

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 25 March 2025**

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

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

### *Announcements*

#### **GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**The SPEAKER:** One of the most exciting things happening today is Greek Independence Day. I acknowledge the members of the House who have Greek heritage. I am sure that members with significant Greek communities in their electorates will be celebrating with them today. In particular, I acknowledge the member for Rockdale, the member for Canterbury and the member for Miranda. I believe they all joined the wonderful event in the Strangers' Restaurant last night with the Greek Consul General, Yannis Mallikourtis.

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I extend a warm welcome to guests of the member for Campbelltown, Morris Kizito Mukasa, the Director of Cross-Cultural Partnerships Engagement Worldwide, and his delegation. I also welcome Professor John Juriansz, Director of the Whitlam Institute, and Dr Jason Donnelly from Western Sydney University, who are guests of the member for Fairfield. I welcome guests of the member for Wakehurst from the Belrose Rotary Club, Combined Probus Club of Belrose, Frenchs Forest Lions Club and Lions Club of Manly. It is good to get those groups together. I acknowledge Adam Hill from the Health Services Union, a guest of the member for Keira. It is unusual to see Adam Hill joining us. I welcome Troy White, Celina Diefenbach, Councillor Jeff Whitton from Orange City Council, Pravin Kumar and Dr Amit Chaubey, guests of the member for Orange. I also extend a warm welcome to school leaders from Lake Macquarie High School, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I do not have all of their names, but I give a shout-out to their principal, Brendan Maher. We welcome you all to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly Chamber for question time.

### *Announcements*

#### **LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS**

**The SPEAKER:** I remind members that there will be a group photograph in the Legislative Assembly Chamber at 1.30 p.m. for members who were first elected to the Fifty-Fourth Parliament or the Fifty-Sixth Parliament. I am not sure who goes back that far, but I might be there.

### *Governor*

#### **ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages regarding the administration of the Government.

### *Bills*

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

#### **Returned**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the Bail Amendment (Extension of Limitation on Bail in Certain Circumstances) Bill 2025 with an amendment. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment be set down as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Question Time***HOUSING SUPPLY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:06):** My question is directed to the Premier. It is now two years since the election. How many new homes does the Premier expect to be completed in the remaining two years of his term?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:07):** The latest information indicates that New South Wales built more completed houses in the month of January than any other jurisdiction in the country for the first time in years. This is devastating information for those opposite.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the first time. I call the member for Hornsby to order for the second time.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It would be miserable to be elected to this Parliament and spend all of your days praying for bad news. The big question is whether we will be able to squeeze another couple of years out of Speako. That is the question we are all asking. Two more years would be fantastic. When it comes to housing completions in New South Wales, we would be able to build a lot more if the Opposition signed up to our reform plan rather than persistently—

*[Interruption]*

Will you call the House to order, Mr Speaker?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. I was checking whether the sound in the Chamber is working properly.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Government has been pursuing planning reform. We get lip-service from those opposite and then when legislation is introduced to try to pull—

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question was not an invitation for the Premier to duck, weave and pass the buck. How many new homes will be completed?

**The SPEAKER:** That is not the way to take a point of order. I would have upheld the point of order if the Leader of the Opposition had not breached the standing orders.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Government introduced the Transport Oriented Development Program in Sydney, which goes directly to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. We got lip-service from members opposite. They said, "We support those plans. They're necessary." Then they introduced a bill to repeal transport oriented development. Do members remember that in the upper House? Opposition members say one thing downstairs, another thing upstairs. They say one thing to the eastern suburbs and something else to the western suburbs. They say one thing to the inner city and something else to the country.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** They say one thing to The Greens and something else to the National Party. The problem with Liberal Party members today is they lack belief. That is not a problem shared by other administrations like the Federal Liberal Party and those in other jurisdictions, but New South Wales Liberal members have not got a spine between them.

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

**NO-GROUNDS EVICTIONS**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (12:10):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier please update the House on how the Government is making renting fairer in New South Wales?

*[Interruption]*

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:10):** I am keen to hear what the member for Wahroonga said. What was it you said?

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I said there will be no properties to rent under you.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** That is another example of the genre.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. The Premier will cease conversing directly with the member for Wahroonga across the Chamber.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The member for Willoughby has said that the New South Wales Government should have acted sooner on this legislation, and the member for Wahroonga says we should not have done it in the first place.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I didn't say that.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** So you are for the rental reforms?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will cease interacting with the member for Wahroonga across the Chamber.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Nearly one-third of people in New South Wales are renters—that is 620,000 people, and the number is growing. As a percentage of the economy, it is massive. It used to be about one-quarter, and now we are approaching one-third. The statistics indicate that renters will get even higher as a percentage of residents in New South Wales. We know that a lot of decent people have put all of their retirement savings into an investment property in New South Wales. We need to get the balance right when it comes to this legislation, because it means ensuring that not just the largest housing marketplace but the largest overall marketplace in Australia has fair rules for everyone. This is not just an issue for renters and those who own property in the State. It is also an issue for the New South Wales economy. I have not come across a small business owner who has not told me that one of the largest problems they face is finding skilled labour. I have heard that repeatedly. When a State loses twice as many young people as it gains every 12 months, and the leading reason is housing, something needs to change.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Changes to no-grounds evictions will be introduced in New South Wales in May. These changes are important, and we believe they will make a difference. Landlords will still have rights. They will need a reason to end a tenancy, such as the proposed sale of the property, significant renovations or repairs, the demolition of the property, or if they or a family member are moving into it. Those are reasonable reasons to intervene in the contract between the property owner and the renter. They are absolutely necessary. Looking at other jurisdictions, particularly those on the eastern seaboard, shows what protections are required for New South Wales renters. Reletting exclusion periods will extend variously from four weeks to six months depending on the reason the landlord uses for the eviction of the tenant. We have never had that before in this State. [*Extension of time*]

There will also be changes to keeping pets in rentals. Other reforms include making sure renters have free and convenient ways to pay rent, limiting rent increases to once a year, extending termination notice periods to allow tenants more time to find a new home, banning fees for background checks, developing the Portable Rental Bonds Scheme, introducing the free online Rent Check tool, and investing \$8.5 million to establish the Rental Taskforce so that investigators and inspectors can engage with renters.

We acknowledge this is a major change to the marketplace, and a major education piece is required so that decent people who think they are following the rules are up to date with the changes to regulations in this State. We acknowledge that is important. These changes have been backed by Homelessness NSW, by the chair of Housing Now!, by the Tenants' Union and by the Committee for Sydney. We appreciate the multi-partisan support for these proposed changes. They are important for New South Wales. While they are about rebalancing the marketplace, particularly for renters, I ask people who are sceptical or opposed to these reforms to think about the economy and fairness. There will be huge damage done to the economy if younger people in particular cannot put down roots, join communities and establish a place to live close to their employer without us making these changes to renting in New South Wales. I understand there is a review of these legislative changes, but I urge future parliamentarians not to change the rules that we have just brought in. They are too important to change.

## HOUSING POLICY

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (12:15):** My question is directed to the Premier. Two years after his election, taxes and charges on new homes are now the highest in the country. What reductions in tax and charges will he give to help home buyers?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:15):** Under Labor, first home buyers pay no tax on their first property purchase under \$800,000 and pay a reduced amount on a purchase under \$1 million. That was opposed by members opposite. What was their alternative proposal? A lifetime land tax for first home buyers. Two years in, this question is like a Dorothy Dixier. I can see one of us writing it for one of our members to ask.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** So that's a no then? Nothing?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** What? Am I wrong about it? I am completely amazed at the question time strategy. The Government introduced legislation and a tax change so that those purchasing a property for the first time

under \$800,000 pay no tax at all and pay a reduced amount under \$1 million. There is the answer, straight up. That is what we did. We also removed the straitjacket and the handcuffs of the lifetime land tax proposed by those opposite.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Everybody else who has purchased a property has paid their stamp duty off or paid a reduced amount, but members opposite would say to the next generation that they are going to pay a lifetime of land tax. We made it clear at the election that we would much rather people pay no tax at all rather than a land tax forever.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** No tax at all? What's the lump sum?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Read the policies.

**The SPEAKER:** The Manager of Opposition Business will cease interjecting. The Premier will cease interacting with him across the Chamber. The member for Bankstown will come to order.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (12:17):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on what action the Minns Labor Government has been taking to fix the long-term challenges facing education in New South Wales and to ensure every child has access to a world-class public education?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:17):** I thank my Parliamentary Secretary for that important question. Mr Speaker, I note your acknowledgement of the students from Lake Macquarie High School. I also welcome them and Mr Maher. I am proud to say that a Lake Macquarie High School polo shirt has pride of place in my office. I begin my answer to the question asked by the Parliamentary Secretary for Education and Early Learning by, of course, talking about this Government's belief that education is at the heart of successful societies and productive economies.

The member for Campbelltown asked about what significant challenges we face when it comes to the education of our young people. There are many. Unfortunately, when we came to government, the challenges that we inherited from members opposite were real. The people of New South Wales made their voice very clear when they voted in a new government to address the root causes of the challenges that we faced in education. Let's remind members of what they were. We had a chronic teacher shortage. Teacher vacancies, resignations and retirements were at an all-time high. Merged and cancelled classes exceeded 10,000 every day. No government in history could seriously put their hand on their heart and say that that is anything but a significant challenge for the future prosperity of the State of New South Wales, because the education of our young people is an investment in the future. This Government faced those significant challenges head on by getting rid of the wages cap for New South Wales public school teachers once and for all and, after 12 years of suppression, giving them the biggest pay rise in a generation.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** That, in addition to all the other measures we have been hard at work on, is beginning to show real results. We made 16,000 temporary teachers and support staff permanent. As a result, vacancies are at all-time lows, and resignations are at significant lows. There has been a 40 per cent drop in vacancies in the two-year period since we came to government. That matters because it impacts on the outcomes for our young people in classrooms—both academic and wellbeing outcomes. We know that our young people face mental health challenges in schools and in society like they have never faced before. We are addressing those significant challenges head on, and getting to their root causes. [*Extension of time*]

In addition to improved outcomes for our children by keeping more teachers in the classroom, I am very pleased to report to the House that offers of university places for teaching degrees are up 36 per cent in New South Wales. That is a more significant rise in those offers than in any other State or Territory in the country. We are proud of the progress we are making, but there is more work to do. We need to roll out the new curriculum with a mandated use of explicit teaching. For the first time in NSW Department of Education history, the department has actually set the expectation for how our children are taught. It is insane that that never happened before. That explicit method of teaching—

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Direct instruction.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Direct instruction—as the former Principal of Punchbowl Boys' High School points out—will, we hope, result in improved outcomes for our children. In a debate last week, the member for Davidson

sheeted home explicit teaching to the former Minister in the other place, Sarah Mitchell, saying that she was perhaps the mother of that form of teaching. We can hold her responsible for a lot of things, but a teaching pedagogy that has existed since the 1960s is definitely not one of them.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** Relying on advice from that former Minister might be like the captain of a ship asking for advice from the captain of the *Titanic*.

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

**Ms PRUE CAR:** We inherited a system in decline. We are making progress, and we will continue to do that work for our children.

## HEALTH WORKFORCE

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (12:22):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I have given notice of a motion in Parliament to recognise the global and national bidding war taking place for medical practitioners across many fields. Will the Minister outline what his department and office are doing to stop that trend, and will he commit to working with me to reverse the trend of health workers leaving the system?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:23):** I thank the member for Wollondilly for the question. In a previous life she was an optometrist, and she has spoken to me about expanding the scope of practice of our optometrists, making sure they can use their full skill set and knowledge. This is an important issue. We have a global challenge when it comes to medical practitioners and graduates right across the board. Two years ago, when I was appointed as the health Minister, one of the first people I spoke to was the Federal health Minister. After I asked for more money, my second question was around workforce challenges, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas.

Elected health Ministers across the country established the Health Workforce Taskforce, chaired by Susan Pearce, the Secretary of NSW Health. A review was conducted by a former Secretary of NSW Health, Robyn Kruk, whom many people in this Chamber will know. The Kruk review was all about what we could do as legislators to fast-track and reduce red tape around the process of registering suitably qualified medical practitioners from other countries to practise in our country. That is particularly important for regional, rural and remote areas. The member for Barwon, the member for Murray and our other regional, rural and remote MPs understand the importance of getting those graduates and staff into the labour force in their local health services.

Specifically, we have worked with regulatory agencies, including the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency [AHPRA], which essentially regulates health practitioners across the country, to try to fast-track the registration of suitably qualified overseas practitioners who want to work in Australia and, from my perspective, in New South Wales. That is a challenge. We have to make sure that their skills and knowledge are comparable and that the way in which health services are delivered is comparable. Although our health system in New South Wales is better, areas like Great Britain, parts of Europe, Canada and New Zealand typically have health systems that are not too dissimilar to ours. [*Extension of time*]

As a result of the Kruk review and working with AHPRA and other regulatory agencies within New South Wales and other jurisdictions, we have been able to fast-track the registration process for GPs, obstetricians, gynaecologists, psychiatrists and a range of different specialists that we need more of in New South Wales. We will continue to work on that as a ministerial group. Obviously, we now await the outcome of the upcoming Federal election to see who is appointed as the Federal health Minister going forward. Minister Butler has been a terrific partner in the process and I acknowledge his work. I also acknowledge AHPRA and my State and Territory colleagues who have engaged with it.

This is not an easy issue to deal with. The health system in New South Wales is a complex one, but a very safe one. It is conservative in nature, in that we put safety first, second and third—and we have to. That means we need to be very careful to make sure people who qualified overseas can do that work similarly in New South Wales. We will continue to look at other specialties and other ways we can do that. I welcome the question from the member for Wollondilly. I know that health care for her community is one of her key priorities. Of course I am willing to work with her, and engage with her as a part of the important work that State and Territory health Ministers are doing, led by Secretary Susan Pearce and in conjunction with the Commonwealth, on the Health Workforce Taskforce.

**The SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for Mount Drutt, I acknowledge the students in the Cooper gallery. I hope they have enjoyed their relatively brief visit during question time. It was fantastic they could be here.

## HEALTH SERVICES

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:29):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health. Will the Minister please update the House on how the Minns Labor Government has been working to address some of the long-term challenges in health to ensure people have access to the services they need?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:29):** I thank the member for Mount Druitt. I know health services in the growing part of Western Sydney that he represents are not only a priority but also under serious pressure at the moment. I acknowledge that from the outset. I am pleased to report, if the member does not know already, that in his electorate on time emergency department [ED] rates have improved by around 10 per cent and ramping has improved by about 7 per cent to 10 per cent as well. Well done to his team at Mount Druitt Hospital.

We face significant and real challenges in the healthcare sector in New South Wales. As community representatives, all of us understand it and feel it, but our healthcare workforce see it and feel it every day. I acknowledge in the gallery representatives of the Health Services Union and the Nurses and Midwives' Association. A lot of the reforms I will talk about are as a result of their advocacy, and I acknowledge that. The challenges are real in health. When we were elected, by far the biggest challenge we faced was staffing our hospitals and health services. When I go through some things today, it is by no means to say the job is done. In fact, it is the exact opposite. We have to improve the health system. I am not satisfied with where we are at the moment. We need to be doing more. Part of what I will talk about is exactly what we are doing.

The first decision I had to make was whether we continued the recruitment and employment of 1,100 nurses. If we did not make that decision as a government, we could not have made the second decision that the Nurse and Midwives' Association had long advocated for, and that was the commencement of ratios in our EDs. I can report that we now have 21 sites with ratios commencing in their ED. They are not completely done, but they are commencing. There is a lot more work to do in level 5 and level 6 EDs, before then moving on to level 3 and level 4, but it is a significant start on that reform. Secondly, we understood from a staffing perspective the challenges in the bush, particularly in relation to paramedics. As the shadow health Minister I heard that about the tyranny of distance. It was becoming a problem, and towns were being left without paramedics. We made a commitment over the course of the four-year term to roll out 500 additional paramedic positions. *[Extension of time]*

After working with the Health Services Union, I can announce that the second tranche of 125 paramedics is now being rolled out, taking us up to 250 paramedics halfway through our term. In addition to that, we have some significant workforce challenges in regional and rural areas. The member for Wagga Wagga and others frequently talk about the challenge around maternity and midwifery services. They are real, and the job is far from done. But we have rolled out improvements to incentives and, importantly, we have rolled out tertiary subsidies to make sure that we have a pipeline of healthcare workers who are incentivised to undertake health degrees in New South Wales that have a five-year commitment tied to back to NSW Health. Many members know that we have challenges in bulk-billing. When we were elected, we were informed that since 2018 some GPs were threatening to leave the workforce because of payroll tax issues.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** The Minister for Finance and I spent many months working through various models with GPs. Pleasingly, that issue is now resolved, and we are providing payroll tax relief to GPs who provide bulk-billing rates and support to their communities. There is a long way to go. There is a lot more work to do and more challenges and turbulent water ahead, but our focus for the next two years is on increasing healthcare staff and retaining those staff.

## WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (12:34):** My question is directed to the Premier. Two years after his election, will construction start in Western Sydney on Badgerys Creek Road South, Devonshire Road, the Eastern Ring Road and further stages of Elizabeth Drive before 2040?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:35):** I thank the member for Badgerys Creek for her question, and I thank her for actually turning up to Parliament. It is fantastic that she is here. A newspaper article from 20 February says, "NSW Liberal skips Parliament for Jordan Peterson's London conference." Then it says, "Meanwhile it is a different kettle of fish here in New South Wales where CBD—"

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** Point of order: I ask that the Premier be brought back to the leave of the question.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I have just started.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier is making introductory comments.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I am just welcoming her back to the Chamber.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will conclude his introductory comments very quickly. It is too early in his answer to rule him out of order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Herald article says:

Meanwhile, it is a different kettle of fish here in NSW, where CBD can reveal that two Liberal opposition assistant ministers, Tanya Davies and Susan Carter, have quietly headed off to London, despite parliament sitting this week.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It was the Jordan Peterson conference, Mr Speaker.

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has made his point. He will move on. Members will come to order. The Premier will answer the substantive question.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I just make the point that members would forgive me for believing the member for Badgerys Creek cares more about incels than infrastructure.

