaration having regard to the factors listed in new paragraph (3B) (b). These include that the person has low bargaining power in relation to the particular contract or that its terms would be unfair, or operate unfairly, in relation to the person. This could include the declaration of contracts of carriage beyond the circumstances now prescribed in schedule 1 [5] if the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission considers it appropriate having regard to all matters.

Schedule 1 [3] to the bill removes exemptions within section 309 (4) of the Act. Chapter 6 currently excludes certain categories of contract transport workers, including those whose contracts of carriage are for the carriage of bread, milk or cream for sale, or delivery for sale, or the delivery of mail on behalf of Australia Post, including the delivery of parcels. In the twenty-first century, these exclusions are archaic and deprive persons who would otherwise be contract carriers from the protection of chapter 6, in particular the minimum standards afforded through contract determinations.

Schedule 1 [5] to the bill amends section 309 of the Act and acts to extend the operation of chapter 6 to contract carriers who own or operate a total of up to three motor vehicles, including providing them with minimum standards provided that the Industrial Relations Commission varies an instrument to include them. Schedule 1 [5] also clarifies and expands upon prescribed circumstances currently contained in the regulations. This is designed to protect a contract carrier in situations where they may be otherwise reasonably unavailable for driving duties, such as being on workers compensation or being unable to drive in order to comply with mandatory rest breaks. The Industrial Relations Commission will have the ability to provide for a contract determination to apply to successors of principal contractors. Schedule 1 [7] to the bill clarifies that where the extension of up to three motor vehicles applies, this does not create the carrier of the main vehicle as being a principal contractor.

Schedule 1 [8] to the bill creates a mechanism to include transport gig workers under the Act. Schedule 1 [8] does this by providing that a contract that is one for the transportation of goods and persons, or both, is taken to be a contract of carriage if the particular contract is arranged or facilitated through a digital labour platform or booking service. The bill sets a definition of a digital labour platform. These new provisions do not apply to or affect a contract of bailment in the taxi industry. The new categories of workers that will be covered under chapter 6 will be able to access the safety net provided by contract determinations. Schedule 1 [9] amends section 313 of the Act to provide a broader and non-exhaustive list of considerations the commission must consider when making a contract determination in respect to contracts of carriage. The bill at schedule 1 [9] amends section 313 of the Act to provide that the Industrial Relations Commission, constituted by a presidential member, will be able to inquire into and take appropriate action in relation to remuneration and other conditions in a contractual chain.

The bill defines a contractual chain as a chain, or series of contracts or arrangements, under which work is performed for a party to a contract or arrangement in the chain or series by a bailor or carrier. The commission is

precluded from these functions if, in its opinion, the exercise would interfere with the reasonable commercial arrangements of the parties to a contract or arrangement in a contractual chain. Given that it is likely that the exercise of this power is almost always going to interfere with commercial arrangements of the parties, in forming an opinion as to what constitutes "reasonable" commercial arrangements, the IRC must have regard to a number of factors, including the overarching objects of chapter 6 and the matters that must be considered in the amended section 313 (2).

Just because commercial arrangements have always operated a certain way between parties does not make those arrangements "reasonable". For example, if a person at the apex of a contractual chain imposes certain commercial conditions on another person that could adversely impact contract carriers, even if it is able to do so in a contract, then the making of a contract determination in a contractual chain would not interfere with the reasonable commercial arrangements of the parties. Similarly, in making a contract determination in a contractual chain that sets remuneration and conditions across a contractual chain in accordance with the New South Wales IRC's power, the amended section 313 (2) and the objects of chapter 6, the New South Wales IRC would not be exercising a function that interferes with the reasonable commercial arrangements of the parties.

Schedule 1 [10] still enables the commission to order the reinstatement of contracts but extends that to contracts where a carrier uses multiple vehicles in circumstances where one or more of those contracts has been terminated or where a contract has been declared under the new section 309 (3A) after the termination of a contract. However, if it relates to deactivation, a gig worker cannot access section 314 where a gig worker is able to access the unfair deactivation provisions of the Fair Work Act. Schedule 1 [12] provides a mechanism for dealing with access to chapter 6 for transport gig workers where there is an application for an employee-like minimum standards order before the Fair Work Commission about the same kind of person performing work but has not yet been determined.

The bill proposes that the IRC, when dealing with an application for a contract determination about the same persons, must have regard to the application made under section 536JZ of the Fair Work Act 2009 and, in doing so, must dismiss the application made under part 2 of chapter 6 of the Industrial Relations Act or adjourn proceedings for a period if it considers reasonable to do so. Schedule 1 [19] inserts a new section 355C to prevent the Industrial Relations Commission from dealing with a dispute under part 4 of the Industrial Relations Act where the dispute concerns a class or group of workers similar to those subject to the section 536JZ application. Contract agreements will be able to apply to transport sector gig workers as an outcome of bargaining between an association of contract carriers and a principal contractor.

Schedule 1 [13] strengthens the ability of the commission to facilitate bargaining and impose good faith bargaining obligations on parties who are bargaining for a contract agreement. Schedule 1 [14] amends the provisions that relate to the termination of contract agreements and acts to prevent the unilateral termination of contract agreements by one party. Revised section 330 (3) provides that a party to a contract agreement can apply to the commission for a contract determination to replace the agreement if the contract agreement has reached its nominal expiry date. The effect of a successful application for a contract determination in these circumstances will lead to the termination of the existing contract agreement, as noted in new subsection (3B).

New subsection (3A) provides what the commission must take into account before making a replacement contract determination. Importantly, the commission cannot make the new contract determination unless it considers it appropriate to do so, having regard to the factors listed in new subsection (3A). This amendment prevents the current situation where contract carriers who have their contract agreement terminated by their principal contractor are automatically left with inferior rates and conditions. Further, where a principal contractor now seeks to unilaterally terminate a contract agreement and replace it with a contract determination that could leave contract carriers on inferior rates and conditions, they must convince the New South Wales IRC as to why it is appropriate to do so.

New subsection (3D) provides particular rules for the termination of a contract agreement where a group of carriers is a party to the contract agreement. Schedule 1 [15] determines the extent to which an approved contract agreement applying to a principal contractor will apply to a new contractor who is a successor to the whole or part of the business of that previous contractor. Schedule 1 [11] amends section 313 to ensure a contract determination is binding on a successor. Schedules 1 [16], 1 [17] and 1 [18] deal with industrial disputes. Section 332 (2) has been amended to ensure that the existence of an industrial dispute is enough to enliven the New South Wales IRC's dispute resolution jurisdiction.

The bill makes reference to the ability of the commission to require a person that would help in the settlement of the dispute to attend a compulsory conference, and this can now include a person involved in a contractual chain which relates to the dispute. The bill amends the dispute resolution provisions by inserting a new section 332 (1C) that the commission must first attempt to resolve the dispute by conciliation. If all reasonable steps have failed, the commission may make an interim determination or other order to resolve the dispute. The

existing provision permitting the Industrial Relations Commission at section 332 (6) (b) of the Act to make an interim determination for one month will be amended by a new section 332 (6) (b) in the bill, giving the New South Wales IRC the discretion to determine the length of the period in the interim determination.

The public interest test at section 332 (5) (a) has also been abolished to make it easier for the New South Wales IRC to quickly resolve any industrial disputes, including disputes relating to the termination of a contract of carriage or bailment through the making of an interim determination reinstating that contract. An interim determination or order can also be made against any person involved in a contractual chain. Overall, the New South Wales IRC is now clearly vested with the power to quickly and efficiently resolve industrial disputes using all of the powers available to it, including ensuring it is easier to make interim determinations.

Schedule 1 [19] amends the Act by inserting a new section 355A, providing that those persons who have been involved in a contravention of the new provisions are taken to have contravened these provisions. This accessorial liability can, for example, result from aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring the contravention or inducing the contravention by threats and promises. Schedule 1 [19] amends the Act to insert a new section 355B to address the issue of contract carriers bearing the cost of road tolls incurred in the performance of their work. The bill provides that contract determinations must specify how tolls will be reimbursed and specify reasonable obligations for carriers regarding routes that must be taken to effect deliveries.

Bringing gig workers under the jurisdiction of chapter 6 is a substantial change for the industry. As a result, schedule 1 [21] provides transitional arrangements to make these changes as smooth as possible. The provisions applying to gig workers do not take effect until 18 months from assent. The removal of existing exclusions from chapter 6 for bread, milk and cream carters and the Australia Post provisions will take effect six months after assent. Similar considerations apply to the extension of coverage to operators or carriers of up to three vehicles. For the removal of exemptions for carrying goods for multiple principal contractors and for the delivery of meals, as they primarily relate to the coverage of gig workers, the provisions will take effect 18 months after the date of assent.

Schedule 1 [21] contains transitional provisions which mitigate the effects of these changes. The removal of the existing exemptions, except delivering for multiple principal contractors and delivery of meals, and the proposed coverage of up to three vehicles, are termed in the bill as "expansion contracts". These provide that a contract which was not a contract of carriage at the commencement date of the new provisions will be able to be covered by a contract determination, but only after six months from assent of the new Act, and only then when an application is made to the commission or on the commission's own initiative. The bill also contains a provision that the Minister is to review the amendments proposed by the bill as soon as possible after a period of 12 months from assent.

A lot of work has gone into the bill. It is quite historic. Not only is it nation-changing, but the world is also looking at this today. I will have more to say in my speech in reply. I acknowledge the Transport Workers' Union, including Michael Kaine, Richard Olsen, Nick McIntosh and Tony Matthews; owner-driver Rosalina Pirozzi; Nigel Ward from Business NSW; Sam Morton; and the Australian Road Transport Industrial Organisation's Laurie D'Apice. I thank my amazing ministerial staff, in particular Tom Craven, who is in the gallery. From the department of Industrial Relations, I thank Ian Galvin. I also thank the many platforms that we deal with, including Uber, DiDi, DoorDash, Menulog and others. We appreciate their cooperation.

I thank Toll Group, Woolworths, the Australian Retailers Association, the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Australian Industry Group, Amazon, Unions NSW, George Petrovic from Industrial Relations, the Bar Association, the Taxi Council and Nick Abraham, the Premier's office, and the thousands of workers who have been advocating for this for over 15 years. I congratulate them and I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Petitions

NURSES' AND MIDWIVES' PAY

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): It being 4.00 p.m., the House will now consider the electronic petition signed by 20,000 or more persons regarding fair pay for nurses and midwives, presented by the member for Newtown. I acknowledge the members of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association who are in the gallery.

The question is that the House take note of the petition.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:00): I am pleased to say that it was not just 20,000 but 38,000 people who signed what I believe was a record-breaking Legislative Assembly petition. The Minister for

Health looks slightly nervous about that. The target of a 20,000-signature petition was reached in four days. Indeed, we got to 38,000 and triggered this debate. Along with the 38,000 people who signed this petition, we call on this Parliament and the New South Wales Government to urgently address the pay disparity for nurses and midwives in New South Wales. There is long-held and overwhelming public support for the campaign to ensure that nurses and midwives are being treated as they should be, because they look after us and we need to look after them. It is as simple as that.

As the petition states, nurses and midwives earn significantly less than their interstate counterparts, affecting workforce retention, recruitment and patient safety. The demands from the petition are clear: It urges the Government to provide New South Wales nurses and midwives with a 15 per cent pay increase and to develop and commit to a plan for interstate pay parity and ratios in every public health service. We remember the chants, "One in three in ED; one in four on the floor" and "Mums matter; babies count". In fact, I remember Government members, when they were on the opposition benches, standing with their placards and chanting. But now that they are in government, what do we see from them?

Nurses and midwives in this State do essential work for the people of New South Wales. Since the last Government was in power, they have been telling us that they are unable to keep doing what they do to keep us safe unless they have mandatory staff-patient ratios in every part of our public health system and unless we deal with the unacceptable pay discrepancy that sees people becoming burnt out, stressed and traumatised, and leaving the profession and the State. It cannot go on anymore.

I thank the nurses and midwives who are in the gallery today, and I give special thanks to Dustin Levick, who started the petition. I also thank all nurses and midwives across New South Wales, who have been doing it so tough. They stepped up to try to get rid of the last Coalition Government and expected that the new Government would deliver for them and finally provide some relief—but no. The Greens are in full support of their demands for fair pay and safer working conditions. That is why I absolutely and wholeheartedly offered to sponsor the petition when my office was approached by Dustin, a nurse who lives just outside my electorate of Newtown in a Labor-held electorate. In making his approach, he said that Labor had failed to act to improve the pay and conditions of nurses in New South Wales.

Nurses had hope in the New South Wales Labor Party but unfortunately found little support there, with the current Government's wage offer keeping their wages far below those of every other Australian State. The Government recently offered a 40 per cent pay increase to New South Wales police, so we know that it is possible. The Premier stated at the time that, if they wanted to be compensated fairly, the nurses should have listed salary as their number one priority like the cops did. Excuse me, but in what world does the Government or the Premier expect our healthcare workers to list their salaries above patient safety? The two are not mutually exclusive, and we have heard loud and clear from nurses that that is absolutely critical.

My Greens colleague Dr Amanda Cohn has made it very clear in the other place that NSW Labor cannot agree on how much it would cost to fund the pay rises. The Premier stated that it would cost \$6.5 billion, but a Deloitte analysis costed it at \$163 million. It appears that the math is not mathing. But governments and budgets are about choices and priorities, and the Labor Government has shamefully failed to prioritise delivering the pay and ratios that nurses and midwives in this State have been demanding. The Greens stand with the nurses and midwives and congratulate them on their ongoing campaign. We will continue to fight every day until we see it delivered.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (16:05): It gives me great pleasure to contribute to debate on this petition, and to address our nurses and the wonderful work that they do. I do not think anyone in the House has said anything other than that. I have had the pleasure to meet with a number of nurse delegations in my electorate office in Cessnock. I have had phone calls and emails. The nurses and midwives are campaigning very strongly, and I congratulate them on that. Long may that be the case. I do not want to get into a tit for tat and a nit for nat with my good colleague from Newtown, but I hear The Greens promise a lot to a lot of groups knowing that, ultimately, I do not think they will hold a majority in the House or have the responsibility for Treasury in my lifetime. I make that point because it is difficult to balance all of the responsibilities the Government has around the entire State.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The member for Newtown will come to order.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: Of course, one of those difficulties is the fact that 420,000 or 450,000 public servants across the State are all looking for the current Labor Government to do some repair to their wages, given the suppression of wages over the previous 12 years. In my heart I believe we are working towards that, but we will not get there in one leap. That is not going to happen; it is not possible or practical, but we are working in that direction. I recognise that we have over 56,000 full-time equivalent nurses across New South Wales. I appreciate that nurses are there when we are born and when we die, and they are there at all of the difficult times

in between. I also appreciate all of that. Since Labor members formed government, we have taken considerable steps to increase the nursing population across our medical facilities in New South Wales, and we now have more nurses coming in than leaving, which is pretty wonderful.

I also appreciate that we have taken steps to invest in our future health workforce. I have the privilege of being on the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health, and of talking about planning the workforce for today, trying to repair it from yesterday and looking forward to tomorrow. It is important to assist students who study some form of health degree and to help our nurses with payments if they choose to move to regional and remote areas. It was also important to secure those 1,000 nurses who were only ever put on a short-term contract during the surge of COVID. That meant they could be funded from State loans instead of recurrent funding every year. That was a sneaky false economy. Those nurses are now permanently funded in the recurrent budget of New South Wales, which costs several hundred million dollars a year. Our safe staffing levels have also only just begun.

We need to do more to get there in the end. We are committed to doing that, but we cannot do it in one go. We need a workforce to do that. We need more nurses being trained to enter the workforce so we can roll them out in the ratio that we have committed to. I say respectfully to the member for Newtown that we cannot simply flick a switch and suddenly have the 10,000 extra nurses we need. This will be a difficult conversation but we need to have it in a sensible and detailed way. We have removed the wages cap. I know that nurses want a bigger number than we are offering them at the moment, but I would like to think that with a Labor Government over two or three terms they will get to pay parity with their interstate nursing colleagues. I know that nurses and midwives want more than thanks, but right now in this Chamber, the Minister sitting beside me will talk in more detail about what is happening and the options on the table. I sincerely thank all nurses for their work, including the nursing community throughout the Cessnock electorate. They are welcome to talk to me any day of the week.

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:11): At the outset, I acknowledge the nurses and midwives who are in the public gallery and those watching online at home. Since becoming the shadow health Minister, I have had the opportunity to meet with many of them to hear their stories and experiences, what made them go into the profession, and the pressures they are constantly under. They tell me that they love the work they do, which is why they do it, but I hear from them that they do not feel valued right now. They are passionate about caring for their patients, but they are exhausted by years of a cost-of-living crisis and being the frontline workers during the global COVID pandemic. They tell me that they have to do more with less and that they are working in a health system under unprecedented pressure. We see that too.

The public in New South Wales is on their side and want them to be paid more than just thanks. Given the pressure they are under with 802,000 presentations to hospitals in the December quarter and 196,000 patients arriving at emergency departments by ambulance—the highest on record—it is no wonder they are tired and angry at a government that is not listening to them and has failed to negotiate a fair outcome. The Premier they put their trust in has let them down. He gave them false hope to get their vote before the election, then turned his back on them in government. They were told before the election that this Government wanted to negotiate. They were not told before the election that it was either the pay deal or safe staffing ratios, as the Government now says is the case. They were not told that they would be working in a health system that has experienced two years of real budget cuts.

I acknowledge the health Minister is sitting in the Chamber. I give him credit for that because often Ministers do not show up when members have these debates. The Minister is a good man, who I believe really has the interests of nurses and midwives at heart, but the bottom line is that he has not been given money by his bosses. He gets told no by Treasurer Mookhey and Premier Minns. I think he meant it when he said to nurses in 2023, "I won't be dicking you around." But he has not been given the money by his bosses, so we have seen strikes without progress, and no progress on the gender pay gap. If that is not "dicking you around", I do not know what is. Nurses deserve to be heard and today the Government has no choice but to listen. I congratulate nurses and midwives for getting over 38,000 signatures on the petition. I know that was easy because a lot of people are supporting them. But the truth is this Government operates in an industrial relations system that is akin to picking a favourite child. They have done deals with the police and teachers but are silent when it comes to the nurses.

Their contempt for hospital psychiatrists meant they let them walk out of our hospitals, and their solution was to let nurses pick up the slack. There was nothing new on the table. There was stonewalling and platitudes. The Government pushed the matter to the Industrial Relations Commission, hoping it would get the result it wants. This Government is forcing nurses to strike and then blaming them for the blow-out in hospital surgery wait times, which have reached pandemic-era levels. We know it is not their fault. This Government needs to take responsibility. They are now two years into their term. Where is the leadership? Where are their solutions and plans for the health system? They cannot spend their days looking over their shoulder and blaming the Coalition because they are now in charge at a time of unprecedented pressure on the health system.

Recently the health Minister said he would not use the one-year deal for New South Wales hospitals from the Federal Government for nurses pay because he said nurses could have the amount for essentially one year while wages are adjusted, but it would then have to go back because there is no flow-on. To be clear, the reason there is no flow-on is because this Government failed to get a five-year funding agreement. Labor in State and Federal means nothing is happening for our nurses. Our system is under unprecedented pressure. In New South Wales we are fortunate to have an amazing health system that is one of the best in the world, and we have extraordinary people working in it. They deserve an outcome. They deserve respect and a fair hearing. I say to the nurses and midwives in the gallery today that I will not promise them one thing before an election, have them standing in their scrubs supporting me, and then get into government and do the reverse. That will not happen. I thank them today. I hope they get a good hearing. I hope they see the support in this Chamber and across New South Wales.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (16:16): I start by acknowledging our nurses and midwives in the gallery and welcome them to the New South Wales Parliament. I particularly acknowledge Shaye Candish, the General Secretary of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. I thank her for the work she does on behalf of its membership. She does a sterling job. I have been in this place for 15 years, and never have I heard such rubbish and hypocrisy as I just heard from the shadow Health Minister. She was part of a government that, for 12 long, torturous years, sat on this side of the House and did nothing but ensure there was wage suppression throughout the public sector.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The member for Vaucluse will come to order. The member for Shellharbour will be heard in silence.

Ms ANNA WATSON: She was part of a government that absolutely bastardised the public sector. We all know that the Liberals and The Nationals do not like public health workers. Members can just look at Peter Dutton, who in February wanted to sack 36,000 workers. How do we think that will go down with the nurses and midwives? The shadow Minister for Health should not pretend to be high and mighty and on the side of those workers.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I call the member for Vaucluse to order for the first time.

Ms Kellie Sloane: That is so offensive.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I call the member for Vaucluse to order for the second time.

Ms ANNA WATSON: Well, it is true. Sometimes the truth hurts. I stand here and speak the truth. I have the greatest respect for nurses and midwives, particularly in my electorate of Shellharbour. Glenn Hayes, Nadia Rodriguez, Silvana Dimovski and Siobhan are absolutely outstanding delegates and incredible human beings. They stood side by side with Labor to fight the Coalition in 2018 when five public hospitals were going to be privatised under members opposite. Let us not forget what they wanted to do. Who stood with the nurses and the midwives and the admin staff and everybody who worked in those hospitals? It was Labor. It was not the member for Vaucluse or the member for Goulburn. It was the Labor Opposition that stood with its union mates to make sure our public hospitals were not privatised. How dare the shadow Minister for Health say such things. She has no idea what we have been through in those 12 years. Let us not forget what will happen if the Coalition is re-elected—the wages cap will go straight back on. Their mate Peter Dutton has already said it. He has already confirmed that members opposite will all fall into line.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: That's rubbish. You're just making it up. You have no idea.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I call the member for Goulburn to order for the first time. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the second time. I call the member for Goulburn to order for the third time. She will come to order or I will direct her to leave the Chamber.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I listened to you. Can you be respectful? I was very respectful. When we won government in 2023, we looked under the bonnet to see what money was there and what was not. We were left with a \$188.5 billion black hole—the biggest deficit ever handed from one government to another. Those opposite seem to think we can fix 12 years worth of neglect in two years. Do we want to fix this? Absolutely we want to fix this. But it will take more than two years to fix 12 years worth of neglect. Wages as a proportion of government expenditure were 40 per cent to 41 per cent under the former Coalition Government. That has risen to 45 per cent. Members opposite are shaking their heads and denying everything, but they cannot deny the facts.

During the Coalition's 12 years in government, the Labor Opposition supported nurses and midwives in this State. Those opposite cannot deny the fact that they suppressed wages throughout the public sector for 12 long years. The House divided at least 50 times on that issue. I have read *Hansard*, and they are all guilty. Not one

Coalition member supported the nurses and midwives during that 12 years—let alone the police, the schoolteachers and the ambos. Again, we cannot fix in two years what those opposite did in government because it took them 12 years to ruin it. We are trying to fix it, and we will. Are the nurses and midwives angry? Of course they are, and we understand that perfectly. They have every right to be angry. We are trying to fix this problem.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:21): I make a brief contribution to the take-note debate on this petition. I am proud to speak in support of the petition, which does no more than call for a fair deal for our nurses and midwives. I thank them for the work they do in our health system and I acknowledge their representatives in the gallery today. The stumbling block to their 15 per cent pay claim seems to be built on the argument that the State cannot afford to pay it. The real question should be: Can we afford not to pay it? Nurses and midwives are the foundation of our health system and they deserve what they are asking for. I think everyone in this House would support that. I speak as a current medical practitioner and someone who has worked in the health system for many years. The health system is very much a nursing system.

Nurses and midwives in New South Wales are paid less than their interstate counterparts so if we do not pay them what they are worth and match or better those other payments, we risk losing them. That cannot be an option. Without an adequate nursing staff, our health system cannot function. If anyone needs convincing of the value of nurses and midwives, they should look no further than the current maternity crisis in rural New South Wales, where a severe shortage of midwives—along with other health professionals—is creating maternity deserts, putting the lives of women and babies at risk and threatening the future of small communities. In August last year I spoke in a private member's statement about the letters that I had received from members of the Wagga Wagga branch of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, and I acknowledge the work of organisers Karen Hart and the team.

Those letters were quite moving. They individually outlined the concerns that those nurses have regarding wage claims and the need for better or matched salaries. But at the heart of it all was workload and having sufficient nurses to staff rosters. The nurses wrote about missing family time to do extra shifts time and again or doing extra work just to make ends meet. They wrote that they were considering moving interstate so they could keep doing their job and sustain their families. They were particularly concerned about the quality of care and the use of agency staff. One nurse asked the pointed question, "Would you pay a nurse or a midwife more to save your life or the life of a loved one?" Surely the answer to that question could not be no. Of course we must look at paying them more.

But it is not just about valuing nurses; it is also about the quality of patient care. The two go together. In the long run, paying nurses will come at a cost—I accept that. But the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association has put together a strong business case that is linked quite credibly to patient outcomes. In the long run, we know that better patient care is not cheaper patient care, but more cost-effective patient care. The two go together and sometimes we have to invest to get those outcomes. I acknowledge the Minister's presence in the Chamber today. I commend him for that. I also commend the Government for the work it has done on ratios, which is a bold, hard step and something we have to acknowledge. There is very clear evidence of the importance of ratios in improving patient care. While I think they could be implemented a bit faster, at least there is a commitment to do that.

We have before us—and this petition highlights it—an opportunity to deliver a good result where the Government wins, the union wins, the staff win but, above all, the patients win. In other words, if we can maintain our nursing staff numbers and improve them through better pay and conditions—and I know the Government is committed to that, which I support—then we will sustain a workforce that is happy and committed and will deliver better patient care. I am not having a go at agency staff because they are an important part of providing relief and keeping some of our rural services open. However, in some situations agency staff are paid more to do the same job as the people working next to them. It is effectively a pay rise without a pay rise and, frankly, the continuity of care is not the same. Again, I am not having a go at agency staff—they are like locum staff and play an important role in the health system—but, in the long run, we want to support and sustain a permanent workforce who are proud of where they work, can afford to live near where they work and can deliver valuable care to their patients. I support the petition.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:26): In response: I acknowledge the Nurses and Midwives' Association, Shaye, O'Bray, Michael and the entire team of delegates and rank-and-file members who are in the gallery today. I also thank Dustin for bringing this petition to the House. Back in 2011, when I was not the health Minister and had a lot more non-grey hair—probably more hair generally—I brought a petition to this place about Bulli Hospital. It took an enormous amount of time to get 10½ thousand signatures, and I thought I was good. So to get 38,000 is incredible. I also thank the nurses and midwives in the gallery for the work they do every day. I know they know we appreciate that, but it is probably not what they want to hear at the moment.

The challenges facing the sector and the staff every day keep me up at night. I am not a Minister who gets a lot of joy out of opening new buildings and new facilities. I understand they are important and are the reason that some Ministers go to work every day. But that is not my drive. My drive is to deliver the best possible services for the community and that means I have to do what I can to invest in our staff. Nurses and midwives make up the largest proportion of health staff, so I understand their importance. However, I have to state a few facts. Over 12 years of wage suppression in this State compared with other States meant that, quite quickly, wages lagged. To try to make up 15 per cent in a single year is difficult, and I cannot do it—I have been clear about that.

But we made offers in both 2023 and 2024 that were essentially the largest offers presented to nurses and midwives in over 15 years. I accept that it is not where they want to be at the moment. I hear that and I understand that. But I will not be lectured by those opposite, who for 12 years moved wage suppression motions and ensured that there was no negotiation, discussion or engagement. I will not be doing that. I know working together is a challenge. I acknowledge the work of the association in partnership with the Government to commence the largest reform of the way we staff our public hospitals in the State's history. Could it be done faster? Yes, of course I would love it to be done faster. Is it complex? Yes. Are our two organisations working together? Yes, but that does not mean we cannot improve. The Government has over 20 sites and over 300 extra staff in place, and we will continue to drive down ratios as quickly as we possibly can.

As the Minister, I understand that no-one else is accountable. This is on me; I am not blaming the Treasurer or the Premier or anyone else. This is my responsibility, and I will continue to engage transparently and honestly with the workforce. We do not yet have a deal, but I am continuing to work through this, in the same way as the Government is continuing to drive down ratios as fast we possibly can. This does not mean there will not be headwinds or challenges along the way, but I assure nurses and midwives that they have a Minister and a government that will continue to engage with them, work through the challenges and do our very best to show them the support they need and deserve.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:30): In reply: I thank the member for Cessnock, the Minister for Health, the member for Shellharbour, the member for Vacluse and the member for Wagga Wagga for participating in this petition debate. I also acknowledge that the member for Balmain is in the Chamber. While the political banter is fun to watch and it keeps everyone entertained, it is hypocritical of the Liberals and The Nationals to claim that they have any moral ground on which to stand on this issue. I remind members that Labor and The Greens were pushing for increased pay, better ratios and the lifting of the public wages cap while they were in government. But now, in opposition, it seems like they just say what they want.

I go to the point made by the member for Cessnock, who said that we cannot just flick a switch. The Greens will not be in government anytime soon, but just because members get into government does not mean they have to sell out on their principles and all the people who delivered them there. While I might never get into government, at least I do not have to sell out on my principle of being committed to paying people correctly. I will give members an example. New South Wales pays \$985,500 a year to lock up children. It would be possible right now for the Labor Government to walk in and say, "We are going to release all of those children because children shouldn't be in prison, and we are going to use that additional money in our healthcare system." They could make that choice but they choose not to. I acknowledge Dr Amanda Cohn in the advisers' gallery. She will continue to work closely with Shaye Candish from the Nurses and Midwives' Association. I thank all the nurses who signed this petition. Remember, at the heart of this are nurses and midwives, who are struggling every day because of the failure of this Government to act.

Petition noted.

Community Recognition Statements

VISHWA SHANTI MAHAYAGNA

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:33): It was an immense honour to attend the newly opened BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir and Cultural Precinct in Kemps Creek for Vishwa Shanti Mahayagna on 5 March. This sacred gathering, dedicated to prayers for world peace—something much needed in these times—marked the beginning of the Celebrate Peace month-long celebration, held in the presence of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, whose wisdom and guidance inspire countless individuals worldwide. At 92 years old, His Holiness has travelled to Australia to unite communities in the spirit of harmony and divine blessings. It was an immense honour and privilege to meet and chat with him on the day. His teachings remind us that true peace begins within each of us and has the power to transform societies and bring nations together for universal wellbeing. Over the years, I have seen the BAPS community continue to make an incredible impact through tree planting, food and blood donation drives, and humanitarian efforts. This new mandir will help supercharge those efforts. I thank them for their dedication to my community.

EMMA GREY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (16:34): Emma Grey has been recognised with a Blayney Council Australia Day Sporting Achievement Award. Emma commenced long-distance running during COVID, and over the past four years her passion and commitment to running has led her to compete in multiple events, including half-marathons and 100-kilometre ultra events. After finishing as first female at the Southern Sydney Track Ultra, Emma was selected to run for the Australian women's 100 kilometres world championship team in India. Outstanding success followed, with a twenty-third place overall finish, and first of the Australian team, with an impressive time of eight hours and 27 minutes. In a short time, Emma has demonstrated outstanding passion and commitment for her sport, and her dedication is worthy of her acknowledgement through the Blayney Council Sporting Achievement Award. I congratulate Emma Grey on her achievement and wish her success into the future.

EAST HILLS ELECTORATE RAMADAN CELEBRATIONS

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:35): Ramadan Mubarak to everyone celebrating the holy month of Ramadan, especially in my community of East Hills. I thank all who have welcomed me to their iftars this year. I have been honoured to share this special time with you. I say a big thank you to the teachers, students and parents of Sir Joseph Banks High School for their warmth and generosity at their recent iftar, and to the Islamic Charitable Projects Association, which also hosted a wonderful iftar at Salamah College in Chester Hill. Recently I enjoyed connecting with my local Muslim community at an iftar in Bankstown hosted by my State and Federal colleagues. I was also pleasantly surprised to see Condell Park High School students at the New South Wales Government's iftar, held in Parramatta. I am sorry I could not make it to the iftars hosted by Mayor Bilal El-Hayek and MUSIAD Sydney this year, but I look forward to attending those events next year. I thank them all for sharing this special holy time in their calendar with many others in my community. I wish all a joyous and peaceful Ramadan.

AFFINITY INTERCULTURAL FOUNDATION

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:36): As those of the Islamic faith in Liverpool and throughout New South Wales observe Ramadan, it was a pleasure to attend the Affinity Intercultural Foundation's sixteenth New South Wales Parliament Friendship and Dialogue Iftar Dinner. Iftar is the evening meal with which Muslims break their fast. It is a time for reflection, gratitude and connection. Beyond the spiritual significance, iftar celebrates compassion and inclusivity, strengthening the bonds of friendship and harmony across communities, reflecting the importance of hospitality in the teachings of the Koran. Affinity embodies that spirit fully. One of the ways it does that is through its home iftar initiative, whereby local Islamic families open their homes to members of the community to break fast with them and teach them more about the Islamic faith. I look forward to joining Yunus and Gulsen Yenitürk to break fast later this month. I thank the team at Affinity, led by executive director Ahmet Polat—cousin Ahmet—for their ongoing dedication to connecting members of the community. Eid Mubarak.

EESHA CHAND

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (16:37): I acknowledge and congratulate a young resident of the Hawkesbury electorate, Ms Eesha Chand. Eesha was the recipient of a prestigious award at Torrens University's Bright Awards 2024, a national competition geared towards recognising the creative talents of students in Australia and New Zealand. The competition, run by Torrens University in partnership with Adobe, encourages students in years 10, 11 and 12 to showcase their talents in the creativity field. Architecture, media arts and fashion design are also included in the competition. Participants are invited to share their works, receiving exposure and feedback from experts within the industry. Ms Chand produced a stunning piece of visual art, which judges praised for its exceptional precision, creativity and high standard of artistic excellence. Congratulations to Eesha on this wonderful achievement. It is so special that her passion, skills and talent were recognised at such a prestigious event. I look forward to seeing her creativity flourish as she continues to express herself.

JORJ LOWREY

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:38): Today I celebrate the outstanding contributions of Jorj Lowrey, the founder of Manyana Matters Environmental Association, who has been named as the Local Woman of the Year for the South Coast at the 2025 NSW Women of the Year Awards. Jorj's tireless advocacy for the environment has had a profound impact on the South Coast, particularly through the Manyana Matters Environmental Association, which she established in 2017. Jorj's leadership came to national attention in the aftermath of the devastating Black Summer bushfires when Manyana Matters successfully campaigned to pause a development that would have cleared over 20 hectares of unburnt forest. Jorj's dedication to grassroots action has not only protected precious local ecosystems but also demonstrated the power of community-led

environmental advocacy. The fight to stop the zombie development application in Manyana is not over yet. The South Coast is a better place thanks to Jorj's efforts, and I congratulate her on this well-deserved honour.

SAMANTHA NEAVES

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:39): I congratulate Sam Neaves, the extremely deserving Local Woman of the Year for Wakehurst. Sam is a local legend. She is the driving force behind Stage Artz Performing Arts School, which is a much-loved institution in our community. Through her incredible leadership, Stage Artz Performing Arts School has raised over \$300,000 for the Children's Hospital at Westmead, making a real and lasting difference in the lives of sick kids and their families. Beyond the fundraising, Sam and her team have created such an inclusive and welcoming space where performers of all ages can shine. Her passion, dedication, and generosity are well known in the community, and I cannot wait to see what Sam and the Stage Artz Performing Arts School do next. I also congratulate her on the latest production of *Heathers the Musical*, which is raising money for youth mental health through headspace Brookvale. How good is that! Our community is so lucky to have Sam, and I thank her for all the work she has done.

NAVITAS SKILLED FUTURES FAIRFIELD COLLEGE

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (16:40): Navitas Skilled Futures Fairfield College has supported tens of thousands of new migrants and refugees in Fairfield. The diverse range of courses offered support individuals from various backgrounds and cultures to improve their language, literacy and numeracy, and assist them to access employment and enable career pathways. Its specialty learning programs include digital literacy, English for sewing, preparation for citizenship and English for driving. I attended its annual graduation day in December last year to honour the accomplishments of its students. Hearing about their experiences and determination to make a better life for themselves in Australia was really inspiring. I thank the Navitas Skilled Futures team, including Basim Shamaon, Mehi Ajo, Reshmi Chaudhary and many others for all the work they do for our community.

TRIBUTE TO WENDY "BANJORA" GAME

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (16:41): Wendy Game, who was known as Banjora in the scouting movement, made an exceptional contribution to scouts in the North Sydney region, and particularly to the 1st Berowra Scout Group. Wendy served as a Joeys scout leader with the group for many years. She would have continued to do so for many more years but, tragically, she died from leukemia in 2022. Wendy was described by all who knew her as someone with boundless energy, enthusiasm and a sense of fun. These are all qualities in the true tradition of scouting. The community came together and raised funds to build a sandstone camp fire circle at the 1st Berowra Scout Hall in her honour. This was also partially made possible from a State Government grant. The camp fire circle was officially opened in early March 2025 with a moving ceremony. The camp fire circle will ensure Wendy's legacy lives on for years to come as the joeys, cubs, scouts, venturers and rovers from the 1st Berowra Scout Group gather around it and sing songs.

CARDINAL STEPINAC VILLAGE

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:42): On Sunday 9 February 2025, I had the pleasure of attending the vocation day at the Cardinal Stepinac Village community hall. I was warmly welcomed and quickly immersed in the ongoing celebrations. The event began with the presentation of new foundation members, which marked an exciting milestone for Cardinal Stepinac Village. It was inspiring to see individuals be recognised for their commitment to the village mission. Following this, volunteers and staff were honoured for their invaluable contributions, hard work and dedication to the community. A special staff recognition ceremony also took place to highlight the exceptional efforts of those who have helped create such a supportive and caring environment at the village. It was truly heartening to witness the appreciation shown to people who make a difference to the lives of others. I thank the CEO of Cardinal Stepinac Village, Emil Perosh, for hosting such a memorable occasion and for his continued support of the Australian Croatian community.

DR ASTRID PERRY-INDERMAUR, OAM

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:43): I congratulate Dr Astrid Perry-Indermaur on receiving the Lifetime Community Service Medal at the Premier's Harmony Dinner. Astrid has led Settlement Services International's Women, Equity and Domestic and Family Violence team in Parramatta for the past decade. Since immigrating from Switzerland in 1983, her activism against domestic and family violence and her support for refugees and migrants has uplifted many members of our communities across Western Sydney. Like many migrants, her qualifications were not recognised. This led her to pursue both undergraduate and doctorate degrees in social science at Australian universities. Astrid has collaborated on the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children, and she continues to fight for prevention programs. One of her many successes was the establishment of the NSW Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety in 2024, which was achieved through a collaboration between the Minns Labor Government and Settlement Services International. Astrid's

motto is "hurdles are for jumping", but perhaps the phrase "mountains are for climbing" would better describe her incredible passion and achievements for our community.

MR FLOYD DAVIES

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (16:44): Tonight I recognise Mr Floyd Davies, who was recently nominated as a finalist and then announced as the winner of the Upper Lachlan Shire Citizen of the Year Award at the 2025 Australia Day Awards. Mr Davies is a resident of Crookwell and has been recognised for his dedication to the community. Mr Davies has been actively involved in several community initiatives. He has volunteered many hours to numerous community events and had a lead role in establishing the *Upper Lachlan Gazette*. A driving incentive to protect community safety has led to his active advocacy and fundraising for local projects, including the original Coleman Park playground that dates back to the 1990s. I thank Mr Davies for his enduring commitment to the community of Crookwell, and I congratulate him on his well-deserved award.

HELEN MCLEAN

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:45): Today I acknowledge Helen McLean as she celebrates 30 years as an authorised marriage celebrant. Helen has been uniting couples in marriage since she was first authorised by the Federal Government on 3 March 1995. When she first began, the system operated as a closed shop, meaning that a celebrant could only be appointed if an existing one passed away or left the district. Helen waited patiently for five years after submitting her name before finally getting the opportunity to become authorised. There was no formal training provided back then; she was handed her manual and sent on her way. The very first ceremony she officiated was held in her very own home, and this marked the beginning of a remarkable journey as a celebrant. She has lost count of the number of ceremonies she has had the honour of officiating, but she fondly recalls the incredible feat of performing five weddings in a single day—not once, but twice! Having pivoted towards conducting funerals, Helen's kindness, compassion and ability to understand life through other's experiences has made her a highly sought after support for families during their time of grief. I congratulate Helen on an amazing achievement.

ST JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC COLLEGE

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:46): The beginning of a new year is always a time of renewal with new challenges, new opportunities and new leadership. With that in mind, I extend my warmest congratulations to the 2025 St John Paul II Catholic College student leadership team. Being entrusted with a leadership role is both an honour and a responsibility, and I commend these students for stepping up to serve their school community with dedication and integrity. I offer special congratulations to the college leaders, Noah Esposito and Isabella Marks, and the college mission leaders, John Apolinar and Analiese Halteh. Their selection reflects the respect and confidence their peers and teachers have in their ability to lead with compassion, commitment and faith. Under the guidance of Principal Anthony Hulme, I am confident they will uphold the values of St John Paul II Catholic College and leave a meaningful legacy. Leadership is not just about titles—it is about service, vision and the impact one makes on others. I have no doubt that this team will inspire and strengthen their community in the year ahead. I congratulate them once again.

INTERNATIONAL DAY TO COMBAT ISLAMOPHOBIA

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:47): On 15 March 2025 we marked the International Day to Combat Islamophobia and stood united against discrimination, prejudice and hate in all its forms. This year, the International Day to Combat Islamophobia held even greater significance as it aligned with Ramadan, a sacred month of fasting, reflection, compassion and unity for Muslims around the world. I acknowledge the Australian Islamic House community for its resilience and strength in the face of a terror threat made online. Despite this distressing incident, it continues to embody the values of peace, generosity and community service that define its contributions to our society. The community's unwavering dedication to fostering understanding and inclusivity is truly commendable. As we mark this important day, let us stand in solidarity with our Muslim community and reaffirm our commitment to a society built on respect, acceptance and unity.

TRIBUTE TO PETER LEARMONT

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:48): I was honoured to attend the inaugural open day of the Sapphire Coast Historic Vehicle Club on Sunday 16 March. The Sapphire Coast Historic Vehicle Club was founded in 1987, and it has grown to a club of 300 members with 55 vehicles and a collection of tools and memorabilia. I was invited to formally recognise Peter Learmont and his family by establishing the Learmont Pavilion. Peter Learmont was a life member of the club, which he joined in 1991, and he passed away in 2023. Peter built the Learmont Pavilion in 2014 to house his collection of vehicles with the agreement that the building would become part of the club on his passing. Peter's love of historic vehicles and their preservation goes back to his childhood days growing up on the Monaro. He had farming properties across the Sapphire Coast and built up

a collection of over 60 vehicles throughout his years as a pharmacist in Cooma. I thank the Learmont family for this community legacy.

ANNELIESE ROTHE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (16:49): Today I extend my congratulations to Anneliese Rothe, who has been named the Lions Club Regional Youth of the Year in both the overall category and the public speaking division. A year 12 student from Young High School, Anneliese delivered a thought-provoking five-minute speech that left a lasting impression. She chose to address the pressing issue of the Doomsday Clock, which currently stands at 90 seconds to midnight, and shared her reflections on reversing the damage done to the planet by climate change, artificial intelligence, and other modern challenges. Anneliese called for greater accountability from corporations, a reduction in pollution and a re-evaluation of technology's role in our lives. Most importantly, she advocated for a renewed focus on honesty and integrity. Anneliese now moves forward to represent our region in the district Lions Youth of the Year competition, which will be held in Cowra on 29 March. Again, I congratulate Anneliese.

NORTH MACEDONIA NIGHTCLUB FIRE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (16:50): Over the weekend, the world witnessed tragic scenes from North Macedonia when a fire tore through the overcrowded Club Pulse in Kocani during a live concert. This tragedy claimed the lives of more than 59 young people. Many more are left with horrific injuries ranging from burns to smoke inhalation and others were trampled in the panic that ensued. The gravity of this event is exemplified by the assistance and cooperation of neighbouring countries such as Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Türkiye, which offered emergency medical treatment to the injured. The catastrophe has left a deep wound in the hearts of the Macedonian people, in both North Macedonia and New South Wales. Since the 1950s thousands of Macedonians have called Australia home, and many live in Bankstown, adding to the fabric of our diverse and multicultural society. Their regular community gatherings are at Bankstown City FC and Yagoona Lions FC, and the youth learn cultural dancing at KUD Vardar Bankstown and the language at the local Macedonian Ethnic School in Yagoona. My thoughts and prayers, like everybody else's, are with them. I hope their families are okay during this difficult time.

TRIBUTE TO STAN BAKER

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:51): Today I acknowledge Stan Baker, a valued member of the Balmain and Rozelle communities, who sadly passed away in January. Stan was an engaged member of Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle, and was heavily involved in its sustainable transport committee. He made a series of important contributions to the group, especially as an advocate for better cycling infrastructure in our area and for electric vehicles. It is deeply important to mark the contribution of those like Stan who dedicate themselves to making their part of the world a better place. Through their advocacy they help bring about much-needed change in our communities. I acknowledge the grief of Stan's family and friends in this difficult time and recognise the work being done by Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle to carry on his legacy. My thoughts are with all of those who knew and loved Stan during his life. Vale, Stan Baker.

LAKE MACQUARIE POLICE DISTRICT AWARDS

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (16:52): I acknowledge and honour the recipients of the Lake Macquarie Police District Awards. These awards serve as a testament to the remarkable dedication, sacrifice and tireless efforts shown by those who serve our community. Among the distinguished awardees, Natasha Johnson was honoured with the NSW Police Service Medal and Certificate of Service. Sergeant Daniel Bishop and Senior Constable Jeffrey Reilly were both presented with the NSW Police Service Clasp Set. The Commissioner's Unit Citation was awarded to Inspector Lisa Jones and Jason Briggs for their exemplary work. Senior Constable Andrew Hellier received the Northern Region Commanders Commendation for his outstanding contributions, and the District Commander's Commendations were presented to Sergeant Jaye Chapman, Senior Constable Jeffrey Reilly, Senior Constable Andrew Thackray, Senior Constable Michael Madgwick and Senior Constable Lisa Dyson, for their continued commitment to service. Those individuals have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to service, and their continued hard work ensures the safety and wellbeing of the Swansea community. I thank them for their efforts.

MOSMAN HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (16:53): The public schools in my electorate do an amazing job at fostering the talents and passions of young people in my community. I acknowledge the incredible achievements of students from Mosman High School, who have been excelling in sporting and extracurricular fields. I warmly congratulate year 12 student Will Wilkinson on becoming the 2025 420 Australian National

Champion in sailing, and Will Rogers, who will now head to Slovenia in June this year to represent Australia at the 2025 Optimist World Championship, also in sailing. I congratulate both boys. I congratulate year 10 student Paul Everett, who has successfully defended his Australian title in karate at the Australian Martial Arts Championships held at the end of 2024 on the Gold Coast. Paul won the 15 years full contact fighting in the black belt division and is qualified to compete in the World Martial Arts Championships in Japan in November. Well done, Paul. Finally, I congratulate Dominik Keil, who swam at the NSW Senior State Age Championships in December and will now be swimming at the national championships in April. I congratulate the boys. I am sure their parents and the whole of the Mosman High School community are very proud of them.

OLIVIA MACKENZIE

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (16:54): I extend my congratulations to Olivia MacKenzie from Rouse Hill Anglican College for being selected to represent our country in the American Football Australia U17 Girls Emerging Olympic Squad. That is a remarkable achievement and a testament to Olivia's dedication, hard work and passion for the sport. Olivia's selection is not only an individual accomplishment but also a proud moment for our community, as she will be representing us on an international stage during her United States of America tour this June. This tour provides Olivia with a unique opportunity to further hone her skills and demonstrate her talents on a global platform. I thank Ollie, Olivia's supervisor, who has been an unwavering source of support to her. He has continually tracked Olivia's progress and managed her schedule to ensure that she excels in all aspects of her life. I wish Olivia the best of luck as she represents our nation. I extend the support of the entire Riverstone community as she progresses in her journey.

THE BUTCHERS CAFE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:55): I acknowledge 17 years of outstanding effort in the Manly area for the hospitality of Mr Andrew Dawes, who will be hanging up the boots of his Fairlight favourite, The Butchers Cafe. People say that the mark of a great cafe lies in its quality coffee and its great bacon and egg rolls. If that is the case, then Andrew has not just met the standard: He has set it. As a butcher turned cafe owner, his passion for quality produce shines through in every detail of his establishment. The coffee is world class and the burgers have become the stuff of local legend. Yet what truly sets Andrew apart is his warmth and approachability. More than the food, it is his genuine hospitality that has kept locals coming back for two decades. As he embarks on this next chapter, I wish him all the best. His presence will be deeply missed, but the legacy he leaves in Fairlight will long endure. I thank Andrew.

BURWOOD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:56): I recognise Burwood Girls High School for its annual iftar dinner held on 10 March, at which I was the guest speaker. This is one of my favourite events at Burwood Girls High School. It reflects the school's incredible diversity and commitment to ensure there is a sense of belonging for all of its students. We reflected that the event was not just about the food but also about reflection, community, and reminding ourselves that faith is not just what we believe but also how we live our lives. We offered a prayer that peace may come for those around the world who need it the most. We offered a prayer also for the strength to uphold peace at home. We reflected on how diversity and social cohesion in Australia keeps us safe and strong. I congratulate Erin Dib, principal Mia Kumer and the Crescent Girls who put together this amazing event.

BADGERYS CREEK ELECTORATE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (16:57): I congratulate and commend Emily Filewood of Glenmore Park High School for winning the Youth of the Year Area C Final hosted by the Penrith Lions Club at Penrith Bowling Club on Sunday 2 March 2025. The public speaking event involved the contestants delivering eloquent and heartfelt speeches on topics ranging from loneliness and isolation, and the importance of service and patriotism. In addition to speeches, the event also included interviews. Emily's overall victory sees her progressing to the district final, which is scheduled to be held at Wentworthville Leagues Club on Saturday 22 March 2025. I wish Emily the very best for the final. I also congratulate Ava Barbara of Caroline Chisholm College, Glenmore Park, for winning the public speaking award. Well done to Emily and Ava! I wish them continued success in the future.

JUSTIN BAXTER

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:58): I congratulate Justin Baxter, a student from Picnic Point High School, who has been given a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to represent Australia at the under-18 Ice Hockey World Championships. This is an extraordinary achievement and speaks volumes about his dedication, discipline and passion for the sport. On top of this, he will be training professionally in Canada, further refining his skills and taking his career to the next level. Justin's journey will take him to Milan for a two-week training camp at the Australian Institute of Sport European Training Centre before heading to Bulgaria, where he will

compete in seven days of intense action at the World Championships. After the World Championships, Justin will participate in development camps and tryouts with Hockey Canada. On behalf of the entire community of East Hills, I wish Justin nothing but the best as he begins this exciting new chapter. I have no doubt that he will continue to achieve greatness, both on and off the ice rink.

PAMELA ALVAREZ

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (16:59): I congratulate Pamela Alvarez of Hunters Hill, who was named the 2025 Lane Cove Woman of the Year. It was an honour to nominate Pamela for this award. An extraordinary woman, her life story serves as an inspiration to the wider Lane Cove community and the broader New South Wales community. Pamela was a young widow who studied law at nights so she could better provide for her children, and she is a dedicated volunteer for so many organisations. She has never sought any recognition for her work, making her the perfect recipient of this award.

HARLEY PUGH AND CHASE PUTTERGILL

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (17:00): I acknowledge and commend the exceptional actions of Harley Pugh and Chase Puttergill, who were both awarded the District Commander's Certificate of Merit at the Lake Macquarie Police District Awards Day. On 12 April 2024, Harley and Chase demonstrated remarkable bravery and quick thinking in a life-threatening situation at Wallarah National Park. When a tourist found themselves in urgent need of assistance in the water, Harley and Chase responded without hesitation. Upon being alerted to danger, they immediately contacted emergency services and took swift action to guide a helicopter to the scene using their phones. Their quick decision-making and resourcefulness ensured the safe rescue of the tourist, potentially saving her life. The district commander acknowledged this heroic effort, which exemplified the very best of community spirit and selflessness in the face of adversity. I thank Chase and Harley for their bravery. Their actions are a true credit to the Swansea community, and we are incredibly fortunate to have individuals like them who go above and beyond to help others.

LINDA FURY

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:01): I recognise, in the Parliament of New South Wales, local Kiama photographer Linda Fury, who has recently achieved significant success with her photos of Bombo Quarry, earning a top 10 entry in Australian Photography Magazine's Best Landscape 2024 competition. Linda's photos of Bombo Quarry, edited in monochromatic black and white, make the familiar Kiama landmark appear otherworldly. Linda entered several photos taken at the same landmark. All were shot at the same place; however, each one conveys something unique. One of Linda's photos, titled *Full Surge*, won first place and a perfect score in the Landscape/Seascape category at the twentieth Pakenham National Photographic Exhibition 2024. It also earned a top five placement at the Mosman Photography Awards and was awarded Best Monochrome Image of the Year at the Kiama-Shellharbour Camera Club's end of year awards. Linda has been passionate about photography for as long as she can remember. For Linda, being recognised in a nationally read magazine is a true honour. Linda is president of the Kiama/Shellharbour Camera Club, and she encourages anyone interested in photography who wants to improve their skills to join. Well done, Linda.

BONDI TO BARRENJOEY WALK

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (17:02): Bondi to Barrenjoey is an epic, 110-kilometre walk from Bondi Beach to Barrenjoey Lighthouse to raise money for mental health charities. Founded by Jake Cohen in 2020, the walk is in its fifth year. In February this year, the walk raised money for Sydney FC Foundation's Sydney FC Empowers Me program, and in previous years has raised money for Gotcha4Life, Mongrels Men and One Eighty Inc. The walk not only raises money but brings awareness to mental health issues and builds a sense of community, camaraderie and support for those impacted by mental illness. The Bondi to Barrenjoey walk has become a mainstay feature in my Pittwater community. Some people walk the whole 110 kilometres—others, including me, just do a stretch. Some of those who joined the walk this year from my electorate whom I wish to acknowledge include Michael Vanderlaan, Jonathan Perrin, Scott Eastaway, Ben Capiron and the amazing Isaac Capiron, who is only 10 years old.

Private Members' Statements

MITCHELL MURPHY

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (17:03): It was a great pleasure to extend my profound gratitude to Hunters Hill Council's general manager, Mitchell Murphy, as he has recently concluded three remarkable, impactful years at the helm. During his tenure, Mr Murphy distinguished himself through his infectious character and steadfast commitment to staff development, community engagement and transparent

communication. His leadership style, which has been described as approachable and inclusive, cultivated a deep sense of respect both within the council and throughout the broader community, ensuring employees at every level felt valued, motivated and empowered. I believe the latter is an important part of council life, given the rather too cynical and ungracious attitude council staff often receive.

As the local member, but also as a Minister in the previous Government, I was delighted to secure considerable funding for important upgrades and service deliveries in Hunters Hill. That includes the brilliant revitalisation of Figtree Park, with particular attention given to amenity and access issues. It includes the creation of the outstanding Boronia Park Sports and Community Facility, which for the first time in the history of sporting facilities in the municipality delivers girls-only change rooms. Another great event for local sport was the installation of multipurpose courts at Boronia Park and Gladesville Reserve, and likewise the upgrading of Buffalo Creek Reserve. It was my great pleasure to work with Mitchell to guarantee that these projects were brought to fruition and on time. Like many in our Hunters Hill community, I was delighted that a man of Mitchell's capability and drive was there to help deliver them during his tenure.

Another accolade I believe is deserving of mention is that Mitchell always took the professional, practical focus of council very seriously, and was truly in the "roads, rates, rubbish" mould of a general manager. Ideological crusades were not to Mr Murphy's taste, especially when ratepayers' money and time was involved. Proof of this is that, in his time serving council, there were substantial investments in stormwater, road and footpath improvements. These "nuts and bolts" duties of council, combined with the strategic projects I referenced earlier, have undoubtedly elevated the community's infrastructure and enriched its social fabric. They have provided a modern environment where civic pride can continue to flourish and guarantee through focused, good governance that Hunters Hill can remain an independent local government area for decades to come.

My local colleague and the Mayor of Hunters Hill, Councillor Zac Miles, has rightly characterised Mr Murphy's tenure as a transformative era for the municipality, one that not only expanded critical infrastructure but also fortified the council's financial stability and cultural cohesion. This is a testament to Mr Murphy's remarkable accomplishments, surpassing even the ambitious goals he initially set for himself and his team. Mr Murphy was appointed as general manager in March 2022, having previously served as chief executive officer of Longreach Regional Council, and he served council as its general manager until 7 March this year. It is worth noting that civic-minded, professional service in local government clearly runs in his blood, as Mitchell's father proudly worked in that level of government for 30 years.

Mr Murphy's future is now in the private sector in Queensland, and I am rather sorry that our State is losing him. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Mr Murphy for his unwavering service and dedication to the council and people of Hunters Hill. On behalf of the Lane Cove electorate, I offer my best wishes for his continued success in all future endeavours. I take the opportunity to express the sentiment that he will always remain a welcome visitor to the electorate.

SWANSEA ELECTORATE HEALTH SERVICES

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (17:06): It is no secret that the Minns Labor Government inherited a health system stretched to breaking point right across the State, including in the electorate of Swansea. I note the presence in the Chamber of my neighbour, the member for Wyong. I know every Hunter and Central Coast MP agrees on the need to invest in our region—not just in buildings, but in people. I know investing in workers is a foreign concept for members opposite. Maybe if they listened, they might learn a thing or two about how to actually run a State by putting the people of that State first.

Putting people first is exactly what we are doing by beginning the rollout of safe staffing levels at hospitals across our State. It is something that the Swansea community has long asked for, and I credit the Minister for Health for listening to the community and our frontline health workers to deliver this critical reform of our health system. The Minister joined me last week in the Swansea electorate to unveil the site of the new Caves Beach ambulance station that will service Caves Beach, Swansea, Murrays Beach, Nords Wharf, Cams Wharf and Catherine Hill Bay. We then visited the Belmont Hospital, where he was very warmly welcomed. The new ambulance station is being delivered as part of the New South Wales Government's \$615.5 million NSW Ambulance Infrastructure Program.

I advocated for the establishment of the ambulance station at Caves Beach, and it has been welcomed by the community. I also joined the Minister in the topping out of the acute services building as part of the \$835 million John Hunter Health and Innovation Precinct. The acute services building is scheduled for completion in 2026 and will deliver a 60 per cent increase in intensive care unit capacity and almost 50 per cent more theatres. The John Hunter Hospital is the busiest emergency department in the State, handling nearly 90,000 presentations a year, including from as far away as Moree and Lismore.

This \$853 million investment is not only delivering improved health services to our community but also backing critical local jobs. During the construction process, up to 800 local jobs have been created. Last month the Hunter New England Local Health District welcomed 118 new junior doctors and the Central Coast Local Health District welcomed 65 junior doctors, further underlining our commitment not just to invest in new health infrastructure but to invest in people so that our community can access the best possible health care. On top of this, the latest batch of paramedic interns has seen 16 deployed to Hunter Zone 1 and 14 to Central Coast Zone. Both service the Swansea electorate.

This record is in stark contrast to that of the former Government, which cut funding to our health services, including closing down our local GP Access clinics. The Swansea community can be assured that the Government they now have—the Minns Labor Government—is committed to improving health services in our region for the people of our region because they deserve the highest possible level of health care.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:10): For many members of this place, the beginning of March means taking part in activities across our electorates to highlight the contributions of women as part of International Women's Day and Women's History Month. These occasions give us the opportunity not only to celebrate women's achievements but also to reflect on the work still needed to achieve gender equality. The theme for International Women's Day 2025 is "Accelerate Action", which is a much-needed reminder that, while progress has been made, it is not happening fast enough. At the current rate, it will take until 2158 to achieve global gender equality—a staggering statistic that should serve as a call to action for us all. We acknowledge the need to move beyond words and take decisive steps to address the systemic barriers and biases that women continue to face at home, in workplaces and in every part of our society.

This year holds special significance for Liverpool as it marks the fiftieth anniversary of the Liverpool Women's Health Centre. Established in 1975, the centre was created as a feminist-based service to meet the needs of women in south-west Sydney. At the time, it was just the second women's health centre of its kind in New South Wales, providing medical care as well as a safe space for women to connect, speak openly, share their experiences and find support. The centre was founded by local women from Green Valley, working with women from the women's liberation movement. It made history as the first women's service to employ Aboriginal women and, over the years, it has led important conversations around domestic and family violence, sexual assault, health literacy and the health needs of incarcerated women. The centre has always prioritised local women, offering services and supports in additional languages and expanding services to meet the needs of our growing community.