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

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

**Mr Alister Henskens:** The question was about the construction of roads in Western Sydney. It was not a question about a conference in London.

**The SPEAKER:** I have made that point to the Premier.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** If it was important enough for them to skip Parliament, why can I not raise it now?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will address the substantive question.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Absolutely, Mr Speaker. We are rebuilding the infrastructure of Western Sydney that members opposite neglected. When I speak to communities they say the same thing over and over again. They say, "We got the houses, we got the people, but the Libs never built the infrastructure." It was particularly bad in Badgerys Creek.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Mark Speakman:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The question was about four specific roads. Will we get them before 2040?

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. The Premier will conclude his answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I just make the point that the only bloke who has a go in the Opposition is Wes Fang. It is usually directed at Natalie Ward, but he is the only bloke who has a go. The rest of them are absolutely hopeless. The member for Badgerys Creek cannot even be bothered turning up to Parliament. She was representing her electorate in London while Parliament was sitting. We will rebuild the infrastructure Western Sydney needs, and we will do it despite them underfunding those projects.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier has completed his answer. The member for Badgerys Creek will come to order. I warn the member for Badgerys Creek that if she continues to interject, she will be directed to leave the Chamber. All members will come to order. I do not need assistance from the member for Drummoyne, who knows very well how difficult it is to listen to 92 voices in the Chamber. I cannot discern what is said by every member who is interjecting, but some voices stand out very clearly. The member for Drummoyne will cease calling out. All members will come to order and listen to the next question. I call the member for Penrith.

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** The Minister for Western Sydney is dead silent. She's dead silent on Western Sydney.

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

**Mrs Tanya Davies:** Answer the question.

**The SPEAKER:** If the member for Badgerys Creek continues to interject, the next step is she will be removed for the day.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Badgerys Creek left the Chamber at 12:40.]*

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** The next step will be to the airport.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Mount Druitt to order for the first time. All members will come to order and listen in silence to the member for Penrith.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:40):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on actions the New South Wales Government has been taking to address the housing crisis in New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:41):** I am pleased to update the member for Penrith—the person who is well and truly responsible for having a beach at Penrith for the past two years that has been visited by hundreds of thousands of people—never done by members opposite. Given the strong interest in housing, I am sure that my answer will be heard in absolute silence. Members opposite know that the New South Wales Government inherited from them a confused and confusing planning system. It was wrapped up in red tape that assessments virtually ceased. The average assessment times had blown out to 117 days. The timeliness of concurrences and referrals needed improvement. In surprising news, in many areas medium-density housing could not even be built on land that had been identified and zoned for medium-density housing, let alone people trying to build dual occupancy, a terrace house or a townhouse in many Sydney suburbs because councils had largely banned those as well.

Housing types that had been part of our housing past were being ruled out of being part of our housing future under the Coalition's watch. It is no wonder New South Wales was not building enough houses. The Minns Government is committed to tackling the housing challenge. We could have kicked this issue down the road like members opposite did; instead, we took it on. We have taken on a program of reform. I know that members opposite will be really keen to get behind it in the future. The Government has introduced a program of planning reform and planning system improvement—the biggest in decades—to get housing and job-creating investments moving in New South Wales. Not only that, but also the Government has delivered the largest investment in social housing in the history of New South Wales, coupled with reforms to make renting even fairer. Our rezonings around stations through the Transport Oriented Development Program is expected to deliver around 230,000 homes over the next 15 years.

Our low- and mid-rise reforms that were finalised last month will result in more diverse homes being built right across our State from suburbs throughout Greater Sydney, from the Illawarra to the Hunter and the Central Coast. The program is expected to supply approximately 112,000 new homes for people over the next five years. The pattern book designs will provide certainty that those homes will be well-designed and well-built homes. They are architect designed and based on an international design competition. The New South Wales Government's in-fill affordable housing bonus scheme is helping to deliver not only more homes generally, but more affordable homes. More than 8,000 homes are currently under assessment as a result of that bonus scheme, including more than 2,400 affordable homes, but that is not all. That will help our health workers, paramedics, teachers, police officers and firefighters to rent at a subsidised rate in areas closer to the city. *[Extension of time]*

Landcom is progressing the first site for this program of key worker housing at the former dive site in Camperdown, in addition to the build-to-rent projects on the South Coast and in the Northern Rivers. Our Housing Taskforce is getting on with the job of clearing the backlog of housing projects that have been waiting too long for a council or government agency to get back to them. More 2,000 government agency concurrences and referrals have been cleared through the system—1,900 development applications [DAs] for 39,000 homes that will be delivered through that. Our Housing Delivery Authority is going gangbusters with more expressions of interest received in the first month than were expected in the first year. Industry is jumping at the chance to use this new pathway and, importantly, industry is doing so, knowing that this pathway comes with time limits for both submitting applications and a time limit to revoke an approval, if construction does not start within two years.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The Government is holding councils accountable for their decisions with league tables. As a result, we have seen a reduction in average DA assessment times down from 117 days when we started in government to 102 days last month. Things are starting to turn around with more than 72,000 new dwellings under construction right now and more on the way. In this financial year, there have been more than 70,000 development applications for new homes lodged in New South Wales. That is an increase of 37 per cent

in the number of DAs lodged compared to the previous year, and New South Wales is now leading the nation in that measure. As I said, more applications are under development and are being prepared to be submitted. Clearly, there is more work for this Government to do, for councils to do, and for members opposite to do to get behind our program of planning reform, but I am heartened by the progress. New South Wales is on its way to being the State of yes—yes to housing, yes to jobs, yes to construction, and yes to better and more vibrant communities.

### SMALL BUSINESS

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:46):** My question is directed to the Premier. Two years after his election, annual business insolvencies in the year to January 2025 more than doubled from 3,300 to 7,200 compared in the year to January 2023. Will the Premier apologise for his Government's failure to adequately support small businesses across New South Wales?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:46):** If there is a truism in politics it is how the Liberal Party takes small business for granted. Is that what all members hear? Honestly, over and over again, the supposed party of small business does absolutely nothing for them.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Government has announced two major reforms. According to Business NSW, insurance is one of two of the major concerns for business confidence in this State. The first reform is the emergency services levy and the second is changes to workers compensation. Last week I explained to the House there had been an exponential increase in workers compensation premiums paid by New South Wales businesses, and nothing was done by members opposite. They expected the public and the community to say, "We know interest rates have risen 13 times. We know that inflation was at 7.8 per cent in December 2022, but look at our record. If you look at small business, the Labor Party should have done more." But this Government has outlined reforms that we believe are important for New South Wales and we are waiting on whether members opposite will support the legislation.

The Greens already have indicated they will not support either reform, so the Government will require bipartisan reform to get the legislation passed. Workers compensation and the emergency services levy are two crucial parts of reform that unambiguously help small businesses in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government is waiting to see whether the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals—the party of small business—will back the reforms. They will probably have a bet each way. On every bit of reform the Government has pursued, on Monday they are for it; on Tuesday, they are against it; on Wednesday, they are for it; on Thursday, they are against it. Who could forget the wages cap? Opposition members said that should not have been removed. The next day the nurses were marching in the street and those opposite said, "Why aren't you paying them more? We should have got rid of the wages cap."

**Mr Tim James:** Point of order: It relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The Premier has given no account of the doubling of business insolvencies in this State.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Willoughby will resume his seat. There is no point of order. The question asked for an apology, which is not forthcoming.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I have spoken about both the current economic circumstances and the economic circumstances the Government inherited from members opposite—a complete lack of reform. I would love to see a counter to this, but it is unarguable that members opposite did nothing about small business. We are now waiting to see what their policy is. Are they for a wages cap or against it? It depends on the day of the week. Are they for rental reforms or against it? It depends on the day of the week. Are they for hate speech laws or against it? It depends on the day of the week. We cannot determine from their media releases a single policy that any of them believe in because they have prioritised criticism over belief.

### NSW POLICE FORCE

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (12:50):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on the actions the Minns Labor Government is taking to ensure we have a strong police force?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:50):** I thank the member for Fairfield. His interest in and support of his local police is outstanding and he is always there when I need to answer a question. When I was appointed the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism—which is an incredible honour—I was genuinely shocked at the mess the NSW Police Force was in.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** It reflected the little regard the previous Government demonstrated for the hardworking men and women of the NSW Police Force. Members opposite left the NSW Police Force in a dangerous position.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** They had no plan to address the complex workforce issues that generally threatened the viability of the NSW Police Force. They had no plan to safeguard the workforce, no plan to pay them better, no plan to retain them and no plan to look after their health and wellbeing.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** The work to rebuild the NSW Police Force is complex and difficult but this Government is very serious about it. We are not alone. As always, I am grateful for the support of the Police Association of New South Wales, which knows that this important work is generational. Together we have delivered our police a very significant pay rise—in fact, it is the best anyone can remember. As I have travelled all over the State these past two years, I have met hundreds of police officers, and my admiration for them grows daily. They routinely put themselves in danger to keep everyone in this State safe. They are injured on duty with alarming frequency, sometimes badly. They risk their lives as part of their everyday work.

The more police I have met, and the more I have learned about what they do and how hard they work, the more I am astonished that the previous Government was willing to drive their wages backwards for more than a decade. Not only are we valuing our police through an immediate pay rise, we have collapsed pay scales. It now takes only 10 years to reach the top rank of senior constable, compared with 16 years previously. We were left with a badly depleted workforce, but we are laser-focused on repairing it through recruitment and retention. Since announcing that we would pay recruits to study, we have received over 3,667 applications. That is a 70 per cent increase. We had a full class of recruits for our December attestation. *[Extension of time]*

We have more than 300 recruits attesting at the next attestation in May.

**Mr Paul Toole:** Point of order—

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

**Mr Paul Toole:** Under Standing Order 129, the Minister needs to inform the House that we have 4,700 less boots on the ground under this Minister.

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

**Mr Paul Toole:** Under this Minister, 2,000 police officers have left the force in the past 18 months, which is the worst it has ever been in this State. You have lost 2,000 police officers. Morale is low and they have walked out the door after you.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Bathurst from the Chamber under Standing Order 249. The member will leave the building.

*[The member for Bathurst left the Chamber at 12:53 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms]*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will come to order. The Minister will be heard in silence.

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** We have also received 90 applications for the Professional Mobility Program, where cops from other States and Territories—and even New Zealand—can join our ranks. Even the Prime Minister of New Zealand has admitted that he cannot compete with New South Wales. We have established a dedicated health, safety and wellbeing command. Our police face scenarios most of us only see in the movies. They confront deeply traumatic scenes that can take a terrible toll on their health and wellbeing. We are embedding mental health clinicians across police area commands, police districts and specialist commands, in addition to the psychology unit attached to the health, safety and wellbeing command.

The Early Access Treatment Initiative is encouraging early access to psychological support. A new mental health literacy program is supporting police to identify the signs early so they can get help early. We want to keep our officers safe, healthy and on the job. We want to make sure officers who have experienced the worst on the job are cared for, supported and that they can recover. If possible, we want them to come back to work and continue to serve when they are ready. We want to care for and keep all of our experienced officers. There is no doubt that there is a great deal more work to do, but I assure the House that the Minns Labor Government will not rest until we turn the tide on the problem left to us of rebuilding the NSW Police Force.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Bankstown will come to order.

## MINING COMMUNITIES

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (12:56):** My question is directed to the Premier. After the election, he increased coal royalty rates for Hunter Valley coal, which will add around \$5 billion to the Government coffers this year. At the same time, his Government also axed the Resources for Regions fund, which compensated towns for the social impact of mining on their communities. What programs does he have to support mining communities?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:57):** Looking at the figures, it is about \$5 billion.

**Mr David Layzell:** Five billion dollars!

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** It is a fair question. We made that decision because there were urgent needs in New South Wales. We did so in consultation with the mining sector. We spoke with them right through the implementation of that change. The truth of the matter is we were selling between \$30 and \$50 billion worth of coal to export markets each year, and the past two of three years were record years for New South Wales. We spoke with the industry and said that it was necessary to pay teachers, ensure that police officers were in regional communities and that we could complete essential infrastructure projects necessary for the New South Wales economy.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hawkesbury will come to order. The member for Goulburn will come to order.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I do not remember the legislation being opposed by members opposite when it was introduced. I make the point that \$400 million has been put into the Regional Development Trust Fund, with \$37 million allocated to initiatives under the first phase and \$50 million allocated to the second phase through the Regional Economic Development and Community Investment Program. The initiatives that the Government is rolling out are important, particularly for coalmining communities. I am happy to compare, line by line, the Government's spend on Hunter communities with the spend under those opposite any day the week.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (12:59):** My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General update the House on the actions the Minns Labor Government has taken to keep our communities safe?

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (12:59):** I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for his question, for his interest and for the work that he does for me in the Parliament and in communities across New South Wales. The Government recognises that for communities to flourish and enjoy the best possible quality of life, they need to feel safe and secure. People need to be free from harm and interference, and to feel that they are free from harm and interference. To live freely, they must be free of violence in their homes, safe when they go to and from work, free to safely travel about our streets without the threat of knives, free from harassment when they access their places of worship and free from racial hatred.

The Minns Government has taken a proactive approach to protecting community safety, while balancing the important democratic freedoms that we all cherish and rely on. The former Government and my predecessor in this role did some good things in that space, but as it got old it grew tired. It failed to keep up with community expectations and stay ahead of the trends, so now Government members have much to do and we make no apology for being in a hurry to do it. For example, on domestic and family violence—an insidious criminal behaviour—we inherited an underfunded domestic and family violence sector, particularly the bail laws, which needed reform.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** On youth crime, despite considerable crowing from National Party MPs, the former Government did very little over 12 years to protect regional and rural communities. Witness what it did to the Police Force in the bush.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** On discrimination, there were no civil protections against religious vilification under the Anti-Discrimination Act and no criminal protections against inciting racial hatred. The statutory review of that Act was a decade overdue.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** The act of defacing a synagogue with a swastika incurred the same maximum penalty as one graffitied on a suburban fence. Protests could be held outside sacred places of worship, interrupting and harassing people trying to come and go. Individuals who blocked railways like those in the Hunter faced the same penalties as those who blocked major facilities, roads and tunnels. Police had weaker resources and powers to find and confiscate knives than their Queensland counterparts. So there was much to be done. In response to those challenges, we have been very proactive. For example, we have enhanced protections for victims and survivors of domestic violence by providing \$245 million as a down payment. We have negotiated more money from the Commonwealth for community legal centres and women's legal services under a recently signed national agreement. [*Extension of time*]

We have also introduced additional offences targeting serious, harmful or persistent breaches of apprehended violence orders because there were complaints that, under the former Government, AVOs were routinely being ignored. They are not being ignored now. We have strengthened bail laws so that persons accused of serious domestic violence and coercive control offences must show cause. We have required decision-makers to consider red flags and the views of victims and families, which victims and their families asked for. We have also introduced electronic monitoring for alleged serious domestic violence offenders who are released on bail. We have introduced serious domestic abuse prevention orders, which are very tough laws that deal with the worst criminals in the State, because domestic violence offenders are amongst the worst criminals in the State.

In relation to regional youth crime, we have introduced and renewed section 22C of the Bail Act. The time frame for that was cut in half by the Liberals and The Greens, who got into bed with each other in Parliament last week. We have delivered on new post and boast offences so that those who broadcast their misdeeds are routinely punished. We have delivered on our election commitment to provide a civil protection against religious vilification in the Anti-Discrimination Act. We have introduced new criminal offences for the incitement of racial hatred and tougher sentencing for displaying, by a public act, a Nazi symbol on or near a synagogue.

We have also worked hard to ensure that people across New South Wales have the right to be free to worship without harassment or disruption. We have toughened penalties for knife possession, doubling maximum penalties for knife crime, and we have increased police powers to find knives, because knife crime is unacceptable. We have introduced wandering powers, and those powers are working, as the Minister informed the House last week. There is much work to be done, but we will not sit on our hands when it comes to keeping the community safe.

### COBAR WATER SUPPLY

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (13:05):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health, representing the Minister for Water in the other place. The pipeline that supplies water to the residents of Cobar and to local industry has been at the end of its life for some time. A recent decision not to fund its replacement has created anxiety in the Cobar community and will drive increasing maintenance costs. What will the Government do to expedite funding, resolve cost recovery issues and replace the failing pipeline?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (13:05):** I thank the member for Barwon for his important question. I represent the Minister for Water in the other place, who is doing a terrific job, and she is happy to engage with the member for Barwon on this issue as well. I acknowledge the Independents, who bring forward a lot of questions about water. As the Minister representing the Minister for Water in this place, I do not ever get questions from The Nationals in that united Coalition. Did anyone listen to 2GB this morning? It was unbelievable. The Government is very aware of the concerns about the project and wants to ensure that the community has access to the water it needs. Delivery of stage one of the project will address critical risks of failure at the Nyngan and Hermidale pumping stations.

As the member may know, early works are underway right now to upgrade the pump stations to protect access to reliable water for the Cobar community. That work will be completed by the end of 2026 and will safeguard pumping infrastructure for at least another 50 years. Stage one is completely funded by the New South Wales and Commonwealth governments. That stage is important, and the New South Wales Government values the work that is being done on the project. However, after a thorough and rigorous final business case, the Government has paused plans to replace Cobar's oldest water supply pipeline due to substantial cost escalations. In relation to how the Government is protecting Cobar's water security, under the current circumstances both the existing life of the pipeline and the economic circumstances of the State do not warrant an immediate investment of that that scale at this time.

Preliminary cost estimates to replace the pipeline have increased to over \$300 million due to rising construction costs. The Government also has an obligation to make sure taxpayers get value for money. The existing parallel pipelines remain operational and will continue to be maintained by Cobar Water Board. It is

expected that the pipelines will continue to supply safe and secure water for more than a decade, but that does not mean that investment will not be warranted in the future. That is important to note. The New South Wales Government continues to work with Cobar Water Board and Bogan Shire Council to support the development, delivery, operation and maintenance of safe and secure water infrastructure via existing programs such as grants and local water utility technical and operational support. [*Extension of time*]

That will continue, following deferral of the decision to fund stage two of the project, with a focus on supporting Cobar Water Board to reduce the overall operating costs of its infrastructure. It is important to note a few things. I know the issue of water supply is very important to the member for Barwon. The final business case is a Cabinet-in-confidence document. Members need to understand the restrictions around that. However, the Minister for Water has committed to doing what she can to explore how much of that business case we can release without cutting across Cabinet-in-confidence provisions. That is very important. I understand that the Minister for Water will continue to engage with the member for Barwon on this matter. We will do what we can to inform the community about the business case.