This year, the Giving Voice exhibition was launched at Liverpool council's Yellamundie building. The exhibition documents the history of the centre and the feminist movement in Liverpool. I am so pleased that we had the Minister for Women present to mark this milestone. She took the time on the busiest day of her year to join us for the launch. As a former Liverpool local, the Minister understands just how important the centre is to our community. Of course, I had to invite Kate Meyer, the current executive officer of the women's health centre, to speak at my Liverpool International Women's Day morning tea. So many incredible women work tirelessly across our community, often without recognition. I saw the morning tea as a chance to come together, connect, and reflect on the work being done.

It was also the perfect opportunity to introduce Liverpool's Local Woman of the Year for 2025, Rowena Assaad. Rowena is a lifelong Liverpool local. She lives, works and breathes the 2168. That connection to our community shines through in everything she does, especially in her role with CORE Community Services. Through the 2168 Roundtable, which I established to bring local stakeholders together, I have seen Rowena's dedication firsthand. One of her standout achievements is the CORE mobile pantry—an initiative she thought of that delivers groceries directly to people in need across the 2168. It is a simple but powerful way to ensure that vulnerable members of our community do not fall through the cracks. I was proud to secure State Government funding to help realise the mobile pantry, but its success is truly a testament to Rowena's passion and determination. She has poured her heart into making sure that it not only exists but also thrives.

It was clear to me that there was simply no better choice for our Local Woman of the Year. Rowena exemplifies community spirit, leadership and care. She is someone who shows up, does the work and makes a real difference. Having Rowena's daughter join us at the morning tea was the icing on the cake—it was a beautiful reminder that the work we do today ripples through generations to follow. Rowena is not only making an impact in today's world but also instilling incredible values in her children and others, teaching them the importance of community, compassion and service. In celebrating Rowena, we celebrate the countless women across Liverpool and beyond who work every day to build stronger, more connected communities. Their efforts may not always make headlines, but they change lives, and it means that people like me can say we truly stand on the shoulders of giants.

As we reflect on the call to accelerate action this International Women's Day, I hope we all remember the role we can play in creating a more equal future. By recognising, supporting and investing in women like Rowena—and in vital services like the Liverpool Women's Health Centre—we create lasting change. Equality is not just women's work, however; it benefits our whole community. I thank the House.

DENCE PARK SWIMMING POOL

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:15): Dence Park pool has long been an integral part of our community in Epping, where history meets local connection. The pool was established as part of a legacy by the late John Dence, and it stands not only as a cherished community facility but also as a war memorial to local soldiers who served in World War II. Dence Park has been a home to many, from Olympic champions like Shane Gould to the Epping Bullets Swimming Club. One of my sisters still holds a swimming record with the Epping Bullets, earning the distinction of being the best Tudehope swimmer.

For many families in Epping, Dence Park is not just a place to swim; it is a community space for play and relaxation. Given its central role in our community, it should come as no surprise that, when the pool was threatened with closure, the community rallied together to protect it. The Save Epping Pool group was supported by the broader Epping community, including the Epping Bullets Swimming Club and its president, Peter Hall. Ms Michie told *The Weekly Times*:

... a petition opposing the closure of the pool has attracted almost 6,000 signatures, which is more than 30 per cent of the Epping population, and is the largest petition ever received by Hornsby Council.

These locals knew the importance of the pool, not just for swimming but as a strong community asset. The Save Epping Pool group took it to Hornsby council and the Government, and I am proud that a previous member for Epping—someone whom I know quite well—was able to fight for the pool's future when it was under threat of closure and to secure funding for its redevelopment. But nearly a decade later, the pool has yet to be redeveloped. Epping locals are now none the wiser as to the reopening of the pool. Again, I refer to my constituents for their views on this matter. Ms. Michie recently commented:

... the only frustrating bit is how long it is taking council to come to a satisfactory plan. It has been a couple of years already!

It is absolutely imperative that Parramatta council tell the people of Epping when this project will start and finish. It is crucial that the council be transparent with the community about how and when funding from the previous State Government will be spent. The people of Epping deserve to know how the redevelopment of Dence Park pool will progress. This is why I am speaking on this topic today. I want the people of Epping to know that, just like those before me who fought for this pool, I will continue to advocate for our community and its assets. I will fight for Dence Park pool. I will not let this pool close.

I commend the work that the City of Parramatta has undertaken so far for Dence Park pool. However, I put it on notice that the community will not tolerate this project being stalled for too much longer. I look forward to working closely with both the community and the council to ensure that this asset remains open, accessible and available to future generations, just as it was for me when I was growing up. The future of Dence Park pool in Epping is important to our community and I will fight for its future.

BATHURST WINTER FESTIVAL

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (17:19): I speak about an important event that takes place in the Bathurst electorate: the Bathurst Winter Festival. This major event held around July helps to build community spirit, but it is not just for locals; it is also for visitors and is a huge tourism drawcard during the colder months. It is more than an event. It brings families together and gives schoolkids something to do during the school holidays. The festival has been running since 2015. Over that time it has included such things as the very popular ice-skating rink on one of the main streets in the CBD, and illuminations on iconic buildings such as the courthouse, the carillon down Ribbon Gang Lane, and many other buildings. As such, it has been like a mini Vivid for the community to enjoy light displays throughout the city. It has also included garden displays, sculptures, many rides including a Ferris wheel and a carousel, night markets and silent discos. Plenty of other offshoot events take place due to this local community festival.

The Bathurst Winter Festival brings tens of thousands of people to the local area. When it launched in 2015, it had the support of the former New South Wales Government and had received numerous grants. This winter would have been the tenth festival to take place in Bathurst. However, with great disappointment, I acknowledge that this year's festival has been cancelled by Bathurst Regional Council due to financial reasons. This has come as a huge shock to the community, and it is a huge disappointment because it will have an impact on the local area. It will impact tourism. It will see fewer visitors to our local community. It will mean a loss of trade to businesses. Stallholders, who had already booked their spots for the event, were today informed that it will no longer take place. Accommodation businesses are also going to miss out. Events like this bring more heads

on beds into a local community, but now we will not have those visitors helping to drive the local economy. There is also a loss of performance opportunities for local musicians and artists, such as dancers, singers, clowns, stilt walkers and fire breathers, who have all been a part of this important festival every year.

As I said, it is not just about tourism; it is also about community spirit. Every local person I know looked forward to attending the Winter Festival every year with their family and friends. It got people out of their homes on the coldest days of the year and grew community spirit by allowing people to join together for something great. Again, I say that I am disappointed that Bathurst Regional Council has made a difficult financial decision that has probably been left unaddressed for way too long. Now it is the community who will suffer because of the decision that has been made. I hope Bathurst Regional Council can sort out its finances sooner rather than later, and that locals will be able to ice-skate across Kings Parade once again. I do not want to see any further events cut by this council, which will impact on the local economy, local businesses and the local morale and community spirit that is an important aspect of these types of events.

WOLLONGONG ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (17:23): As we approach the two-year mark of the Minns Government, I thought it was important to update the House on the progress of a number of commitments to Wollongong. We have made considerable progress over the past two years, and that will continue in the weeks, months and years ahead. We are working to build an even better Wollongong. It will be one that has more homes, more jobs and more opportunities. While our health and hospital services remain under pressure, they are being improved by investments the Minns Government has made and continues to make. This includes the opening of the new Fairy Meadow Ambulance Station, which adds capacity to already stretched ambulance services. Work is underway to upgrade Wollongong Hospital so that it can house a new MRI and CT scanner. Early works have started on the new Warrawong Community Health Centre. On the site of the old Port Kembla Hospital, the centre will be a great addition to Wollongong's southern suburbs.

Bricks and mortar alone are not enough to improve health services. The Government has introduced several measures to improve health services in the region, including the expansion of virtual care services to the Illawarra and the expansion of the midwifery group practice model, with an additional team of midwives added to the program. It has supported the rollout of urgent care services and safe staffing levels at the Wollongong Hospital emergency department. More than 8,300 people have used urgent care or virtual care services already this fiscal year, which has taken pressure off local GP services. Together, my colleagues the Minister for Health, Federal member for Cunningham Alison Byrne and I are working with local aged-care providers to reduce the number of older people in our hospitals each night through the Aged Care Taskforce. This includes initiatives such as the Aged Care Outreach Service, additional transition care beds and support from the Federal Government to expand or revamp existing residential aged-care services.

I have also made changes to planning laws that provide for a floor space bonus for aged-care providers looking to build new facilities. This will add much-needed capacity to services. This is in addition to work to reduce surgery waiting times in the Illawarra, which is producing results. Wollongong Hospital performed 1,756 planned surgeries in the October to December quarter, with 86.6 per cent of them performed on time. This is an improvement of 13.8 percentage points compared with the same quarter in 2023. The Illawarra Rail Resilience Plan is being developed, which will guide investments in the South Coast rail line and rail network into the future. But we are not waiting for the plan to make investments in track improvements. During 2023 and 2024 we invested \$61 million to improve services for South Coast rail passengers. This includes work to improve the resilience of cuttings, cleaning out drains and culverts, and ballast cleaning to fix track drainage.

An upgrade of the Coalcliff-Scarborough rail tunnel has also commenced and is expected to be completed in 2027—work that the previous Government could have done but did not. Planning is also underway for accessibility upgrades for Coniston station, and that draft plan will be released soon. The nearly 30-year-old temporary Marine Drive bus layover—yes, a 30-year-old temporary layover—is set to move to Atchison Street near Wollongong station in August, improving facilities for drivers and returning beachfront parking to the public. The massive Mount Ousley interchange project continues, which will improve traffic flow and safety on this vital road transport link.

Other projects are also progressing well. TAFE is taking enrolments for the Illawarra Heavy Industry Manufacturing Centre of Excellence. This \$47 million joint project of the Minns and Albanese governments will provide students with access to state-of-the-art facilities and equipment that will enable them to cultivate the skills required to operate legacy equipment and enhance efficiencies by using digital and robotic technologies and advanced manufacturing techniques. Our youngest learners are also being catered for. Schools in the Wollongong electorate are set to be among the first to have co-located public preschools, introduced through a life-changing investment in 100 such facilities across the State by the Minns Government.

Recently, Cringila Lions Football Club flicked the switch on new lights at John Crehan Park. Berkeley Neighbourhood Centre has had a new kitchen installed. Warrawong Residents Forum has a new home, with its food service to continue because of support from the Minns Government. I am chairing working groups to guide the transformation of 200 hectares of surplus BlueScope industrial land—the largest industrial land transformation of its type on the planet right now—and the master plan for the 32-hectare Warrawong Parklands site to make it one of our great public spaces.

More homes are on the way with transport oriented development, low- and mid-rise housing reforms and the rezoning of Warrawong Plaza, as well as Homes NSW undertaking a trial of modular housing in the region. Our rental reforms will make renting fairer for the almost two in five households in the Wollongong electorate that rent. The Minns Government is investing in Wollongong and the Illawarra—something the previous Government failed to do. As a result, we will build an even better Wollongong, with more homes, more jobs and more opportunities for the future.

COSMETIC INJECTABLES INDUSTRY

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (17:28): I speak on a matter of significant public concern: the unchecked dangers in the cosmetic industry, where illegal injecting, unqualified practitioners and the use of unapproved substances are placing lives at risk. Over the past 12 months we have seen case after case of individuals suffering botulism poisoning, severe infections and even exposure to bloodborne viruses due to unsafe and unregulated cosmetic procedures. These are not minor cosmetic mishaps; they are serious medical crises that have left individuals with lifelong complications.

We are witnessing an alarming rise in illegal injecting, where unlicensed individuals perform cosmetic procedures without the necessary medical training or accreditation. On 31 January 2025 *The Australian* reported that three women were hospitalised with botulism poisoning after receiving unregulated anti-wrinkle injections from an unlicensed practitioner. One of the victims ended up in intensive care, unable to breathe properly, due to the incorrect administration of botulinum toxin. Days later, *The Daily Telegraph* reported that two more women had been admitted to hospital with suspected botulism poisoning after undergoing cosmetic injections from a rogue operator advertising on WhatsApp and Instagram.

On 4 March 2025 *The Guardian* reported that clients of the Ketthip Beauty Clinic in Sydney's CBD had been advised to undergo urgent testing for HIV, hepatitis B and hepatitis C. That followed a Health Care Complaints Commission investigation that found shocking failures in infection control. Health officials discovered that the beauty clinic had been using medical instruments intended for veterinary use. Injections and infusions were being performed without qualified medical supervision with unknown, unapproved products. The clinic was immediately shut down and NSW Health issued an urgent public health warning. Clients who had received treatments as far back as 2023 were told to undergo blood tests to determine whether they had been exposed to life-threatening infections.

That should shock every member of this House. It was not an accident; it was gross negligence on a scale that should never have been allowed to happen. For too long dangerous operators have taken advantage of loopholes in our regulatory system, conducting their business in unlicensed premises with zero medical accountability. It is unacceptable that anyone can purchase those substances online, set up shop and start injecting members of the public without any legal consequences. We cannot allow those dangers to continue unchecked. The current regulatory framework is not strong enough to combat the growing black market for cosmetic injecting. We need stricter licensing laws that ensure that only trained, registered medical professionals can administer injectable cosmetic procedures.

No longer can we allow anyone with access to cheap, imported substances to set up a business and start injecting people. There must be a clear and enforceable accreditation system that prevents unqualified individuals from operating. We also need stronger penalties. Fines of a few thousand dollars are simply not a deterrent for rogue operators. Those caught practising without proper qualifications or using unapproved substances should face criminal charges. The safety of the public must come first. Furthermore, we must crack down on the importation of unregulated products. At present, counterfeit botox, black market dermal fillers and illegally imported anaesthetic creams are entering Australia undetected. Like the war on vapes, there needs to be harsher penalties for illegal distributors.

The New South Wales Government must also educate the public. Many people do not understand the risks of seeking cheap cosmetic procedures from unlicensed individuals. A public awareness campaign that teaches consumers how to verify a practitioner's qualifications and recognise the warning signs of an illegal operator is imperative to reduce participation in such practices. Having spoken to many stakeholders in this field, including dermatologist Dr Natasha Cook, it is evident to me that better safety measures are desperately needed to protect the health of consumers.

It is time for this Parliament to take decisive action by introducing stronger licensing laws, increasing penalties for illegal operators and cracking down on unregulated imports. Consumers deserve clear, accessible verification systems to check practitioner credentials, and public education campaigns must highlight the dangers of unsafe procedures. The people of New South Wales must be protected from these avoidable medical disasters, and it is our responsibility to act before more lives are harmed.

PARRAMATTA WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:33): I take the opportunity to talk about a topic we are all very familiar with and that we do not speak about often enough, and that is sewerage. Most people have no idea about a critical piece of sewerage infrastructure in the Parramatta electorate. On Grand Parade in North Camellia, between Lollipop's Playland and the Bidgee Bidgee Bridge, sits State Heritage listed Camellia Sewage Pumping Station 67, which was commissioned in 1931 and has played a very important role in the major advance and protection of the public health of the Parramatta region for decades by ending the discharge of treated sewage into the Parramatta River.

Currently the station services the Parramatta CBD and the Granville, Lidcombe and Auburn areas. That is a heck of a lot of poo! With massive population increases right across the catchment, the pumping station is rapidly drawing to the end of its life. Sadly, local residents can testify to that. Last September they were walking around with pegs on their noses and making some pretty serious odour complaints. Fortunately, Sydney Water was able to address the issue at the time by replacing the carbon filters, making the people living in Rydalmere extremely pleased. I appreciate that there are still odours emanating from the pumping station from time to time, but it is closely monitored.

Housing is the number one issue in New South Wales. The Parramatta electorate is doing more than its fair share of heavy lifting when it comes to delivering new housing, and that will continue. The increased number of dwellings approved for construction in Harris Park, Parramatta and North Parramatta alone will place further strain on the existing infrastructure. Add the construction of the Children's Hospital at Westmead stage two redevelopment, the Integrated Mental Health Complex within the Westmead Hospital Precinct, Metro West stations at Parramatta and Westmead, and a potential new university located within Westmead, and the pressure on our sewerage system continues to grow. In fact, over the next 30 years, the Greater Parramatta and Olympic Peninsula [GPOP] precinct will be home to an additional 250,000 people.

The good news is that Sydney Water has a plan. I recently visited the site of the proposed Camellia-Rosehill water resource recovery facility, which will play a critical role in the broader GPOP water cycle management project. Wastewater from the Parramatta area is currently treated and discharged at North Head. However, through the GPOP water cycle management project, we are taking the opportunity to shift away from our reliance on coastal treatment and ocean discharge of wastewater—surfers will be happy—and to enable future water re-use to sustainably service Parramatta and its surrounds.

The project involves a new treatment plant at the 21.7-hectare site at Camellia-Rosehill, upgrades to the existing pumping station, a pipeline transferring wastewater from the pumping station in Camellia to the new water resource recovery facility, and a brine pipeline connecting the new water resource recovery facility to the Northern Suburbs Ocean Outfall Sewer via the pumping station. The Camellia facility will produce high-quality treated water that can potentially be released through a new pipeline into the Parramatta River. It will also enable the supply of recycled water for non-drinking purposes, including industrial and agricultural use and irrigating playing fields, with the potential to deliver purified recycled water into the future.

I thank Bala Subramanian, senior project manager; Tatendaishe Mwanza, community engagement officer; and Dominic Schuster, government relations lead, for giving me a tour of the two sites and explaining the important work that the 100 per cent publicly owned Sydney Water is doing to support the future growth of Parramatta and surrounds. Sewage is something we all contribute to, but few of us understand and appreciate what is going on behind the scenes to plan for the future.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I thank the member for Parramatta. That contribution was certainly no stinker.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:38): My constituents want affordable, reliable and clean power through a dynamic energy grid underpinned by wind, solar, hydro, storage and efficiency. Our coal power stations are ageing and nearing the end of their lives. They are becoming more expensive and less reliable to run and are hugely expensive to replace. Expanding renewable energy with dispatchable storage infrastructure is the cleanest and most economical way forward to power the State. New South Wales has a renewable energy plan to get us there that has bipartisan support.

Renewables now represent 37 per cent of total power generation in the State. Australia has a renewable energy target of 82 per cent by 2030, a net zero emissions target by 2050 and a Capacity Investment Scheme that decreases financial risks for investing in renewable energy generation and clean dispatchable capacity. New South Wales also has a target to cut emissions by 70 per cent by 2035. The targets have given strong signals to industry, making last year Australia's biggest year for large-scale renewable energy investment since 2018. But this progress is under threat from the Federal Opposition's withdrawal of bipartisanship on renewable energy to push for nuclear power. Under the proposed policy, the life of ageing coal-fired power stations would be extended and seven power plants across the country would be converted to nuclear. Coal generators at Liddell and Mount Piper in New South Wales would become large-scale nuclear power plants. Renewables would only provide 54 per cent of our power by 2050.

The claim is that, under this scenario, the price of power would come down by a whopping 44 per cent. But nothing could be further from the truth. Extending the life of ageing coal-fired power stations will cause power disruptions and drive up costs. The Australian Energy Market Operator's latest Quarterly Energy Dynamics report found that energy prices are rising because the 18 remaining coal-fired power stations left in the National Energy Market are fast approaching their use-by dates. An assessment by Australia's national science agency, the CSIRO, found that nuclear would be two to six times more expensive than renewables and could not be operational until at least the 2040s at best. We can expect it to be much later given that the serious environmental risks make project delays likely. Extending coal into the 2040s is risky. It will lead to higher power bills and energy blackouts while increasing the country's carbon dioxide emissions by two billion tonnes.

Nuclear power would impact on existing renewable energy supply because it provides old-fashioned baseload power that runs all day and all night. Rooftop solar currently provides over 20 gigawatts of our total power supply and is forecast to grow to more than 70 gigawatts in the next two years. Millions of Australian households and businesses have invested in rooftop power, with the highest take-up in the world. But rooftop power would need to be shut down during the day if we had nuclear, to prevent overload of the grid. By contrast, rooftop solar complements large-scale wind, solar and hydro projects because it reduces energy demand during the day, allowing larger renewable infrastructure to send power to storage for dispatch when the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing.

Australia is set to hit 48 per cent renewable energy this year, which is only 6 per cent below the Federal Opposition's plan to cap renewable energy at 54 per cent by 2050, creating business uncertainty after a record year of renewable energy investment. We have already seen plans for an offshore wind farm project at Wollongong put on hold until after the Federal election. We know that renewable energy is capable of meeting Australia's future energy needs and provides the cheapest pathway to lower energy bills. An Australian Energy Market Commission analysis of the renewable energy transition found household electricity bills could drop by 13 per cent over the next decade. The latest CSIRO GenCost report found that the cost of large-scale solar photovoltaics fell in price by 8 per cent and battery costs fell by 20 per cent.

The transition is set to bring significant economic opportunity to regional communities through alternative income streams for farmers, and jobs to build, maintain and operate large-scale generators and transmission infrastructure. Jobs across the country in rooftop solar and electrification are expected to grow exponentially. Renewable energy provides a win-win solution to the challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the sector currently responsible for Australia's largest source of emissions, while delivering reliable and affordable energy in the face of growing demand. We must not sacrifice the progress we have made and the pathway we have set by reviving the climate wars. I call on all members of the House to continue our bipartisan approach to renewable energy and the rejection of nuclear power.

MULTICULTURALISM

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:43): Strathfield is one of the most diverse electorates in the whole of New South Wales and probably the whole of Australia, so today I speak about Australian multiculturalism. Many will know that, with the gradual dismantling of the White Australia policy after the Second World War, it was replaced with a policy known as assimilation. That meant that Australians were expected to shed the cultures they came from and adopt the dominant culture. Migrants were expected not to speak their language. Everybody was to speak English and everybody was to be Christian. That was the policy of assimilation. Under the Whitlam Government, in about 1973, the adoption of what we now know as multiculturalism began in Australia.

It had four main pillars. First, there was a recognition of cultural diversity—the fact that, no matter where you came from, the culture from your original country was valuable to Australia. People were encouraged to keep and celebrate that culture. We could all be Aussies, but the fact that people come from many different places and continue to celebrate those cultures was a source of strength. There was also a recognition of equal opportunity and access—that everybody should have the same opportunities as anybody else. There was a recognition of the importance of social cohesion, and that everybody should have a sense of belonging and shared identity in

Australia. Of course, there was respect for human rights as a pillar—that all people should be able to enjoy dignity and respect.

All in all, I think multiculturalism has been tremendously successful in Australia. We come from over 300 heritages and it is just wonderful. Often in this place we celebrate the many diverse festivals: Lunar New Year, Holi, Diwali and Ramadan. Yet I cannot help but reflect on the tensions and where multiculturalism has been under stress over the years. I, and I think a lot of people in my electorate, have experienced that. I have noticed how international issues and global affairs are increasingly beginning to tear at our concept of multiculturalism in Australia. We saw it rear its head during the war on terror and how Muslim Australians were treated during that time. We saw it during COVID, when Australia-China relations were at their lowest, and how Chinese Australians were attacked and abused at the time as being the source of the coronavirus.

The carpenter working on my home is a Russian Australian. He says that he cops abuse all the time. He tries to hide his Russian heritage because of the war in Ukraine and the animosity towards Vladimir Putin's regime. With the war in the Middle East, we have seen the significant, shocking rise of antisemitism and how members of the Jewish community are being treated. The widespread and systematic firebombing of synagogues, homes and even a childcare centre is next-level stuff. My reflection is that it is time to have a new, additional pillar to our central concept of multiculturalism—that is, we need to separate our views of foreign governments, countries, leaders and policies from how we treat fellow Australians of that heritage.

In other words, no matter what we think about a foreign country or its leaders or policies, we should not let that result in discrimination, hate or abuse of fellow Australians of that heritage. Putting it bluntly, no matter what we think of Vladimir Putin and the Russian regime, the Chinese Communist Party and President Xi Jinping, or Israel and Benjamin Netanyahu, we should not take our frustrations out on Russian Australians, Chinese Australians or Jewish Australians. It is our social cohesion and our successful multiculturalism that makes us strong and safe as a country.

DUBBO ELECTORATE WOMAN OF THE YEAR NIC GROSE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:48): It is with great pride and admiration that I recognise and celebrate an exceptional woman who has made an indelible mark on our community. The NSW Woman of the Year Awards provide us with the opportunity to acknowledge the determination, bravery, skill and passion of women whose contributions inspire and uplift those around them. This year I have the immense honour of recognising Nic Grose as the 2025 Dubbo electorate Local Woman of the Year. Nic's record of achievements is nothing short of remarkable. While many may know her from her touch footy field days, either playing or coaching, her impact extends far beyond the sporting arena. Her dedication to helping people with disabilities and supporting community groups showcases her deep commitment to making a real difference in the lives of others.

Nic's journey began in Bathurst, where she grew up, before she moved to Dubbo in 2002 to take on a role as a physical education teacher. In 2009 she decided to shift her career focus and retrained to become an exercise physiologist. It was around this time that she met and married—in her words—the love of her life, Clint. Clint's service in the army saw them relocate to Brisbane not long after the birth of their first son, Paddy, but after three years the family headed back to Dubbo. After returning to work as an exercise physiologist, Nic identified a crucial need within our community for a dedicated rehabilitation centre to support people with chronic conditions. In 2019 she founded Active - On The Move Rehab, a business and facility that has since flourished, growing from two exercise physiologists to a team of five, along with exercise scientists and allied health professionals. Nic's work in the field of exercise physiology is vital. Whether supporting individuals with diabetes, autism, spinal cord injuries or a host of other conditions, her commitment to improving the lives of those in need is truly inspiring.

Nic's impact in the sporting world is equally significant. In 2024 she represented Australia in the women's 40 division at the Touch World Cup, held in the United Kingdom. The team secured a gold medal, which was an incredible achievement. She has also played for New South Wales in the women's 35 and 40 sides, demonstrating her exceptional talent and dedication to the sport. Beyond playing, Nic has shown outstanding leadership in touch football. As president of the Dubbo Touch Association, she has driven community engagement and huge growth in the sport. Her contributions were further recognised when she was appointed country director on the New South Wales Touch Association board.

While Nic continues to shine in her playing days, she has set her sights on expanding her role in coaching this year. In fact, such is her commitment to coaching that I had to work around her busy schedule to present her the award. She could not be at the State breakfast as one of the recipients of an electorate Woman of the Year award because she was meant to be on her way to Coffs Harbour to coach the women's 40 Hunter Western Hornets team at the nationals. That level of dedication sets Nic apart and is why she is so deserving of this recognition. Nic's sporting contributions do not end with touch football. She is the league tag coordinator and a coach for St Johns junior rugby league, as well as assistant coach for Dubbo CYMS Football Club. Her passion and

commitment to CYMS saw her become the first female member of the Dubbo CYMS Old Boys club, a historic recognition of her invaluable contributions to the club. In 2019 Nic's efforts were further acknowledged when she was named Dubbo Regional Council's Sports person of the Year.

One of Nic's strongest beliefs is that being a part of a community means actively contributing to it. She does not just say it; she truly lives it. Outside her professional and sporting commitments, she volunteers her time with other important local organisations, including Clare's Angels and the Tie Dye Project. Her willingness to give back, lend a hand and use her skills and experience to help others really exemplifies the true spirit of community. There is no doubt that Nic is an inspiration. Her tireless work ethic, her commitment to supporting others and her incredible achievements in sport and health care make her a truly deserving recipient of this honour for 2025. She embodies the essence of what the NSW Woman of the Year Awards stand for: determination, skill, passion and an unwavering dedication to making a difference. Nic is ably supported by her wonderful husband and a good mate of mine, Clint, and is loving mother to Paddy and Olly, who I am sure are very proud to have Nic as their wife and mum. On behalf of the community, I express our heartfelt gratitude to Nic for everything she does. Her contributions have made Dubbo and the wider region a far better place. I congratulate her on this achievement.

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (17:53): I thank the member for Dubbo for bringing to the attention of the House Nic Grose as the Local Woman of the Year for Dubbo. Local women of the year are incredibly important people, and certainly Nic is one of those. The recounting of Nic's life and story is really instructive for the Chamber. This year's International Women's Day theme was "March forward for all women and girls", and Nic is certainly an example of a woman who does exactly that. She shines a light on exactly what women do through sport and how they can contribute through their lives. Nic really shows that you can be what you can see, and I am sure that many women and girls in Dubbo are going shine as a result of Nic's achievements.

COMMUNITY LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:54): I am proud to recognise the outstanding community language schools in the electorate of Prospect and, in fact, across Western Sydney. As a member of Parliament for a Western Sydney electorate, I am so proud to represent our diverse communities who have chosen to call Western Sydney home. I am sure my fellow Western Sydney MPs would agree. In the electorate of Prospect a rich tapestry of community language schools cater to the linguistic and cultural needs of our community. The schools foster social cohesion, heritage and harmony. They provide an invaluable resource for students to learn and maintain their ancestral languages, promoting cultural exchange and understanding. Over 220 community language schools service some 26,000 students across New South Wales. Supported by over 2,500 teachers, our schools teach 72 languages in 515 different locations. The Tamil, Armenian, Assyrian, Maltese, Hindi, Filipino, Arabic, Italian, Greek, Dinka and Malayalee community language schools form an essential part of our education landscape and contribute to the cultural fabric of the Prospect electorate.

We are fortunate to have the Wentworthville Tamil Study Centre in Prospect, supporting over 650 students on Saturday mornings every week. In neighbouring electorates, the Australian Society of Graduate Tamils, the Tamil Study Centre Homebush and the Balar Malar Tamil Educational Association are instrumental in preserving and promoting the Tamil language and its rich literary heritage. I also acknowledge Kamban Kazhagam Australia, which celebrated its eighteenth Kamban Tamil Literary Festival this year. Supported by the New South Wales Federation of Tamil Schools, those organisations are helping preserve Tamil, one of the world's oldest languages, by passing it on to the next generation of young Australians.