As Cabinet Ministers, we are restricted in the way we can distribute and share Cabinet-in-confidence documentation. However, I know the Minister for Water has a deep passion and care for the bush. She is committed to ensuring that, wherever possible, we deliver more sustainable water supplies for the bush. More importantly, she is willing to work with the crossbench and with the member for Barwon, in particular, to ensure that his community continues to get the water it needs. His advocacy is listened to. We will not always agree, but I think the member for Barwon agrees that the ability to engage with the Government is something we both respect and treasure. I know that the member for Barwon and the Minister for Water in the other place will continue that process of engagement.

### ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:10):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the actions the Government has taken to ensure it builds the infrastructure that the growing communities of New South Wales need?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (13:10):** I thank the member for Shellharbour for the question. She is a passionate advocate for her community and a great Parliamentary Secretary for Roads, and Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Transport and Roads. She has been working hard, and I congratulate her. Members opposite would do very well to emulate some of the actions of the member for Shellharbour. She is one of just 17 members in this Chamber who met with me last week.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The members for East Hills, for Fairfield, for Riverstone, for Leppington, for Coogee, for Blacktown, for Strathfield, for Cabramatta, for Prospect, for Mount Druitt, for Granville, for Wollondilly, for Blue Mountains, for Shellharbour, for Campbelltown, for Pittwater and for Wakehurst all met with me. More members will meet with me next week to talk about the projects that the former Government ignored for 12 years. The member for Shellharbour has done very well. Along with the Federal member for Whitlam, she made a great announcement about Federal funding. That is another \$20 million towards planning for the M1 off-ramps. That is how things get done.

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Kiama to order for the first time. The member for Prospect will cease assisting the Minister with her answer.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** That is why members opposite are in opposition. As the Premier said, they are more interested in going to London conferences than in advocating for their communities. Earlier today, along with the member for Riverstone and the Federal member for Greenway, Michelle Rowland, the Premier and I made great announcements about progress on Bandon Road, Garfield Road East and Richmond Road. That is all part of a \$1.1 billion project. We are announcing progress. We have the houses and the people, but the Libs never built the infrastructure. That has been the story. It is not just about the Libs; it has been right across the board. The Government is doing things. I was surprised by a question from the member for Upper Hunter, who has never before asked me a question related to his shadow portfolio.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Upper Hunter will not be drawn into interjecting.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** They are too scared to do that. But the good news for the member for Upper Hunter is that the Government is escalating the Muswellbrook Bypass. We are doing the jobs that members opposite failed to do in their time in government. We have to be honest about the challenges that we inherited. We inherited tens of billions of dollars in cost overruns. Certain candidates for the Federal election, who used to

be in charge of the Roads and Transport portfolios, are wandering around the State offering free advice about how they could do it better. The bottom line is that they had a crack, and they did not make it. They could not do it. They left cost overruns and unfinished infrastructure. This Government inherited the largest debt ever handed from one government to another.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Davidson will come to order.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** What are we doing with the debt? We are getting it down—just like they went down in their electorates. [*Extension of time*]

We give credit to the former Government for the projects that did progress. We are seeing the benefits of the Sydney Metro project. However, we need to coordinate so that strong growth is matched in Western Sydney and regional areas across the State. We will build the infrastructure that people need. When we came to government, there were roads to nowhere—or, worse, no road to get there, like the school—

**Ms Prue Car:** Jindabyne!

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** —at Jindabyne, as the Deputy Premier has quite rightly said. Imagine building a school with no road to get there. We talk about the same thing in Western Sydney: unfinished roads. The Government is going through electorate by electorate.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I encourage members to talk to me. If they are in metropolitan areas—I am sorry because a lot of members opposite come from metropolitan areas and I do not really know them. That has not been relevant to me for the past couple of years. But if members talk to their colleagues—

**Mr Chris Minns:** They're in London.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Some of them have been in London, you're right.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** If members talk to their regional colleagues, they will learn that I will give them a fair hearing. I spoke to the member for Coffs Harbour about the Coffs Harbour bypass, which is progressing. It is getting further ahead. Those are the things we do in government. This is a government for everyone in New South Wales. The Premier and I were at the Warringah Freeway the other day to mark the breakthrough of the Western Harbour Tunnel. There has been great investment from the Federal Government. We had a meeting with the member for Pittwater and the member for Wakehurst last week. There is funding from the Federal Government this week, which is a great start. The Government will consider that in its budget. That is the difference between Government members and Opposition members.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** We work with the Federal Labor Government to deliver infrastructure. Members opposite cannot even negotiate or coordinate amongst themselves. They are fighting all the time.

## OVERSEAS MIGRATION

**Mr RON HOENIG:** By leave: Pursuant to Standing Order 131 (7), I table a written response from the Premier to a question asked by the member for Kiama during question time on 18 March 2024.

### *Documents*

## SMALL BUSINESS COMMISSIONER

### Reports

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Small Business Commissioner Act 2013, I announce receipt of the report of the Small Business Commissioner for the year ended 31 December 2024, received on 21 March 2025. I order that the report be printed.

### *Committees*

## LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

### Reports

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 27/58*, dated 25 March 2025. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

### **Inquiry**

**Mr JASON LI:** As Chair: In accordance with Standing Order 299 (1), I inform the House that the Public Accounts Committee has resolved to conduct an inquiry into the examination of the Auditor-General's performance audit reports December 2020 to December 2023, the full details of which are available on the committee's home page.

### *Petitions*

## **PETITIONS RECEIVED**

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

### **Sextortion and Intimate Image Abuse Penalties**

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to double the criminal penalties for sextortion and intimate image-based abuse offenders, received from **Mr Matt Cross**.

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

### **Nullica Lodge**

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to reopen Nullica Lodge, received from **Dr Michael Holland**.

## **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

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

The Hon. Ryan Park—General Practitioners and Junior Doctors' Pay—lodged 18 February 2025 (Mr Jordan Lane)

*[Notices of motions given.]*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

### *Bills*

## **WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (STANDALONE REGULATOR) BILL 2025**

### **Consideration in Detail**

#### **Consideration of the Legislative Council amendments.**

*Schedule of amendments referred to in message of 20 March 2025*

No. 1 **GRNS No. 1 [c2025-057F]**

Page 4, Schedule 1. Insert after line 2—

**[3A]Section 276C**

Insert after section 276B—

#### **276C Supervision of operation of work health and safety scheme by Parliamentary Committee**

- (1) As soon as practicable after the commencement of this section and the commencement of the first session of each Parliament, a committee of the Legislative Council must be designated by resolution of the Legislative Council as the designated committee for this section.
- (2) The resolution of the Legislative Council must specify the terms of reference of the committee, which must relate to supervising the operation of the work health and safety scheme established under this Act.
- (3) On the commencement of this section and until a committee is designated under subsection (1), the Standing Committee on Law and Justice is taken to be the designated committee.

No. 2 **IND No. 1 [A01.3]**

Page 6, after line 37, insert new:

## (3) Reporting Requirements

The SafeWork Commissioner will report every 6 months (including in an Annual Report) on the achievements, challenges, program management and regulatory engagement governance of SafeWork NSW. These reports will be posted on the SafeWork NSW website and include:

- (a) The High-Risk Workplaces and Repeat Offenders program list;
  - (b) A summary of action under the High-Risk Workplaces and Repeat Offenders program;
  - (c) A summary of completed investigations and their outcomes;
  - (d) In circumstances where the regulator considers it appropriate, a list of current investigations;
  - (e) A summary of the number and type of complaints by industry received by SafeWork NSW; and
  - (f) A summary of any action taken following advice received from the Safework Advisory Council.
- (4) No liability is incurred by the State in respect of anything done in good faith for the purpose of publishing information under this section.
- (5) No liability is incurred by a person publishing in good faith information that has been published under this section.
- (a) In this section—  
liability includes liability in defamation.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (14:31):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

The amendments moved and passed in the other place are aimed at increasing the oversight and transparency of the new standalone SafeWork regulator. The form of oversight for the new standalone agency was considered carefully by the Government in drafting the legislation. The Government determined that, as an executive agency, transparency and accountability would be achieved through an annual report process in addition to the review of the legislation and the normal estimates scrutiny. The amendment moved by The Greens will give the Standing Committee on Law and Justice oversight of SafeWork. The Government did not oppose this amendment.

The amendment moved by the Hon. Mark Latham seeks to improve transparency and accountability by causing the SafeWork commissioner, the regulator, to publish information on the achievements, challenges, program management and regulatory engagement governance of SafeWork NSW. This would occur every six months. The Government supports this amendment on the basis that having such reports available on the website will provide any worker, health and safety representative, union or member of the public with important information relating to ongoing investigations, companies that have been placed on the high-risk workplaces and repeat offenders program and, importantly, information on action taken in response to advice from the advisory council. The whole point of the bill is to bring SafeWork out from where it was hidden by the previous Government and bring it back to life to do its job properly—just as His Honour Justice McDougall recommended and as the Labor Party, in opposition, campaigned for. I commend the amendments to the House.

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (14:33):** I wish to confirm the Opposition's support for the amendments. In the interests of further transparency and accountability, they have our support.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the Legislative Council amendments be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

### Consideration in Detail

#### Consideration of the Legislative Council amendment.

*Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 20 March 2025*

No. 1 **OPP No. 2 [c2025-058B]**

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:35):** I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

I have spoken numerous times about the many measures our Government is progressing to tackle youth crime: criminal justice reforms, additional funding for programs targeting the underlying causes of youth crime, and other important measures like the Moree Bail Accommodation Program. There are many others, but I will not address them now. The bill extends an important bail measure designed to directly address concerns heard particularly across our regional communities but not exclusively about certain young people repeatedly breaking into homes and stealing cars, and then doing it again even when they are on bail.

The Government sought to extend this measure for three years until April 2028 to keep the community safe and to not have to return to this place and have the argument again and again. But in the other place, the Opposition colluded with The Greens to make sure this measure expires in October next year and not in 2028. The Opposition provided a few different reasons for teaming up with The Greens to defeat this measure. In the Legislative Council they said they wanted to make sure the measure is evaluated. It is fairly extraordinary reasoning that you have to sunset a provision—that is, end it—to evaluate it, particularly when there is already a review provision built into the bill. The Coalition and The Greens teamed up to end a program so they could then evaluate a program that they have already put to death, legislatively speaking. It does not make sense.

We heard speakers on the other side of the House, like the member for Bathurst, declare that we are at a crisis point. The member for Bathurst said that crime in the regions is a real problem, but that this bail measure should sunset in October next year because "this will mean that youth crime will remain on the Government's agenda". By that same logic, does the member for Bathurst suggest that we sunset the whole Crimes Act so that crime stays on the agenda? It is a ridiculous proposition, but then again so is his. We heard the truth of it from the member for Oxley, when he admitted he thought the amendment "allows us to beat you at the next election". The member basically admitted that the Opposition allied itself with The Greens to water down protections in section 22C of the Bail Act for the sake of playing politics. Let's be very clear: The member for Oxley let the cat out of the bag. He wants to bring this measure back so they can play politics with it again before the next State election.

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

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** That is the timing issue that Opposition members used to team up with their opponents, The Greens, to water down a tough new bail measure that we were using to keep communities in New South Wales safe. The member for Oxley might want to reflect on that after the comments from former police Minister David Elliott on a radio program last week, when he said of the Opposition, "But they are also at risk of having an internal fight in the public in the lead-up to the election, because half the Coalition wants to go—

**Mr Gareth Ward:** Point of order—

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Oh, for goodness sake!

**Mr Gareth Ward:** The member for Mount Druitt is right—for goodness sake. What is the relevance of some internal discussion that allegedly was had between Opposition members? There is no relevance. The Attorney General should be brought back to the leave of the bill.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** There is no point of order. The Attorney General will continue.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** That was a waste of time. Let me go back. The member for Oxley might want to reflect on that after the comments from former police Minister David Elliott on a radio program last week when he said of the Opposition:

They are also at risk of having an internal fight in the public in the lead-up to the election because half the Coalition wants to go red-hot hard on bail laws, particularly youth crime, and the other half of the Coalition, I can tell you as a fact, will want to water it down because they believe they will only win teal seats in the North Shore of Sydney if they go easy on youth crime.

That is from one of their own recently departed senior Ministers. The Opposition is so at sea on youth crime that it has a bill drummed up by the National Party that the Leader of the Opposition says was notified without consultation. *The Daily Telegraph* says the Opposition is in a civil war over youth crime, and the best it can do is play politics, pull a stunt, team up with The Greens and move an amendment that means the tougher bail laws this Government has put in place to protect communities will be in operation for a shorter period. That is the extent of it.

As much as I would like to throw the amendment out, the reality of the situation is that if we do not agree to the bill in its current form, with the measures that have come back from the Legislative Council, the tougher bail measure imposed by section 22C of the Bail Act will sunset thanks to the apparent new law-and-order, safety-keeping coalition of the Opposition and The Greens. We do not want that to happen, so we have no choice but to accept the bill as amended. I hope that by October next year, the Opposition has some kind of plan on youth crime that extends beyond teaming up with The Greens and staging stunts in this Parliament.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:41):** I am glad to hear the Government is supporting the date of the sunset clause that was specified by the Legislative Council. It is not as if the notion of a sunset clause is new to this bill. A sunset clause has always been part of the bill. The only difference between the two sides of Parliament is whether this matter should come back to Parliament for scrutiny 2½ years after section 22C commenced operation or whether it should now go beyond the initial 12-month period to, conveniently, just after the next election.

In what can only be described as a brilliant contribution to debate, the Attorney General said, "Why don't we have a sunset clause on all of the Crimes Act and bring it back next year?" The answer to that is that the only provision with a sunset clause is the one that he introduced, which is section 22C. That is why the Opposition reasonably has a different point of view as to what date the sunset clause should have. Although the Attorney General has tried to spin the debate in a frankly very intellectually dishonest way to suggest that bringing back youth crime provisions for further scrutiny by the Parliament somehow weakens them, the Coalition—without any dissent amongst any of its members, Liberal or Nationals—moved two amendments that would have made a real difference to community safety and deterred any further repeat crimes, in respect of a provision that is specifically directed towards serious repeat offences by young people.

Those amendments were to have electronic monitoring to ensure that bail conditions are complied with by repeat youth offenders for serious crimes and to impose a curfew, keeping them out of the community between 8.00 p.m. and 6.00 a.m., when a lot of those crimes are being committed. I recall the parents of one of my children's friends saying, "Nothing good happens after midnight." It is highly desirable to keep serious repeat offenders of youth crime in a safe environment when motor vehicles are being stolen and serious break and enters are occurring, and that is why the Coalition put forward those very sensible amendments to ensure community safety. But Labor and The Greens teamed up to vote against them.

It seems as if the Attorney General, in his commentary last week, momentarily forgot that he is actually in a Labor-Greens coalition Government. A majority in this House requires 47 seats. Labor has 45 seats and there are three Greens. With the three Greens votes, Labor always has a majority. It is a very rare occasion when The Greens are not voting with Labor on legislation in this Parliament, including in respect of the two amendments to keep regional communities much safer by having electronic monitoring of serious repeat offenders and imposing a curfew as a condition of their bail. Labor and The Greens worked together to water down the provisions the Coalition put forward to keep communities safe.

When the Attorney General refers to "so-called Opposition concern with the safety of communities", it is not just so-called—much more than you, old son. The Attorney General should have supported sensible Coalition amendments to keep our community safe, instead of going off to The Greens after he gave them a private briefing. Interestingly, we have no statistics as to the 12 months of operation of section 22C. No evaluation was promised by the Attorney General when he introduced the initial bill to Parliament 12 months ago. There were no statistics.

**Mr Gareth Ward:** No Data Daley.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS:** Yes, No Data Daley. There were misleading references to the bail refusal rates at first instance, with no actual figures on what the rates were after an appeal on the refusal of bail was conducted. We know from reported Supreme Court judgements that there are instances when bail is refused and the Supreme Court then allows bail under section 22C. There are no statistics on what the true rates are. As I referred to in the second reading debate, the deputy secretary of the department said that the rate is not a true measure of how section 22C is operating because many of the serious offences would have been refused bail without section 22C. We do not know how this provision is operating. As the member for Kiama said, we do not know where we stand with No Data Daley, and the issue is too important for us to operate in a void of data and analysis. We want communities to be safe. As the Opposition said in the debate, the best youth crime measure is one that deters young people from committing crime altogether.

We have data from electronic monitoring in other assessed areas, like parole for domestic violence offenders. In a very detailed Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research study of over 1,000 people, measuring a control group without electronic monitoring against a group with electronic monitoring, there was a 33 per cent reduction in reoffending for domestic violence. Electronic monitoring seems to have an important impact on reoffending. If electronic monitoring in this area stops young people reoffending by any significant percentage, that means fewer young people are in juvenile detention, which is a good outcome for the community. It means less crime being committed and fewer young people in custody, which is a win-win for everybody. But the Government and the Attorney General would not support those measures. He gave no explanation for his reason because he did not need one. He just needed to get the three votes of The Greens, and that was not going to happen with the Australian Labor Party members in this place.

I cannot stand a selective quotation. If a member is going to quote David Elliott on 2GB, they have to include the fact that he said, "I'd bring it back before 1 October 2026 too if I was in Opposition, because you keep the issue alive and you keep the performance of the Government on this issue under scrutiny." That is what David Elliott said. That is important and that is what the Opposition is doing. We are keeping the performance of the Government's Youth Justice initiatives under scrutiny. All I can say to the Attorney General is that the Opposition will promote other community safety-focused measures that will shine a light on the impacts these terrible crimes are having on victims and the community, which is very important for the legal system to observe. Watch this space, Mr Attorney General.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (14:51):** I speak on behalf of The Greens in support of the sunset clause amendment that has come back from the Legislative Council. I find it absurd that Labor is saying that The Greens are in cahoots with the Coalition and the Coalition is saying that we are in cahoots with Labor. We are not in cahoots with anyone. Unlike the old parties, we do not take donations from corporations. We are not beholden to anyone. They love to hate on us. The shadow Attorney General is correct that this is a minority Government. However, there are 14 members on the crossbench, so the idea that we are doing anything in cahoots is absurd. The upper House is meant to be the house of review and we expect legislation to be interrogated there. When these bail laws were introduced they were fast-tracked. My community is 100 per cent being impacted by youth crime.

I am on the Law and Safety Committee, and the chair is in the House now, which is conducting an inquiry and holding hearings around the State. This is a nuanced matter, and anyone who suggests otherwise is kidding themselves. I have listened to victims, and their stories are horrendous. I have also listened to community organisations making evidence-based cases. They are crying out for more recurrent funding. They want the Government to listen instead of winding back programs. The Government should not tell members that everything is being done. All we know from the Attorney General is that bail refusals are up. My goodness, that is not data that tells us very much. Are bail refusals the mark of success? Are they the mark of diverting young people from the criminal justice system? No, they are not. Love us or hate us, The Greens are not beholden to any of the major parties. We will continue to stand up for our communities and have our voice heard.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (14:53):** The bail amendment bill proved from the word go that this response is all about politics and not about outcomes. It was about satisfying a couple of key stakeholders rather than looking at the data and responding accordingly. There has been a lot of talk about data in this debate. What was that?

**Mr Michael Daley:** Nothing. He was talking to me, not you.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Absolutely nothing. That would be right. On brand, as usual.

**Mr Edmond Atalla:** Paranoid, are we?

**Mr GARETH WARD:** They have a nickname for you over there. They call you "glove box", because every time you open your mouth all this useless crap falls out everywhere. Can you be quiet and let me finish? We know about data.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** Point of order: The member for Kiama cannot insult MPs. I call on the member to withdraw that comment.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I uphold the point of order. I ask the member for Kiama to withdraw that comment.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** The truth cannot be withdrawn, Mr Assistant Speaker. We know that 64 per cent of children who have been incarcerated are back in front of a judge within 12 months, often after committing more violent crimes. We also know that 31 per cent of children who are detained on remand are let go or found not guilty. The bill is not about increasing penalties for specific crimes; it is about the way bail works. As I said in the substantive debate, there are two tests for bail: One test applies to all offences and the other applies to select offences. In this debate the Government has applied both tests to children that they would not apply to adults for the very same crimes.

The Attorney General has criticised the Legislative Council's processes and gave some woolly-headed rhetoric about how this amendment is unfair. For the first time in my entire career I commend the Legislative Council, because on this particular occasion its members have done something right. They have said they will place a reduced sunset clause on the bill so before the end of this Parliamentary term we can assess whether the legislation works. Just about every member I heard speak from this side of the House welcomes that sunset clause. I have some differences of opinion with members of some regional electorates, but I absolutely appreciate that

they want this epidemic addressed and they feel this legislation is the way to do that. I will not go over again why I think that is not necessarily correct, although I accept that something needs to be done.

In his second reading speech the Attorney General said that there needed to be more data. The extensive sunset period originally set when the legislation was introduced has been reduced. I think that is entirely appropriate, because the definition of stupidity is continuing to do the same thing over and over again. I do not think any member of this House wants to harm young people if there are better ways. Whilst I accept that this is the Government's policy, we need to ensure that responses are underpinned by evidence, and that has been substantially lacking in this debate. It is disappointing that there has been a bit of mudslinging from the Government around deals and backchannelling and all of that sort of nonsense. This is not the right response, and many Government members have told me outside of this Chamber that they are not happy with it.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** No-one talks to you.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Yes, they do. Many Government members have expressed their concerns, as they bravely did in caucus.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** Go on, name them.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** I am not going to name people who have confidential conversations with me, just as I am not going to talk about the comments you have made to members about how you should be in the ministry but are not there yet.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Order! Members will cease having conversations across the table.

**Mr GARETH WARD:** Only one person on that side of the House takes those comments seriously. In fact, they wrote a book about your faction. It's called "The power of one". I simply want to see this debate return to where it should be, and that is an evidence-based, informed debate. I want to see young people, victims and communities safe. But this bill is all about politics and not outcomes. We will see that when this legislation concludes and hopefully it will never return

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.** [*Quorum called for.*]

[*The bells having been rung and a quorum having formed, business resumed.*]

## JUSTICES OF THE PEACE AMENDMENT BILL 2025

### First Reading

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

### Second Reading Speech

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (15:03):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Justices of the Peace Amendment Bill 2025. Justices of the peace—or JPs, as they are commonly known—are volunteers appointed by the Governor of New South Wales that come from all sections of the community. The functions of justices of the peace are regulated by a framework that includes the Justices of the Peace Act 2002 and the Oaths Act 1900, under which they have three primary functions: witnessing statutory declarations, witnessing affidavits, and certifying copies of original documents to be true and accurate. There are currently around 66,000 justices of the peace across the State. They provide services in many places throughout the community, helping New South Wales citizens every day at key moments in their lives.

As the Attorney General, on behalf of all members of this place, I take a moment to thank all of the justices of the peace that are scattered across the State, in every single one of our electorates, for the amazing work that they do. They are volunteers that take their work incredibly seriously. If the Government had to step into the breach to fulfil the roles that justices of the peace currently do, the cost to the taxpayer would be enormous. I genuinely thank them all for the work that they do.

The bill will amend the Justices of the Peace Act 2002 to provide New South Wales justices of the peace with a statutory protection from liability—in effect, an immunity from suit that applies when functions are carried out in good faith. This is an important change that acknowledges the vital role that justices of the peace perform

for the New South Wales community and legal system by providing voluntary witnessing and certification services to members of the public for official or legal purposes. The statutory protection provided for in the bill will also align New South Wales with most other Australian jurisdictions, which have similar protections. This reform was informed by targeted consultation undertaken in 2024 with key stakeholder organisations. I thank stakeholders for their contributions to the consultation.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. Item [1] of schedule 1 introduces proposed section 9B to the Justices of the Peace Act 2002, which provides that a justice of the peace is not subject to any form of civil liability, including actions, claims and demands, for acts or omissions done in good faith in the exercise of a function as a justice of the peace or in a reasonable belief that the act or omission was done in the exercise of a function as a justice of the peace. If the necessary elements are satisfied, the protection will provide a justice of the peace with a complete defence to any civil action, claim or demand by a recipient of their services, or another person, in relation to loss or damage caused by the justice of the peace.

While this is a broad protection, it is not absolute. Several features of proposed section 9B of the Justices of the Peace Act 2002 ensure that both justices of the peace and the members of the community who use their services are appropriately protected. A key element of the protection is that it applies only when a justice of the peace acts in good faith. This means that the protection will not cover intentional misconduct by justices of the peace, including malicious or dishonest conduct. The protection also does not extend to circumstances where a justice of the peace has engaged in criminal conduct—for example, fraud. Also, as the protection will only apply to acts and omissions done during the exercise of a justice of the peace function, or where there is a reasonable belief of this, the protection will not apply if the conduct falls outside the scope of a JP's statutory functions.

If the protection does not apply, because an act is not done either in good faith and/or in the exercise of a statutory function, a legal remedy will remain available for consumers of justice of the peace services who may have cause to take legal action against a JP for any injury suffered. I want to stress that existing obligations and standards applicable to justices of the peace will remain unchanged. New South Wales justices of the peace owe a duty of care when providing services to members of the public, which means they have a legal obligation to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to another person through their actions or omissions. This duty of care will continue to apply. Appointment as a justice of the peace is subject to a code of conduct set out in schedule 1 to the Justices of the Peace Regulation 2020, which outlines the acceptable standards of conduct for justices of the peace. In accordance with the code of conduct, justices of the peace are required to be familiar with and follow the provisions of the *Justice of the Peace Handbook* every time they carry out a function. They must be independent, impartial and honest and must not behave in a disreputable way. The code of conduct will also continue to apply.

Schedule 1 [2] confirms that new section 9B of the Justices of the Peace Act will apply prospectively to acts done or omitted to be done by justices of the peace after the commencement of the bill. The bill provides that the amendments will commence upon assent. Commencement of the bill will not impact any actions, claims or demands against justices of the peace that may have already been made or commenced, including any legal proceedings on foot. Justices of the peace deserve to be protected from liability when performing their functions in good faith. The reform recognises the significant contribution they make to the legal system and the community generally. Once again, I take this opportunity to thank all JPs for their service. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2025**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 19 February 2025.**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:10):** I make a contribution to debate in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. The bill is critical in addressing the housing challenges facing New South Wales. It streamlines our planning system, supports the efficient delivery of housing and provides much-needed certainty to the construction industry, local communities and all stakeholders involved in the planning and development process. The bill reflects the pragmatic and forward-thinking approach of the Minns Labor Government. The housing crisis in our State is real. Families are struggling to find affordable homes, young people are being priced out of the housing market and renters are experiencing unprecedented financial pressures.

The previous 12 years have seen our planning system become a bottleneck, delaying the supply of housing and frustrating those who seek to invest, build and live within our communities. The legacy of inaction, inefficiency and red tape must change, and the bill is a clear response to that need for reform. The bill builds upon the Government's ongoing reforms to the planning system, particularly in development assessment and

determination. It responds directly to recent court decisions that have introduced uncertainty into planning assessment decisions, including cases before the Court of Appeal and the Land and Environment Court. In some instances, those decisions have complicated the ability of consent authorities to modify development consents, creating unnecessary delays and additional legal uncertainty.

The bill seeks to amend sections 4.55 and 4.56 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act—EP&A Act—to clarify the powers of a consent authority to modify a development consent, ensuring that simple modifications are not bogged down by bureaucratic hurdles. Further, it addresses inconsistencies in how public submissions are counted under the planning system. By amending schedule 1 to the EP&A Act, the bill provides clear guidelines on how submissions are to be received and counted, ensuring fairness and consistency in community consultation. The amendment will enhance transparency and efficiency in determining consent authority responsibilities for State significant development applications.

Another crucial element of the bill is its provision for resolving inconsistencies between concept development applications and subsequent development applications. The Land and Environment Court's decision in *Castle Hill Panorama Pty Ltd v The Hills Shire Council* clarified how consent authorities can address inconsistencies in concept approvals and subsequent applications. The bill builds upon that decision to provide certainty and flexibility for consent authorities, allowing for sensible and pragmatic planning outcomes while maintaining integrity and oversight. The bill also seeks to streamline the State significant development process.

Under current provisions, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is required to obtain and publish advice from the Independent Planning Commission before declaring certain types of residential development as State significant development. That requirement adds an unnecessary layer of duplication and delay. The bill removes that requirement and allows the Housing Delivery Authority to take on an advisory role for residential State significant developments, enabling a more agile and efficient decision-making process. Additionally, the bill introduces a significant change by reducing the minimum exhibition period for most residential State significant development applications from 28 days to 14 days. That aligns with the exhibition requirements for local development applications assessed by councils and ensures that critical housing projects are not delayed by excessively long consultation periods. The reduced period maintains adequate opportunities for public input while accelerating the assessment process.

The bill also modernises the framework for affordable housing contributions. By clarifying when a condition requiring an affordable housing contribution can be imposed on a development consent, it provides greater certainty for councils and developers alike. The bill further amends the State-led rezoning process, allowing all environmental planning instruments, not just local environmental plans, to impose affordable housing contributions. Those reforms will help to ensure that affordable housing is provided where it is needed most and that contributions are collected in a fair and transparent manner.

These reforms are necessary, practical and timely. They address longstanding inefficiencies in our planning system and clear the path for a more responsive, streamlined and fair development process. They are about reducing red tape, improving efficiency and ensuring that we can deliver much-needed housing in the right locations, at the right time and in a way that benefits New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government is committed to addressing the housing challenge head-on. We understand that there is no single solution—no magic fix. But we also know that we cannot afford to continue delaying much-needed reforms. The time for action is now. The bill is not the end of our work in reforming the planning system, but it is a crucial step forward in making the system work better for everyone—home buyers, renters, investors, developers and the local community. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (15:17):** I speak on behalf of the Opposition regarding the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. From the outset, I thank the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for his consultation with the Opposition on the bill through the shadow Minister, the Hon. Scott Farlow, and acknowledge the Minister's presence in the Chamber. In large part we agree with the substantive amendments that the bill proposes, but there are some areas where we have flagged concerns with the Government. Those concerns have also been identified by many stakeholders and members of the crossbench. I understand that amendments may be moved by others in this place, which the Opposition will consider. In addition, following the passage of the legislation from this place, the Opposition may move amendments in the other place to address issues in the bill.

The Coalition remains firmly committed to increasing housing supply in New South Wales and working constructively with all parties to improve our planning system and remove the barriers to getting homes built. We are in the midst of a housing crisis that demands practical and strategic solutions. It is essential that we work together to increase the availability of housing, while ensuring that new development is supported by necessary infrastructure and that communities are consulted along the way. We know that building more homes is essential, but it must be done the right way, supported by the infrastructure that growing communities need to thrive. That

is why strategic planning is an important part of supporting housing growth across our State and ensuring that the planning system delivers all we need, including liveable communities, employment opportunities and the infrastructure necessary to support movement from one to the other.

Planning reform presents an opportunity to streamline the planning process and unlock new housing supply while maintaining the integrity and accountability of the system. Our planning reforms in government were aimed at improving certainty in the system and providing meaningful consultation with the community. A stable and predictable planning framework is critical to encouraging investment and ensuring that housing targets are met in a way that reflects the needs of local communities. It is important to remember that building homes is a fundamental part of the planning system, but it is not the entire system. Our planning system needs to allow for places for the people of New South Wales to live but also places for us to work, for our recreation and for delivering economic opportunities for our State now and into the future. It also must be underpinned by an understanding of how we plan for, deliver and integrate the infrastructure that supports it all.

The development of the Greater Cities Commission, the Six Cities strategy, the *Greater Sydney Region Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities*, and the district strategic plans that underpinned these, were all part of this strategic planning approach. The bill removes references to the "Six Cities Region" in the Act, giving the Minister the power to declare any area of the State to be a region or district. We understand that the Government did not like the Greater Cities Commission and is taking a new approach. However, in introducing the Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill 2023, the Government assured us this would not be the case. The Minister said:

Importantly, the bill does not change the process for making strategic plans and it does not change the content of those plans.

He went on to say:

... a district strategic plan prepared for a district within the Six Cities Region must still address the planning priorities, including the number of net additional dwellings required for each local government area within the district for the next five, 10 and 20 years.

The bill before the House does away with all these things in the legislation. We do, however, take the Government on its word that an updated Sydney regional plan is being worked on and will soon be finalised, but it is not a requirement of this bill. Under the bill, district strategic plans "may" be prepared by the Minister, and if the Minister requires it then the secretary "must" complete it. Formerly, it was a requirement for the secretary to prepare such plans. This bill affords the Minister significantly more discretion when it comes to strategic planning, rather than compelling such planning under legislation, as presently exists.

Likewise, we take the Government on its word that 10- and 20-year housing targets are being progressed, but this bill abolishes the definition of "housing target", removing the requirement for them to be formulated for the next five, 10 and 20 years. In addition, we understand that housing targets envisaged under the bill will be marked on completions within the period in line with the housing accord agreement. Again, this moves away from the previous definition that required "net additional dwellings", so that 1,000 knockdown rebuilds in an area that did not add one additional dwelling would not be counted towards the housing target.

Similarly, the existing definitions allow for an additional target of development consents, something that was within the purview of a local council, rather than a completion target, which it may have no control over with the pressures of countervailing market forces and the imposition of additional State contributions hampering the delivery of new homes. Concern around the dilution of strategic planning requirements under the bill has been expressed by the Committee for Sydney, the Planning Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Architects. Likewise, these bodies have raised concern with the changes under schedule 1 [24] that a regulation may prescribe circumstances in which a planning proposal does not need to give effect to a strategic plan. I invite the Minister to outline potential scenarios that are envisaged under this power and address those concerns in his reply.

A concern has also been expressed from industry regarding the removal of the requirement under section 3.9 (3A) of the Act that requires the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to issue written advice that a local strategic planning statement is consistent with the regional and district plans. The Government's rationale for removing this requirement is that it only applied in the Six Cities Region and this amendment provides consistency across the State. It is my contention that this was the case because, as it stands, it was only in those regions that there were applicable regional and district plans, and that only councils in those areas were provided with a local housing target. It is our view that this was a relevant safeguard when introduced to give effect to district and regional plans at the local strategic planning level and it is a safeguard that should be maintained to provide consistency with strategic plans that are developed by the department.

The Government's introduction of the Housing Delivery Authority [HDA] in January this year has introduced a new body into our planning system that was not envisaged by the Act. The HDA is an advisory body, and applications that it recommends to the Minister proceed as State significant development applications still need to go through the SSD process with the checks and balances that it entails. The Opposition is satisfied that

this body does not perform the function of a prescribed planning body as was envisaged under the Act and, as such, should not be subject to the same requirements. However, like many stakeholders, the Opposition would like to continue to see the utmost transparency around the determinations and recommendations that are made by the HDA to increase confidence within the community about its operation.

Local Government NSW has expressed its concern that the legislation as drafted will remove the requirement for transcription records of HDA meetings and resolutions to be made publicly available. This is a concern shared by the Opposition. However, we understand that it is not the intention of the Government for this to be the case. Similarly, Local Government NSW, along with the Planning Institute of Australia, the NSW Institute of Architects and the Committee for Sydney have all expressed concerns with the measure in the bill to reduce the minimum public exhibition period from 28 days to 14 days for State significant development that involves residential accommodation. These concerns are shared by the Opposition.

The bill seeks to clarify when an affordable housing contribution can be imposed, especially if a State environmental planning policy identifies a need for affordable housing in a specific area and the condition is authorised by a local environmental plan through an affordable housing contributions plan or a SEPP. The amendment will apply retrospectively to 1 March 2019 and contributions are to be reinvested where they were collected or in an adjacent area. The Urban Taskforce has raised concerns that these provisions remove the current safeguards that are in place against excessive or unreasonable contributions under section 7.32 (1) of the Act—namely, that at least one of the following applies: first, the development will or is likely to reduce the availability of affordable housing in the area; second, the development will create a need for affordable housing in the area; and, third, the development is only allowed because of the initial zoning or rezoning of the site. I invite the Minister to respond to the concerns articulated by the Urban Taskforce in explaining the Government's rationale for the removal of this provision in his reply.