The Loooyce Armenian Saturday School and Hamazkayin Armenian Educational and Cultural Society have been steadfast in their mission to preserve their rich heritage and foster a sense of belonging and pride for the Armenian community in the Prospect electorate and across New South Wales. In the Prospect electorate the Homenetmen Navasart, or the Smithfield Armenian Scouts, are helping connect to our Armenian youth to share language and culture. We are also fortunate to have numerous Assyrian language schools, including the Urhi Community Language School, the Assyrian Nissibin School Sydney, the Assyrian Diqlat School and the Assyrian Resource Centre, which preserve a linguistic legacy that is over 3,000 years old. Last year the Assyrian Diqlat School celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, commemorating that remarkable milestone and its integral role in passing on an ancient language.

The Maltese Language School of NSW plays a significant role in nurturing Maltese culture and optimising online classes to support individuals throughout the Prospect electorate. The Seven Hills Arabic School is one of many community language schools empowering students with the linguistic and cultural tools to engage with this vital language. The Dinka Literacy Association is another shining example that fosters cultural expression and identity for our South Sudanese and Equatorial African communities. We are also pleased to be home to the Australian Hindu Multicultural Association and the South Asian Australian Association. Through classes and

special events, they promote that versatile dialect and connect generations of our subcontinental community. The Prospect electorate is also home to the Western Sydney Malayalee Association, which connects our South Indian community, sharing its vibrant culture through special events, dance and language classes.

Community language schools are not just schools; they are centres of cultural exchange and understanding. By promoting cultural diversity, community language schools are building a stronger and richer society. They bridge generational gaps, strengthen family ties and ensure the continuance and expansion of culture and tradition. Language is the key to unlocking ancient traditions, like learning to make sambar just like Amooma, knowing steps to the Kochari, hearing stories about Pattil's village in Trincomalee, or exchanging letters in Maltese with a family in Gozo. From their storytelling to their speaking competitions, I congratulate my local community language schools on their dedication and passion.

WAKEHURST ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (17:59): The State-led low- and mid-rise planning reforms, announced on Friday 21 February and published via the housing State environmental planning policy on Friday 28 February, have the potential to transform the urban form and population density for significant parts of my electorate of Wakehurst and, of course, the Greater Sydney region. Town centres identified in the policy in Wakehurst are Forestville, Forest Way, Frenchs Forest, Dee Why and Warringah Mall. Under the low- and mid-rise planning reforms, dual occupancies, terraces, townhouses and low-rise apartments of up to two to three storeys are now allowed on R1 and R2 low-density residential zoned land within 800 metres of those town centres. Residential flat buildings and shop-top housing up to six storeys will be permitted on land zoned R3 medium density within 400 metres of those town centres and up to four storeys within 400 to 800 metres of town centres.

Across the Northern Beaches Council local government area [LGA], approximately 11,000 properties are affected by stage two of the low- and mid-rise reforms. For reference, that is almost the exact number of dwellings for the entire LGA under the previous agreed strategic housing target, which was 12,000. Potentially, 11,000 properties could now be turned into tens of thousands of dwellings, smashing the well thought out and strategically planned—alongside the department of planning—housing targets. I am on record supporting more diverse housing options for people at all stages of life. I support density done well, and I am pushing hard for The Forest High School's soon-to-be-vacant site, with a new school opening down the road, to have 100 per cent of its 1,000 new dwellings be affordable and social.

However, as I think everyone in this Chamber would agree, all development must be accompanied by investment in public infrastructure. I have very serious concerns about delivering the infrastructure to support the growth in population that those reforms could bring. There is a lot of uncertainty about how quickly and to what extent the new planning provisions will result in successful development applications and construction. This suck-it-and-see approach to planning runs the risk of seeing more homes and people without the essential public infrastructure to support them.

Public infrastructure in my area is already failing, and today I focus on bus and sports field infrastructure. The whole premise of the Government's housing push is to put more homes near effective public transport. As a reasonably large region with over 277,000 residents, the northern beaches region is unique in Sydney in its complete reliance on buses, with no trains, light rail or metro, and only two major roads to the city. Through The Forest area, on Warringah Road and Forest Way, there is not even a transit lane, let alone a bus lane. Chatswood station is already at capacity with regard to buses. The streets beyond the Roseville Bridge are already choked, and there is no bus priority to Chatswood or the city. Rat runs through the backstreets of The Forest are already the norm, and that is before the current policy is implemented.

As we have seen in recent weeks, in terms of capacity and reliability, the bus network is already failing existing residents, let alone additional future residents. That is due to an ageing and inadequate bus fleet and chronic driver shortages. That is why I was so pleased to secure the commitment from the Government last week for 60 new high-capacity buses, including 10 new B-Lines. In addition to that, we need affordable housing for essential workers, including bus drivers, in the redevelopment of The Forest High School and the Frenchs Forest town centre development. Lack of local affordable housing is a key barrier to recruiting bus drivers and teachers, among other key workers of whom we have a shortage right now.

The Government's plan for the Camperdown dive site is an exciting model, with 200 build-to-rent homes for essential workers to be developed by Landcom. I call on the Government to replicate that or something similar on the Frenchs Forest site, with 100 per cent essential worker and affordable housing. We need the Dee Why to Chatswood rapid bus service enhanced, ultimately, as a second B-Line that connects the beaches with the metro from Chatswood. But Chatswood is pretty much already at capacity, as I said. We need an on-demand first- and last-mile bus service, an extension of the successful Keoride operating in Pittwater to provide accessible services to key points of interest, and bus stops on arterial roads.

More density and population also increase the need for more sports fields, of which the Northern Beaches Council LGA already has a shortage. The most important project here is the upgrade of County Road Reserve, Belrose. The proposal to upgrade the 2½-hectare County Road Reserve in Belrose was initially announced as one of eight projects under the department of planning's \$50 million Parks for People program. A detailed development application was prepared and exhibited. The project included a multipurpose amenity building, utility connections, field lighting and a new car park. However, in February 2023 the department of planning announced the County Road project was on hold indefinitely.

Those upgrades would make the reserve more accessible and help address the severe shortage of sports fields across the northern beaches. In particular, the Wakehurst Football Club currently has use of County Road for home games. However, there are no toilets or change rooms. That prevents the club from hosting women's matches especially. With the women's game becoming more popular, more accessible playing fields must be a priority. The low- and mid-rise planning reforms are a significant contextual policy shift that makes the case for these infrastructure investments in Wakehurst even more urgent. They have gone from important to essential. Since being elected, and before that as Mayor of Northern Beaches Council, I have been calling for investments to preserve and enhance the quality of life for the people of Wakehurst, and I will not stop.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:04): Tomorrow, on 21 March, many people and organisations across Liverpool and beyond will hold events and activities to mark Harmony Day. It holds deep significance internationally as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1966. The day has been observed worldwide as a day to commemorate lives lost, raise awareness about the consequences of racial discrimination and urge governments and societies to strengthen their efforts to combat racism in all its forms. The date was chosen to mark the Sharpeville massacre, which occurred on 21 March 1960, when police officers in a black township in South Africa opened fire on a group of people peacefully protesting oppressive laws under an apartheid regime, tragically killing 69 people and injuring many others.

For nearly a decade after signing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination [CERD] in 1966, Australia failed to do anything about it, not because it could not but because it would not. Political resistance, legal loopholes and the remnants of the White Australia policy kept racial discrimination embedded in our laws and institutions. It took the bold leadership of the Whitlam Labor Government to push through the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975, finally bringing CERD into Australian law. It was not just a legal victory; it was a turning point in our history. It was a rejection of racism in all its forms in law and a declaration that equality would be no longer an aspiration but a legal right. Importantly, the Racial Discrimination Act was not merely a symbolic victory for the elimination of racial discrimination; the Act had real constitutional weight. It paved the way for groundbreaking decisions of the High Court such as the Mabo decision, which rejected the lie of terra nullius and finally recognised ongoing native title of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Today I recognise that this important piece of legislation turns 50, and we must honestly ask ourselves, "Has racism been eliminated in Australia?" We concede, 50 years on, that while the Racial Discrimination Act has been important and necessary in many respects, it clearly has not eliminated racial discrimination or helped everyone understand it better. We live in a time when race is debated, when Islamophobia and antisemitism occur daily, when a call for a Voice to Parliament for our First Nations peoples is met with misinformation, when international students are scapegoated, and when refugees and asylum seekers continue to be treated as a political football.

Legislation alone does not eradicate prejudice. Laws cannot shift hearts and minds by themselves, and real transformation requires education, community engagement and honest conversations that acknowledge the deep impacts of racism and colonisation. The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is about more than sharing food and wearing our cultural outfits; it is about recognising the impacts of racial discrimination and its ongoing costs. Under the Howard Government, we packaged the uncomfortable aspects of injustice, institutional barriers and systemic inequities behind cultural fairs and celebrations—behind what we began to call Harmony Day. A racism-free Australia is built not just in our laws but in our workplaces, our schools, our media and our everyday interactions.

In seeking a thriving multicultural and socially cohesive society, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the Racial Discrimination Act and consider ways to strengthen the legislative guardrails that the most vulnerable in our society depend on. Gough Whitlam was a visionary, but I doubt even he could have imagined the impact of Facebook, TikTok and the cesspit that is X on our social and political discourse. The current Act also relies on a flawed complaints process through the Australian Human Rights Commission that

places a huge burden on individuals to challenge and redress the harms they face, failing to hold institutions accountable in the process.

As our understanding of these issues and social conversations become more nuanced, it is vital that we strive to do what the Whitlam Government did 50 years ago: provide a vision for social cohesion, multiculturalism, and a society that enables belonging and progress for generations to come. We must ensure that experiencing racism, not just being called a racist, is what we strive to eliminate.

BIRTH TRAUMA

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:09): In May last year the Select Committee on Birth Trauma released a landmark report that shed light on the systematic issues in the State's maternity care system. The report highlighted that birth trauma is a widespread issue in Australia that remains under-recognised and insufficiently addressed, and gaps in support for related injuries persist. In June last year I addressed this issue in a speech highlighting the inquiry's findings and the need for reform. I spoke about the prevalence of birth trauma, the failure in maternity care and the need for systemic reforms to support women and families affected by traumatic births. I also reflected on the birth of my first child and my own family's experience with birth trauma.

Birth trauma affects one in three women in Australia, and one in eight experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. In 2023 alone, of the 287,000 births recorded, an estimated 100,000 women and families were impacted by birth-related trauma. These figures show the need for improved maternity and postnatal care. Yet, despite the prevalence of these issues, there remains a significant gap in public awareness, medical training and policy action to address birth trauma adequately. As a result of my speech and the report, I recently met with the incredible Amy Dawes, OAM, the CEO of Birth Trauma Australia. Its work focuses on improving care pathways, increasing awareness, and ensuring women receive the medical and psychological support they need to recover. Their experiences should inform policies and services.

Birth Trauma Australia's 2025 Federal budget submission makes several important recommendations, including developing a national plan for the care and treatment of birth injuries to ensure consistent, equitable care pathways for affected individuals. A coordinated national approach will ensure that healthcare providers have the training, resources and accountability necessary to deliver trauma-informed maternity care. The report recommends raising national awareness of birth trauma and increasing the support available to affected women and families. Too often birth trauma is dismissed or misunderstood, leaving women without the recognition or assistance they need to heal.

The report also suggests investing in specialised GP training to ensure that primary care providers can recognise, treat and refer patients with birth-related trauma appropriately. Many GPs lack the training required to diagnose and manage birth trauma, meaning that women are often left with inadequate support and misdiagnosed conditions. Fostering collaboration between interagency groups will develop trauma-informed care and culturally appropriate care strategies. Birth trauma affects women of all backgrounds, but First Nations women, culturally and linguistically diverse communities and refugees often experience additional barriers to receiving the care they need and deserve. A collaborative approach will ensure that all women, regardless of their background, receive equitable and appropriate care.

Despite the inquiry's findings, preventable birth trauma continues to occur. Women and families still struggle to access appropriate support, and birth trauma remains absent from the National Women's Health Strategy. It is time we changed that. The long-term consequences of untreated birth trauma include chronic pain, pelvic floor disorders, incontinence, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and, in extreme cases, even maternal suicide. In the long term those issues have an effect on our aged-care system. According to the Australasian Birth Trauma Association's annual community survey, *Your Birth, Your Voice: Survey for Better Care 2024*, 31 per cent of women who have experienced birth trauma reported having suicidal thoughts due to the impact of their experience. This statistic underscores the need for targeted mental health support and improvements in maternal care.

Successful pelvic pain clinics show a similar model could benefit birth trauma recovery. Establishing dedicated birth trauma recovery clinics, alongside increased access to specialist physiotherapists and mental health professionals, will allow for comprehensive and holistic options for affected women. A Medicare Benefits Schedule item for birth debriefing could improve access to professional support, helping women process their experience and potentially reducing long-term mental health risks. Professional birth debriefing can support recovery and mental health. This practical reform could significantly improve the outcomes for thousands of women. Integrating birth trauma education into medical and midwifery training would help healthcare professionals better prevent, recognise and support affected individuals. Training healthcare professionals can enhance maternity care. This is not just about improving individual outcomes but also about ensuring that birth

trauma is recognised as a systemic issue requiring systemic solutions. Every woman deserves a safe and supported birth experience. Let us ensure that no more families are left to suffer in silence.

PASSIVE LEVEL CROSSINGS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (18:14): I voice my strong opposition to the proposal to create a brand-new passive level crossing on a new section of the Inland Rail line between Illabo and Stockinbingal, known as the Old Sydney Road level crossing. This is not just about a single crossing; this is about learning from the past, applying the lessons of tragic loss and putting safety first for the future of our communities. My electorate of Cootamundra has experienced some of the worst tragedies imaginable when it comes to accidents at level crossings. Families in my community have suffered the unbearable loss of loved ones—lives cut short by collisions that should never have happened. In February 2021, two treasured locals lost their lives at a passive level crossing near Bribbaree. In the aftermath, more than 21,000 people signed an ePetition that I brought to Parliament.

The petition led to a significant debate in this House on 11 November 2021 that resulted in bipartisan support for improving level crossing safety, which has so far resulted in trials of warning sign technology at dangerous crossings, reduced speed limits at more than 110 crossings across New South Wales and Federal funding of \$160 million for regional level crossing safety. In the debate I stood in this place, backed to the hilt by my communities and with Maddie Bott and her family present in the gallery, and I vowed to continue this fight. Yet I stand here today because we are at risk of undoing that progress. The Inland Rail project represents a significant investment in regional New South Wales and our nation's freight capabilities, but with this project comes increased risk. There will be a significant increase in train traffic through our region. By 2040, 11 freight trains per day, many of them 1,800 metres long and double stacked, will use this corridor.

With the growth in rail transport comes a clear responsibility: It is incumbent upon all levels of government to take every possible step to ensure the safety of road users and rail operators alike. Increased train traffic means more interactions with road users, and that means we must prioritise safety at every turn. A brand-new crossing in 2024 should not rely on passive controls when we have the technology, expertise and knowledge to implement active safety measures from the outset. With my full support, Junee Shire Council has advocated for active controls, such as flashing lights and boom gates. Despite this, the Inland Rail project intends to proceed with a passive crossing, instead proposing 150 metres of sealed road, as if laying some extra bitumen is an acceptable substitute for a proper safety system. Let me be clear: That is not enough.

I have long worked in a bipartisan way with the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport, on the issue of level crossing safety. I know the Minister has a deep personal commitment to improving safety at level crossings, which I truly appreciate. I respectfully ask the Minister to do everything she can to ensure that the Old Sydney Road level crossing does not proceed as a passive crossing. A passive crossing at this site would be an unacceptable risk to road users. The Australian Government cannot pick and choose where it cares about safety. If we are committed to upgrading passive crossings for safety reasons, then we cannot in good conscience approve a brand-new one.

The Inland Rail project must commit to flashing lights and boom gates, which are the only acceptable standard for new level crossings in 2024 and beyond. We owe this to the families who have suffered, the communities who live with these risks every day and the 21,000 people who signed the 2021 petition to improve level crossing safety in New South Wales. I have spoken in this place many times about the need to upgrade passive crossings, to invest in safety and to do everything we can to prevent future tragedies. I cannot accept that we should be building more of them when we know what needs to be done. We have seen the pain these accidents cause, and we must not allow history to repeat itself. We can and must do better.

BALMAIN ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (18:19): Today I speak about public transport services in my electorate, which is a matter that is incredibly important to members of my local community. In a global city like Sydney, we could and should have world-class public transport that gets people where they want to go when they want to get there. A city like ours should not be as reliant on cars and private vehicles as it currently is. We could have a walkable city with reliable and frequent public transport connections. Our community is instead faced with bumper-to-bumper congestion that is only getting worse, as more people opt to use their cars rather than hedging their bets on whether their morning bus will show up on time or at all. It is a far cry from what we should be aspiring to in a city like Sydney.

I now highlight some of the particular issues faced every week by people in my electorate, including the significant problems with bus services, including on the routes that have been impacted by the disastrous Rozelle Interchange. Yesterday in question time I spoke about the 437 bus. This used to be a fantastic and quick

city-bound bus that took people from Leichhardt and Lilyfield to the Queen Victoria Building [QVB]. The Premier was quick to suggest that Transport for NSW had fixed the problems with the 437 by adding new services to the timetable, but this has unfortunately not resolved all the issues. My community has welcomed the additional services, but the problem of bus delays remains.

The 437 gets caught in the heavy congestion caused by the Rozelle Interchange as it comes up the City West Link and over the Anzac Bridge. While the buses may run reasonably on time for the first few pick-ups, they are significantly behind schedule by the time they set down passengers at the final stop outside the QVB. I hear from residents about the problems caused by these delays on a weekly basis. Their journey time has effectively doubled since the interchange opened. The impact of these extensive delays is that more and more people are choosing not to get on the bus and instead are hopping in their cars and driving into the city.

The trip is less than five kilometres for people coming from Lilyfield, where I live, and it is just over six kilometres for those coming from Leichhardt. It is a sad indictment on our public transport system that residents living so close to the CBD do not have a reliable public transport option and are jumping in their cars instead. The Government needs to look beyond simply adding a few more bus services to the timetable; it needs to look at how to give priority to buses along main arterial roads like City West Link and the Anzac Bridge. Failure to do so will only result in more congestion down the line as residents opt to use their cars instead.

I now turn to the broader bus service issues in the inner west. I urge the Government to take the necessary steps to de-privatise our bus services. Selling off of inner west buses has clearly failed our community. There are more late and cancelled buses across the board than ever before. Although it did not specifically look at inner west buses, the Auditor-General's report *Bus contracts in metropolitan Sydney* revealed what so many in my community already knew—privatised buses are not working. The damning report found:

TfNSW is not effectively managing bus contracts to ensure that operators are meeting contractual performance obligations and customer needs.

It also found:

Further, bus operators are not consistently meeting contractual performance obligations for on time running, cancelled trips and customer complaints ...

The bus contract for region 6 is due to end next year. Now is the time for the New South Wales Labor Government to undo the damage done by the former Liberal-Nationals Government by committing to bring this service back into public hands. The South Australian Labor Government brought trains back into public hands last month, and it has committed to bringing the trams back too. New South Wales Labor should take note of this and commit to doing the same with our buses.

Members would also know that I am a big advocate for improving ferry services. My electorate is lucky to have the Balmain West wharf. It is very welcome news to hear that, after a very long campaign on this issue, it will reopen this year. In addition to the Balmain West wharf, there is a range of opportunities to increase services in suburbs like Annandale. During the State election campaign, the Labor Party made a commitment to open new ferry wharves in Annandale and Pyrmont. The new stock is coming to Pyrmont soon, but unfortunately no progress has been made for Annandale, which is one of the areas most affected by congestion from the Rozelle Interchange.

Adding a new ferry service in Annandale would give members of my community another viable and fast option to get into the city. This would be an absolute game changer for people who are affected by the terrible congestion we are dealing with at the moment. This option would not require people to sit in their cars or overcrowded buses waiting to get onto the Anzac Bridge. These are some of the tangible improvements that can be made to deliver the world-class public transport options our city deserves. I ask the Government to work with me to help make this a reality. Transport services have become so bad that I am often riding my bike to work rather than catching the bus. I thank the Government for my improved fitness, but I would like to see more of my constituents being able to rely on their local buses.

NORTH SHORE ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:24): I address this place on behalf of the frustrated and exhausted commuters across the North Shore who have been affected by the ongoing bus crisis that has disrupted their daily lives. I echo the words of the member for Balmain, who is also experiencing this issue in her electorate. Every day in my electorate, commuters are facing overcrowded buses, frequent cancellations, increasingly unreliable services and shockingly long queues that can stretch for 700 metres around the block. Since October last year, a number of bendy buses across the network have been removed from service due to structural cracking and safety concerns. Forty-three of these are from bus region 8, which services the eastern part of my community.

I hear from residents in my community every day who have been left stranded at bus stops. They watch packed buses go by without stopping and see apps that show the constant cancellation of bus services. I speak to

workers whose commutes have been extended by hours each week, which forces them to wake up earlier, return home later and lose valuable time with their families. Our community deserves a functioning public transport system, and I have been pushing for urgent action to restore services. Last week the Government finally announced the purchase of 50 new diesel-powered bendy buses and 10 double-decker buses for the B-Line fleet. While this is a step in the right direction, it does not alleviate the commuter stress inflicted on my community in the short term.

Commuters will potentially not feel the impact of these additions as repairs to the existing fleet may continue for six to 12 months. The newly purchased buses are not due for delivery until later this year. These delays are costing people time, wages and peace of mind, and they are causing significant stress. As their elected representative, I want to ensure that North Shore locals' concerns are heard. I will place some of them on record in the Parliament tonight. Ben from Neutral Bay said:

Each morning at Watson Street, I stand in a 100m long queue, watching packed buses pass by for 10 minutes straight. Today, I gave up and walked to the metro adding up to an hour just to get to the city. With more people back in offices, things are only getting worse. Where are the solutions?

Alison from Mosman said:

After 8:40am, there are no buses from my stop and the last one is often full. I've been forced to take taxis, but many people have no options at all.

William from Mosman said:

What used to be a 45-minute bus ride to Brookvale is now over 80 minutes for just 12km. Overcrowded buses and constant cancellations have made public transport unbearable. I see more 'Not in Service' buses than actual ones.

Chris from Cremorne said:

The bus services around are too unreliable. I now allow 45 minutes just to get into the city. It's often late, cancelled, or too full to stop. Queues are turning into a mad rush. With more apartments going up, this just isn't sustainable. We need more drivers, more buses, and real solutions now.

Hillary from Mosman said:

The 100 buses have been infrequent and overcrowded that I've been waiting over 25 minutes and constantly arriving late to work. This morning, commuters behind me were told to give up on waiting for a bus and take a train instead.

Arianne from Mosman said:

Every morning between 7:45 and 8:45, I watch packed buses from the North Beaches pass by leaving Mosman, Cremorne, and Neutral Bay commuters stranded. Some wait 20-30 minutes just to squeeze onto a bus. We urgently need services that start in Mosman because relying on overflow from the Beaches just isn't working.

Yasmine from Mosman said:

Every morning at 8am, I watch full buses pass by as I stand in a line 10 people deep. By the time I finally squeeze onto a bus, I'm late for my 9am meetings at Barangaroo.

We all know that public transport should be reliable, efficient and accessible. It should not be a daily source of stress. It should not leave elderly residents with no option but to take expensive taxis. It should not force commuters to arrive at work late or exhausted, or to not get home to spend precious time with their families; yet this is the reality for too many people in my community. This is more than just an inconvenience; it is a failure of basic public transport services. Instead of immediate and meaningful solutions, commuters are being told to wait. I refuse to accept this delay as the status quo. The North Shore community deserves better than a transport system that leaves them stranded.

My community deserves a public transport system that it can rely on. People in my community love our public transport. We are one of the highest users of public transport and we have a significant reliance on public transport. I have met with the Minister. I appreciate particularly the work that his team and Transport for NSW are doing to make changes in this area, but it needs to occur more quickly. I urge the Government to not just accelerate the rollout of new buses but look at interim measures, including shuttle buses to the metro if necessary, to get the North Shore moving again. The commuters of my electorate have waited long enough. It is time for action.

RYDE ELECTORATE ROADS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:29): Of all the things that bother people in Ryde, it is often those small, surface-level things that cause the most frustration. We have big responsibilities in this place—managing an economy, supporting jobs, addressing a changing climate and keeping up with a constantly changing way of life. Yet those challenges, while important, often feel abstract in daily life. Their effects are real, but they do not always register in the moment. However, roads are different. They are the daily lived experience of our constituents, and

that experience is real. Bad roads cannot be rationalised as the cost of progress. They are just bad. They stifle productivity, create safety risks and erode confidence in public services. That is why I have spent so much time advocating in this House for better, safer and more efficient local roads.

As one of the clearest demonstrations of a government's capacity for delivery, we would expect roads to be front of mind for any leader seeking impact as their legacy. But failing that, there are three other reasons why they should be prioritised. The first is a practical one. Anyone who walks, drives or cycles in Ryde knows that road investment is needed. We have experienced exponential growth, brought about through extraordinary over-achievement on housing targets. Today there are tens of thousands of new homes in the planning pipeline, but no equivalent uplift in the investment in and maintenance of the most basic services needed to move those people around. This is more than just a sustainability problem. It has undermined and will undermine the appeal of Ryde, thus undermining our achievements as deliverers of new housing supply.

The second reason is an economic one. With Macquarie Park now the sixth-largest GDP-producing centre in Australia—and on track for fourth by the end of the decade—we have a lot of employment-oriented traffic, pedestrian and public transport movements. The better the roads flow, the better the local economy prospers. Ignore the interrelationship between those things and we may find it is a long way to developing another Macquarie Park anywhere else in Sydney. The third reason is a moral one. Politics is to navigate the waters of progress, and most of the time our citizens follow us on that journey. Occasionally they protest, but by and large they are open-minded, aspirational and willing to embrace a better future. Yet how can we take them on that journey if the very service they rely upon daily is not up to standard? How can we ask them to trust us with the complex if we cannot demonstrate capacity with the simple? Roads represent a simple yet incredibly important service in practice, tool in progress, and symbol of trust, competence and delivery.

In recent months, Ryde has been successful in elevating a number of local traffic black spots to a point where real, tangible resources are starting to flow. In particular, I am proud of those in my community who have done so much work to promote long-overdue upgrades like the Rutledge Street and Shaftsbury Road intersection in Eastwood, the Epping Road and Culloden Road intersection in Marsfield, the Victoria Road pedestrian crossing in West Ryde, the two pedestrian refuges on Blaxland Road at Ryde and Eastwood, and the notorious black spot in Denistone East near Anzac Avenue. Combined, Ryde has secured almost \$4 million to deliver these key road safety upgrades, with much more still to do. We need to install a green right-hand turn for those turning off Hermitage Road onto Victoria Road in West Ryde. We also need fencing or bollards to improve the safety of the Chatham Road and Station Street intersection. There is still a strong case to be made for traffic lights at Blaxland Road and Anzac Avenue, and many people are disappointed with an early decision of the Minns Government to abandon plans to widen Victoria Road.

I acknowledge the new Minister for Roads and thank her for her early willingness to engage on some of these issues. As a local MP, I am committed to working in good faith to improve what I believe most people in Ryde would identify as arguably the worst problem in Ryde—not because, objectively, they are the worst roads, although some genuinely are, but because the problems are so eminently fixable and most people know it. It is a matter of prioritisation. Through this contribution, I hope to see these problems further prioritised and ultimately addressed.

VAUCLUSE ELECTORATE TRANSPORT

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (18:34): I speak on the growing transport issues in my communities in Sydney's eastern suburbs. Across the State of New South Wales, my electorate is marked as one of the highest in terms of population, with approximately 3,400 people per square kilometre. With the natural geographical boundaries of the harbour to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the east, my constituents rely on the efficient flow of traffic, whether travelling by car, bus, train or ferry. On an almost weekly, if not daily, basis my office is contacted about overcrowded buses, unreliable trains and inaccessible ferries. With three main arterial roads—New South Head Road, Old South Head Road and Bondi Road—traffic congestion has become an unfortunate part of the daily commute, but it does not have to be. Proper planning by the State Government in conjunction with local councils can go a long way to providing reliable, efficient and safe transport options.

Perhaps the worst example of this is the intersection at New South Head Road, Bellevue Road, Cross Street and Kiaora Road. This intersection has a long history of crashes and near misses. In 2020 Woollahra council commissioned a Double Bay transport study that predicted that, by 2027, this intersection will operate "over capacity during the a.m., p.m. and Saturday peak periods" and will be "unable to meet the forecast traffic demand associated with background traffic growth and full development yield". This has been dubbed the worst intersection in the east. It is confusing, congested and dangerous. I encourage the Minister to come and see this intersection, watch the backed-up traffic, hear the beeps and witness the road rage that happens almost every minute of the day. The Minister should see the dangers to other drivers and pedestrians caused by this intersection.

The Government needs to step up and fix it, which is why I am launching a petition calling on the Government to fix this intersection. I also call on everyone in the community with experience of this intersection to sign that petition. Since being elected, I have written multiple times to the Minister for Roads about this intersection. The Government needs to act. Transport for NSW needs to undertake a comprehensive traffic study and then provide the funding for our community to fix this dangerous intersection. But our issues are not confined to just this intersection. As I mentioned earlier, our community is bordered by Sydney Harbour to the north, so what is going on with our ferry services? The Government needs to examine the reliability and accessibility of the ferry services at Rose Bay, Double Bay, Watsons Bay and Darling Point. People in our community use those ferries on a daily basis to travel to and from work, to appointments and to school. The accessibility upgrades promised at Darling Point wharf and Watsons Bay wharf are yet to be delivered.

The former Perrottet Government consulted the community and designed and provided funding for the Darling Point wharf upgrade. The community was notified in November 2022 by Transport for NSW that construction on Darling Point wharf would commence in early 2023. It is now two years later and there is no indication on when construction will commence at Darling Point. It is incredibly frustrating. The Government should come clean on why it has delayed this project. Is this just another example of postcode politics from the Minns Government? A disability or accessibility issue should not limit someone's ability to use public transport, and it is deeply disappointing that the Government has delayed this upgrade. Further to this, it has been more than two years since consultation ended on the Watsons Bay wharf upgrade and the community has received no updates—nothing—from Transport for NSW about when this project will proceed. Consulting the community and then failing to provide any updates on the project for over two years is just unacceptable.