The primary intention of the bill is to make substantive responses to decisions of the courts that have had a significant impact on the operation of the planning system in our State. The Coalition supports the changes that are moved in this regard and have found a broad cross-section of support for these amendments amongst stakeholders in order to provide clarity and consistency. Firstly, the bill clarifies the powers to modify a development consent. Under the current framework, there has been some uncertainty about whether a consent authority can modify a condition of consent if the modification does not change the overall development itself following the decision of the court in *Ku-ring-gai Council v Buyozo Pty Ltd*.

The bill makes it clear that a consent authority is not prevented from modifying a condition of consent under sections 4.55 (1A) and (2) and 4.56 (1) simply because the change only affects the condition, not the development itself. This is a sensible amendment that will hopefully allow for modification applications and prevent cumbersome workarounds that have been developed in order to get projects built more quickly, where there is no change at all in what has been approved. Secondly, the bill also defines how public submissions are to be counted during the development assessment process, addressing the decision of the court in *Filetron Pty Ltd v Innovate Partners Pty Ltd atf Banton Family Trust 2 and Goulburn Mulwaree Council*.

There has been some ambiguity about whether late submissions should be considered when determining the level of public support or objection to a proposal. Under this legislation, only submissions made within the formal public exhibition period will be counted for the purpose of determining a consent authority's decision, which is particularly important for the triggers in the Act that determine the consent authority. In closing—which I am sure members are all delighted to hear—the last of the changes made by the bill in this regard concerns a response to confirm the decision of the court in *Castle Hill Panorama Pty Ltd v The Hills Shire Council*, which makes changes to the Act regarding concept approvals and subsequent development applications.

The changes uphold the decision of the court and confirm that there are no jurisdictional barriers to a consent authority imposing a condition of development consent that requires the modification or surrender of a concept approval. This means that even if a subsequent development application is inconsistent with an original concept approval, a consent authority will have the power to impose reasonable conditions to enable the development to proceed. Planning reform must take steps towards greater planning certainty by improving assessment processes and removing unnecessary red tape. A clear, predictable framework will give developers and local councils the confidence to bring forward projects that deliver homes in the right places, supported by infrastructure. We cannot talk about increasing housing supply without addressing infrastructure. More homes mean more pressures on local roads, schools, hospitals and public transport, which is why strategic planning is so important as we build our State and its cities for the future.

On behalf of the shadow Minister, I thank the following stakeholders for their engagement on the bill: Australian Institute of Architects, Committee for Sydney, Housing Industry Association, Local Government NSW, Planning Institute of Australia, Property Council, Urban Development Institute of Australia and the Urban Taskforce. In this place, we are all committed to ensuring that we are able to provide more homes for the people

of New South Wales, but we also need to ensure that in achieving this aim we also plan for and provide the best building blocks for liveable communities, now and into the future.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (15:29):** I contribute to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. I share the desire of the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to see the planning system operate at its full potential to deliver more houses and jobs across New South Wales. It is vital that the planning system is administered to meet these key objectives set by the Minns Labor Government. The provisions in the bill will provide better clarity, more certainty and greater confidence for all those engaging with the planning system. We are in the middle of a very difficult housing challenge—one that does not have a quick solution or easy fixes. On behalf of the Government, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces has worked tirelessly to pull every possible lever to get the planning system fit for purpose again. When we listen to the Minister outline his reforms to the planning system, he has a simple message about why the Government is making changes. It is clear that the Government wants to provide opportunities for young people, families and local key workers to live closer to their jobs, close to their immediate families so grandparents can see their grandchildren grow up, and provide support to working parents.

The Government wants to provide housing choices—well-designed, good quality homes nearer to public infrastructure and open spaces. The Government wants young people, families and key local workers to be able to live in the communities they choose. These opportunities and choices have been slowly whittled away before our eyes. Under part 4 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, or the EP&A Act, all development applications must be placed on public exhibition for a set period, depending on the type of application. This process allows community members and other interested parties to have their say, whether they wish to comment on, support or object to a proposed development. The Government acknowledges that community participation is an important part of our planning framework, and it is essential that submissions made during this process are handled with consistency, transparency and integrity. Under part 4 of the EP&A Act, the consent authority is required to consider any submissions made in the assessment and determination of a development application. For State significant development applications, the planning secretary is required to publish submissions received. The department does this in line with its published submissions policy, which guides the management and consideration of submissions on State significant project applications and other development applications.

Division 3 of schedule 1 to the EP&A Act outlines provisions for public exhibition, with section 15 allowing for submissions during the formal exhibition period. However, it currently does not explicitly state that submissions must be made within that period to be considered a duly made submission. This has led to confusion about what qualifies as a duly made submission for the purposes of the EP&A Act. To complicate matters further, the New South Wales Court of Appeal's decision in *Filetron Pty Ltd v Innovate Partners Pty Ltd atf Banton Family Trust 2 and Goulburn Mulwaree Council* [2024] NSWCA 41 found that submissions received after the close of the exhibition period may still constitute a duly made submission for the purposes of the EP&A Act. This has led to important consequences. The number and nature of submissions received in respect of an application can directly influence who the relevant consent authority is for that application. In the case of State significant development applications, receiving 50 or more public objections requires the matter to be determined by the Independent Planning Commission unless it relates to infill affordable housing, or the application is made by, or on behalf of, a public authority where the Minister is the consent authority.

Uncertainty around counting submissions for a State significant development project is creating unnecessary delays and, in some cases, the need to seek further legal advice to identify who the consent authority is for a particular application. This is clearly inefficient and unsustainable. The bill proposes to amend the EP&A Act to ensure that only those submissions received within the designated exhibition period for a plan, application or other matter are counted for specific purposes under the EP&A Act. These include determining the relevant consent authority for a development application; establishing whether a person has objector appeal rights under section 8.8 of the EP&A Act; notifying submitters of the determination of a development application or application to modify a development consent. Importantly, although the bill clarifies when a submission may be counted for the purposes of the EP&A Act, it does not prevent a consent authority from considering or otherwise taking into account the issues raised in a submission that is made outside the relevant exhibition period during its assessment. This important safeguard makes sure that all voices are heard while maintaining the integrity, transparency, and efficiency of the planning system.

By clarifying what constitutes a duly made submission for formal planning purposes, the amendments proposed in the bill will restore confidence in the planning system for all stakeholders. They will eliminate the current inefficiencies, streamline decision-making and uphold the principle of fairness in community participation. This bill contains important planning reforms. They are another necessary step towards a more transparent, consistent and effective planning framework in New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (15:36):** My contribution today to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025 focuses on the implications the bill has for strategic planning. My motivation is pretty simple: I do not want to see strategic planning in Greater Sydney weakened. As a former mayor, I know firsthand the challenges councils face when trying to accommodate growth responsibly. We are given housing targets, we are pressured to approve rezonings, and yet we have no certainty about when and where infrastructure will be delivered. Without a State-led strategic, long-term plan for Greater Sydney that is regularly updated, councils are left in the dark, and are forced to make decisions in isolation while our communities bear the consequences of poor planning, inadequate services and worsening congestion.

A region plan is essential to guide sustainable growth, infrastructure investment and land use planning across Sydney's interconnected metropolitan area. Without it, there is no overarching framework to coordinate housing, jobs, transport and environmental protections, leaving the city vulnerable to piecemeal development and infrastructure shortfalls. In its current form, the bill has the potential to weaken strategic planning in Greater Sydney by changing legislative requirements to firstly, not explicitly have a region plan for Greater Sydney; secondly, not require its review every five years; and, thirdly, for planning proposals to not have to adhere to the plan. Without a long-term, integrated plan for Greater Sydney, we risk uncoordinated urban expansion, leading to infrastructure deficits in, for example, schools, transport, public spaces and jobs, or development occurring in unsafe locations, such as bushfire-prone areas.

That is very relevant to the northern beaches and my electorate of Wakehurst. Five-year housing targets are essential to addressing Sydney's housing crisis, but targets alone will not deliver a liveable, sustainable city. Without complementary strategic planning, we risk unchecked development that fails to balance economic, social and environmental needs. As climate change intensifies, the risks of bushfires, floods and coastal erosion become even more severe—I have seen it all in my electorate of Wakehurst—demanding proactive, spatially aware planning that integrates climate resilience and hazard mitigation into every aspect of urban development. That type of planning is essential. Growth must be planned, not just permitted, to ensure that housing is delivered safely, sustainably and in the right places. That is why I will be moving amendments to the bill.

A number of amendments, which I understand the Government has chosen not to support, would explicitly require the making of a regional plan for Greater Sydney and remove the ability under section 3.8 of the Act for regulations to override the need for planning proposals to align with a strategic plan. Strategic planning is not an optional extra. It is fundamental to delivering a well-planned, liveable and resilient Sydney. I urge all members to consider the long-term consequences of removing those safeguards. However, I am pleased to have worked with the Government to agree on an amendment that regional plans will be reviewed every five years. That is an important safeguard that will help our planning system to be responsive, evidence based and hopefully aligned with Sydney's long-term needs.

I support the amendments foreshadowed by the member for Sydney, which are critical to ensuring continued public transparency and meaningful community engagement in planning decisions. I appreciate the opportunity to have worked with the Government on those amendments. I also thank and acknowledge the Committee for Sydney, which has engaged critically with the bill, bringing its planning expertise to bear in a sincere effort to improve the bill. I give a special shout-out to Estelle Gretch, who is a superstar.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:39):** I speak in support of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. I also thank the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for his mighty work on the task of reforming the planning system on behalf of the Government. My contribution to debate focuses on the bill's provisions relating to the strategic planning framework. In essence, planning should be relatively straightforward, practical and focused on delivering the homes, jobs and infrastructure our communities need. That applies not just to development approvals but also to strategic planning. With the repeal of the Greater Cities Commission Act 2022 by the Parliament in late 2023, this Government brought the responsibility for strategic planning back into the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

While the now-repealed Act had its place and exercised its functions for the time it was needed, there was a case for eliminating the duplicative resources of the Greater Cities Commission and the department. Therefore, as mentioned, the Parliament agreed to repeal the Act. As the Minister said at the time, repeal of the Greater Cities Commission Act 2022, and the subsequent abolition of the Greater Cities Commission, was a necessary first step to "create a clear line of accountability for the operation and management of planning across the public sector". The reform was among the first measures taken by the Minister in the ongoing reform of the planning system. However, legacy issues from the Six Cities model remain in legislation, creating unnecessary complexity, which can and should be removed following the Greater Cities Commission repeal.

The bill will amend the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to remove references to the "Six Cities Region" and provide the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces with the power to declare any area of the State, including those areas that currently make up the Six Cities, to be a region for the purposes of that

Act. That will enable a targeted approach to strategic planning for the Greater Sydney area, as well as all other areas across the State. At the same time, it will make the strategic planning system framework apply equally across the State, making it easier for the community and stakeholders to understand. That allows the Parliament to create a more streamlined and equitable planning system, whether you live in Belrose or Ballina. The legacy provisions have made it harder to deliver the necessary strategic planning to secure the future pipeline of homes and jobs for the people of New South Wales.

Contrary to some concerns, and recent misguided commentary in the media and by stakeholders, the bill does not remove or diminish the role of strategic planning in the New South Wales planning system. Rather, it strengthens and prioritises the strategic vision for our State. The bill puts in place simpler, more consistent provisions. Most importantly, it will clear the way to prepare and deliver a new strategic land use plan for Greater Sydney. Now that the Government has announced and is implementing important, necessary and urgent initiatives to unlock housing opportunities through the transport oriented development and low- and mid-rise housing policy reforms, it is refocusing work on long-term strategic planning. The Government is currently prioritising the review and update of the Greater Sydney Region Plan while progressing with other important planning policy reforms.

Currently, different provisions under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act apply to strategic planning within the former Six Cities Region compared with the rest of the State. That creates unnecessary complexity and inequity. The proposed amendments in the bill will re-establish a consistent framework across New South Wales. I point out some of the key changes to the strategic planning framework. The bill will provide a single, uniform process for declaring regions or districts across the State through a ministerial order; make district plans optional rather than mandatory in all parts of the State, reducing unnecessary planning layers but allowing flexibility if they are needed; ensure housing targets apply consistently to any strategic planning region or local government area in New South Wales; make the approval of local strategic planning statements consistent across the State; and establish flexible review cycles for strategic plans so that they can remain relevant and responsive to changing conditions.

Those amendments will have a delayed commencement by proclamation to ensure that any other references to the Six Cities Region in other legislation can be amended to account for the proposed changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. That will ensure there is no disruption to other important policy initiatives such as the Transport Oriented Development Program under the Housing State Environmental Planning Policy, while paving the way for a new plan for Greater Sydney. Existing strategic plans will remain in force until they are replaced or revoked. That means key regional plans like the Greater Sydney Region Plan and associated district plans, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Regional Plan, the Central Coast Regional Plan and the Hunter Regional Plan will continue to guide growth and development. Another key element is ensuring the continuation of planning panels in Greater Sydney.

To align with changes to the strategic planning framework, the bill proposes making the necessary amendments to sections of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act that reference district-based planning panels. The bill ensures the constitution of those panels and the areas they serve remain unchanged. The changes are needed because they retain continuity while simplifying the system and removing outdated references to the Six Cities Region framework. By making the amendments, the bill will simplify the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act by removing outdated references, improving clarity and creating certainty; enable a new strategic land use plan for Greater Sydney to be prepared and delivered; deliver a consistent and modern strategic planning framework that can be applied across the whole of New South Wales; and create more flexible strategic planning processes, allowing for more targeted and timely planning responses that meet local and regional needs.

Those changes will help the New South Wales Government get on with the job of delivering more housing, infrastructure and jobs across New South Wales. By removing the Six Cities model from the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act, this Government is demonstrating its commitment to improving strategic planning across the State. The bill will make important changes that will guarantee the continuity of the strategic planning framework for years to come. The changes made by the bill will provide greater clarity and further reduce unnecessary duplicative functions in the planning system. More importantly, it will clear the way to prepare and promptly deliver a new strategic land use plan for Greater Sydney as well as other areas of the State. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (15:48):** The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025 proposes to abolish the Six Cities plan. Passing the bill will mean the entire Sydney metropolitan area no longer has a growth strategy. New South Wales residents, planners and local governments will therefore be flying blind in future planning as the Sydney metropolitan area grows and evolves. The bill replaces five years of planning frameworks with the need to start over again. I speak today not only as the member for Kellyville, which is wholly within the North West Growth Area, but also on behalf of every person who lives within the Sydney

metropolitan area, every local government area, every council area and every planner within those areas, who will need to adapt to what can only be termed horrific changes to planning in the Sydney metropolitan area.

I have often referred to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, or the EP&A Act, as the bible of planning. Throughout my career from local government to Parliament, I have reverted to it numerous times to read its principles and aspects and drill down to find out the actual meaning of something pertaining to planning because, from time to time, councils will amend their local environmental plans and change their development control plans, which will sometimes take on a new meaning in their locality. I have had to visit councils in areas where my constituents live to remind those councils of certain aspects of the Act to bring them back to the basis and fundamental principles for certain things they need to address, too numerous to mention here. I have always strongly believed that the Act has stood the test of time. We have developed a wonderful Sydney metropolitan area. Although there were certain discrepancies and some failures, overall I think the Sydney metropolitan area has been well served by the Act. Planners would say to me, "Has that development taken place in spite of the EP&A Act or because of it?" That's an interesting question but if the Act did not exist, that development could not have been developed. Therefore I give great credit to the EP&A Act.

The bill abolishes the Six Cities Region plan, which was adopted into the Act by the previous Government and makes significant changes to the State significant development status. If a development is residential, there is no need to provide reasoning or advice for why something needs State significant development status under this bill. There is a reduction of the exhibition period for those developments from 28 to 14 days, which provides a completely inadequate amount of time for councils, residential groups, residents and, far more importantly, those who live in the areas that will be affected by the State significant development.

By way of example, there is currently a State significant proposal for Rouse Hill with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure. It will not improve housing delivery and is another example of this Government taking power away from councils, including very good councils, and centralising power within the State Government and the department. To provide context, the Rouse Hill Town Centre was planned and commenced back in 2003. As a matter of fact, it was approved at the last council meeting for that council term. When I entered council in 2004, the plan had already been adopted and the development of the Rouse Hill Town Centre went forward. One aspect of the centre was the four- to five-storey apartments surrounding it so that when people drove though, they would see nicely designed apartment buildings instead of a big, bare wall. Many of those homes, adopted into the local environmental plan, were to be affordable homes for nurses, police officers and other frontline workers. The development has been quite pleasing and not in any way confronting to the many people who either already lived within the Rouse Hill Town Centre area or the adjoining areas.

The proposal currently with the department is a \$30 million project to develop a 20-storey apartment building containing 445 units and 120 parking spaces on one of those sites. The developer has the opportunity to present that to the department under this State Government and, ultimately, the State Government will make the decision whether it is acceptable. I say that it is completely unacceptable to increase the height four to five times and provide 445 units but only 120 parking spaces. How 445 separate, individual one-bedroom and two-bedroom units can equate to 120 parking spaces in two underground levels is absolutely beyond me. The outcome remains to be seen but I put the Government on notice that my community is already incensed by what it has received. GPT are now the owners of that site, and it sold one area to Freecity, a developer, in good faith. Freecity has now completely disregarded the planning laws and is proposing a horrific development of 20 storeys between the front of the Rouse Hill Town Centre and the metro station, which is completely out of scale with the entire site. More importantly, the area, as many people would know, directly adjoins Windsor Road. We have a great metro line, a great bus transit way and six lanes of Windsor Road, but every one of those is now either at capacity or over capacity. It is probably the most congested area in the city.

The primary issue with the current system is not the planning regulations. The primary issue concerning housing has nothing to do with planning regulations, nor is it zoning or approvals. It all comes back to what I have consistently raised in this House: There is not enough profit margin to be made by developers to entice them to purchase land, build homes and deliver them to market, full stop. For developers fortunate enough to have bought land five, six or 10 years ago—and were sitting on that land—there is some movement, but the majority of developers have purchased land in recent times. They buy the land, develop the housing, on-sell it then move on. Everyone blames developers for the all problems we have in our areas but developers are just business people, who abide by the rules and regulations that are set out.

At the moment over 100,000 individual blocks of housing are available across the North West Growth Area in The Hills Shire Council, Blacktown City Council, Camden City Council, Penrith and another council area near Camden that I have missed, which might fall under a portion of Liverpool as well. Over 100,000 blocks of land are sitting there with services already built. They have water connected, they have roads and they have electricity. They have everything people need but the houses are not being built because, at the end of the day, the

profit margin is too low for developers to put their hands in their pocket and deliver those homes. No-one is going to build, make or manufacture anything if there is no profit margin. The profit margin has been reduced by, first and foremost, higher interest rates, which are coming down—that is terrific news—the \$12,000 tax that this Government placed on the top of every house that was built and the seven-star Building Sustainability Index rating, which is unrealistic. [*Extension of time*]

Developers will not construct homes if they are going to lose money. The cost and the economies of scale for delivering homes is the problem we have at the moment. When the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces gets on his feet every question time, he talks about the missing middle. He talks about the duplexes and the small, low-rise developments that are not permitted in council areas and he blames the councils for that. That represents a complete misunderstanding of the planning system and the basic principles of a local environmental plan for those particular areas. The local environmental plans were formulated with the council and the department of planning to determine the yield of housing in those specific areas. Once the yield was settled, those areas were developed by the council, with support from the department of planning, to put high-rise buildings around roads and transport.

I state for the record that I am 100 per cent in support of high-density development around metro stations, and I have supported that in the past. However, I do not support these changes. We proposed, planned and supported 5,000 new dwellings being built around Castle Hill Showground, but the Government has turned that into 10,000 homes. We proposed to build 5,000 apartments between Kellyville station and Bella Vista station, but this Government has increased that to 20,000 homes. It is completely unacceptable and unsustainable. Those areas are gridlocked with traffic each and every day. That is the failing with increasing development by being lazy and cheap.

When I say "cheap", I mean that the Government is not developing any more greenfield areas. As the member for Blacktown knows, there is much that can be done in brownfield areas. Increased density makes it profitable for developers to come in, buy up homes and build apartments. There is an economy of scale in building like that. However, that depletes the resources that are currently there. Ultimately, it creates problems with sewerage systems and water into the future. More importantly, increasing density in those already developed areas will create a significant amount of gridlocked traffic. The trains are already over capacity. The metro line is wonderful. It has the capacity to run at two-minute intervals with an extra two carriages. That will need to happen shortly, because the existing carriages are already at capacity during the morning and afternoon peaks. It is standing room only. Every time I come to Parliament, I catch the metro and see firsthand how busy those lines are.

We are doomed to fail if we do not have a plan for the future. Each council needs a strategic plan to implement the housing yield in each area, and that needs to be matched with infrastructure and supported by the State Government to provide sewerage and water. There are no plans for further greenfield development, when there should be a mix. There should be brownfield and greenfield developments. There should not be over-development on top of development sites that were already planned under the guise of the Sydney Metro plan and the Six Cities plan. Infrastructure was provided by the former Liberal-Nationals Government—miles of it in my area alone. We upgraded Memorial Drive and Showground Road. We built a metro line and we provided thousands more buses. We did that to accommodate the yield and development that was happening in the Hills Shire Council area, for example, as part of the north-west growth centre.

If the Government imposes over-development by 20,000 additional apartments over the next five to six years, it will impact on the existing infrastructure. That is already happening. In terms of planning in our electorates, we are doomed to fail. I hate this legislation because it is fraught with danger. I hope it is defeated. Unfortunately, those failures will occur in the future and when they do there will be better people than me debating the matter. I oppose the bill.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:03):** I contribute to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. One of the most important reforms in the bill addresses one of our most pressing challenges, which is the delivery of more affordable housing across New South Wales. The need for affordable homes is critical. Our population is growing. People have been choosing other, more affordable States to live, work and raise a family. Until this Government ended the wages cap, teachers and police were moving to Queensland for both cheaper housing and higher wages. Having ended the wages cap, we are now addressing housing affordability, and not a moment too soon.

Hardworking people—particularly our key workers—moved away because they were priced out of the areas where they worked and wanted to live. The Minns Government recognises that is unacceptable. After 12 years of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government ignoring the problem, it is our responsibility to ensure that the planning system better supports the supply of housing choices that people want and can afford. New South

Wales Productivity Commissioner Peter Achterstraat best summarised the challenge facing this Parliament when he said, "If we don't act, we could become a city with no grandchildren."

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 [EP&A Act] already recognises the delivery of affordable housing as a core outcome in its objects. Under section 7.32 of the Act, councils can seek contributions for affordable housing when certain conditions are met, such as the identification of a need in a State environmental planning policy and the adoption of an affordable housing contributions plan set out in or adopted by the local environmental plan. However, the current process includes requirements that delay the timely application of affordable housing contributions, causing even more delays at a time when we need assessments and approvals to move quickly.

Currently, councils must reassess the affordable housing impacts of each development and revalidate the need for contributions, even when the need is evident and supported by an existing approved plan. That adds unnecessary time and uncertainty for councils and for the delivery of affordable housing in our communities. It is clunky and costly. The bill proposes reforms to section 7.32 of the EP&A Act, including section 7.32 (1) (a) to (d) and section 7.32 (3) (c) (i) and (ii). Those changes will streamline the process, modernise affordable housing contribution requirements and help unlock the delivery of more affordable homes. By removing those steps, the bill aims to reduce the administrative burden on councils and ensure faster assessments. That means that a consent authority will not have to consider matters such as the impact of the proposed development on the availability or need for affordable housing prior to imposing a condition and granting consent.

It is an undeniable reality that the need for affordable housing is statewide, not just in Sydney, and repeated testing of the same criteria does little to deliver affordable homes across New South Wales. The proposed change to section 7.32 (3) (b) of the EP&A Act will allow all environmental planning instruments, not just local environmental plans, to authorise the imposition of affordable housing contribution conditions. That change expands the scope for both State environmental planning policies and local environmental plans to play a role in securing affordable housing contributions. It also ensures a flexible and futureproof approach to affordable housing contributions, particularly as the Government and department embark on new State rezoning initiatives.

Another important part of the reform addresses a gap in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021, which oversees affordable housing contributions where developments lead to the loss of existing low-cost rental accommodation. While a transitional provision initially allowed State environmental planning policies to allow for that, the law relating to the provision was never enacted. The proposed bill will change that by introducing a retrospective validation, which will be effective from 1 March 2018. The retrospective commencement date applies only to the change to section 7.32 (3) (b). That will preserve the intended policy effect and remove any uncertainty surrounding the existing provisions.

The reforms are more than just technical adjustments; they represent a substantial commitment to making our planning system work better for everyone, especially young families and key workers. By reducing delays, increasing certainty and enabling greater flexibility, we can create an environment where affordable housing is delivered more efficiently and consistently. I urge members across the political spectrum, representing all communities across the State, to support the bill and the delivery of more affordable new homes across New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:08):** I contribute to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. Boosting housing supply and density is an important part of improving housing affordability, and this bill aims to facilitate more housing. Some of the changes in the bill are small clarifications, while others have wider implications for the State's planning framework. When we increase the density of an existing neighbourhood, we must work towards making it an attractive and dynamic place to live. Areas in the city with the highest densities, including Potts Point, Pyrmont and Haymarket, are some of the most liveable areas in the country. They provide supportive communities, active and exciting streets, access to essential services, and opportunities for work and entertainment.

If we want similar living standards for future generations as we incorporate increased density, we need to take a strategic approach to planning new uplift. Neighbourhoods in my electorate are prospering with high density because the City of Sydney has carefully managed growth, planning for not just houses but also jobs, shops, medical services, child care, open space, restaurants and bars, while also accounting for access to infrastructure like transport. That is not the same as just squeezing as many houses as possible into spaces identified to deliver a profit to a developer. Urban growth must prioritise healthy, liveable, affordable, and environmentally and socially sustainable homes and communities into the future. When we do that, we take more people with us on the journey to support new growth.

The bill continues the process of transferring the establishment of local housing targets from the Greater Cities Commission and councils to the planning Minister and secretary. The reforms follow the release of the

Transport Oriented Development Program and the low- and mid-rise housing policy, which set out height limits that override local environment plans around transport and service hubs. We must retain the collaborative planning process between State and local governments. The State is best placed to develop high-level city and State visions to respond to population growth, climate change and environmental challenges, while councils are best placed to determine where density is most appropriately located using local knowledge of constraints and opportunities. The Minister assures me that strategic planning will continue, and I ask him to work together with councils to set targets to ensure healthy cities into the future.

Achieving good planning outcomes requires community input. I have seen locals deliver real improvements to State significant development proposals through the consultation process. A recent example is Central Barangaroo, which was first slated to include a 20-storey tower on the waterfront. The final approval brought the height down to five storeys after a strong community campaign by locals, the council, heritage experts and astronomers, making submissions about impacts on Observatory Hill, the Millers Point heritage conservation area and our public harbour. Without a proper exhibition and consultation process, the tower would have been rubberstamped, leaving another embarrassing eyesore on Sydney Harbour.

The bill proposes to cut the minimum exhibition period required for State significant developments that include residential homes from 28 days to 14 days, the claim being that the change would bring minimum consultation periods into line with council minimums as more redevelopments are transferred from council to State. But councils do not exhibit the larger residential redevelopment projects that would be captured under State significant development in the new regime for just 14 days. They have policies and plans that require them to exhibit developments for longer periods depending on the complexity and potential impacts of a project. The City of Sydney, for example, requires 21 days of exhibition for residential flat buildings and 28 days for projects worth over \$50 million. Councils notify all residents within a radius of developments to ensure that anyone who could be affected has an opportunity to contribute. State significant developments are only advertised in a newspaper.

While council development applications are assessed against local controls that have already considered impacts on infrastructure, amenity, flood, bushfire and heritage, State significant projects go beyond that, requiring more time to understand. I am especially concerned that it will be harder for the community to get submissions lodged on time when the bill will also stop late submissions from being counted towards the tally of objections that can trigger a determination by the Independent Planning Commission. The Minister tells me that only very simple projects will be exhibited for the 14-day period and larger projects will be exhibited for longer. But the community needs guarantees, and I foreshadow that I will move amendments at a later stage to require the Government to establish community participation plans that ensure that complex applications for residential developments continue to be exhibited for 28 days.

Planning and development decisions can deliver significant private windfalls to landowners, and there are many examples of them trying to influence the process. Corruption risks are real, and planning laws have sought to deal with those risks through transparency. Decisions are made in public, where community oversight can assess the merits of the decision and where conflicts of interest are disclosed. The bill proposes to remove legislated requirements for the Housing Delivery Authority [HDA] to meet in public. While the authority does not make the final determination on a development, declaring a project State significant can provide an easier and faster pathway to approval and profit. The HDA received 100 expressions of interest in the first three weeks, demonstrating its appeal to developers.

Safeguards are needed to ensure minimum transparency requirements for the Housing Delivery Authority, and I foreshadow that I will move amendments at a later stage to achieve that. I am worried that the HDA process could be used to bypass approved affordable housing contributions that require the delivery of affordable homes in exchange for added bulk and scale, and development controls that support the provision of jobs, amenity and services. I understand that developers are bringing development proposals that have already received approval through council pathways to the HDA to undermine carefully negotiated outcomes. I ask the Minister to ensure that the HDA pathway cannot be used to override affordable housing contributions and development control plan conditions that are in place under an existing development approval.

The bill includes miscellaneous but important clarifications to ensure that modifications can be approved when there is no change to a development, such as when a proponent wants to change the timing, sequencing or staging of a development; that a consent authority can deal with an inconsistency between a concept plan and subsequent development application if the applicant modifies or surrenders the original concept plan; and that the housing State environmental planning policy [SEPP] can be used to raise an affordable housing contribution as part of a condition of consent.

Land use planning for uplift can increase housing supply, but it will not necessarily improve housing affordability. The building industry is stretched. Labour and material shortages and rising costs are causing significant delays in housing. Zombie development approvals are growing. The market now favours the

construction of luxury developments that are out of reach for most renters in the inner city, which has led to the loss of affordable studios, one-bedroom apartments and boarding houses. If we do not just want to build luxury homes for the wealthy and new properties for investors to add to their ever-expanding portfolios, we need to work on other solutions.

No-net-loss policies like those proposed in the City of Sydney's development control plan, currently with the Minister, should be adopted across the State. The housing SEPP and the Guidelines for Retention of Existing Affordable Rental Housing need to protect boarding houses as well. Short-term letting continues to see rental homes replaced with holiday accommodation. We are still waiting for a response to the Government review done last year, while there are clear solutions through caps, enforcement and fees, like in Victoria. Victoria has also introduced a vacant residential land tax, which is seeing empty homes return to the market. An estimated 43,000 privately owned properties in New South Wales are vacant, and we need incentives to make them homes again.

Most importantly, we need to shift the focus from delivering housing to delivering affordable housing. We must boost social housing stock by building 10,000 new social and affordable homes every year. Government-owned land like that at Blackwattle Bay provides huge opportunities to boost social housing onsite. Without a strong safety net, our most vulnerable women and children will not be able to leave abusive homes and people down on their luck will be forced into homelessness. The essential worker housing inquiry will soon report to Parliament and, together with my colleagues, we will make good, strong recommendations to ensure that key workers can afford to live close to their jobs. We have heard about low- and medium-paid workers sleeping in cars during the working week. We need to tackle housing affordability beyond the development lobby's talking points.

I hope to see more reforms across multiple portfolios to deliver homes that people can afford and want to live in, and that are environmentally sustainable into the future. I thank the Government for working with me on amendments to the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:18):** I am pleased to make a brief contribution to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025, which makes necessary amendments to further streamline the planning system, support the delivery of housing and provide certainty to the construction industry, local communities and other stakeholders. As we know, the housing challenge in New South Wales demands action. The Minns Labor Government has already introduced a range of measures to address that challenge, which I have spoken about in this place multiple times because residents of the Liverpool electorate face issues across both the rental and private housing markets. Part of the reason for that is the failure of strategic planning—and I use that term pretty loosely—of previous regimes to deliver what they promised to do. I note the member for Kellyville's comments around the five years of planning approaches after the Six Cities model. Under the previous Government, approaches to strategic planning changed as often as its members changed their clothes. Residents in Warwick Farm waited 10 years for movement on new housing. They were constantly waiting for each new approach to strategic planning to be implemented, having to go through the process time and time again.

The challenge of addressing the housing crisis in our State has no magic solution. It requires fresh thinking, continual examination of assessment processes with fresh eyes, and a strong commitment to cutting through unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape, which has too often in the past slowed progress. We know this because families are struggling to find affordable homes. Young people are being priced out of the housing market and renters are facing unprecedented pressures. This is resulting in many people seeking greener pastures in communities in other States, with New South Wales experiencing a brain drain because of the difficulties in the housing market.

Over the past 12 years the New South Wales planning system has been a bottleneck, delaying critical housing supply and frustrating those who seek to invest, build and live in the communities they have chosen. The objective of this Labor Government is to change the legacy left by the previous Government. Uncertainty in the planning system has impacted on the delivery of new homes and the simple modification of a development consent. It has held back progress at a time when New South Wales clearly needs efficient, effective and streamlined planning processes.

The bill continues the Government's pragmatic and functional reforms of the planning system, specifically reforms to development assessment and determination. It responds to decisions from three separate challenges in the New South Wales courts to restore certainty in planning assessment decisions. Unfortunately, two of those decisions, in the Court of Appeal and the Land and Environment Court, caused considerable uncertainty. In a third case, the decision established a positive planning outcome, but the pathway used to reach that conclusion was not without doubt, so it is clarified in the bill. That will hopefully alleviate concerns and confusion for stakeholders.

The bill also aims to further support housing delivery and streamline the planning system by removing the statutory requirement for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to obtain and publish advice from the Independent Planning Commission before declaring certain types of residential development to be State significant developments, in accordance with the powers vested in the Minister. The bill modernises requirements for affordable housing contributions to better align with current needs and expectations across New South Wales and removes outdated references to the Six Cities Region under division 3.1, thereby establishing a more cohesive strategic planning framework for the State. Those measures reflect the Government's commitment to cutting red tape and bureaucracy, improving the efficiency of our planning system, and continuing to tackle the housing challenge. It is essential that the rules establishing a consent authority for State significant development applications are clear. The amendment in the bill makes clear that only submissions lodged within the public exhibition period will be counted when determining the consent authority.

The bill amends the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 to provide less formal meeting arrangements for the Housing Delivery Authority [HDA], which is important for the following reasons: Firstly, the HDA will perform an advisory role; and, secondly, the public hearing-style forums typically used for planning functions, such as determining development applications or hearing evidence, are less relevant. It is anticipated that the HDA will meet monthly and at short notice, when required. This more agile approach will reduce lead times and associated administration to deliver high-quality advice to government more quickly. Furthermore, it will consider the ways our communities would like to provide feedback or respond to applications and developments within our community. Having previously served on a council, I know that very few people in our communities refresh the department of planning's website to check what it is doing or what a particular application looks like on any given day.

**Mr Paul Scully:** I do.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA:** Save for the Minister, of course, and probably rightly so. But for many members of the community, particularly those in the communities that will be most impacted by the housing crisis who will benefit most from the changes outlined in the legislation, that is not the way they will look at changes to the planning system. For those people, having a more agile and flexible way to respond to consultation will provide some benefit. The department will publish a record of each Housing Delivery Authority meeting, including high-level information about expression of interest submissions, the HDA recommendations, advice and reasons. This will provide transparency, accountability and insight into the process for those who are, like the Minister, watching the website with bated breath and refreshing that information.

Finally, as was mentioned by other members, the bill seeks to tackle and do more on the affordable housing crisis we find ourselves in today. As a government, it is a clear statement of our values of fairness, opportunity and progress that we deliver more quality and well-located homes that are closer to jobs and near public infrastructure investments. That is particularly the case for young people, families and local key workers who for too long have been priced out of the market and forced to travel long distances and experience long commutes, taking them away from their families and limiting their time for pleasure and alternative things in their lives, purely so they can make it to their jobs. The bill is a recognition that the challenges that New South Wales residents face demand new solutions and that we cannot afford to keep pushing this issue down the line, waiting for someone else to solve it, as happened under the previous Government.