The Minns Government announced before the election that it was committed to accelerating accessibility upgrades at public transport sites, but it appears the Government has no interest in progressing accessibility upgrades in my community. With the Government's new planning changes, the eastern suburbs will be subjected to more increased density. This will only compound the existing congestion and lack of transport options that are available. I urge members of my community to sign the petition. I urge the Government to see the intersection, to upgrade our ferry wharves and to make sure that the people of the east have access to public transport.

MANLY ELECTORATE FIRE SAFETY ORDERS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:39): I bring attention to a serious issue affecting unit owners and residents in Manly: fire safety audits and the excessive compliance demands being imposed on certain buildings. Many affected residents have reached out to me directly, distressed by the enormous financial strain and impractical demands being imposed on them. Undeniably, fire safety compliance is essential, and all buildings should be subject to strict safety standards to ensure public safety. However, compliance must be practical and achievable.

Over the past year, I have increasingly heard from residents who are facing extreme financial pressure due to local councils enforcing excessive fire safety compliance orders, which are placing an overwhelming financial burden on owners rather than delivering proportionate safety improvements. In one case, a group of local residents reported how their building, constructed in 1968, was subjected to a fire audit which required the owners to retrofit the building to comply with modern fire safety standards. Acting in good faith, these owners removed carpets, installed new fire hydrants, upgraded balustrades, replaced all front doors with fire-rated alternatives and installed smoke detectors and exit signage, all at a cost of roughly half a million dollars. Despite complying with these measures, they are now facing additional costs to carry out further works, including intrusive modifications to their homes. For these owners, the financial and emotional toll is immense.

In another case, one groups of residents in Manly who have proactively sought to improve their building's fire safety are now being penalised for their diligence. In this case, private reports commissioned voluntarily by owners have been used by the council as the basis to impose strict fire safety orders, demanding full compliance with the modern Building Code of Australia standards—something that is simply impractical for older buildings. They are now facing the prospect of retrofitting a sprinkler system at an estimated cost of \$1 million. This is despite Fire and Rescue NSW confirming that the current guidelines do not require it.

For those affected, these audits are not just a financial burden; they are also placing strain on our community. In some buildings, disputes have arisen between owners who simply cannot afford further expenses and those who feel compelled to comply with every directive, regardless of cost. This is not how good policy should function. No-one disputes the critical importance of fire safety, but regulation must be applied with common sense. There is a significant difference between implementing measures that genuinely improve safety and imposing excessive compliance requirements that fail to account for the practical limitations of older buildings. It is unacceptable to expect owners to bring decades-old buildings up to modern construction standards without reasonable allowances for cost and feasibility.

Concerningly, in raising these issues, some residents have also pointed to a potential conflict of interest within the process itself. Owners are required to hire private fire engineers to conduct audits, and those same engineers often stand to benefit financially from managing the costly remediation works that they recommend. This has the potential to create an incentive to identify as many deficiencies as possible, with little accountability for whether the proposed solutions are truly necessary, cost-effective, or even practical. While these cases are not yet widespread, they highlight the need for urgent reform. To date, I have met face to face with some of the affected residents to hear their concerns firsthand and I have engaged directly with the Northern Beaches Council. I have also written to both the Minister for Emergency Services and the fair trading Minister to advocate for a fair and reasonable solution.

A number of things can be done. First, an immediate review of how fire safety orders are being issued should be conducted. Owners should not be forced into full compliance with modern building codes when the risk profile of their building does not justify such excessive and unrealistic measures. Secondly, we must address the clear potential for conflicts of interest in the fire audit process. Independent oversight is needed to ensure that recommendations are reasonable, necessary and cost-effective, and are not just a blank cheque for private consultants. Finally, I urge the Government to establish an appeals process that gives owners a genuine pathway to challenge excessive or impractical requirements without navigating an expensive and adversarial legal process.

Residents of Manly, and New South Wales more broadly, deserve a system that balances fire safety with fairness. Right now, those who are caught up in this process are receiving neither. I urge the Government to act swiftly to bring relief to affected owners and restore confidence in a system that, in its current form, is failing those that it is designed to protect. I will continue to stand with my constituents in fighting for a fair and practical approach, and I look forward to the Government's response.

Bills

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (STANDALONE REGULATOR) BILL 2025

Returned

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr): I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with amendments. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendments be set down as an order of the day for a later time.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:46 until
Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 12:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

ERNEST 'SOLLY' STEPHENS OAM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Cronulla's Ernest 'Solly' Stephens OAM on being a finalist in the 2025 Cronulla Seniors Awards for his exceptional commitment and dedication to Wanda Surf Life Saving Club, the community and surf lifesaving generally. Solly has dedicated an astounding 73 years to the club, becoming a pillar of its success and spirit. His many leadership roles have included president, chief instructor, club captain and patron. Solly has been instrumental in the club's growth and development, including the establishment of the nipper program. His 67 years as an official at the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships is a testament to his dedication and passion for the sport. Solly's influence extends beyond our shores. He played a key role in fostering international relationships, particularly with the Yugawara Surf Life Saving Club in Japan, where he hosted young lifesavers and took Wanda members abroad for training. Solly still attends club events and supports members, embodying the true spirit of camaraderie. I agree with Wanda president Fiona Sutton who said of Solly: "He is, without a doubt, a living legend of Wanda and Surf Life Saving. Solly's lifetime of service makes him an iconic figure in local lifesaving."

GREG ALLUM AM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Greg Allum AM of Cronulla on being a finalist in the 2025 Cronulla Seniors Awards. Greg was nominated by Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club for his work as member of the Shark Island Swim Committee, which is the club's most significant fundraiser. As a member of the committee and race referee, Greg has played an essential role in shaping the event by offering technical advice and contributing to the development of race documentation. Greg is renowned for his enthusiastic service to surf lifesaving and has been a driving force in revitalising the Cronulla Carnival. Greg's dedication is shown for his work across clubs, as he continues to give much energy to Wanda Surf Life Saving Club as its senior vice patron.

In 2020 he was appointed a member of the Order of Australia (AM) for "significant service to surf lifesaving, to international federations, and to the community" and last year he was awarded the Commander of the Order of Lifesaving by the International Lifesaving Federation. I'm delighted to again recognise Greg for service to surf lifesaving, his tireless work and unwavering commitment are deeply valued in the Sutherland Shire and beyond.

FIONA SUTTON – CRONULLA WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—It was a great pleasure earlier this month to announce highly respected surf lifesaving leader and business owner Fiona Sutton as Cronulla Woman of the Year. Fiona is a long-time active volunteer for Wanda Surf Life Saving Club and currently its president. She has been a driving force in Wanda's 'nippers' that introduces children aged 5 to 14 to surf lifesaving and as Chair of the club's Junior Activities Group oversaw the successful introduction of the inclusive and accessible 'Red Fins' program. Having stated out in surf lifesaving as a nipper herself, Fiona holds 13 surf lifesaving awards and a Bronze Medallion in Public Safety and Aquatic Rescue. On top of her dedication to club leadership and running a successful small business, Fiona has served the community as a member of Wanda's surf patrols to help keep the community safe. She has been described by the Wanda club as an inspirational leader, much loved mum, and friend to all in the club family and beyond. Fiona has quietly made a difference over many years and I congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition of her leadership and service to the community.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE SPRINGFIELD BRIGADE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise long serving members of the Springfield Brigade Rural Fire Service. The Springfield Brigade, Rural Fire Service celebrated their 85th Anniversary in December 2024 when they proudly recognised their active long serving members, who have undertaken several roles and participated in a variety of community emergencies. I wish to congratulate the following long serving members: Mark Thornwaite - 35 years; David Lomas - 37 years; James Lomas - 39 years; Linda Lomas - 39 years; Marty Lomas-35 years; Jeffery Tarlinton - 35 years; Don Tarlinton - 39 years; Ted Tarlinton - 39 years; John Whitmore - 38 years; Simon Connor - 23 years; Tom Morrison - 35 years; Terry Birtles - 46 years; Greg Martin - 49 years; Douglas Southwell - 60 years; Geoffrey Larkham - 62 years. I take this time to recognise and thank you all for the incredible altruistic roles that you undertake and the many years of accumulated service as individuals and collectively as a team. Your willingness to support the community in times of natural disaster, tragedy and despair is heartwarming and truly admirable.

MS JOANNE BROWN

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Ms Joanne Brown. Initially a Registered Nurse for more than twenty years and then becoming a Mental Health Nurse, working as a Nurse Manager at Kenmore Psychiatric Hospital, Ms Brown went on to undertake the role of Nurse Unit Manager for the Ron Hemmings Unit - providing inpatient care for adults requiring recovery and rehabilitation. Ms Brown has also worked as the Clinical Nurse Consultant for the Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs Clinical Excellence and Innovation Team. In 2022 Ms Brown was recognised for her significant contribution to the Clozapine Virtual Remote Monitoring Program, receiving a Quality Award. In 2024 Ms Brown was awarded the NSW Service Medallion, recognising her years of service and her significant commitment and dedication to serving the people of New South Wales. I sincerely thank Ms Brown for many years of service in care of our community, particularly her contribution to the management of mental illness. I wish you the very best in your retirement.

MS LYN LACE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Ms Lyn Lace. Ms Lace commenced her career as a dietician in 1980 at Westmead before moving to Goulburn in 1984. Upon her arrival she was the only dietician working in Goulburn and bordering regions, taking on a pioneer role in many respects and going on to forge a service which has flourished. In her role, she was able to advocate and educate patients and the community more broadly on how they could improve their health through nutrition and dietary advice. Over forty years of service, Ms Lace has been a tireless advocate for the dietetics profession, taking on roles as Head of Dietetics for the Tablelands Network and Dietetics Advisor for Southern. With her knowledge and expertise in dietetics, Ms Lace has worked collaboratively to ensure patients received the correct meals to meet their needs. Ms Lace has also championed electronic documentation and virtual care. I sincerely congratulate Ms Lace for her tireless work and being the recipient of an NSW Service Medallion in 2024.

KIAMA LIONS CLUB

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Kiama Lions Club for its commitment to supporting children's eye health across our region. On Sunday, 2nd March 2025, the Kiama Lions Club hosted their free eye screening event for 36 little nippers. This marks a continuation of their important work as the first club in our district to roll out the Children's Vision Screening program. Held in

partnership with the Kiama Surf Life Saving Club, the event saw Lions Club members screen the children at the Clubhouse. The screening included tests for visual acuity, colour vision, and stereo depth perception. I acknowledge Kiama Lions Club member Janet Bruce who has contributed for many years. The atmosphere was friendly and relaxed, with Lions members making everyone feel at ease throughout the screening. While they can't provide diagnoses, the Lions were able to refer those who needed additional care to other specialists. This year, 36 children participated in the screening, with only 8 being referred for further follow-up with an eye specialist. The process was efficient, designed to identify issues early on. A huge thank you to Kiama Lions Club and Kiama Surf Club.

SLOW FOOD SADDLEBACK

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises some wonderful Kiama businesses – Slow Food Saddleback, Little Earth cafe and Silica restaurant – who are promoting the future of the food industry with sustainability, ethics and quality. More people than ever are thinking about where their food comes from, how it's produced, and who is behind it. They have done some impressive research, made decisions about the kind of food they want to eat, and actively seek out restaurants, markets, and food businesses that align with their values. I acknowledge Eva and Ochre from Little Earth – a local roastery and cafe in Kiama which is focused on promoting organic food that is good, clean, ethical and fair. One movement helping food businesses connect with these values-driven consumers is Slow Food Saddleback, the local branch of the global Slow Food movement. Applications are open for the Slow Food Snail of Approval, a recognition given to businesses that demonstrate these principles. Silica is a Kiama restaurant proud to display the Slow Food Snail of Approval to connect with a growing community of food-conscious consumers. And I acknowledge Silica owner Luke Basic and Milly Alferink.

ASHA ARDILL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises outstanding local Kiama resident Asha Ardill. Asha is diving into a 20-kilometre swimming challenge to raise awareness and funds for youth mental health. Participating in the annual Laps for Life campaign in March 2025, Asha is committed to supporting ReachOut Australia, a life-saving organisation providing vital resources to teens experiencing mental health challenges and their families. Laps for Life is ReachOut Australia's fundraising event, highlighting the urgent need for mental health support among young Australians. Statistics show that one in three young people in Australia are facing mental health difficulties and suicide remains the leading cause of death for young Australians. ReachOut Australia provides a safe online space where young people can seek anonymous support through peer chat, online forums, and expert resources. The organisation also extends support to parents, carers, and schools, offering guidance on how to best assist young people facing mental health challenges. Last year alone, ReachOut reached over 2.5 million Australians in need. Asha's fundraising efforts will help ensuring more young people have access to these services. Well done and thank you to Asha Ardill.

JAN MEEHAN

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Today, I acknowledge the exceptional dedication of Jan Meehan, a compassionate and selfless volunteer who has dedicated her life to supporting the unseen and forgotten members of our community. Jan is a key figure in Action Care, an initiative of Global Care and the Social Justice arm of I.N.C. Action Care provides food, material support, and love to individuals and families across the Nambucca and Macleay Valleys. All services are provided free of charge, run entirely by volunteers, with Jan being the oldest of these remarkable individuals. Every Thursday, Jan arrives in Macksville before 7:30 am to set up, prepare fresh produce, and pack food for distribution. She then personally delivers these items across the region, from Stuarts Point to South West Rocks. Jan doesn't just provide food; she creates relationships, offering love and support to those in need. Jan's warmth, generosity, and unwavering commitment have transformed the lives of many. Her actions, often with her own limited resources, embody the true spirit of volunteerism. Jan is an invaluable asset to our community.

MARILYN FIGGETT

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—I wish to recognise the incredible resilience and dedication of Marilyn Figgett, a tireless advocate for crime prevention and the safety and well-being of our community. Marilyn's unwavering commitment to supporting those around her has made a profound impact, and her advocacy for crime prevention is unmatched. A psychologist by profession, Marilyn has worked in the social services sector for over 25 years, particularly in alcohol and drug dependence. At 75 years old, Marilyn continues to lead by example, always putting herself forward to create positive change. She is a voice for those who need it most, offering her expertise and compassion to improve the lives of others. Marilyn's courage and strength have been tested in unimaginable ways. Recently, she was given the unfortunate title of "most targeted victim in New South Wales" after suffering 17 home invasions—17 times when her safety and dignity were taken from her. Despite this,

Marilyn continues to advocate for her community, showing immense bravery and an unwavering commitment to making our world safer for everyone. Her dedication, strength, and perseverance are an inspiration to us all. Marilyn is truly a remarkable individual.

MARY MCENALLAY

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—I stand today to celebrate and recognise the exceptional contributions of Mary McEnallay, a true pillar of the Wauchope community. Mary's selflessness and dedication are evident in everything she does. Whether for her family, friends, or community, Mary is always the first to step up when volunteers are needed, ensuring every task is completed with care and dedication. As a longstanding member of the CWA Wauchope, Mary has held numerous key roles, including Vice President, Handicrafts Officer, Hall Officer, and previously, President. In her leadership role, she oversaw the rollout of the Trees for Schools program, which saw over 125 fruit trees donated to local schools to replace those lost to fire, drought, and flood, including contributions to Wauchope High School for bank stabilisation. Mary is a talented artist and craftsperson, generously donating quilts, paintings, and handmade items to charity. Mary was the driving force behind the inaugural Wauchope Volunteer Expo, and has consistently advocated for domestic violence victims, playing an integral role in organising related community events. Mary's selfless acts are truly appreciated by those around her. It is individuals like her that make small communities worth living in.

RYDE PROFILE IN COURAGE AWARD: NATHAN BARBARA - MARIST COLLEGE EASTWOOD

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Mr Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Nathan Barbara, who is Marist College Eastwood's recipient of the 2024 Ryde Profile in Courage Award. This esteemed recognition celebrates Nathan'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, Nathan has exemplified integrity, leadership, and compassion. Navigating the complexities of youth while remaining steadfast in one's convictions is no small feat. Nathan'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 Nathan 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, Nathan, on this well-deserved recognition. Always be courageous.

RYDE PROFILE IN COURAGE AWARD: MENZIES DYER - MELROSE PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Mr Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Menzies Dyer, who is Melrose Park Public School's recipient of the 2024 Ryde Profile in Courage Award. This esteemed recognition celebrates Menzies' 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, Menzies has exemplified integrity, leadership, and compassion. Navigating the complexities of youth while remaining steadfast in one's convictions is no small feat. Menzies' 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 Menzies 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, Menzies, on this well-deserved recognition. Always be courageous.

RYDE PROFILE IN COURAGE AWARD: MADELINE MENG - NGARALA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—Mr Speaker, I ask the House to join me in congratulating Madeline Meng, who is Ngarala Public School's recipient of the 2024 Ryde Profile in Courage Award. This esteemed recognition celebrates Madeline'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, Madeline has exemplified integrity, leadership, and compassion. Navigating the complexities of youth while remaining steadfast in one's convictions is no small feat. Madeline'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 Madeline 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, Madeline, on this well-deserved recognition. Always be courageous.

CAROL FLANAGAN

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I wish to extend my congratulations to Carol Flanagan on her extraordinary dedication to supporting those in need through her baking. For nearly 40 years, Carol has used her

talents to bring joy to countless individuals, beginning with Waitara Children's Centre and Dial-a-Mum before dedicating her efforts to the Wayside Chapel and the Bill Crews Foundation since 2015. Each year, Carol begins baking and wrapping Christmas cakes as early as mid-year, continuing every weekend until Christmas Eve. Working alongside a team of 34 volunteers she has built over time, she ensures thousands of cakes reach those who need them most. Last year alone, Carol and her 'elves' baked 2,000 muffin-sized cakes and 1,000 large cakes for the Bill Crews Foundation, along with 900 cakes for the Wayside Chapel. With demand growing, this year Carol was asked to produce 10,000 baby cakes for the Bill Crews Foundation and 900 for the Wayside Chapel, all lovingly wrapped and decorated. These cakes bring comfort to many on Christmas Day and in hampers for those in need. Carol's generosity and dedication are truly remarkable, and I commend her for her outstanding service to the community.

PHILLIP WELLS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I would like to congratulate my constituent Phillip Wells on his retirement after an amazing 50 year career in optometry, 48 of which have been in Forbes. A Red Bend boarder in 1965, Mr Wells returned to Forbes in 1976 to open his business in Rankin Street. He has gone on to treat, in some cases, three generations of the same family during his career. It was while he was at Red Bend Mr Wells discovered his interest in optometry, the difference his own eye-sight correction made to his life inspired him to do the same for others. Alongside his community, Mr Wells has battled floods, his initial rooms on Cross Street flooded before he moved to the current Rankin Street premises. Like most professions, optometry has advanced enormously in the 50 years Mr Wells has been involved but he has adapted and adopted technology. Screens now have a major impact on eyesight as well as longer life-expectancy – making regular eye check-ups and continuity of service important. I congratulate Phillips Wells on the service he has given his community in his half-decade career and wish him well in his retirement.

JUDITH KOPP

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I would like to congratulate my constituent Judith Kopp on her recognition within the pharmacy retail industry. Judith, who works at Life Pharmacy Forbes, was one of six exceptional pharmacy employees handed a Loyalty Champion award during the Independent Pharmacy Australia's Retail Excellence Conference. Judith has worked in pharmacies since 2001, and enjoys the day-to-day interaction with her community, members of which have placed their trust in her. The award, presented to Judith at the Independent Pharmacy Australia's inaugural retail excellence conference, also emphasised Judith's problem-solving on behalf of pharmacy clients, who in some cases struggle to understand the medical network. The award also recognises her commitment to their health. Humbled by the award, Judith deflected praise to her to workmates at Forbes' Life Pharmacy, where she enjoys being a part of the team. Mr Speaker, employees like Judith are exceptionally important to their community. A familiar, reliable face customers and clients can trust for advice or guidance, can make all the difference when health issues are impacting on their lives. I congratulate Judith on the recognition for her hard work and dedication to her job.

CHARLIE DENHAM-JONES

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I would like to extend my congratulations to Charlie Denham-Jones of Parkes, who has been honoured as Evolution Mining Northparkes Operations' Apprentice of the Year. Charlie was awarded the prestigious Lester Plumber Award, a significant recognition at Evolution Mining, in acknowledgment of his strong work ethic, dedication, and pride in his role. As an apprentice auto electrician at Northparkes Operations, Charlie stood out among 14 candidates for his exceptional commitment to safety, outstanding craftsmanship and positive attitude. His trade work requires no rework, a testament to his skill and attention to detail. Charlie has built a strong rapport with his colleagues and has earned the respect of his peers and mentors throughout his apprenticeship. His eagerness to learn and his dedication to safety and teamwork have made him a valuable asset to the Northparkes team. Charlie's journey has been one of constant growth, and I'm sure he will continue developing his skills and contributing to the success of his team. Charlie has a bright future ahead of him, earned through hard work and dedication. Once again, congratulations to Charlie on this well-deserved recognition.

JEBEDIAH YORK

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to congratulate Jebediah York of Grenfell who was recently named the Grenfell Cadets 2024 Cadet of the Year. The cadet of the year award is announced each year on Remembrance Day and has been a tradition since 1966. RSL Sub-branch Present Glen Irvine announced that LCPL York had won this year's award. Jebediah consistently demonstrated the core values of discipline, teamwork, and respect while inspiring others around him. His proactive approach to all tasks, whether in training or community service, set a high standard for his peers. As Cadet of the Year, Jebediah's example has left a lasting impact on the Grenfell Cadet Unit. His leadership skills have not only enriched the program but also helped foster

a spirit of camaraderie and mutual support among fellow cadets. He continues to inspire future cadets to pursue excellence in all their endeavours, embodying the values of service and selflessness that the cadet program aims to instil. Jebediah's award is a testament to his dedication and unwavering commitment to his community and cadet family. Congratulations Jebediah.

TOM HERRICK'S DREAMS BECOME REALITY

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I am incredibly proud to acknowledge the remarkable achievements of West Wyalong's motorbike champion, Tom Herrick, who is gearing up for the biggest challenge of his career. Thanks to the unwavering support of our community, the local racing fraternity, and the generous folks at Davies Motorcycles, Tom is preparing to compete in the prestigious 2025 American flat track season. After securing victory at the Australian Flat Track Nationals in Gunnedah last November, Tom earned the opportunity to race in major U.S. events such as the Jackpine Gypsies Short Track in Sturgis and the renowned Peoria TT. However, the road to the USA is not without its financial challenges. That's where Davies Motorcycles, alongside our community, stepped up to help. Tom's dream of competing on the world stage is now a reality, thanks to the incredible generosity of everyone involved. As he prepares to represent West Wyalong, we stand behind him every step of the way. I have no doubt that Tom will make his hometown proud as he races on the global stage. The community spirit and support for Tom's journey exemplify what makes West Wyalong such a special place.

COOLAMON'S LEGENDARY CHEESE COMPANY VISITED BY THE NSW GOVERNOR

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—It was my pleasure to join Her Excellency, The Hon Margaret Beazley, Governor of NSW and her husband, Mr Dennis Wilson on their recent visit to the Riverina District and especially the Coolamon Cheese Co. situated in Cowabbie Street, Coolamon. Coolamon's legendary Cheese Company is known far and wide for its Artisan Cheeses, which are created with a passion that could be seen as we toured the facility, and enjoyed tasting some of their award winning cheeses, especially the Sydney Royal Show Gold Medal-winning Marinated Labneh. They were also awarded two Bronze awards at the same Sydney Show for their "The Rock" Blue Vein and their Riverina Silk Feta. This small team is known for their skill and dedication in creating their amazing cheeses and this most definitely show in the quality of the products they make. The Company credits Kai Dambergs, described as an incredibly talented cheesemaker and Corey Higgins, who is the production and Labneh oil queen, for their latest successes at the show.

WARRAGAMBA PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE ARTS FILM ALIVE FESTIVAL

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—The inaugural Arts Alive Film Festival program showcased the performing arts talent of local primary school students. It included an impressive film, called 'The Paths We Choose' by the years 5 and 6 students from Warragamba school. I was blown away with the maturity and insight shown by the students as they used this opportunity to express what they had learnt on the topic of Choice Theory and Total Behaviour, exploring basic needs of survival, love and belonging, power, freedom and fun. The film festival took place at a movie theatres and the films were warmly received by proud parents, family members and friends. The festival had the support of the Sydney Opera House Creative Team, and gave students a unique opportunity to creative, produce, direct and act in a film of their own making. Thanks to Warragamba Primary School teachers Belinda Allard, Leah Corner, Tayla Baker, Chris Szaitz, Emma Crocker and Danielle Dimech along with principal Lloyd Kusar, for encouraging students to achieve their best in their endeavours and for facilitating students to express themselves through the creative arts.

MOYENGULLY BRIDGE

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—A bridge in Wollondilly has recently been named Moyengully Bridge, after the last war chief of the Gundungurra people. The naming of the bridge honours the legacy of the Burra Burra man and leader of the Nattai tribe. Located on Mulhollands Road, near the junction with Barkers Lodge Road in Picton and spanning Stonequarry Creek, the naming ceremony was attended by Gundungurra elder Aunty Kazan Brown, friends, family and community members, along with Wollondilly Shire Mayor and Councillors. The Dharwal community was represented by Aunty Glenda Chalker. Aunty Kazan was recently awarded the First Nations History Award, issued by the History Council NSW, in their annual History Awards. Aunty Kazan is a direct descendant of Moyengully. She was inspired to research her family's history in the Burratorang Valley and her preservation of this significant aspect of Wollondilly's history is recognised in her well deserved award. Her work focused on the impacts that raising the Warragamba dam wall would have on the significant cultural sites in the area, and led to an exploration of her own family history and connection to the area.

ROYAL AERO CLUB

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I was honoured to join the members of the Royal Aero Club of New South Wales at the formal dinner for the annual Flying Training Camp at Camden Airport in January. This

flagship program engages young people ages 14 and up, many with no flying experience, toward their first solo flight. It embodies the best of the aviation industry, with 35 youth beginning their careers while immersed in aviation for 9 days. The training was highly effective, with some students gaining enough experience and confidence to be ready to fly solo. Volunteers from diverse backgrounds dedicate their time to ensure the best start for these student pilots. The formal dinner wraps up the program, celebrating the students' achievements and recognising the outstanding volunteers. The Royal Aero Club training paves the way for the next generation of pilots and aviators, fostering leadership, integrity, and lifelong friendships among its participants.

STEPHEN HINDMARSH

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—While all teachers are amazing individuals, I make special mention of Stephen Hindmarsh, Head of Secondary at Heritage College Lake Macquarie, who goes above and beyond for his students. Recently Stephen played a pivotal role in helping students to complete the gruelling Action for Agape Ride. The 250 kilometre, five-day mountain bike ride spans from Canberra to Mount Kosciuszko, with competitors raising desperately needed funds for Majimoto Secondary School in Kenya. Stephen prepared and mentored students, ensuring they were physically and mentally ready for this challenge, while instilling values of resilience and service. Beyond this initiative, Stephen is also a passionate educator who dedicates countless hours to supporting HSC wood tech students, even milling timber himself to reduce costs. His commitment extends to coaching and mentoring in Oztag, sprint training, and other sports. A decorated athlete, Stephen recently won multiple gold and silver medals at the NSW and Australian Masters Athletics Championships. His inspiring words "Consistency is the key to success, and discipline is the key to consistency" reflect his unwavering dedication to excellence. Stephen Hindmarsh is a role model, and I commend his outstanding contribution to education and the community.

GARY JAMES SIMON

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)—I acknowledge the passing of a great man, Aboriginal Elder, Uncle Gary Simon of Blackalls Park and extend my sympathies to his wife Brenda, children April, Gary, Marie, Seaman, Lacey, Brenda-Lee, Belinda & Saul, and their beloved grandchildren and great grandchildren. Gary was a highly respected member of our community. He had extraordinary personal strength under the most difficult circumstances, nowhere was this more evident than in 1971 and the following years, when his seven children were stolen by government officials. Gary was working away when his children were taken from the family's Gilgandra home. Aged between just one and eight, there was no reason for this atrocity. He and Brenda spent four horrific years fighting in court for their children's return, during which time they were denied contact. Despite this hardship, Gary's life was dominated by his prevailing sense of love for his family and the community. He was a great storyteller and Pastor, who always had a lesson of forgiveness and generosity to impart. Gary also had a creative side and was a talented artist, guitar player and singer. He will be dearly missed. Vale Gary.

COOPER KLIENDIENST

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Cooper Kliendienst, who was recently named Sportsperson of the Year at the 2025 Wingham Rotary Australia Day celebrations. At 12 years of age, Cooper has shown exceptional talent in a range of sports. He has represented his region at the state level in athletics and has focused on rugby league over the past two years. In 2024, Cooper stood out in three sports: athletics, rugby league, and touch football, being selected for the Hunter teams in all three. He then went on to earn a spot in the state teams for both rugby league and touch football. Cooper's hard work and success have earned him an Indigenous Youth Leadership Scholarship to attend St Joseph's College in Hunters Hill, Sydney. I congratulate Cooper on his success and wish him all the best as he takes on this next exciting chapter.

KEN CAMERON

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Ken Cameron OAM of Marlee, who was recently awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for his outstanding service to the Marlee community. Ken's contributions reflect his connection to the area his family has called home since 1854. Ken has been President of the Marlee Hall and Progress Association since 2006 and a member for 25 years. He was involved in the hall's 100th anniversary celebration in 2022. Ken is also a founding member of the Marlee Rural Fire Brigade, established in 1983, where he has held numerous roles, including captain and tree felling instructor. Additionally, Ken has been involved with Clean Up Australia, the NSW Farmers Federation, the Wingham Scottish Festival, and many other organisations, all while running his family's beef cattle farm. Ken's approach to volunteering is summed up in his own words: "When something happens, you just do it." Congratulations, Ken, on this well-deserved recognition.

SUZANNE SMALL

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to recognise Suzanne Small, the recipient of the 2025 Volunteer of the Year Award at Wingham's Australia Day celebrations. Suzanne's involvement with horses has been a lifelong passion, starting with her first competition at just 18 months old. By the time she was 21, she had already secured two Australian showjumping titles and earned a spot on the 1988 Olympic showjumping team. Her passion for horses and sport has translated into years of coaching, with Suzanne being a well-regarded figure in the community. As the chief instructor at Wingham Pony Club, she has shared her experience and knowledge with riders of all ages. Suzanne has a special gift for working with young people and those with special needs, including NDIS participants, helping them build confidence through horse riding. Suzanne's positive impact on the community is clear, and her award is a fitting recognition of her years of service to the Wingham community. Congratulations, Suzanne, and thank you for all that you do.

ST JOHN PAUL 2 CATHOLIC COLLEGE SCHOOL LEADERS

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)—The beginning of a new school year is always a time of renewal—new challenges, new opportunities, and new leadership. With that in mind, I extend my warmest congratulations to the 2025 St John Paul II Catholic College student leadership team. Being entrusted with a leadership role is both an honour and a responsibility, and I commend these students for stepping up to serve their school community with dedication and integrity. A special congratulations to College Leaders Noah Esposito and Isabella Marks, as well as College Mission Leaders John Apolinar and Analiese Halteh. Their selection reflects the respect and confidence their peers and teachers have in their ability to lead with compassion, commitment, and faith. Under the guidance of Principal Anthony Hulme, I am confident they will uphold the values of St John Paul II Catholic College and leave a meaningful legacy. Leadership is not just about titles—it is about service, vision, and the impact one makes on others. I have no doubt that this team will inspire and strengthen their community in the year ahead. Congratulations once again!

JINDABYNE WINTER SPORT ATHLETES

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)—Last weekend four Jindabyne winter sport athletes scored big results at the FIS World Cup series. Charlotte Wilson gained her first career victory in the Dual Moguls event and was also named FIS rookie of the year in Moguls Skiing. Josie Baff, Adam Lambert and Abi Harrigan also claimed podium finishes in the World Cup in slopestyles and Snowboard cross. Congratulations to these fantastic Snowy Mountains athletes. With world championships coming soon and winter Olympics in less than a year, who knows what else is in store!

TRAGIC FIRE IN KOCANI MACEDONIA

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education)—Queanbeyan has long enjoyed its wonderful Macedonian community, the community brings to our city a wonderful cultural input, great food, a fabulous dance group and enthusiastic (and successful) footballers. But it is, right now, a sad community. Members of the community have been deeply saddened by the tragic fire in an unlicensed nightclub in Kocani Macedonia that has killed 59 people and injured more than 150. Our Australian Macedonian community retains deep emotional and family connections their family origins in Macedonia and they are feeling this tragedy deeply. I extend my condolences and thoughts to our Australian Macedonian community as well as to the family and friends of victims.

RON MARCUS INAUGURAL RECIPIENT OF THE BRUCE ALLEN HUMANITARIAN AWARD

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—The Rotary Club of Castle Hill recently held the club's 60th birthday celebration. During the celebration the club presented many awards. One award was the inaugural Bruce Allen Humanitarian Award. The award was established in honour of Bruce's legacy, recognising Rotarians who embody commitment to humanitarian work and who use Rotary's global reach to create real lasting change. It is awarded to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions across Rotary's seven areas of focus. The inaugural recipient was Ron Marcus. Ron has dedicated his life to serving communities near and far, with a particular focus on international projects. His impact is nothing short of extraordinary. His work in Mongolia alone is estimated to have saved at least 25,000 lives through the installation of life-saving medical equipment and critical hospital upgrades. And he didn't stop there—his commitment has taken him across Mongolia, Nepal, and Papua New Guinea, making more than 80 self-funded trips to oversee and implement life-changing projects. Ron's dedication to humanitarian service reflects what Rotary stands for. I congratulate Ron on receiving the inaugural Bruce Allen Humanitarian Award.

JAMIE BUTTIGIEG, RECIPIENT OF PAUL HARRIS FELLOW

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I congratulate Jamie Buttigieg on recently receiving the highest Rotarian honour of being named a 'Paul Harris Fellow', which was received at the recent Rotary Club of Castle Hill, 60th Anniversary Gala Dinner. A Paul Harris Fellow is bestowed in appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world. Jamie joined Rotary in December 2022 and has shown an outstanding dedication and commitment to Rotary. His enthusiasm and application to his role as Admin Director has been transformative, introducing numerous initiatives to streamline processes and enhancing efficiency. With professionalism, innovative ideas, and aspirational thinking, he consistently works to enhance the clubs' initiatives whilst remaining respectful of cherished traditions. Jamie served as a youth mentor for Wesley and a mentor for Hills Women in Business before becoming the CEO of Skills Samurai, Australia and New Zealand, a business dedicated to equipping young individuals of all abilities with the skills needed to thrive in an AI-driven world. His contributions were recently acknowledged by Prime Minister Luzon who commended Jamie for opening a second franchise in New Zealand. Congratulations Jamie.

COMMUNITIES GET BEHIND NSW SES WOODBURN UNIT

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I travelled to Woodburn as floodwaters in the Richmond River receded to check in on local businesses and to personally thank NSW SES Woodburn Unit volunteers for their service during the recent prolonged weather event. Joining me were NSW Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Paul Scully, Jenny Aitchison (now NSW Minister for Roads and Minister for Regional Transport), NSW Reconstruction Authority CEO Mal Lanyon APM, Richmond Valley Mayor Cr Robert Mustow and General Manager Vaughan Macdonald. The Unit on its Facebook page shouted out an enormous thank you to all the businesses in Woodburn and Evans Head who assisted them in every way possible from bagging and delivering sandbags to preparing and serving meals. They included Hemlocks Books & Coffee Woodburn, Wurlitzer Bakery Woodburn and Woodburn's Rod 'n' Reel Hotel Motel, which we visited, Rosies Takeaway Woodburn, Woodburn Marine, Thai Siam Woodburn, Sarah and Glen Cambarll, Woodburn RFS Brigade, Woodburn Public School, O'Grady's Transport & Removals, Firs and Rescue NSW Station 288 Evans Head, Hotel Illawong Evans Head, Ritchies Evans Head, SPAR Supermarket Evans Head, and Richmond Valley Council. Also thanked were volunteers' families, other SES units and all emergency services personnel.

MURWILLUMBAH MIDWIFE CAROLYN HASTIE ON PNG MISSION

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I commend Murwillumbah-based midwife Carolyn Hastie, who is one of seven Australians volunteering their expertise in Papua New Guinea (PNG) next month. The Byron Shire Echo reported that Carolyn will work with local midwives to help improve maternal and neonatal outcomes as part of a mission organised by Rotary International. Angela Stavrogiannopoulos from Rotary International told The Echo: "PNG has one of the highest rates of preventable maternal and neonatal deaths in the world. "The Rotary Club of Mordialta (South Australia) and Port Moresby (PNG) in partnership with PNG Midwifery Society and the Australian College of Midwives have developed a Buddy Leadership program between PNG and Australian midwives to improve maternal and neonatal outcomes." Based at Port Moresby General Hospital, the midwives and their buddies meet for a week in person then work through various means of communication over a 12-month period. The Echo reported that Carolyn is PhD qualified and has a national and international reputation as a role model and leader in midwifery education and practice. She was one of the first AusAID midwifery education facilitators in Papua New Guinea in 2011 and still has connections with midwives in Port Moresby.

PREMIER, MINISTERS GET GRAND TOUR OF KYOGLE

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—In the aftermath of Ex-Cyclone Alfred it was wonderful to be able to accompany Premier Chris Minns and a group of State and Federal Ministers on a visit to Kyogle to find out firsthand the impact of the event on the local community. It was quite the grand tour of Kyogle with Mayor Danielle Mulholland and Susanna Freymark from The Indy Northern Rivers joining us. Susanna's dog Jelly who won special attention from the Premier. We spent time with the local SES, and thanked them for their fantastic work. Kyogle SES Unit Commander Deb Castledine and Deputy Commander Paul Arber told the Premier how this small unit, working over a broad area, worked around the clock to ensure community safety, and were able to give early Watch and Act advice. Richmond Valley Cluster Local Commander Hayden Doolan said the preparation for Cyclone Alfred was wonderful, as there was time to get units from other regions involved and they had the RFS, Fire and Rescue, VRA and everyone working together. The visit included a meeting with councillors, lunch at Espresso Edge and a street walk with Ministers spending time and money in the town.

SHELLHARBOUR CITY ARTS SOCIETY

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Shellharbour City Arts Society for being awarded the 2025 Outstanding Contribution to the Arts at the Shellharbour Community and Australia Day Awards ceremony in January. The Shellharbour City Arts Society is nominated for their contribution to the arts in the local scene through nurturing, networking, advocacy and the creation of exhibition opportunities and workshop delivery. The Arts Society is a non-profit organisation which is run by volunteers. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate the Shellharbour City Arts Society for this amazing achievement.

INDIANA DOS SANTOS

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Indiana Dos Santos for being awarded the 2025 Young Athlete of the Year at the Shellharbour Community and Australia Day Awards ceremony in January. Indiana has taken Australian football by storm since she burst onto the scene by breaking A-League Women's record aplenty at just 15. A proud Shellharbour junior, Indiana has gone onto win A-League championships, as well as being selected for the Young Matildas World Cup squad that played in Columbia in 2024. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Indiana on this amazing achievement.

MARGARET YOUNG

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to congratulate Margaret Young for being awarded the 2025 Volunteer of the Year Award at the Shellharbour Community and Australia Day Awards ceremony in January. Margaret has been an inspirational and selfless volunteer at Mirrabook Mental Health Unit at Shellharbour Hospital. She has given up her time and money to make baked goods and gifted presents there for over six years. Her dedication of time and her kindness have inspired countless staff members and have helped thousands of patients during this time. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Margaret on this amazing achievement.

ROSEWOOD STOCKMAN'S CHALLENGE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Rosewood's Sports Club, its Committee Members, and the dedicated volunteers for pulling together the spectacular family-friendly Rosewood Stockmen's Challenge Event. Over three days 116 competitors showcased their horsemanship honouring the traditions and skills that have been part of our Australian heritage, of stockmen and women. This incredible event not only highlighted the remarkable abilities of our competitors, but it also played a vital role in preserving the invaluable skills that have been a cornerstone of rural Australia's history, the traditions of our stockmen and women. Congratulations to all competitors who competed in a range of events including Whipcrack, Packing, Shoeing, Bareback Obstacle, Cross Country and Stock Handling. Thank you to everyone who participated, and once again to the Rosewood Sports Committee for making this event a success. A special thank also to the generous sponsors, whose support makes events like this possible, and to the 400 attendees who made this event truly spectacular!

PROOF DREAMS CAN TAKE FLIGHT AT ANY AGE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the achievements of Chris Abbott from Albury whose lifelong dream of flying has taken flight at the age of 63. Mr Abbott recently earned his commercial pilot's licence, turning that dream into reality. Though Mr Abbott's initial childhood dream was to join the Royal Australian Air Force, his journey led him to a successful career in bricklaying, engineer studies and business owner. A health setback in 2007 didn't stop his dream – it fuelled his desire to revisit his ambition to become a pilot. In 1999, his wife gifted him a trial flight that reignited his love for aviation, and from that moment, he knew it was a goal worth pursuing. Now, as a proud pilot for Angel Flight Australia, Mr Abbott is using his skills to support those in rural and regional areas, offering flights that help people access crucial specialist medical treatments in major cities. Congratulations, Chris, for proving that dreams really can take flight at any age.

ASSYRIAN BUSINESS AWARDS 2025

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 30 January 2025, I had the pleasure of joining my Parliamentary colleagues, friends, and the local community to attend the 2025 Assyrian Business Awards, organized by the Assyrian National Council of Australia. It was a truly special and unique event, celebrating the remarkable achievements and contributions of Assyrian businesses across the country. The evening was filled with inspiring stories of hard work, resilience, and success, highlighting the incredible impact these businesses have had on the broader community. It was a fantastic opportunity to witness firsthand the talent, passion, and dedication of the Assyrian business community. The event also provided a platform to honour the incredible cultural and entrepreneurial spirit that continues to thrive, and it was an honour to be part of such an important celebration.

The awards were a wonderful reminder of the power of community and the importance of supporting local businesses, and I left the event feeling both proud and inspired by all the incredible individuals who contribute so much to our society.

CHRISTMAS PARTY BY LAO COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT CO-OP NSW

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 20 December 2024, I had a wonderful time celebrating the festive season at the Christmas Party organised by the Lao Community Advancement Co-op NSW Ltd [LCAC]. It was a fantastic opportunity to come together, reflect on the year's achievements, and celebrate the rich culture and contributions of the Lao Australian community. I extend my sincere thanks to President Mr Bountham Vongsaya and LCAC leaders for their kind invitation and commend them for organising yet another successful and vibrant celebration. Their dedication to fostering community spirit, preserving cultural traditions, and supporting Lao Australians is truly commendable. I had an opportunity to present my Community Recognition Statements of last year's Christmas Party Celebrations to the President Mr Bountham Vongsaya and to the Former President Mr Deth Sysengrath. It was also a joy to see so many familiar faces and share in the warmth and hospitality of this wonderful community. I wish everyone a joyful holiday season and look forward to continuing our work together in the new year.

ST JOHNS PARK HIGH SCHOOL'S END OF YEAR PRESENTATION 2024

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 17 December 2024, I had the pleasure of attending St Johns Park High School's end-of-school-year presentation event, where I had the honor of presenting my recognition awards to some exceptional students. It was a truly special occasion, celebrating the hard work and achievements of the students throughout the year. I would like to extend my thanks to Principal Mr. Steven Moisidis and Ms. Sue Palmer the School Administration Officer for their kind invitation and for their excellent coordination of the event. I would also like to congratulate all the wonderful students who received the recognition awards. They included: Masarra Al-Obadi from Year 7; Dylan Huynh from Year 8; Vikky Luong from Year 9; Alvin Vuong from Year 10; and Marisa Dang from Year 11. Each of these students has shown tremendous commitment to their education and personal growth, and it was a privilege to be part of their celebration. Finally, I would like to thank the teachers for their hard work and dedication throughout the year. Their tireless efforts ensure that these students are given the best opportunity to succeed, and I am grateful for all they do.

BAYSIDE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate four Rockdale constituents; Edward Adhikari, Michael Cayabyab, Maria Franklin and Michelle Sparkes for winning the Bayside Council's 2024 Photography Competition. This annual photography competition encourages residents to capture the beauty of the local area through their camera lens. Across seven categories, including: Open, Environmental, Waterways, Transport, Active, Neighbourhood, and Junior, each winner has captured the essence of the area's natural beauty and diverse local community. To all the finalists and those who participated, I acknowledge and commend your dedication by offering glimpses into what makes Bayside such a vibrant cultural and creative exchange in Southern Sydney. The finalist's works are exhibited online, and the winning photographs will be printed and displayed in select locations across the Rockdale Electorate. Thank you all for your remarkable photographs and participation in the 2024 Bayside Photography Competition.

BAY COMMUNITY GARDEN RECOGNITION STATEMENT

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)—I take this opportunity to recognise the great effort and ingenuity displayed by the volunteers at The Bay Community Garden. I love visiting the garden. Not just because it provides a lovely patch of greenery but because it is a symbol of the powerful bonds our community has and continues to build upon. The garden helps provide a strong sense of collaboration and provides a wonderful opportunity for residents to socialise and build lasting friendships whilst enjoying the outdoor environment. The garden, located at Lance Studdert Reserve in Kyeemagh, began when residents came together to commence four years of planning that culminated in its opening in April 2017. Since then, the garden has doubled in size. It has provided a scenic space for residents to harvest their own produce and take pride in their hard work. I would like to particularly thank Christopher, Vera, Pat, Janice and Jeanette for making this effort possible and dedicating their time to enhancing our community space in an environmentally beneficial way. I commend this garden which allows locals to grow not only their own plants, fruits, vegetables and herbs, but also a strong sense of community.

GREENWOOD COTTAGE

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)—I would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of Greenwood Cottage and its parent charity The Benevolent Society. Greenwood Cottage is a vital community organisation providing social support and centre-based respite for seniors aged 65 and over, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members aged 50 and over. Operating four days a week, Greenwood Cottage offers a welcoming space for connection, engagement, and wellbeing in the St George area. Greenwood Cottage's programs are designed to enhance physical, cognitive, and emotional health through a variety of activities, including group outings, physical exercises, and cognitive stimulation. With nutritious meals and affordable transport options, the Cottage ensures accessibility for all participants. The dedicated and experienced team fosters a safe, supportive, and cheerful environment, embodying the values of integrity, respect, optimism, effectiveness, and collaboration. This remarkable organisation not only combats social isolation but also strengthens community bonds, enriching the lives of its clients and their families. Greenwood Cottage is a shining example of how compassion and care can transform lives. I commend the staff, volunteers, and supporters for their unwavering commitment to creating a brighter, more connected community. Thank you, Greenwood Cottage, for your exceptional service and dedication.

GLENMORE PARK PROBUS CLUB

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate and commend the Glenmore Park Probus Club on their 20-year anniversary which was officially celebrated on Wednesday 19 February 2025 at Penrith RSL. The Club meets each month and often catches up for coffee, day trips and longer trips to locations such as Norfolk Island, Fraser Island and the Snowy Mountains. I particularly recognise President of the Club Barbara Davis who has been part of the organisation for 8 years, having arrived here from England with her husband 10 years ago. I extend that recognition to all past and present officeholders and members of the club who are integral to the functioning of the club. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I congratulate the Glenmore Park Probus Club and all past and present members on this outstanding milestone and I wish them the very best into the future.

EMILY KLIMEK

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I thank and commend Glenmore Park local Emily Klimek for her continued work in spreading awareness and raising funds to fight Type 1 Diabetes and to assist people diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes and their families. Emily herself was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at the age of 2. Emily recently organised this year's Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation One Walk held at Tench Reserve on 2 March 2025, with the purpose of raising funds for more research into Type 1 Diabetes so that we may hopefully have a cure. In addition to seeking a cure and prevention, Emily also focuses her efforts on ensuring people are educated about the disease as recognising the signs and symptoms can be lifesaving. Emily was announced as the Youth 2023 Volunteer of the Year for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation [JD RF] in recognition of her outstanding work, for which I congratulate her. I look forward to witnessing the continued positive contribution of Emily Klimek in our community and broader society and I wish her the very best in the future.

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY 2025

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—The 21st March 2025 is World Down Syndrome Day which is a global awareness day that has been officially observed by the United Nations since 2012. The goal and purpose of World Down Syndrome Day is to assist people in better understanding and supporting those with Down syndrome. I take this opportunity to recognise all people with Down Syndrome in my electorate of Badgerys Creek and beyond and their families, friends, carers and organisations who support them. The date being the 21st day of the 3rd month was chosen to represent the triplication (trisomy) of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome. I'm pleased to know that Down Syndrome NSW is partnering with leading organisations, experts, and sporting teams to run numerous events in NSW in commemoration of World Down Syndrome Day. I wish everyone with Down Syndrome, their families, friends, carers and organisations who support them the very best.

CELEBRATING THE COSTA GROUP OF GUYRA

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Costa Group of Guyra on its positive impact on our region, with the group being proactive in strengthening the community, providing grants to local initiatives and projects, through their Well Grown Community Grants Program. I congratulate all involved in providing the grants program, which is now in its third year. It is aimed at non-for-profit community organisations, sporting associations and schools, to enhance the wellbeing and development of the Guyra and Armidale regions. I also congratulate the group on their impressive 130 year history, with the Costa family starting

out with a plan for a small vineyard, evolving into an international farming operation, providing fresh grown produce across to the world. Staying true to the group's roots, the Costa family legacy of passion, integrity and innovation are still the essence of operations today, exemplified by this supportive initiative. I commend all involved in the Costa Group and the grants program, including State Manager Vertical Farming Brett Ryan and the all the team for their support. Thank you for such commitment to the region and importantly for improving the economic and social landscape of the local area.

LITTLE VILLAGE – BIG HEART

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the community of Woolbrook for banding together for one of their own, hosting a fund-raising 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, with those attending digging deep and raising more than \$22,000! I congratulate all involved in this incredible act of support to Trish and her family, including organisers Kylie Matthews, Cr Gary Olrich, Rhonda Olrich and Janelle Smith. Special thanks to Margaret Swanton for the generous gift of a Scooter and to all that donated quality auction items. Thank you to each volunteers working tirelessly behind the scenes to make this occasion a great success. Events such as this in regional towns and villages, cannot function without the wonderful support and commitment these volunteers give. I commend the people of Woolbrook for looking out for one of their own, for their community spirit, generosity of time and strength given to the Ford family.

MOREE JUNIOR CRICKET TEAM

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I would like to recognise the achievements of the Moree Junior Cricket players, on their selection to play at the NSWPSA Girls Cricket Championships, held at the Central Coast Regional Sporting and Recreation Complex at Tuggerah recently. This event brings together teams from all over NSW, including representatives from each PSSA zone, Polding and Mackillop from Catholic Schools, as well as teams from NSW Combined Independent Schools. I congratulate each of the players on their performance, including Sophie Jensen, Marley Legg and Ellie Rigby from Moree Public School and Isabelle Diprose from the Warialda Public School, each of whom represented the North-West zone. Elsie Sullivan from St Philomena's Catholic School represented Polding, which featured players from Catholic schools in the northern half of NSW. Impressively the girls competed in matches having 50 overs, competing in 6 games over the 3-4 day period. I commend each of the players on their hard work in their preparation and practice leading up to these championships and their commitment to the sport of Cricket. Special thanks to coaches, school staff and families for your valuable support, enabling the children to travel and play their best at the championships.

BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2025

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Hallie Hancock, Lincoln Price, Lucy Bourke, Cade Fitzgerald, Claudia Evans and Alliera Wardle on being named the 2025 school leaders at Belmont Public School. These students have demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to their school community. They represent Belmont 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 Hallie, Lincoln, Lucy, Cade, Claudia and Alliera on this well-deserved achievement. I also wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

BUDGEWOI PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2025

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Byron Heath, Mikayla-Rose Millard, Artie Scollary, Mia Cramond, Cadence Baker, Georgie McDonald, Bayley Peterson, Leah Sharpe, Blake Stephenson, Oliver Trkulja, Tayah Hodder and Kai Lockley on being named the 2025 school leaders at Budgewoi Public School. These students have demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to their school community. They represent Budgewoi 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 Byron, Mikayla-Rose, Artie, Mia, Cadence, Georgie, Bayley, Leah, Blake, Oliver, Tayah and Kai on this well-deserved achievement. I also wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

FLORAVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOL LEADERS 2025

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Phoenix Annett, Ahlia McMullen, Jett Hartley, Adelyn Kelly, Crystal Galliot, Sophie Mascord, Max Reid and Mila Stringer on being named the 2025 school leaders at Floraville Public School. These students have demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to their school community. They represent Floraville 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 Phoenix, Ahlia, Jett, Adelyn, Crystal, Sophie, Max and Mila on this well-deserved achievement. I also wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

LAKE MAC AWARDS COMMUNITY NOMINEES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—The Lake Mac Awards celebrate the best and brightest of the Lake Macquarie City community, and I am pleased to report that many of the 2025 nominees are local to the Charlestown electorate. It is so inspirational to learn about the incredible achievements of the nominees across all thirteen categories, especially the Charlestown electorate-based nominees in the community categories: Community Event of the Year and Community Group of the Year. Held on Sunday 8 September 2024 at Croudace Bay Park in Eleebana, the Orange Ride 4 Child Protection Awareness was an initiative of Hearts and Hands and aimed to raise awareness of and funds for the fight against child abuse. With another ride around Lake Macquarie planned for later this year, it is great to see the 2024 Ride nominated for Community Event of the Year. Charlestown-based Healing Path to Wellness has been nominated for Community Group of the Year. A Health Promotion Charity, Healing Path to Wellness works to alleviate the symptoms of those living with mental ill-health, emotional distress, trauma and more. My congratulations to the nominees and I wish them all the best!

LAKE MAC AWARDS SPORTS NOMINEES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—The Lake Mac Awards celebrate the best and brightest of the Lake Macquarie City community, and I am pleased to report that many of the 2025 nominees are residents of the Charlestown electorate. It is so inspirational to learn about the incredible achievements of the nominees across all thirteen categories, especially the Charlestown electorate-based nominees in the sports categories: Lake Mac Sports Star and Lake Mac Sports Leader. Nineteen-year-old athlete Jemma Pollard of Whitebridge and thirty-two year old elite trampoline gymnast Shaun Swadling of Tingira Heights are nominated for Lake Mac Sports Star alongside triathlete John Domandl of Eleebana, who is also nominated in the Outstanding Contributor with Disability. Dr Alyce Barnes of Dudley, a senior research assistant based at the University of Newcastle's School of Medicine and Public Health with a background in physical education, and Laraine Dunn of Eleebana, a business owner and mentor in the fitness industry with a lifetime of experience, have been nominated for Lake Mac Sports Leader. My congratulations to the nominees and I wish them all the best!

LAKE MAC AWARDS LEADERSHIP NOMINEES

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—The Lake Mac Awards celebrate the best and brightest of the Lake Macquarie City community, and I am pleased to report that many of the 2025 nominees are local to the Charlestown electorate. It is so inspirational to learn about the incredible achievements of the nominees across all thirteen categories, especially the Charlestown electorate-based nominees in the leadership and volunteering categories. The Groundswell Collective, an organisation dedicated to building a connected, thriving and sustainable Lake Macquarie, led a program to plant a Tiny Forest at St Paul's Primary School, Gateshead, in 2024 has been nominated Lake Mac Environmental Leader. Red Cross volunteer mainstay Sandra Collins of Warners Bay, youth worker and twenty-year SES Long Service Award recipient William Knight of Cardiff South and fifteen-year SES Long Service Award and SES National Medal recipient John Robertshaw of Tingira Heights have been nominated for Volunteer of the Year. My congratulations to the nominees and I wish them all the best!

SUCCESS FOR EVANS HEAD/WOODBURN BOXER SUNNY MCLEAN

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to congratulate Evans Head/Woodburn boxer Sunny "Lil Dog" McLean, on achieving the title of Amateur Australian Lightweight Champion at the national boxing league titles in Gosford. Sunny is the NSW/QLD interstate champion and got picked to represent QLD for the national titles. Despite that 16-year-old Sunny has only been competing for two years, he defeated all

opponents during the elimination rounds. While taking on his first opponent, the referee stopped the fight in the third round. Sunny's second opponent was the favourite from Tasmania, and his success in these two rounds saw him secure the gold medal against the NSW champion in the final. Prior to gaining this title, Sunny was picked in the Australian Boxing Councils national team to fight against the New Zealand team in Auckland and won every round in his fight. Sunny is dedicated to gaining as much experience as possible and trains with coach Scott Smith out of Maddog Boxing Gym in Meerschaum Vale. Great efforts Sunny, congratulations on your successes and I wish you many more to come.

MARK BLACKADDER

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge and thank Mark Blackadder for his outstanding contributions to the Grafton Jacaranda Festival and the Clarence Valley community. Mark's dedication, leadership, and vision have been instrumental in shaping the Jacaranda Festival into the world-class event it is today. As Festival Manager for the past six years, he has worked tirelessly to modernise and elevate the festival, ensuring its long-term success and sustainability. Under his leadership, the event has seen record crowds, increased national recognition, and a revitalised community spirit. Beyond his work with the festival, Mark has been a passionate advocate for the Clarence Valley, helping to put Grafton on the map as a must-visit destination during Jacaranda season. His innovative approach and unwavering commitment to the region have left a lasting legacy. Mark's contributions will be deeply missed, but his impact will be felt for years to come. On behalf of the Clarence community, I sincerely thank Mark Blackadder for his dedication and service, and I wish him all the very best in his next chapter. Thank you, Mark!

AUNTY BERIS DUROUX OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—My congratulations go to Beris Duroux from the Grafton Education Office who has received the Outstanding Leadership in Aboriginal Education award at the 19th annual NSW Department of Education Nanga Mai Awards. The Nanga Mai Awards celebrate and recognise excellence and educational achievements in Aboriginal Education in New South Wales public schools and their school communities. Aunty Beris is a proud Yaegl woman with strong connections to the Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr nations. Receiving the award highlights her significant contributions to Aboriginal Education since the 1980's. Over the time, Aunty Beris has served as an Aboriginal Education Officer, teacher, and an Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, while acting as a role model and mentor to countless colleagues. Additionally, she has played a pivotal role in connecting communities with schools through the Three Rivers, One Mob program and the Rivers of Learning initiative at Maclean High School. Aunty Beris has also assisted local communities to establish Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups and has provided support to the Bulla Jugun program, which bridges the Bundjalung and Gumbaynggirr communities and schools to enhance students' educational experiences. Well done Aunty Beris on such a remarkable achievement.

CHARMAINE ROBERTS

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Charmaine Roberts who has been recognised as the Greyhounds NSW Volunteer of the Year. Charmaine, a Dubbo Greyhounds Life Member, is a hardworking, passionate, and dedicated advocate for greyhounds. Her countless hours of volunteer work and impeccable attention to detail ensure that the Dubbo club remains a leader in the industry. In addition to her dedicated contributions to the club, she is a passionate advocate for greyhounds as pets and has facilitated the rehoming of numerous retired greyhounds across the state. Charmaine's passion for greyhound racing extends beyond off track activities. She is recognised as one of the most successful female trainers in NSW. This well-deserved honour was presented to Charmaine at a gala event in Sydney on 19 February 2025 and is recognition of her invaluable contributions and all she brings to the NSW Greyhounds Racing Industry. Congratulations Charmaine!

DOROTHY BLAKE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like acknowledge Dorothy Blake who has been recognised with life membership of the Dubbo and District Family History Society Incorporated [DDFHS Inc]. Dorothy becomes the fifteenth person to receive this prestigious recognition, for her outstanding dedication and contributions to the club over the years. Despite living in Wellington, she regularly travels to Dubbo to support the society. With more than twenty years of dedication, her broad knowledge and experience have made her an invaluable asset, assisting countless members and visitors to the society's rooms. Always an effective communicator, she actively participates in the Share Your Story program and Information Sessions, often suggesting topics that benefit members. Dorothy is also an important part of the team delivering beginners courses, including sessions being run this year. Beyond generously donating her time, Dorothy has also contributed to the society's library collection, particularly with books on Wellington's history. Passionate about preserving local

heritage, she has further enriched the historical record by researching and writing on various aspects of Wellington's past. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition Dorothy!