The reforms proposed in the bill will support the delivery of more homes faster and more efficiently through the planning system. They will make the planning system more transparent, flexible and focused on the outcomes that we all want to see: the delivery of more homes and more jobs. The reforms will make sure that New South Wales remains a place where everyone can live, work and thrive in the communities they choose in a place they can call home. They will also hopefully stop the brain drain that I mentioned before so that young people in particular do not choose other States or other places to call home purely because they are more affordable and the processes there are better equipped. I commend the bill to the House and ask that all members support the proposed reforms to the planning assessment system.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:28):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. The Government says that the bill is part of its program to streamline the planning system, support housing delivery, and provide certainty for the construction industry, communities and stakeholders. The bill has multiple components that are not necessarily connected to one another. I will deal briefly with each of them. First, the bill will clarify that consent authorities can modify conditions of a development consent even if the modification does not change the development itself. Second, it will specify that only submissions made during a public exhibition period are counted when determining an appropriate consent authority. Third, it will allow consent authorities to approve subsequent development applications that are inconsistent with an existing concept development consent, provided conditions are imposed requiring modification or surrender of the original concept consent.

Fourth, it will remove the statutory requirement for the Minister to obtain and publish advice from the Independent Planning Commission before declaring residential developments as State significant developments. Fifth, it will reduce the minimum public exhibition period for specific residential State significant development applications from 28 days to 14 days. Sixth, it will allow both State environmental planning policies, or SEPPs, and local environmental plans to impose affordable housing contributions as conditions of development consent. Seventh, it will remove references to the "Six Cities Region" and its constituent cities, reallocating strategic planning functions to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Department of Planning and Environment.

I acknowledge the work of my colleague in the other place and The Greens planning spokesperson, Sue Higginson, who has done significant work consulting with stakeholders on the bill. The Environmental Defenders Office [EDO] has raised significant concerns about several provisions of the bill. It argues that the bill reduces public participation, weakens transparency and accountability, and undermines public confidence in the planning system. It also highlights potential corruption risks due to decreased oversight in planning decisions, referencing the Independent Commission Against Corruption's 2012 report *Anti-corruption safeguards and the NSW planning system*.

The Planning Institute of Australia [PIA] has also provided feedback. While supporting many amendments, the PIA expressed concerns over the bill's potential to undermine strategic planning efforts and diminish public confidence in the planning system by reducing requirements for public notification of State significant development. Local Government NSW has expressed strong opposition to certain amendments in the bill, citing concerns over transparency, community participation and planning outcomes. It is concerned that the Government failed to consult local councils before introducing the bill, despite its significant implications for the planning process.

I note that a recent editorial in a popular Sydney newspaper took the Lord Mayor of the City of Sydney to task as a nimby for raising the same kinds of concerns about the Housing Delivery Authority as the experts at the EDO, the PIA and Local Government NSW. It will be informative to see how the Government responds to their feedback. I anticipate Ms Higginson will speak to those concerns in greater detail when the bill is debated in the other place, and I encourage Government members to pay particular attention to her contributions. In the meantime, I speak to some of the provisions in the bill that relate to affordable housing.

It is good to see that the Government intends to modernise affordable housing contribution requirements. In particular, I note the proposed amendments to section 7.32 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. I have introduced a Greens bill that would do something very similar. It would remove the requirement for a State environmental planning policy to identify a need for affordable housing within an area before an affordable housing contribution scheme can be established, whereas the Government's bill will retain that requirement but remove some of the subsequent considerations. The requirement is a hangover from days gone by. State Environmental Planning Policy No 70, established in 2000, allowed councils to levy specific development contributions for affordable housing in designated areas experiencing high housing stress.

It originally only applied in the City of Sydney, Willoughby City Council and the former Leichhardt Municipal Council areas. In 2019 it was expanded to include the Randwick City Council, Inner West Council, City of Canada Bay, City of Ryde and Northern Beaches Council areas. The policy was expanded again in 2019 to include all New South Wales councils, giving them the authority to develop local housing schemes and to require developers to contribute to affordable housing. SEPP 70 was also incorporated into the broader housing SEPP in 2021. But it is now more than five years on from the expansion of the policy to include all parts of New South Wales, and there is no longer the need for the SEPP to be referenced as a limiting factor in the legislation. In fact, given the broad consensus that affordable housing is now needed right across New South Wales, it is dangerous to leave the application of section 7.32 to a SEPP, which can chop and change at the whims of a Minister. It is time to bring the requirement under the Act itself, and it is quite surprising that the Government has overlooked that in bringing the reform to the House.

The Government says that its proposed changes are intended to improve the delivery of affordable housing across the State. It is good to see that intention being backed up with legislation, but why have only a handful of local councils actually come up with an affordable housing contribution scheme and started levying developers for affordable housing funds, despite the SEPP being available to them for more than five years? Quite simply, it is because they cannot get their heads around how such a scheme might work. It is because the statutory framework is in a constant state of flux, with the bulk of affordable housing being delivered through density bonuses and other developer-led schemes that are constantly being tinkered with and pushed back against, rather than baked-in contribution schemes.

If we want to improve the delivery of affordable housing across the State, how about building some much-needed public housing? Labor says it wants to spend \$5.1 billion on new public housing, which of course

is fantastic. But whenever I mention all the vacant public land that is crying out to be put to that use in my electorate, the enthusiasm for investment in public housing seems to disappear. Sites like the former WestConnex dive site in Camperdown, the old Sydney Fish Market site at Blackwattle Bay and the Bays West precinct are all crying out for some of the Government's planned investment in public housing. Instead, they are getting sold off for more private development.

When it comes to affordable housing, we are once again asked to put our faith in piecemeal or yet-to-mature schemes that are failing to deliver, or in density bonuses that only deliver at the margins and only for a handful of years. We cannot even get the local Labor-led council to back some investment in public housing on well-located land that the Government already owns. When legislation like this comes before the House for debate, it makes me wonder just how seriously this Government is taking the housing crisis in our State. We need to see serious investment in public housing. We need to see affordable housing reform so that it is actually affordable. We need to see public and affordable housing in every new high-density development.

I note that other members have mentioned Blackwattle Bay, which has a 7.5 per cent affordable housing contribution. That will potentially result in no affordable housing being delivered on the site because developers can make a financial contribution instead. The Camperdown dive site, which was previously part of WestConnex, has 100 out of 500 homes earmarked for key workers. There is no public or social housing on the site, and there is a lack of clarity about how the scheme will work. Whilst it is an improvement, there should be some public housing on that site. We are yet to see where the Bays West development will end up. There is much work to do, and The Greens look forward to working with the Government to get better housing outcomes for the people of New South Wales.

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:36):** I contribute to debate on the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. The National Housing Accord has set a target of 1.2 million homes in the next five years, from mid-2024, in order for Australia to have a sufficient supply of homes. Given the current population of New South Wales, the Government has committed to building 378,000 new homes in the next five years, by mid-2029. Uncertainty in the planning system has impacted the delivery of new homes and simple modifications of development consent. We need efficient, effective and streamlined planning processes.

The bill will continue the Government's pragmatic and functional reforms of the planning system, specifically to development assessment and determination. It will make the necessary amendments to further streamline the planning system. The bill is one of many that have recently been introduced to address the housing crisis, which is one of the biggest challenges of this generation. The housing crisis is one of the main factors contributing to the current cost-of-living crisis in Australia, and especially New South Wales. Housing is inevitably the most expensive element of household budgets around the world, and worsening housing affordability will only add to cost-of-living problems. Last week, new data from the Reserve Bank of Australia showed that 0.55 per cent of New South Wales home loans—or about 5,185 households—are at risk of defaulting, having fallen at least 90 days behind on their mortgage payments.

Australian markets have been impossibly unaffordable. The median multiple has deteriorated to 9.7, from 6.9 in 2019. The median multiple is the median house price divided by median household income. That means the average family would have to bank its entire income for nearly 10 years to save the average selling price of a home in Australia. Hong Kong is the only country that has a higher median multiple, with 16.7. Last year's top 10 most unaffordable housing markets in the world, in order, were Hong Kong, Sydney, Vancouver, San Jose, Los Angeles, Honolulu, Melbourne, San Francisco, Adelaide, San Diego and Toronto. The situation is more serious in New South Wales, considering Sydney's median house price in 2024 was about \$1.5 million. Melbourne has the next highest median house price, at about \$1 million. That is about \$500,000 less than Sydney. That median housing figure is followed by the figure in cities like Brisbane and Adelaide, which have a median house price of about \$900,000. Therefore, in Australia—and especially in New South Wales—we have a housing crisis that has no quick and simple solution. We need to reduce the unnecessary red tape that has slowed the process.

The bill responds to decisions from three separate challenges in the New South Wales courts to restore certainty in planning assessment decisions. In two of those cases, the decisions of the Court of Appeal and the Land and Environment Court have caused considerable uncertainty. The third case established a positive planning outcome but used a pathway not without doubt. The New South Wales Court of Appeal's decision in *Ku-Ring-Gai Council v Buyozo Pty Ltd* [2021] NSWCA 177, or the Buyozo decision, found that a modification application must seek to effect some change to the development. The bill seeks to amend sections 4.55 and 4.56 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act—the EP&A Act—to clarify that a consent authority is not prevented from modifying a development consent merely because the modification sought is to a condition of development consent that, if modified, would not result in a change to the development that is the subject of the original development consent.

The decision of the court in *Filetron Pty Ltd v Innovate Partners Pty Ltd atf Banton Family Trust 2 and Goulburn Mulwaree Council* [2024] NSWCA 41 has caused uncertainty over whether a late submission, by way of objection, should be counted. The bill amends clause 15 of schedule 1 to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to require submissions in response to a publicly exhibited development application or plan to be made during the exhibition period. The amendment makes it clear that only submissions lodged within the public exhibition period will be counted when determining the consent authority. The third court case has a positive impact on the planning system and the processes we should be adopting as a result. In *Castle Hill Panorama Pty Ltd v The Hills Shire Council* [2023] NSWLEC 24, the Land and Environment Court confirmed that a consent authority could approve a subsequent development application, even if it departs from the original concept approval, by using the mechanism established in section 4.17 (1) (b) and (5) of the EP&A Act.

The bill builds on the Castle Hill decision by providing certainty and clarity in the planning process. It confirms that consent authorities have the power, under section 4.17 (1) (b) and (5) of the EP&A Act, to impose conditions requiring the modification or surrender of a concept approval when assessing a subsequent development application. The amendment is intended to support housing delivery, as it will improve the ability of a consent authority to approve a development application that seeks to use housing bonuses, such as additional height or floor space, that are inconsistent with approval for a concept development application as they may not have been available when that concept development application was originally approved.

Parts of the bill will help to speed up the much-needed delivery of new homes in this State. In November 2024 the Government took a significant step towards boosting housing supply in New South Wales by establishing the Housing Delivery Authority [HDA]. The bill seeks to remove the statutory requirement to obtain advice from the Independent Planning Commission before deciding whether certain residential developments should be declared State significant developments under section 4.36 (3) of the EP&A Act. Instead, the Housing Delivery Authority will provide the advisory role for residential projects as part of its agreed functions. The bill also amends the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 to provide less formal meeting arrangements for the Housing Delivery Authority. The HDA will primarily perform an advisory role, and the public hearing style forums typically used for planning functions, such as determining development applications or hearing evidence, are less relevant.

The bill will introduce an important amendment to reduce the mandatory minimum exhibition period for certain residential State significant development applications from 28 days to 14 days. The proposed reduction in exhibition time will apply to the following State significant development applications: development applications declared to be State significant development by the Minister under section 4.36 (3) of the EP&A Act that include residential accommodation; and housing developments listed under schedule 1 to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021, such as housing developments carried out by certain public authorities, in-fill affordable housing projects, build-to-rent housing projects and seniors housing projects.

Developments within the transport oriented development precincts listed under clause 19 of schedule 2 to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) will also benefit from the reduced 14-day exhibition period, provided they include residential accommodation. Under new section 7.32, a financial contribution for affordable housing can be imposed if a State environmental planning policy identifies a need for affordable housing in a specific area and the condition is authorised by a local environmental plan through an affordable housing contributions plan. The bill removes references to the Six Cities Region, paving the way for the creation of a new strategic plan for Greater Sydney.

The bill is part of the planning reforms commenced by the Minns Labor Government. It is about delivering more quality and well-located houses closer to jobs and near public infrastructure investments. It will reduce delays in assessment created by court decisions and remove duplications in the building processes. I note that the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is in the Chamber, and I thank him and his team for their wonderful work. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (16:45):** I oppose the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025. I begin by acknowledging that this Government is focused on its responsibility to address the housing crisis. We all recognise the urgent need to ensure that more people have access to safe, affordable and diverse housing, particularly in strategic areas around metro stations, as in the recent transport oriented development announcement. Moreover, we must acknowledge the impact of essential worker shortages on our community. However, the approach being taken through the bill, the low- and mid-rise housing policy reforms and the establishment of the Housing Delivery Authority raises significant concern.

As we plan for Sydney as a city of the future, we must have sustainable development, where we balance environmental, economic and social outcomes. The member for Sydney mentioned some great examples of doing density well in Sydney. We must create walkable and well-connected communities and better integration of transport and housing. We must incorporate environment, protect our tree canopies and preserve green space, not

only for nature's sake but also for our social wellness and health. As highlighted by Local Government NSW, we also need climate-resilient planning and hazard mitigation. As a major city, we need density and we must do it well. It must be supported by infrastructure, planning and a commitment to that infrastructure—which should ideally come first—as well as preserving and enhancing local character. To do that, we need not only strategic planning but also local government and community involvement.

My concern is that the bill not only abolishes the Six Cities Region but also diminishes strategic planning and community voice. I therefore welcome other members' amendments to the legislation, particularly those that bring the requirement for regional strategic planning into the legislation. Neglecting good planning risks the downfall of everything we love about our Sydney suburbs. I acknowledge that the bill provides certainty following a number of Land and Environment Court decisions, and it will modernise affordable housing contributions. However, at the heart of the bill is an attempt to fast-track development under the banner of efficiency, and it will come at the cost of community voice, democratic oversight, transparency and proper planning.

Specifically, schedule 2 [4] accelerates the Housing Delivery Authority, undermining transparency by preventing advice from the Independent Planning Commission being made public for State significant development. It also reduces the number of days allowed for public submissions from 28 to 14 days. People in my community have let me know that 14 days is often not enough time for them to make submissions. It also prevents late submissions from being considered, reducing flexibility and the ability for community to have their voice heard. Community consultation should never be treated as an inconvenience. It is a safeguard to ensure that developments reflect local needs, not just developer profits.

I note that the bill is only the latest step in years and years of erosion, by both major parties, of community involvement in planning. Before the Housing Delivery Authority, there was part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act. In my community we continue to see clause 4.6 variations at a local level routinely used to override local environmental plans and development control plans. Years of local consultation and careful planning can be tossed aside, leaving communities questioning why they engaged in the planning process at all. This bill does not exist in isolation but as part of broader reform including low- to mid-rise developments. Mona Vale, in my electorate of Pittwater, should not have been declared a town centre—particularly prematurely—due to a lack of infrastructure. We have no train line and no metro. We have a bus system in crisis, and we have a major road that is still incomplete. That is without counting some of the other development policies that will increase density, including shop-top housing in Mona Vale.

My community has done a lot of work together with council to develop the Mona Vale Place Plan, which is a strategic approach to balancing growth with infrastructure and community needs, laying the foundation for a future Mona Vale that meant housing targets and the needs of the community could both be met. That plan is currently under review. I also acknowledge the Mona Vale Residents Association, who contributed to that plan and continue to work with council to understand what the future of Mona Vale now looks like and ways to preserve local character. In my electorate, we have already seen land prices surging, small businesses being priced out, and the risk that apartments delivered will be not affordable but expensive. We have nine town centres announced on the northern beaches and no infrastructure announcements. Infrastructure should come before development.

A constituent came in to do a quick check of transport figures with me—arguably more than done by the planning department—which exposed the flaws in logic behind some of the high-density zoning in areas like Mona Vale. A heavy rail transport system can transport approximately 100 people per minute, a metro system 350 and the B-Line bus, the primary transport option for Mona Vale, only around 16 per minute. This means Mona Vale's transport capacity is only 16 per cent of what centres serviced by heavy rail can handle.

The Government claims that increasing density will lead to greater supply and lower housing costs. However, many economists, including one Cameron Murray, famous for his book *The Great Housing Hijack*, has shown that simply relaxing zoning laws and allowing high-density development does not necessarily increase net housing supply or reduce dwelling prices. Housing affordability is driven by factors beyond planning, including taxation policies and market values and, of course, by the construction industry, with the cost of construction and the availability of the construction workforce playing a role.

When it comes to planning, if more diverse housing is the aim, it is simply unachievable in some of our suburbs with the current policies, including suburbs in my electorate. Land values and construction costs are high, and we risk seeing more and more multimillion-dollar apartments that do little to ease the cost-of-living crisis. There is more that can be done, including freeing up the 1.5 per cent of dwellings that are vacant homes, incentivising downsizing through stamp duty changes, and implementing other policies at a Federal level. Handing control to developers is essentially privatising housing solutions without more and direct meaningful investment in public and affordable social housing to infill areas that have existing infrastructure. I have concerns that the bill reduces transparency and also has no mandate for meaningful engagement with local government and community.

I briefly mention what happens when we fail to protect the character of our cities. In 2021, UNESCO made the decision to strip Liverpool in the United Kingdom of its World Heritage status. It is a stark warning of what happens when we have unchecked development irreparably damaging cities, their character and their heritage, and a good lesson of what we risk if we scatter town centres across Sydney rather than centralise those locations around infrastructure. Arguably, democracy starts at home, and that means having a say in the development not only of our homes but of our suburbs and our cities. Addressing the housing crisis should not come at the cost of good planning.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:53):** The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025 is ultimately based on one of the greatest social and economic challenges we have in New South Wales and indeed in Australia. It is particularly the case in my beloved home of western and south-western Sydney, where we have seen significant growth over the years. The reality is that whilst the demand is there, we must build houses. Reduced supply inflates house prices and makes it unaffordable for young people to get into the market, like I did in the '90s. I want my children and my grandchildren to be able to purchase a home—which is about 50 years away, given my youth.