DR MIKE AUGE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to recognise the life of Dr Mike Auge. Dr Auge was a man who dedicated himself to making Wellington a great place to live. He was a dedicated community leader who genuinely sought to make a positive impact. Among the many roles he devoted himself to were Councillor and Deputy Mayor of the former Wellington Shire Council, President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Wellington Historical Society, member of Wellington's Heritage Committee, Founder of Friends of the Wellington Caves as well as involvement in the Wellington Lions Club, Friends of the Burrendong Arboretum and served as a volunteer Ranger at Mt Arthur. In 2024 Mike was honoured as Wellington's Citizen of the Year in recognition of his dedication to the environment and his passion for sharing his knowledge and love of Australia's flora and fauna. Drawing on his extensive expertise as a highly respected Palaeontologist, Dr Auge, alongside Chris George and Bruce Welch, co-authored a popular local book on Wellington's main tourist attraction the Wellington Caves. He truly embodied the spirit of a dedicated and selfless volunteer and will be missed. Vale Dr Mike Auge.

SPORT ALBURY WODONGA 2025 JOSS YOUNG ACHIEVER FINALISTS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge everyone who played a part in making this year's Sport Albury Wodonga: 2025 Joss Young Achiever Finalist event such a memorable occasion. Your support made the night truly special celebrating the future of our young athletes. Firstly, to President Robert McDonald, thank you for your continued leadership and commitment. To the 14 finalists, each of you have displayed talent, determination, and passion across a range of sports. You inspire with your own personal journeys. To this year's winner, Nate Palubiski, congratulations for your outstanding achievements in Clay Target Shooting. To Joss Group for their generous sponsorship of the event. To all the devoted parents, families, and coaches who support and encourage these young athletes every step of the way. To Kylie King, former Mayor for her motivational words, and the dedication of Steve Murphy from All In Sports, ensuring the event ran smoothly. Finally, congratulations to Rebecca Snow on your well-deserved Life Membership, presented on the evening. Sport Albury Wodonga 2025 Joss Young Achiever Finalist Event is a celebration of the future of sport in our community and the young people who shape it.

DON KIBBLE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge a fantastic individual within my local community, Don Kibble. As a part of the St George Art Society, Don has made significant contributions to our local art scene. Serving in multiple roles including President and Vice President since 2001, Don's leadership at the St George Art Society has helped it to thrive. He is always willing to help out wherever he may be needed. Over the years, Don has helped to organise countless exhibitions, workshops and demonstrations. He has also assisted in fundraising efforts to support the club and other local institutions, including a donation of thousands of dollars to St George Hospital for the purchase of new equipment. I recently had the opportunity to award Don with a 2024 St George Community Award for his hard work over the last few years. It was fantastic to see his friends, family and the team from the St George Art Society show their support. Once again, I would like to thank Don Kibble for his contributions to our community. I wish him all the very best as he continues to inspire others through art.

THANK YOUR PHARMACIST DAY 2025

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, it was an absolute pleasure to celebrate 'Thank Your Pharmacist Day' by visiting several local pharmacies recently, alongside the Shadow Minister for Health, Kellie Sloane. Together, we had the opportunity to visit both Rakoty Pharmacy in Peakhurst and Galluzzo's Chemist in Riverwood. It was wonderful to meet with the owners and staff, to discuss the ongoing challenges and success stories associated with owning and operating a Pharmacy. As our local area continues to evolve, we know that now more than ever, Pharmacists are doing more and more to meet the growing demand of our healthcare system. This will be especially important as we move into flu season this year. Did you know that Australian Pharmacists deliver over 2 million influenza vaccines every year? I would like to thank Vivian Mikhail and the team at Rakoty Pharmacy, as well as Benjamin Galluzzo from Galluzzo's Chemist, for their exceptional work in our community. Further, I extend thanks to all pharmacists in our local community. I encourage everyone in our local area to show their appreciation for their pharmacist by saying thank you!

JACQUI ROSEWOOD

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—New Lambton resident and social worker Jacqui Rosewood has been named Local Woman of the Year 2025 in recognition of her contributions to the Wallsend community. Jacqui

attended an awards ceremony in the Grand Ballroom of the International Convention Centre in Darling Harbour on Thursday 6 March, enjoying a breakfast with many inspirational and successful women celebrating their achievements in NSW. Alongside her day job attending to the mental health needs of health workers, Jacqui has pulled together hundreds of Lambton and New Lambton locals to advocate for the preservation of community spaces within the "Save Our Ovals" group and the campaign against the basketball stadium proposal off Turton Road, advocating for green space, not car parks, buildings and non-consultation with residents. Jacqui is a wonderful listener and communicator. I have come to know Jacqui well and admire her bold, brave and inspiring leadership and work ethic in assisting others. Standing up for one's community, seemingly against all odds, can be a daunting and terrifying experience and I appreciate Jacqui's unwavering commitment to our community's cause. Congratulations, Jacqui, on your well-deserved accolade.

DOMINIEK DE GRAAF

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Dominiek de Graaf, Year 12 student at Lambton High School in 2024, has her work included in ARTEXPRESS 2025, an exhibition of exemplary artworks created by NSW visual arts students for the HSC examination, beginning in the Art Gallery of NSW. Dominiek's drawings, called "Overstromen" ("Overflowing") are inspired from her childhood in the Netherlands. She says that climate issues are often overlooked, wanting to embody Dutch culture that is recognisable worldwide, especially traditionally Dutch 'Delftsblauw' ceramics which she represents with blue pen and watercolour, to depict how Dutch culture and history could be easily erased due to rising sea levels. Dominiek notes the importance for young art students to have the opportunity to see a wide audience react and interact with their artwork and listen to their reactions. HSC student artists work across twelve expressive forms: ceramics, collection of works, designed objects, documented forms, drawing, graphic design, painting, photo-media, printmaking, sculpture, textiles and fibre, and time-based forms. Dominiek's scenes are 'offered' on Dutch plates and platters, framing landscapes altered by human intervention, conveying that environmental changes may also affect the domestic front. Congratulations, Dominiek!

DR PAMELA HARRISON OAM

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Lambton resident of forty years, Dr Pamela Harrison OAM, credited with bringing palliative care to Newcastle in 1983, has built a legacy in haematology and palliative care services in Newcastle, including 25 years at Calvary Mater. Dr Harrison retired in 1996, three years after the Mercy Hospice opened, her work having paved the way for this place. Training as a pathology technician at the Calvary Mater in 1954, and later working at the Manning River Hospital in Taree and in London, Dr Harrison studied Medicine at University of Sydney on a mature age scholarship. In 1976 she was seconded from her post as director of Royal Newcastle Hospital District Blood Transfusion Service to the Mater, three years later becoming the hospital's first full-time haematologist in an emerging specialist field. She established the Hunter Haemophilia Treatment Centre where cancer patients could be treated locally, and founded the Newcastle Mater Misericordiae Hospital Palliative Care Service, directing it voluntarily until it was funded in 1986. She was awarded the OAM in 2022 for service. Thank you, Dr Harrison, for your significant contributions to our local community.

FRED POOLE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I wish to congratulate Fred Poole, awardee of the 2025 Bayside Citizen of the year, for his continuous contributions to the Bayside Men's Shed. The Bayside Men's Shed has become the cornerstone of the local community, where Mr Poole and other volunteers dedicate many hours of their week to work on projects that benefit the local community. Their work includes building street libraries for Kyeemagh Public School, building a music wall for St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary school, and constructing a bee hotel and garden beds for the Bayside community garden. Thank you Mr Poole for your dedication to the Bayside Men's shed and the greater Bayside Council Community.

GRAEME WYNN

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to take the time to acknowledge and congratulate former St George rugby league star and longtime coach at the GyMEA Gorillas, Graeme Wynn, who was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM]. This honour was presented to him in recognition of his long time service to rugby league as a player, coach, and administrator. As a 19 year old rookie he startled the rugby world with his speed and power, and as a result was eventually named the New South Wales Rugby Football League [NSWRFL] Rookie of the Year. His prowess on the footy field also helped the Dragons overcome the Bulldogs in the 1979 NSWRFL grand final. To Graeme, grass roots footy is vital to the development of young players and as a result he is deeply involved in his local community and club, both as a coach and a patron. Thank you Graeme for all your hard work over the years, and congratulations on receiving such a distinguished honour.

OPERA AT LYDHAM HALL HISTORIC HOUSE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—The Kogarah Historical Society is an incredible local community organisation who have recently hosted the mesmerising 'Opera in the House'. On the 2nd of February, Mezzo Soprano Yasmin Arkinstall sang operatic arias, musical theatre standards and opera hits at Lydham Hall Historic House. Lydham Hall is one of the oldest homes in the St George area, built in the 1860's and reopening recently in February 2024 after some extensive renovations. Lydham Hall and the Historical Society have continued to provide important historical, social and cultural life to the St George Area. Ms Arkinstall and all those involved in the organisation of the event are to be highly commended for their continuing contributions to the community and the incredible opera performance.

RAE DRUITT – BLUE MOUNTAINS LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2025

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains)—Rae Drutt has been a stalwart of the environmental movement, as a former Golden Trowel Legend Award winner (awarded in 2021 during COVID) for Bushcare. Bushcare is a volunteer program that restores and cares for bush reserves throughout the Blue Mountains. There are more than 60 active Bushcare and Landcare groups throughout the Mountains from Lapstone to Mt Wilson, and their hard work helps protect the World Heritage Area. Rae is the organiser and co-founding member of the Wentworth Falls Lake Bushcare group (started in 1998), and the Sublime Point Bushcare group (started in 1996) at Leura with her partner David Coleby. Rae's work in this amazing community organisation has proven to be a valued source of longevity and a way to stay healthy as an older person! A true hidden, quiet treasure in our community. Ms Drutt is a longstanding member of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, which advocates for the protection of our World Heritage Area. As a keen gardener, Rae is a strong advocate for native plants and caring for the environment. This year, I was honoured to nominate Rae as our Local Woman of the Year!

IORELLA VAYDA

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—On behalf of the Sydney electorate, I recognise Iorella Vayda who has served as the Surry Hills Neighbourhood Advisory Board's [NAB] secretariat with Mission Australia since September 2023. Iorella has been a dedicated and reliable secretariat, who has recorded the Surry Hills NAB meetings with accuracy. She prudently ensured that tenants who spoke out about their concerns were protected and their privacy and requests for anonymity were respected. Iorella was diligent in her distribution of meeting minutes to all participating services and tenants, even printing and hand delivering copies to tenants who do not use or have access to email. Iorella has regularly supported her community through various volunteering activities. She participated in the peer educator program, and in 2024 ensured that health information sessions were made available to tenants living in Surry Hills with the assistance of Mission Australia. I thank Iorella for her service in supporting her neighbours and her community.

VALE FRANK MICO

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—Frank Mico was a beloved member of the Artarmon community, best known for running the Fiveways Fruit Shop in Wilkes Avenue alongside his wife, Pina. For decades, their store was more than just a place to buy fresh produce—it was a gathering point where locals were greeted with warmth and kindness. Frank and Pina were dedicated members of the community, living on Cameron Avenue from the mid-1950s (including next door to me and my family). Their tireless work and friendly nature made them well-respected figures in our community. Sadly, Pina passed away in 2017, leaving behind a legacy of generosity and hard work that Frank carried on. Frank's passing marks the end of an era for those who knew him. His commitment to his family, his business and the people around him will always be remembered. The impact he and Pina had on the community will not be forgotten, and their memory will continue to live on in the hearts of all who knew them.

INAUGURAL ARMENIAN-AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY LAW TERM COMMENCEMENT SERVICE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I want to acknowledge the inaugural Law Term Commencement Church Service of the Armenian-Australian community, held on 10 February 2025 at the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection in Chatswood. This historic event brought together esteemed members of the judiciary, legal professionals and community leaders for a meaningful service led by His Eminence, Archbishop Haigazoun Najarian. The service was followed by a reception, co-hosted by the Diocese and the Armenian Professional Network of Australia – Legal Profession Forum, providing an opportunity for reflection and fellowship. It was an honour to attend and address the gathering in my capacity as the Member for Willoughby. This event highlights the Armenian-Australian community's deep commitment to faith, justice and professional excellence. I commend Archbishop Najarian, Chancellor Nishan Basmajian and all involved in organising this significant occasion. Their dedication to fostering unity and upholding the values of justice and service is truly

commendable. I extend my sincere appreciation to all who participated and contributed to making this event a success.

AUSTRALIAN TAIWANESE FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I want to recognise the Australian Taiwanese Friendship Association [ATFA] and its celebration of the Lunar New Year on 16 February at Zilver Restaurant Chatswood. This significant event brought together over 260 guests to mark the occasion and reflect on the contributions of the Australian Taiwanese community in Sydney. Founded in 1987 ATFA is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to fostering friendship and communication among Australian Taiwanese residents. For over 30 years ATFA has provided service education and support to its members ensuring the preservation of culture and community values. The establishment of Sydney Taiwanese School in 1991 further highlights ATFA's commitment to education with over 270 students now enrolled across three campuses. The Lunar New Year celebration was a testament to ATFA's dedication to community engagement and cultural enrichment. I commend Ms Kathy Sieh President of ATFA and all involved in organising this successful event. Their efforts in strengthening ties and promoting cultural exchange are invaluable and I wish the Australian Taiwanese community a prosperous year ahead.

MALCOLM BOYDEN

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Congratulations to Malcolm Boyden of Lithgow who has been awarded the Open Volunteer of the Year Award. Malcolm has demonstrated a deep commitment to the community through giving a significant contribution and many hours of tireless support to his community. This has been undertaken through volunteer work at Lithgow Neighbourhood and Information Centre where he undertakes to drive the bus and to Gorrie Ban, an organisation which is run by volunteers and brings the community together through activities and bus trips. Malcolm has also supported the activities of the Lithgow Hockey Association and continues to willingly and selflessly give of his time to assist and support community organisations in Lithgow. I congratulate Malcolm Boyden on the recognition has received as the Lithgow Open Volunteer of the Year and on the incredible and commendable contribution he has given to his community.

DEIRDRE MOLLOY

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—I extend my congratulations to Deirdre Molloy who has been recognised as the Blayney Shire Volunteer of the Year. A wonderful Citizen and invaluable member of her Community, Deirdre has dedicated some 60 years of tireless service to the Mandurama community making an immeasurable impact through her volunteer work and tireless efforts. A member of the local Memorial Hall Committee since 1957 Deirdre has held virtually every committee position and currently serves as Crown Land Manager and President. With a strong focus on attention to detail Deirdre was instrumental in securing funding for key infrastructure upgrades such as a new kitchen and improved facilities resulting from her hands-on approach to volunteer management. Acknowledgement of her community endeavours also saw her receive a 30-year service award for Crown Land Management and as a semi-finalist nomination for the NSW Government Individual Excellence in Crown Management Awards. Congratulations to Deirdre Molloy - a special treasure to her community and our region.

I CONGRATULATE DAVID PETERS – THE LITHGOW CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—David has been involved with the Lithgow Show Society for over 50 years during which time he has mentored many young people to be involved across many community pursuits. His involvement commenced at just 15 years old as a volunteer and he has undertaken many positions including Show Secretary, Vice President and President. Further representation as a member of the inaugural board of Agricultural Shows Australia becoming the first Chairman of the National Competitions Working Group. David has demonstrated a strong commitment to Agricultural Shows and sees them as an integral part of country life, imbedded in culture and as a true community based organisation which promotes not only our region but agriculture. Through David's efforts, the Lithgow Show has evolved as a local event which brings people together. Further commitment and dedication have been through service to the Rural Fire Service for over 40 years. In striving to keep his community safe, David was honoured with an Australian Fire Service Medal. David's endeavours and dedication are inspiring and the recognition he has been given including that of Citizen of the Year is deserving. Congratulations to David Peters.

CLIFF COOKE

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)—I rise to honour my dear friend, Cliff Cooke, who recently passed away peacefully aged 88. Cliff was a man of extraordinary character—resilient, loyal, and deeply committed to his family and community. His journey was one of perseverance and quiet strength. Born into hardship, Cliff was placed into care as a child and forced to leave school at 13. With no shoes to his name, he took his first job as a paperboy. But Cliff never let adversity define him. Through sheer determination, he built

a distinguished career, rising to Manager of Outdoor Staff at the City of Botany Bay Council. I had the privilege of working alongside Cliff for many years. His work ethic was unmatched, his loyalty unwavering. Many of my achievements were built on the foundation of his hard work. More than a colleague, he was a confidant, a steadfast supporter, and one of the finest men I have ever known. A proud First Australian, Cliff gave countless young Indigenous people their first job, opening doors that changed lives. His passion for Rugby League, especially La Perouse United, was unwavering. Vale, Cliffy—you were one of the best.

TALLULAH EATON LIPMAN

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)—I rise to congratulate an outstanding young artist from my electorate, Tallulah Eaton Lipman, who recently won second place in the Councillor's Choice category of the 2025 Randwick City Council Women's Art Prize. At just 20 years old, Tallulah has already made a name for herself in the local arts community with her evocative and thought-provoking work. A Kingsford local, she is currently studying at the University of Technology Sydney while working as a host at museums, truly immersing herself in the Arts at every level. Tallulah's piece—FREAK!—no doubt captivated the judges and Councillors alike, standing out among the 173 entries including paintings, illustrations, sculptures, and digital works. This prize, held in honour of International Women's Day, celebrates the creativity of women, and Tallulah's recognition is a testament to her talent and dedication. Her success is an inspiration to other young artists and I have no doubt she has an exciting creative future ahead. Congratulations, Tallulah—this is a well-earned achievement and I look forward to seeing where your journey in the Arts takes you next!

JOHN GARLAND

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government)—I rise today to honour a true Eastlakes icon, John Garland, who has dedicated 38 years to caring for our community. More than just a streetsweeper, John has been a fixture of Eastlakes and Mascot—a friendly face, a hardworking gentleman, and someone who took real pride in his work and his neighbourhood. John's dedication never wavered, even in the face of personal challenges in recent months. The loss of his beloved staffy, Superhero, hit him hard, impacting his health and well-being. I am thankful that his colleagues and Bayside Council have shown incredible kindness, supporting him through hospitalisation and ensuring he has the care he needs. They even celebrated his 73rd birthday last week, a testament to the deep respect and affection he has earned. With his doctors urging him to step back, John is preparing to retire in July. It will be a bittersweet moment—our community will deeply miss him, but he has more than earned this next chapter. Johnny, you have given so much to Eastlakes and we are all better for it. Thank you for your service, kindness, and friendship. Our community truly wishes you the strength and happiness you deserve.

MASADA COLLEGE YEAR 12 LEADERS 2025

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Monday 17 March 2025, I visited Masada College with the Hon. Sarah Mitchell MLC to meet their Year 12 leaders for 2025. During my visit, I had the privilege of speaking with the student leaders about exercising leadership, public speaking, and policy. I was impressed by their thoughtful questions, their commitment to the 2025 school slogan "Unity and Drive" and their desire to make a meaningful impact on their school community. I recognise the Year 12 school captains, Ari Siganos and Chase Feldman; and prefects Arin Michels, Benjamin McNeil, Erin Kruger, Jessica Sternberg, Liam Cohen, Sasha Korchemnaia, Satya Chadda, and William Hu. They show remarkable resilience and strength, qualities that will undoubtedly serve them well as they face challenges and unite their school community. I recognise Principal Mrs Raquel Charet, Head of Senior School Ms Lucy Benjamin, and the entire staff for fostering such a supportive learning environment. It was an honour to witness the dedication of the exemplary staff and students at Masada College and represent them in the Parliament of NSW. I look forward to continuing to support Masada College.

DR MARLENE KANGA AO

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Monday 24 March 2025, I will be attending the Honorary Degree Conferral and reception for Dr Marlene Kanga AO at the University of New South Wales. Dr Marlene Kanga AO is a globally recognised engineer and advocate for diversity and women's participation in STEM. She has held leadership roles including being appointed National President of Engineers Australia (2013-2014) and President of the World Federation of Engineering Organisations (2017-2019). Her contributions to engineering safety, education and sustainability have had a lasting impact worldwide. The UNSW University Council has resolved to award her an Honorary Doctor of Engineering in recognition of her outstanding service to engineering leadership, diversity and sustainable development. I recognise the Chancellor of UNSW, Mr David Gonski AC, and the broader UNSW community for their role in honouring Dr Kanga's exceptional achievements. In our Davidson electorate, we have a strong and growing community of engineers, innovators, and advocates for STEM diversity. Dr Kanga's work continues to inspire many, and I am immensely proud to celebrate and acknowledge her contributions.

LINDFIELD EAST PUBLIC SCHOOL YEAR 6 LEADERS 2025

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Monday 24 March 2025, I will be visiting Lindfield East Public School to meet their Year 6 students, teachers, and leadership team. I look forward to speaking with the Year 6 students and answering their questions about policy, public speaking and leadership. Engaging with young people is always a highlight – hearing their perspectives reminds me of their curiosity and thoughtfulness about the world around them. Encouraging students to think critically, express themselves with confidence, and take an interest in leadership is one of the most rewarding parts about my role. I acknowledge Principal Diane Read, Deputy Principal Susan Young, and all the exceptional staff who help to create a supportive and enriching learning environment. A special mention to Year 6 School Captains Hannah Dunkerley and Jaden Cheah, Vice Captains Philippa Campbell and Fox Hetherington, and prefects Nathan Chung, Hannah Woods, Daniel Kincade and Hayden Chong. I also recognise their teachers Miss Lucy Arnison, Mrs Helen Sonemann and Assistant Principal Mr Scott Campbell. It gives me immense pride to represent Lindfield East Public School, alongside the school's community and parents, in the Parliament of NSW.

MAX DAY

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—Last month I had the pleasure of joining community champion Max Day of Lockhart in celebrating his 80th birthday – a milestone in a lifetime of community service. Max's birthday lunch at the community-operated Pleasant Hills Hotel was attended by dozens of family members, friends and supporters, reflecting the enormous respect Max has gained over many years of working to enhance the economy and lifestyle of Lockhart Shire. Awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia [OAM] in 2017, Max's many achievements include 50 years of leadership of the Lockhart Showground Management Committee, chairing the Lockhart and District Progress Association, nine years as a Lockhart Shire Councillor and and charity and community development support as a member of Lockhart's Apex and Lions clubs. Throughout it all, in partnership with his wife, Lockhart Shire Councillor, Fran Day, Max has driven economic and social growth for his community, helping to deliver important infrastructure improvements, strengthening the town's identity, fostering community spirit, and ensuring the long-term prosperity of key local institutions. Max is an example of the remarkable community spirit that makes country towns great, and I am delighted to say, happy birthday, Max, and thank for all you have done.

VALE KEITH JAMES LOTTY

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—Our community was deeply saddened to hear that Keith James Lotty passed away. Keith was an active member of the Canterbury Leagues Club for over 60 years, serving as director from 1982 to 2003. He also played a significant role in the Committees of Lakemba Services Club and Lakemba RSL Sub-Branch. Keith was a passionate supporter of the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs and rugby league in our community. He also served the Bulldogs as a member of the Social Committee, as a selector First Grade, as a member of the Management Committee and as Deputy Chairman for 15 years. Keith also actively contributed to Junior Rugby League and the Referees Association for many years. Keith was honoured with Life Membership of the Football Club (1988), the Leagues Club (1997), and the Junior League (2000). This was a testament to his outstanding service to the Bulldogs, to our community, and to Rugby League. Keith's dedication and passion for our community and the sport of rugby league have left an indelible mark on our community. His memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew him. Vale Keith James Lotty.

CELEBRATION MARKING THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE LEBANESE REPUBLIC

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I was honoured to co-host a special event at NSW Parliament House, alongside the Maronite Catholic Diocese of Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania and His Excellency Bishop Antoine-Charbel Tarabay, celebrating the election of General Joseph Aoun as the President of the Lebanese Republic. This significant occasion brought together dignitaries and community leaders to mark a new chapter in Lebanese history. The evening featured powerful reflections on the enduring ties between Lebanon and Australia. A special video message from President Aoun further reinforced the importance of this moment for the Lebanese community. It was a privilege to stand alongside the Australian Lebanese Friendship Committee and the Parliamentary Friends of Lebanon in recognising this milestone. As a proud Lebanese Australian, this event held special significance for me, celebrating the connections and contributions of the Lebanese community in Australia. I hope this milestone marks the start of Lebanon's rebuilding, leading to peace, stability, and prosperity. I thank the Maronite Catholic Diocese for their continued support. As we celebrate together, I proudly acknowledge the ongoing contributions of the Lebanese community in Australia and their important role in our shared heritage.

JIEH HSC ACHIEVERS AWARD CEREMONY

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I am honoured to have recently attended the Jieh HSC Achievers Award Ceremony. This significant event celebrated the hard work and dedication of students whose origins are from the Lebanese village of Jieh who successfully completed their HSC. It was a heartwarming opportunity to connect with Lebanese families and share in the pride of our student's achievements. The Jieh Community Club is a pillar of support and strength, and this ceremony highlighted the ongoing contributions of our youth to the future of our community. I extend my deepest congratulations to the HSC achievers, and I am confident that their dedication will shape them into future leaders who will make valuable contributions to our community. The achievements of these students reflect their commitment and perseverance, and I look forward to celebrating their ongoing success as they continue to thrive and make a lasting impact on our community and beyond. A special thank you to Halim Azzi, President of the Australian Jieh Community Club, for organising this meaningful event. I finally commend the Jieh community for their continued efforts in nurturing the next generation and preserving our strong Lebanese heritage here in Australia.

ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY – ST PATRICK'S DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 17th March, I was pleased to attend the St Patrick's Feast Day Mass hosted by Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus Terry Brady at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney. Irish Australians shaped our Catholic community, with early Irish settlers establishing church communities. One of the first great Irish leaders in Australia was Patrick Moran, Archbishop of Sydney in 1884. This legacy is carried forward by our Clergy, and by all 730,000 Australian residents with Irish ancestry. As Patron Saint of Ireland, St Patrick is credited with converting the Irish people to Christianity in the 5th Century. His story began, as a child, when he was captured by Irish pirates and taken as a slave. Through years of slavery, his faith never wavered. St Patrick eventually escaped, commencing Priesthood studies. He was ordained by St Germanus, and was later ordained a Bishop. He returned to Ireland to lead the Gospel, converting thousands and building churches across Ireland. Today, St Patrick stands as a pillar for our Irish Catholic community, and symbol of social justice. Thank you to Most Rev. Bishop Terry Brady, the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney and the St Patrick's Day Mass Committee for this moving Service.

MULTI-FAITH COMMUNITY IFTAR

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 11th March 2024, I was pleased to attend the Annual Multifaith Community Iftar Dinner, in Parramatta. Co-hosted by the Diocese of Parramatta and Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, the Iftar Dinner is an opportunity to acknowledge Ramadan, to celebrate breaking of the daily fast, and share the message of peace through a common meal. It is a wonderful reflection on our multicultural and multifaith community in our local Prospect Electorate. I wish to thank Mr Alpha Cheng for his moving keynote address. Despite suffering a terrible tragedy when his father, Curtis Cheng, was shot and killed leaving the Parramatta Police Station by a 15-year-old claiming to act for the Islamic State, Mr Cheng continues to teach tolerance and acceptance. Following his father death, his Islamic friends helped carry him through – and taught him a valuable lesson. When we take time to listen and talk, there is far more that unites us than divides us. I thank the Most Rev. Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta, Rev. Dr Patrick McInerney, Director, Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, and the hardworking team at the Diocese of Parramatta and the Columban Centre for connecting our community.

LEAD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION INC - INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to LEAD Professional Development Association for hosting a wonderful International Women's Day celebration for all the dedicated women striving to make a difference, in our community. The event, 'Accelerating Action, Together: Power of the Community Sector' connected our community sector workforce across Western Sydney, to amplify the important role they play in overcoming systemic barriers and biases that women face, to drive meaningful change. With lived experience and a passion for helping others, our community sector workforce provide pivotal support, helping vulnerable members of our community tackle the nuanced challenges facing women today. With support from Wesley Mission, the Community Migrant Resource Centre and Harman Foundation, LEAD marched past the cupcakes this International Women's Day. Showcasing moving performances from local artists and facilitating meaningful discussion between community representatives, this event was both a celebration and an impactful forum for our community workers. Thank you to CEO, Sharmily Nagarsekar and the dedicated team at LEAD for coordinating this event, and for your ongoing support for our community sector workforce. I also thank Melissa Monteiro, CMRC CEO, and Harinder Kaur, Co-Founder of the Harmon Foundation for your continued care for our community.

FRIENDS OF PALLIATIVE CARE WALK

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to everyone who participated in and supported the recent Friends of Palliative Care Walk at Maitland Regional Athletics Centre. This event is always a poignant reminder of our community's unwavering commitment to those facing life-limiting illness. Hundreds gathered, creating a river of purple shirts circling the track. Every step taken symbolised not just the kilometres covered, but the journeys shared with those needing compassionate end-of-life care. It was incredibly moving to see families walking in memory of loved ones, their faces reflecting both loss and purpose. Our dedicated palliative care volunteers also took part, momentarily stepping away from their vital roles to walk alongside the community they serve with such devotion. The event raised an incredible \$25,142.61—funds that will go a long way in providing essential equipment and services to support patients with dignity and comfort. A heartfelt thank you to the Friends of Palliative Care Inc. committee, whose dedication ensures this vital service continues. Without these volunteers this support service simply would not exist. Your efforts change lives, and our community is deeply grateful.

JUNE CAMPBELL

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to Maitland resident June Campbell who was honoured on March 8th for her exceptional community service spanning over four decades. Ms. Campbell, 78 has dedicated herself to improving our community through her work with Maitland Meals on Wheels, the Hospital Auxiliary and as founding member of the East Maitland Historical Society. Her tireless efforts have directly impacted thousands of residents across our electorate. The ceremony highlighted her instrumental role in preserving local heritage through the documentation of Maitland's historical buildings and establishment of the community archive that now bears her name. Council representatives, community organisations and three generations of Campbell's family attended the event where she was presented with the Distinguished Community Service Medal. In her characteristically modest fashion, Ms Campbell acknowledged that her achievements were only possible through collaboration with dedicated volunteers and supportive community members. This recognition coincided with International Women's Day, making it a fitting tribute to a woman whose practical approach to community service has created lasting change in Maitland.

CONVOY NEWCASTLE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—I want to recognise and congratulate the organiser and participants that took part in the recent Camp Quality Convoy in Maitland. Over 200 trucks drove through supporter lined streets as a powerful symbol of hope and solidarity for families facing childhood cancer. As I watched these magnificent vehicles parade in the Maitland Showground, many adorned with decorations and messages of support, I was deeply moved by what it represented. Each truck carried not just its load, but the weight of our collective promise to these brave children: you are not alone. Our trucking industry has always been the backbone of our economy, but on this day, they showed they're also the backbone of our community spirit. These hardworking men and women raised \$190,000 that will provide specialised camps, family support programs and educational initiatives for kids and families facing cancer. The Camp Quality convoy reminds us that together, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of our most vulnerable children and I thank all the organisers and sponsors of the event. Congratulations and I look forward to seeing Convoy back in Maitland in 2026!

DUNEDOO HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Last month the Dunedoo Hospital Auxiliary celebrated its 80th year of operation. In 1944, the construction of Dunedoo War Memorial Hospital was completed. The following year in February Dunedoo War Memorial Hospital Auxiliary was formed. The aim of the Auxiliary was to provide the hospital with items that were needed, and this is still relevant today. I would like to thank all volunteers, past and present of the Dunedoo Hospital Auxiliary. It is a credit to this small community for keeping the Auxiliary running for the last 80 years.

KATHY SEWARD

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—In March this year Kathy Seward celebrated 45 years with NSW Health. Beginning her nursing career in 1980, Kathy is a Communicable Disease Nurse Practitioner, Public Health Nurse and Manager of Tuberculosis services for the Far West and Western NSW LHD. An area covering Barwon and beyond. Kathy spent her career guiding and supporting aspiring nurses, teaching at the College of Nursing and TAFE. She was part of the Australian Measles Control Campaign from 1988 to 1998. Travelling across outback NSW vaccinating children in isolated and rural communities. Her efforts safeguarded their health and bridged the gap between these remote areas and essential healthcare services. She still travels to Bathurst and Dubbo for

clinics whenever needed. Kathy has a passion for learning and growing in the profession, she achieved a remarkable milestone by becoming a Nurse Practitioner during the COVID-19 pandemic whilst she was also a COVID-19 case manager and close contact team leader for the Far West LHD in NSW. Highly regarded and respected, many who know her joke that she has immunised half the state. Congratulations Kathy and thank you for your continued efforts in the public health sector across NSW.

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I wish to pay tribute to the parish of Our Lady Queen of Peace celebrating their centenary this week. It was a joyful service with Archbishop Anthony Fisher who was the celebrant at the Pontifical Mass, accompanied by our local celebrant, Father Greg Morgan.

HOLI THE FESTIVAL OF COLOUR

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – Holi the Festival of Colour is a great opportunity for our Indian community to express their culture here in our great country. The Candidate for Bennelong, Scott Yung and our Senator Dave Sharma together celebrated the day in Ryde.

VALE KATE SMORTY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the extraordinary life and legacy of Kate Smorty, a tireless advocate, devoted mother and fearless defender of her community. I extend my deepest condolences to her family following her passing, just days before her 97th birthday. Kate's remarkable journey took her from Paddington to Auburn, Ingleburn and Malaysia, before settling in Byron Bay in 2017. It was here that she became the spearhead of the fight to save Feros Village, standing firm against the eviction of its elderly residents. As one of the 'Audacious Eight', Kate refused to be displaced, demonstrating unwavering resolve and a deep commitment to justice. A passionate writer and outspoken advocate, Kate's words resonated throughout our community, shining a light on the broader issues affecting aged care and affordable housing. She lived her final years in peace at George's Cottages, surrounded by love and the very community she fought to protect. Kate Smorty's courage, resilience and spirit of defiance will not be forgotten. She leaves behind a lasting legacy and will be dearly missed.

EZEKIEL KNIGHT

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I congratulate Ezekiel Knight (Zeke), who was recently honoured as the Ballina Shire citizen of the year. Zeke has been volunteering with the NSW SES Ballina for the past eight years and was recently awarded a commendation for courage by the NSW SES Commissioner. This recognition was in response to Zeke's efforts during the 2022 Northern Rivers floods when he and a partner waded out into treacherous waters to rescue two females trapped in a flooded car. Furthermore, he has taken the initiative to help train and grow the SES volunteers and his leadership, calming nature and commitment in responding to emergencies makes him an invaluable team member. Zeke is making a positive impact in the lives he engages with, and I thank him for his service to our community.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - CORRIMAL 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 Zack Wonson, Storm Miranda, Pundzius Felix and Chase Hine who have been named as the 2025 Corrimal 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 their studies and extracurricular activities. Each 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 – FIGTREE HEIGHTS 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 Amelie Hill, Hugh Clark, April Knox and Olivia Lonsdale who have been named as the 2025 Figtree Heights 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 their studies and extracurricular activities. Each 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 - BALGOWNIE 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 Max Cappetta, Faith Oxley, Chelsea Eastwood and Kohen De Agnoli who have been named as the 2025 Balgownie 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 their studies and extracurricular activities. Each 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.

ONNI WONG

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge Abbotsford local Mr Onni Wong, whose short story, 'My Island Home – Australia' was published in the 10th edition of the NSW Seniors Stories Collection. Mr Wong recites his story as an immigrant to Australia in the 1950s and shares the adversities he faced in search of a better life abroad. In his story he recalls his father's oppression under the Qing dynasty, his experience growing up on a farm in Fiji, and the difficulties he faced in leaving behind his loved ones. Mr Wong's story is a truly touching reflection on the migrant experience in Australia. I was particularly moved by his strength as he recalls "I sold my Indian motorbike for \$160, bid farewell to my family and flew across the Pacific". This kind of strength and resilience in search for the opportunity of a better life is a reminder of the migrant experience. On behalf of our local community, I sincerely congratulate Mr Wong on his contribution to the Seniors Stories Collection. I thank him for sharing this story with us and wish him all the best.

JOANNA CAPON – AUS DAY HONOURS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to recognise Mrs Joanna Capon for being awarded a Member of the Order of Australia at the 2025 Australia Day Honours. Mrs Capon received this award for her significant service to the arts, and to community health. Mrs Capon served in many positions in the George Institute for Global health including as a Non-Executive Director. She is a former Board Member of the Sydney Childrens Hospital Network and has been their honorary art curator for 20 years. Mrs Capon has made significant contributions to the Art Gallery of NSW, and her impact will endure through The Edmund and Joanna Capon Research Library and the Joanna Capon Reading Room. Mrs Capon has received an honorary doctorate from the University of NSW in 2021 and the Medal, Order of Australia in 2002. On behalf our community, I congratulate Mrs Capon and thank her for her contributions to our country.

THOMAS GOTTLIEB – AUS DAY HONOURS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to recognise Professor Thomas Gottlieb for being awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia at the 2025 Australia Day Honours. Professor Gottlieb received this award for his distinguished service to medicine as an infectious disease and microbiology specialist, author and researcher, and to professional organisations. Professor Gottlieb is the current Head of the Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology at Concord Hospital. He is a Clinical Senior Lecturer, Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology, at the University of Sydney. Professor Gottlieb has held positions at the Australian Society for Antimicrobials, Australasian Society for Infectious Diseases, Australasian Society for Microbiology, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, and many other organisations. On behalf our community, I congratulate Professor Gottlieb and thank him for his contributions to our country.

ROSSLYN SWEETAPPLE – AUS DAY HONOURS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to congratulate Rosslyn Sweetapple for being appointed a Medal of the Order of Australia at the 2025 Australia Day Honours. Mrs Sweetapple received this award for her significant service to community history. Mrs Sweetapple served as the officer in charge of the National Trust of Australia NSW's Garden Panel from 2006 to 2016. She is currently the organiser of Garden Seminars, and is involved in a range of fundraising initiatives including Garden Gourmet Recipe Book and Bric a Brac Sales. Mrs Sweetapple has been a member of the National Trust (NSW) Women's Committee since 1984, is a Member of the Governo's Circle and has been an Honorary Life member since 2019. Mrs Sweetapple also received the Volunteer Service Award from the National Trust of Australia in 2006. On behalf our community, I congratulate Mrs Sweetapple and thank her for her contributions to our country.

PAMELA FLOYD

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge Drummoyne local resident Ms Pamela Floyd whose short story, 'The Sound of Silence' was published in the 10th edition of the NSW Seniors Stories Collection. In her story, Ms Floyd shares her experience growing up as a Child of Deaf Adults and the challenges her parents faced raising a family. Her story is told through the lens of an artist painting their terrace house. Ms Floyd persevered through the adversities and sees her experience as an opportunity. I was particularly moved when reading as she recalled that "As a CODA, I have been gifted. My heightened sense of perception has enhanced my creativity enabling me to become an artist". On behalf of our local community, I sincerely congratulate Ms Floyd on her contribution to the Seniors Stories Collection. I thank her for sharing this story with us and wish her all the very best.

LOUISE DAVIS AM

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge Drummoyne local resident, Mrs Louise Davis AM, whose short story, 'The Tale of a Country Girl' was published in the 10th edition of the NSW Seniors Stories Collection. Mrs Davis' story recounts her life, being born in the small country town of Drouin, Victoria and living at the police residence before moving internationally in pursuit of a secretarial career. In 2018, Mrs Davis AM was appointed to the Order of Australia for her continued service to the community. In her story, she recalls that "since then, when I was about 14 years old, I have tended to think of how I can help others". Throughout the past three decades, she has volunteered with countless organisations including Clean Up Australia, Breast Cancer Australia and Noffs Foundation for at-risk youth. On behalf of our community, I sincerely congratulate Mrs Davis on her contribution to the Seniors Stories Collection. I thank him for sharing this story with us and wish her all the very best.

KACHAN SCHOOL OF TUMBLING AND PERFORMANCE 20 MARCH 2025

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)—Mr Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and congratulate the Kachan School of Tumbling and Performance in South Windsor. The school won 5 awards from a total of 16 nominations at the Gym NSW annual awards, held in February 2025. Operating since 2009, the school offers a range of programs to support individuals in the sport of tumbling, trampolining and other gymnastics-related activities. Classes are offered for a range of ages, including KinderGym and Tumble Tots for younger learners, GymFun and GymSkills for school age students and Stream Development squad classes for teens and adults wishing to partake in competitions across the state, nation and internationally. I congratulate the athletes on receiving the awards ceremony in 2025, acknowledging the hard work and achievements over the previous year. I also acknowledge the owners Dzmityr and Rebecca Kachan and staff of the school in receiving both local and international coaching awards. This recognition is a testament to the skills, dedication and passion of tumbling and performance held by participants at the school. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

AUNTY EDNA WATSON 20 MARCH 2025

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury)—Mr Speaker, I rise to acknowledge and thank Dharug Elder Aunty Edna Watson, who has received an OAM for service to the Indigenous community. Aunty Edna has played a pivotal role in preserving the Dharug language and advocating for her people, country and culture. Aunty Edna Watson is an artist and storyteller who has made a lifelong contribution to Indigenous education and cultural preservation. Working closely with various community groups including local councils, TAFE and several universities, she has recently assisted in developing a curriculum for NSW Schools in Western Sydney to revitalise the Dharug language. Aunty Edna's service to the Indigenous community is also evident through her work in Macquarie University's Australian Research Institute and various other projects throughout Western Sydney University. She contributes to areas of midwifery, nursing and community welfare, ensuring students are supported in these disciplines to afford the best care possible to communities. Congratulations to Aunty Edna on receiving this OAM. Her dedication to culture and community are truly inspirational and I thank her for her efforts and advocacy in preserving the Dharug language and implementing Indigenous culture for future generations. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

NORTHERN NSW LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT CYCLONE ALFRED

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Amidst the disruption caused by Tropical Cyclone Alfred earlier this month, staff at our hospitals went above and beyond to support patients and those needing healthcare. More than 370 staff across the Northern NSW Local Health District slept on site for up to four days to provide care in our hospitals and multi-purpose services. In many cases this meant being away from their own families, loved ones and homes during a time of great uncertainty and unpredictability. Thank you to our dedicated and committed health workers for putting the care of others first and thank you to NSW Health staff who travelled from other locations across the state to provide back-up support in our hospitals.

THE KING'S SCHOOL

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—The King's School has demonstrated its commitment to academic excellence in the 2024 NSW Higher School Certificate. Notable achievers include, the school captain, James Napoli, who has earned First in Course for Agriculture, ranking him the first in the State of New South Wales for this subject. Additionally, Ethan Liheng, who secured First in Course for German Extension. These individual successes are part of the broader excellence demonstrated by The King's School. The school ranked 34th among all NSW schools, with an impressive success rate of 34.25%, reflecting the dedication of both students and staff to academic achievement. These accomplishments highlight the hard work, perseverance, and academic rigor that define The King's School. The school's continued focus on fostering talent in diverse fields and its consistent performance in the HSC serve as a testament to its strong educational foundation. We congratulate The King's School on another successful year.

INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—An Indian Film Festival was hosted by the Consulate General of India Sydney and Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre who worked with Cinema Reborn and the Riverside Theatre Parramatta to organise the 'Parallel Cinema of India'. The festival highlighted a screening of the Indian movie, 'Suddenly, One Day' - a masterpiece by legendary Indian film director Mrinal Sen. 'Suddenly, One Day' based on the 1977 Bengali-language novel Beej by Ramapada Chowdhury tells the story of the disappearance of a professor and the fall out on a deeply wounded family. Film is a powerful medium and the significance of this festival was the celebration of Indian film-makers outside of the mainstream of more high profile Bollywood directors and studios. Hosting this event in Parramatta provided an opportunity for our local community to see these hidden gems. I extend my sincere thanks to Dr S Janakiraman, Consul General of the Consulate General of India Sydney, Ms Niyati Mehta, Director of the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Mr James Vaughan of Cinema Reborn, Mr Craig McMaster, Director, and Ms Catherine Swallow, Manager of Programming and Curatorial at Riverside Theatres for their collaboration in bringing this festival to life.

RAMADAN MULTIFAITH IFTAR 2025

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, is a sacred time when prayer, resilience and the renewal of faith take centre stage. On 11 March I attended the Multi-Faith Community Iftar Dinner hosted by the Diocese of Parramatta and the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations. I am grateful to Bishop Vincent and Reverend Dr. Patrick McInerney for hosting this meaningful event, highlighting the importance of strengthening our multi faith relationships and their vital role in promoting tolerance and unity within our community. Attending this Iftar has given me a deeper appreciation of the fasting journey. It's more than just abstaining from food – it's about cultivating compassion, building virtues and learning discipline. Mr Alpha Cheng, the son of Curtis Cheng who was shot and killed on his way home from work at the NSW police headquarters spoke about resilience and the importance of social cohesion. Dr Derya Iner, Associate Professor at the Centre for Islamic Studies, Charles Sturt University spoke about the significance of Ramadan Parramatta is a welcoming community where people of all faiths come together to celebrate each other's religious festivals thus strengthening the cultural richness that makes our city so vibrant. Ramadan Mubarak!

RUSSO FAMILY

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to recognise an exceptional sporting family in my community, the Russo family. Daniel and Lisa Russo play a key role in the Georges River Softball Association, sharing their love of the sport with their four children. Daniel serves as a player, coach, and President of the Association, while Lisa manages social media and is an active committee member. Their children - Jacob, Kaylee, Hayden, and Evie - have all played for Georges River representative teams from a young age, starting with T-ball, and have gone on to compete at state and national levels. At 16, Jacob recently competed in the U18 Boys Nationals in Blacktown, while 14-year-old Kaylee helped secure the National Championship at the U16 Girls Nationals in WA. The family also competes in the Saturday summer competition, with Jacob and Kaylee representing United Softball Club, and 11-year-old Hayden and nine-year-old Evie playing for St Christophers Softball Club. Daniel and Lisa have dedicated countless hours to supporting their children's passion for the sport, strengthening both their family and the local softball community. Their family's love for the game is a great example of what local sport is all about.

ROYAL FAR WEST: 100 YEARS OF CARING FOR COUNTRY KIDS PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, as I mentioned in this Chamber last year, 2024 was an important year for the Royal Far West Children's Health Scheme, marking 100 years of providing essential medical, and developmental services to children in regional and remote communities. In celebration of this historic

milestone, the NSW Parliament will be showcasing a powerful photographic exhibition which tells the story of how Royal Far West has continued to shape and transform the lives of those in need. In particular, it portrays how the Royal Far West has adapted its approaches over the last century to respond to the evolving needs of regional families. It is a profoundly moving collection of images, and I encourage every Member in this place to take a moment of their day to drop by the exhibition and reflect on the impact of this unique, Manly-based organisation and the terrific people who dedicate their time to advancing its cause. 100 Years of Caring for Country Kids is free and open to the public, and displayed in the Parliament House Fountain Court from 4 to 27 March, on weekdays, 9.00 am to 5.00 pm.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MYF WEBSTER, WHO HAS BEEN RECOGNISED AS THE HORNSBY WOMAN OF THE YEAR.

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)—It was my pleasure to nominate Myf in recognition of her long and exceptional record of philanthropic community work. During her decade-long tenure as a centre leader at Fusion in Hornsby, Myf developed a food rescue program that salvaged surplus food from local supermarkets to provide community dinners twice a week for up to 70 people. The program also distributed food hampers to over 100 people weekly, powered by a dedicated team of adult and student volunteers. More recently, Myf has founded The Social Local Collective, a charity dedicated to enhancing community wellbeing by creating opportunities for intentional connection and enjoyment. The charity started as a result of Myf's research into the profound health impacts of social isolation and loneliness. Myf's guiding philosophy is simple: Be the change you want to see in the world. This is a philosophy that each of us in the Parliament should live by. Myf's work in our area has consistently driven positive change and strengthened our local community. I can't imagine anyone who is more deserving of being recognised as the Hornsby Woman of the Year.

TERRIGAL MATCHAM JUNIOR CRICKET CLUB

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—Today, I would like to celebrate the outstanding achievements of some of our young local cricketers and their hard work, dedication, and teamwork. A huge congratulations to Terrigal Matcham Junior Cricket Club for their U14C and U16 teams, who recently claimed Premiership glory in their respective Grand Finals! The U14C side set a solid total of 6/105 before bowling out Lisarow for 77, while our U16s put on a dominant performance, scoring 6/197 and dismissing Wyong for 99. What a fantastic way to finish the season! I also want to acknowledge the club's Runners-Up – U12C, U14B, and Male Youth League. Reaching a Grand Final is an incredible achievement, and although the final result didn't go their way, they played with great spirit and determination throughout the season. Every player should be proud of their efforts, whether they lifted the trophy or fought hard until the very end. You've all represented your teams with passion and commitment, and that's what truly matters. To all the players, coaches, and supporters you have had an incredible season. Congratulations and enjoy the celebrations—you've earned them!

THE PNG ANGELS TEAM

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is an absolute privilege to acknowledge the remarkable work of Dr. Marc Coughlan and his dedicated team of PNG Angels as they embark on yet another life-changing mission to Papua New Guinea. Since establishing PNG Angels in 2020, Dr. Coughlan and his team from Coastal Neurosurgery at North Gosford, with the support of Gosford Private Hospital, have been delivering essential neurosurgical care, training, and supplies to those in need. Their unwavering commitment goes beyond saving lives—it is about empowering local communities and building a future where Papua New Guinea can meet its own complex neurosurgical needs. On March 17, this exceptional group of volunteer medical professionals, including neurosurgeons, anaesthetists, and nurses from leading hospitals across NSW, once again packed their bags, bringing with them over \$220,000 worth of specialised equipment to support intricate brain tumour surgeries. Their focus on high-impact clinical training ensures their legacy will continue long after they return home. Dr. Coughlan and the entire PNG Angels team, we commend your selflessness, expertise, and dedication to global healthcare. Your work is nothing short of inspiring, and we wish you every success on this mission. Congratulations and thank you!

UTS & USYD POLITICS IN THE PUB

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I would like to acknowledge the work of the UTS and Sydney Uni Young Greens in bringing together their O-Week Politics in the Pub event. Politics in the Pub is a fantastic way to meet and hear from politically engaged young people about the issues that matter, not only on their campuses but in their lives. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to discuss freedom of speech and organising on campus, the ongoing effects of the housing crisis and what we can do to promote the causes of global peace and justice in our communities. It is so important that we empower young people to be political leaders and I thank the organisers of Politics in the Pub for doing just that, in an atmosphere of fun and solidarity. I give thanks to

Manon O'Neill, Maddy Barry and Luc Velez for their role in the event and extend my thanks to everyone who came by for a chat. It was wonderful to meet you all.

SHARON BILLINGE – BLUE WREN TRAIL

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I'd like to acknowledge the work of local artist Sharon Billinge who is promoting the importance of protecting wildlife in our city through her 'Blue Wren Trail' art project. The Blue Wren trail project, consisting of over 50 murals of the Blue Wren painted on houses throughout Annandale and Lilyfield, serves as a reminder of the beauty and precarity of our native species. We are so lucky in our area to benefit from the Whites Creek Valley Wetlands and Food Forest, which support local fauna, including the Blue Wren and Fairy Wren. These murals help to show us the importance of doing all we can to protect the natural environment, especially in our inner cities, where green space is prized habitat for birds, insects and wildlife. I have loved being able to follow the trail throughout our area and spot these beautiful murals. Thank you to Sharon Billinge for all her work in this project and thank you to all in our community who have allowed your homes to serve as a canvas for this wonderful community project.

RAINBOW FAMILIES MARDI GRAS FLOAT

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—I had the immense joy of marching in the 2025 Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras with Rainbow Families. Every year Rainbow Families proudly, loudly and fabulously participate in the parade – celebrating and promoting their Mission to support, connect, empower and advocate for Rainbow Families at every stage of their lives. Before the parade the group comes together to decide on costumes, dance routines and float themes. This year the float theme was "Free to be Family". Banners are painted, the float is crafted and T-shirts are produced for everyone – in a mammoth group effort. For LGBTQIA+ parents, it is an opportunity to celebrate and be visible for their kids, and to make memories that will last a lifetime! Thank you to Ashley Scott, Scott Brunelle and all the whole team at Rainbow Families for welcoming my family and I, for providing a wonderful experience for families, and for the ongoing invaluable support and advocacy they provide 365 days of the year for our LGBTQIA+ community.

RABBI CHAIM KONCEPOLSKI

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise Rabbi Chaim Koncinski for his 10 years of dedicated service to the Cremorne Synagogue and the wider North Shore community. Through his years of leadership, Rabbi Chaim has fostered a welcoming and connected congregation. He has guided families and congregants through life's greatest celebrations and most difficult challenges, always offering comfort, inspiration, and faith. He and his family have served as a pillar of strength for their community over the past few difficult years for the Jewish community. His commitment to education and interfaith dialogue has strengthened relationships across the broader community, enriching the cultural and spiritual life of North Shore. Now, as Rabbi Chaim embarks on his next chapter and commences his role as Rabbi of one of the largest Jewish congregations in Sydney, I want to sincerely thank him for the lasting impact he has left on the lower north shore community. I wish him, Dina, and their family all the very best for the future. Thank you, Rabbi Chaim.

SENIORS' STORIES – PAUL TAVUZZI

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—In recognition of the Seniors Festival held this month, I want to acknowledge the incredible writing of local Mosman senior, Paul Tavuzzi. Paul is a talented and passionate contributor to the Seniors' Stories writing competition. In his writing, Paul captures the essence of his Italian heritage and shares his experiences of emigrating to Australia as a child and building a life with his family in an unfamiliar setting. Paul's story is a remarkable reflection on his Italian identity, resilience, and lifelong pursuit of creativity. From his early years as an immigrant in Australia to his passion for art and writing, Paul's journey highlights the profound impact of personal experiences in shaping one's character. Introduced in 2013, the Seniors' Stories competition provides a platform for senior Australians to share their experiences and reflections with our communities. This initiative continues to be an important way of honouring the contributions of our seniors, reinforcing the importance of lifelong learning, storytelling, and cultural preservation. I commend Paul Tavuzzi for his outstanding contribution and thank all participants for sharing their incredible journeys. Their stories remind us of the rich history, wisdom, and creativity that seniors bring to our society.

SHARE THE DIGNITY'S MARCH DRIVE 2025

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to recognise that this Month marks Share the Dignity's March Drive. Each year, my office proudly serves as a collection point for the campaign, and I am always moved by the support for this important cause. Throughout March, collection points across the country will be accepting donations of brand-new pads, tampons, period underwear, menstrual cups, and incontinence aids. These donations will go directly to those who need them most, helping to restore dignity and ease financial stress for vulnerable girls and women. Over the March and August drives, Share the Dignity have set a goal to collect 500,000 period

products to help end period poverty. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the local businesses that have stepped up to serve as collection points in my community, including Physio Inq in McMahons Point, and Woolworths Neutral Bay and Crows Nest. Thank you for supporting such an important cause. I acknowledge the amazing team at Share the Dignity and thank them for all the hard work and dedication they have poured into this cause. Finally, I thank everyone in my community and across Australia who has donated, every product makes a difference.

PAMELA DEAN

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I recognise Pamela Dean of Miranda for her service to our rugby league community in the Sutherland Shire. Pamela has been involved with Cronulla Caringbah Junior Rugby League Football Club ["JRLFC"] for around 20 years. After initially volunteering as a parent in support of her children who played rugby league for the Club, Pamela's unwavering commitment continued even after her children moved on from the Club. Pamela provides families and players with a familiar and ever-present face on game days and has earned their admiration over the years. During her around 20 years with Cronulla Caringbah JRLFC, Pamela has served in many roles including as Treasurer, Secretary, Canteen Manager, Working With Children Officer, Assistant Secretary and Registrar. Additionally, Pamela has been recognised with life membership of the Club and has a Trophy named in her honour at Cronulla Caringbah JRLFC's annual Presentation Day. I thank Pamela for her dedicated service to Cronulla Caringbah JRLFC over two decades and extend my best wishes for the future.

2025 MIRANDA WOMAN OF THE YEAR

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I congratulate the 2025 Miranda Woman of the Year, Sharon Xabregas of Gynea – an inspirational business leader and passionate advocate for the deaf and hard of hearing communities. By way of background, Sharon was born deaf and grew up in the Sutherland Shire. Her passion to support the deaf and hard of hearing communities led Sharon in 2018 to establish Sign Hear, an inclusive employer providing Auslan interpreting, job placement assistance, and support for the Deaf community. Proudly, Sign Hear was named Specialised Business of the Year in 2022 and 2023 at the Sutherland Shire Local Business Awards. Furthermore, Sharon has volunteered as a mentor with Hear for You Limited offering guidance to teenagers living with deafness or hearing loss. She is also an Advisory Board Member for The Centre for Volunteering, with a focus on improving the accessibility and range of quality volunteer management products for those living with a disability. Sharon has made significant impact on our community. I am pleased to acknowledge her passion for helping the deaf and hard of hearing communities by naming her the 2025 Miranda Woman of the Year.

NICHOLAS RUBBI

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I recognise Nicholas ("Nick") Rubbi of Kareela for his over 15 years of incredible service as a volunteer surf-lifesaver. A dedicated member of Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club, Nick's surf life-saving journey began at the age of 52 in 2008 when he obtained his bronze medallion and immediately became a patrolling member. Nick hasn't taken a backwards step since, achieving 15 years of 100% patrol attendance at Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club and earning a reputation as a diligent patroller and fastidious Patrol Captain. Furthermore, to support him in his role as a Patrol Captain, Nick has obtained several qualifications and certificates in Life Saving including Advanced Resuscitation, First Aid, Spinal Management, Defibrillators and Beach Management. As a Patrol Captain, Nick has successfully managed a mix of veterans and youth patrollers, bringing out their best and leading the team to be named Winning Patrol twice in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 seasons. I thank Nick for his tireless efforts in keeping our beaches safe and for his commitment to developing the next generation of volunteer surf life savers.

CATAPULT DANCE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—A huge congratulations to Catapult Dance Choreographic Hub for receiving the prestigious Creative Australia's Arts Program funding. Under the direction of Cadi McCarthy, Catapult has been Newcastle's leading professional arts organisation for over a decade, supporting Australian artists to foster a thriving professional arts sector in the Hunter. The \$99,000 in federal funding will ensure Catapult can continue to produce artist-led residencies and performance outcomes with emerging and mid-career professional choreographers and dance artists. In addition to fostering a progressive contemporary dance and arts sector in the Hunter, Catapult has supported local artists with prestigious national and international residences and collaborations. Catapult's success is a testament to Cadi's passion and leadership in ensuring the arts remain an integral part of life in Newcastle, and I thank her for her commitment to our community.

YOUNG MATILDAS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Newcastle Jets young guns Alexis Collins, India Brier, Claire Adams and Josie Allan are forces to be reckoned with, coming home as PacificAus Four Nations Tournament champions with the CommBank Young Matildas. The 2025 PacificAus Four Nations Tournament was supported

by the Australian Government, through the PacificAus Sports program. Alexis and India joined fellow Jets teammates Claire and Josie to debut for the Australian U-20 team against Vanuatu, Thailand and Solomon Islands. The Commbank Young Matildas played sensationally throughout the tournament, finishing three points clear atop the table with nine points. Alexis, India, Claire and Josie's achievements show true Novocastrian spirit and are a testament to their passion, dedication and leadership. Congratulations!

JAMES GARDINER

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—I'd like to congratulate veteran Newcastle Herald sports reporter, James Gardiner, for gaining accolades at the prestigious Australian Sports Commission's ASC Media Awards. James took home the Best Coverage of Rural and Regional Sport category out of a pool of 300 entries for his 2024 examination of the Newcastle Jet's ownership saga. James' submission "demonstrated his investigative skills to produce a series of exclusive articles that were followed up nationally by other media outlets", highlighting his incredible work as an investigative journalist. This is an amazing achievement, and I thank James for his unwavering commitment to our local sporting sector.

SENIORS WEEK

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Thank you to all Seniors living across the Parramatta Electorate and our state. Your contributions to our communities are wide and varied. The NSW Seniors Festival was held from 3-16 March offering a time to honour the contributions and achievements of our seniors. It was an important reminder of the valuable roles seniors play in shaping society through their wisdom, experience and leadership. This year, I was visited seniors at Northcourt Aged Care, where I saw the veggies being grown by Michael in his edible balcony garden. His tomatoes will soon be shared with fellow residents. I also visited Courtlands Retirement Village, where I met over 40 residents eager to learn about happenings in the Parramatta electorate. Additionally, I visited Uniting Arrunga Ermington and Fairlea Aged Care in Harris Park. A visit to Our Lady Mercy Place was great fun with the café decked out in international flags, staff wore traditional dress and a group of Nepalese staff performed dances for residents and their guests. These visits highlight the importance of engaging and acknowledging our seniors who helped shape our state and nation.