Importantly, the bill will make sure that we continue to have reforms in place. I acknowledge the Minister is in the House. I thank him, his staff and his department, who have inherited one of the greatest challenges in addressing how to supply desperately needed housing into a market where the absence of such policy has flow-on effects in terms of homelessness and the economy. Of course, we have our challenges in having enough tradespeople in the industry who are well enough equipped, but the reality is we cannot fix this in the rear-vision mirror. We cannot fix the future until we reflect on the past, and the past is not pretty.

The Minister and his team have brought the bill to the House because they inherited a system that is at best opaque and that is also unworkable for industry. We must ask ourselves who is paying the price. It is aspiring home owners in New South Wales, which by and large are young people. Once upon a time the great Australian dream was to own your own home. It is now almost a pipe dream to get a rental, because there has not been enough supply. The nimby approach is flawed for a number of reasons. I am privileged to represent a developing area along with my friends the member for Camden, the member for Wollondilly and the member for Leppington. We have long managed growth by finding a balance between environmental protection and delivering the houses that young families need, like we did as young families once upon a time. But the brakes were put on and a system was set up in which the balance was no longer found.

The reforms in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025 are essential. I am delighted that the bill has been brought before the House. But, I will be honest, I wish it was not necessary. If we were not in such a housing supply crisis, we would not have to go through this. I spent eight years in opposition, along with my colleague the member for Wollongong, who is now the Minister—we came in at almost the same time. When it came to any kind of planning and environment reform, we supported the Government. We did not stand in the way. We offered alternate views and we worked with Government members. Why? Because we wanted the solution. That has not changed for us today in government.

This very serious crisis is not about our politics. It is about every person in our community, and particularly our young people who are trying to enter a market that is intrinsically difficult and desperately needs reform. I refer members to a Grattan Institute report that my learned colleague the member for Leppington brought to my attention. It is dated October 2023, so not very long after we came to government, but it goes back to the early 2000s. The very detailed report makes clear that there is largely a failure of housing supply, not housing markets. It reads:

Land-use planning rules in NSW are highly complex and prescriptive, and particularly restrict many medium- and high-density developments in established suburbs.

The report went further:

Reserve Bank researchers estimated that restrictive land-use planning rules add up to 40 per cent to the price of houses in Sydney, up sharply from 15 years ago. Most recent research from the NSW Productivity Commission suggest that planning rules have added over 50 per cent to the cost of a new apartment in Sydney.

The planning system tends to favour existing residents who oppose change due to concerns about extra traffic congestion, parking, and damage to neighbourhood character. But those who live in new housing—if it were to be built—do not get a say.

The specific barriers, which are listed in more detail, stand in the way of new homes. It is a very thorough report, but it draws attention specifically to an issue that was referred to 15 years ago. Time and time again we have seen this from conservative governments. They do not like change, but planning needs to change. If things do not change, the status quo will be maintained, and our young people will pay the price.

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

*Public Interest Debate*

**GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE**

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:00):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Supports the New South Wales Government's reforms to build better public services for New South Wales, which has seen teacher vacancies reduce by 40 per cent, nurse retention rates increase to pre-COVID levels, the recruitment of an additional 250 rural and regional paramedics, and police officer recruitment up 65 per cent compared with the former Liberal-Nationals Government.
- (2) Supports the New South Wales Government's reforms to increase housing supply including through investing \$5.1 billion to deliver social and affordable housing, the largest investment in housing in the State's history.
- (3) Supports the removal of the wages cap, which resulted in 10,000 merged and cancelled classes in schools every day, saw 12.6 per cent of our nursing workforce—7,678 nurses—leaving our health system in 2022, and police officer turnover more than double, from 513 vacancies in 2017-18 to 1,286 in 2021-22.
- (4) Opposes the privatisation of essential government services including roads, energy and hospitals.

Before I am interrupted by interjections from members opposite, I urge Opposition members to heed some of the statistics that will be discussed in this debate and underscore the importance of the motion. The issue is building a better New South Wales. In 2025, do we have a better New South Wales than we had in 2023? Surely all members will agree that reducing teacher vacancy rates by 40 per cent is a good thing. Some members had teacher vacancy rates in excess of 70 per cent in their electorates, which means that the teachers who might have been at the local school on any given day, particularly when young families took their child to school on the child's first day, might or might not have been the teachers at that local school by the end of that year and the year after. How can parents possibly build connection for their children through education at the local school if the parents are not able to predict the teaching staff will be at that school day to day, and year to year?

Members of this House all agree that retention of nurses is important. In a single year when 12 per cent of nurses left the profession—from a total of roughly 50,000 nurses, we lost 7,000 nurses—we would all agree that problem needs to be addressed. Members may prefer to consider the impact of that by considering an investment of \$50,000 which, during a single year, is reduced to approximately \$43,000. Surely members would ask themselves: What is wrong here? What do I need to do to fix the problem? One of the fundamental problems that existed during the term of the previous Liberal-Nationals Government was that day after day, week after week and year after year they said, "There is no problem to be fixed." Labor members fundamentally disagreed with that—and we still do. There are still problems to be fixed in this State. The Government is working towards fixing those problems and is making good progress. I am very happy about that. I am also happy to speak about the progress this Government has made, but the Government is not finished.

The Government openly states that we still have some problems, but we have recruited and trained an additional 250 rural and regional paramedics out of the 500 paramedics who have moved to the regions. I live in a regional area. I value being able to call a paramedic and have them turn up to help people in need. Geographically, great distances need to be traversed in the regions to get to the patient's house and then get the patient to a medical facility. We all understand that the distances to medical facilities are much larger in the State's regions than in larger cities, so I wonder why this recruitment work was not done earlier. However, it is being done now. The regions have 500 paramedics on the way and already we have 250 rural and regional paramedics. Police officer recruitment has increased by 65 per cent. Surely all members agree that is a good thing. Law and order discussions occupy much of the time of this House. For police officer recruitment numbers to have increased by 65 per cent it must be a good thing. Under the previous Government, there were increasing rates of police officers removing themselves from the service, which was not a good thing. The current Labor Government has turned that around and is very pleased to have done that. There is still more to do, but we are also making progress in that space.

The Government is increasing the supply of housing. Today we debated a bill to change planning laws and instruments. The Opposition intends to oppose the changes in that bill. With planning if we keep doing what we have been doing, we will keep getting the same results. We need to adopt different planning methods, which is what the Government is proposing. Labor got rid of the wages cap, which drove wages for public servants to the very lowest standard in the country. Recruitment is a market force. If the workforce in the public service is to be retained and new recruits are to be attracted, governments must pay them a wage that will keep them in the public service. The New South Wales Government got rid of the wages cap that had been suppressing public service

wages for over 12 years. Public service workers literally were going backwards financially in real terms. The New South Wales Government opposes privatisation and is about to embark on an inquiry into the complete failure of the Northern Beaches Hospital. I commend the motion to the House.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (17:08):** I oppose the motion and I will be moving an amendment. It is interesting that the motion moved by the member for Cessnock is about building a better New South Wales. I rather thought that the motion would be about building a better left-wing faction. I note that the member for Cessnock recently joined the left-wing faction of the Labor Party. I am not sure if that means the third faction, but we will wait and see.

**Dr Marjorie O'Neill:** Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 76, which relates to remarks being relevant to the motion.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I will extend a little leeway to the member for Davidson. Public interest debates are usually wideranging in nature.

**Mr MATT CROSS:** I move:

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

- (1) Notes that the Minns Labor Government has overseen mass psychiatrists' resignations and regular industrial action from nurses and train drivers.
- (2) Notes that the Minns Labor Government has overseen 12-year lows in annual housing approvals and commencements, a 10-year low in annual housing completions and record housing unaffordability.
- (3) Notes that instead of funding wage increases from productivity offsets, the Minns Labor Government has ripped money from hospitals, schools and infrastructure and contributes to the highest ever debt in New South Wales.

Today I will be quoting from the budget papers. The last paragraph of the amendment is about the largest debt ever delivered by a government in the history of New South Wales. I note that the half-yearly review that was released late last year states, "Gross debt is projected to be \$199.9 billion by June 2028", which is in line with the 2024-25 budget projections. Another thing the Australian Labor Party is delivering for New South Wales is record debt. In fact, it is the highest debt ever in the history of this State.

Halfway through the term of the Minns Labor Government there has been some interesting independent analysis of how the Government is doing at its two-year mark. A reporter called Nick Dole from the ABC says:

Chris Minns might have been in a shiny high-vest, but he was in no mood for reflection.

He goes on:

Many leaders would use the opportunity to rattle off a list of achievements for which they believe they are deserving of recognition.

What did Chris Minns do when he was asked what voters should give him credit for? He declined. Nick Dole goes went on to say:

He's got a point. Very few voters will have woken up this morning thinking, what have Chris Minns and Labor done for me?

That is from an independent reporter. There was also some interesting commentary in *The Daily Telegraph*. An article reads:

"We need to start showing progress on the things that matter," one minister says.

Even Government members are questioning what Labor has done in two years. I wonder who is that Minister? We all know in the Parliament who those type of Ministers are. Another interesting comment was as follows:

"People like that he's competent, but that could unravel very quickly," one Labor official warns. If you ask people to identify what this government is doing and what this government's agenda is, they can't attach much to him".

That is concerning, and it comes not from the Opposition but from the Government's own side. They are right to think that. A recent *State of the States* report that CommSec put out had the New South Wales ranking. Do members think it was one? Two? Four? No. It was six. In the CommSec report New South Wales is last of all the States. I will give some them some credit. It says their strength is relative population growth, but what is their weakness? Dwelling starts. The Government has moved motion that talks about building a better News South Wales, but is has the lowest dwelling starts. What did Labor shadow treasurers say when they spoke about the CommSec reports? I note an individual called Walt Secord, who was at one time the shadow Treasurer, said:

NSW's economy had slipped to second place after Victoria. NSW led the rankings from October 2014 to July 2018.

Under the Liberal Party, we made New South Wales number one. Labor will make New South Wales number eight again.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (17:12):** I thank the great member for Cessnock for bringing the motion to this Chamber today. What I will talk about is how important it is to not forget that we are in the business of undoing 12 years of complete neglect by the Liberal-Nationals Government. In fact, very early on in my tenure in this building, a Minister said to me that there was not one part of their portfolio that was not falling apart at the seams when it was handed to them by the former Government. It is really important that the people of New South Wales remember what it was like to live under that Liberal-Nationals Government. The people of Camden, the people of Leppington, the people of Parramatta, the people of East Hills and the people of the South Coast have not forgotten what it was like to live under a Liberal-Nationals Government. In fact, they completely changed sides because of the previous Government. Because of the decline and the neglect in those electorates, people chose a different way.

As the new member for Camden, I am very proud to stand up for the things that we have worked for. As a former teacher, I have a particular passion for that profession. The member for Cessnock spoke about the 16,000 temporary teachers that have been made permanent. That is very easy to just skip over, but for long-term temporary teachers it is next to impossible to get a home loan or a car loan or to form any roots in a community because they do not know where they will be teaching next year. They turn up on the first day of school and count those little heads, hoping that they will have a job. We have made 16,000 of the best and brightest of those long-term temporary teachers permanent in the schools in which they were working. In fact, teaching has an all-time low vacancy rate. There has been a 40 per cent drop since we came into government. University offers are also up 30 per cent.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Which schools? Show us the data.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** I am quite happy to discuss with you which schools. Gledswood Hills High School now has teachers that—

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Will you? Commit to it.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** I am. If you stop yelling at me and listen, I will tell you. Elizabeth Macarthur High School on any given Friday afternoon had 80 classes merged or cancelled due to lack of teachers, but not anymore. They are just two schools in my electorate that no longer have merged and cancelled classes because of what we have done. We lifted the wages cap, which then allowed teachers, paramedics and police officers to have a real wage increase. Members opposite keep talking about wanting to bring that wages cap back. It is quite interesting to go through quotes of what has been said about the wages cap. There is an idea that some members want teachers to have caps on what they are paid according to their delivery rates and their work levels. I have been in this job now for exactly two years. I can tell members that to this day it is still not as hard as being a teacher. The idea that members opposite expect teachers to do more is unbelievable. It is incredibly insulting.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Who said that?

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** You did, actually.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** I said teachers should do more? I never said that.

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL:** You said teachers should do more. It is really important that we look at how the removal of the wages cap is working for the people of New South Wales. How is it helping the people of New South Wales to be able to negotiate their own pay? During COVID, nurses were told that their wages were going to go up 0 per cent, the people that we would have thought were doing the most. That is not to mention the former Government's plan to sack over 1,100 nurses because they were "no longer needed". I commend the motion to the House. I think it is very important.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:17):** I thank my good friend the member for Cessnock for bringing the motion to the House. It is an absolute stinger, and he should be in Cabinet for this one. He well knows that the sands of time are slipping through this Government's hands. Two years in, they are meandering around and ranting at the former Government occasionally for things it may or may not have done. Two years in, the people of this State are really experiencing buyer's remorse. They have a visionless, small-minded government so lacking in political courage that Government members get scared looking at themselves in the mirror. Imagine sitting in opposition for more than a decade, collapsing over the line into minority government and then not having a plan to show for it. They are just meandering from one thing to the next. Apparently, their re-election commitment is about Rosehill racecourse. One minute it is free; the next minute it will cost \$5 billion. I just cannot keep up.

The rational person would have thought that, after spending over a decade in opposition, they would come to government with a crystal-clear plan of what they were going to do and what they were going to deliver. Yet, as we approach the midway point of this Government, the State has well and truly lost its mojo. My colleague mentioned the State of the States report. New South Wales is only ahead of the Australian Capital Territory and

the Northern Territory. It is a shambles. It is safe to say that this Government has settled for mediocrity as its default position; that has become the sad position of a once-proud State. I have been trying to work out the Government's strategy. At the beginning, it seemed to be about under-promising and over-delivering. Then it changed to just getting the basics right because it could do those well. Now it is a kind of mixture of the two, with a rant at the previous Government and then whatever Chris Minns wakes up wanting to do. That is the strategy as far as members opposite are concerned.

In the early days of the Government, let us not forget the textbook approach of the Premier and Ministers bagging out the former Government by saying, "The place is burning down. It's so bad. They didn't build or do anything. Everything is terrible." That does not quite work when you are holding a pair of scissors to cut the ribbon for a new metro, road or school. They over-egged that. Then, weirdly, they cut the free swimming vouchers during a cost-of-living crisis, which is pretty short sighted. Let us think about cause and effect: 10,000 kids missed out on swimming lessons during the COVID pandemic, and now one in five kids cannot swim more than 50 metres—with an over-representation of kids from Western Sydney.

Mookhey has gone and axed all the departments, so the Ministers are gathering crumbs to push all the projects down the hill to keep the stakeholders happy and make sure that backbenchers are not worried about losing their seats. The fact is that, over 10 years, the former Government delivered a \$150 billion infrastructure pipeline and a \$14 billion infrastructure future fund, and built more schools, roads, rail and hospitals than members opposite could ever dream of. It dug the State out of a \$4 billion Health hit to the budget, and delivered \$29 billion worth of support to communities to keep businesses open and food on the table. Yet the best thing members opposite can think of is removing the wages cap. Their Frankenstein, free-for-all, union wage bargaining process, in which all unions set out to knife each other, makes *The Hunger Games* look soft. No wonder Toby Warnes has gone bonkers. He has worked out that if you yell loudly enough, you get your union looked after.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** It's disgusting.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** No, it is not disgusting. I am just saying that members opposite have unleashed the unions against each other. Toby Warnes is out there demonstrating how it works: a bit of industrial action to rev things up and make sure the Government feels the pain. Heaven help us if members opposite think that is a fair and considered approach to wage bargaining.

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** It's not bargaining.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Whatever process they have cooked up, it is not working.

**Ms Charishma Kaliyanda:** A wages cap is not bargaining.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** However members opposite explain it, they need to do a better job because their communities cannot understand what they have unleashed. If members opposite are proud of it and think it is working well, thumbs up to them because their communities do not like people who whinge or look in the rear-view mirror. Those opposite need less talk about the former Government and more setting out a future vision for New South Wales that this Government can be proud of. The Government is only halfway through its term, yet it has run out of gas. There is no vision. It is just a matter of "Chris wakes up and we'll do this today." What was the other one? Moore Park Golf Course?

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The Clerk will stop the clock. What is the member's point of order?

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** My point of order has two parts. First, the member for Manly should refer to the Premier by his correct title. The second point is in relation to the amendment mentioned earlier. Paragraph (1) of the motion refers to nurses, teachers and police officers but the amendment refers to psychiatrists. I know members opposite do not care about public sector workers and cannot tell the difference between a teacher and a psychiatrist—

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The member for Leppington will resume his seat. I uphold the first part of the point of order but not the second part. The member for Manly has the call.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** I ask the member for Leppington to reconsider those remarks. Saying that the Coalition does not care about psychiatrists and mental health is absolutely appalling. The Government is bereft of political ideas, vision and courage. I think it is a time for a reshuffle. The member for Cessnock will fix it.

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (17:23):** The member for Manly referred to the vision of governments. Inherent in the motion before the House is our opposition to the privatisation of essential government services, including roads, energy and hospitals. I note that the Opposition amendment removes the sentence about

privatisation. That speaks volumes about the vision of those opposite. As the member for Parramatta and I know, the electorates with some of the poorest people have been hit by the privatisation of roads that were previously paid for from the public purse. It is costing some individual drivers in those communities \$6,000 a year. Cleaners, nurses, and teachers who live in Auburn and travel one way on those roads are out of pocket by \$3,000.

Members opposite want to lecture us about the cost of living, but the reason that people are under so much stress is the cost-of-living pressures they deliberately put on Western Sydney. Some 44 per cent of the population of Sydney—and 9 per cent of the Australian population—lives in Western Sydney. Members opposite can laugh about it, but it is not a joke for the cleaners who get up every morning and must travel into the city to clean offices. They are paying \$3,000 out of their pockets because members opposite decided that Silverwater Road, which was a public road with public access onto the M4, needed to be privatised. It is an absolute disgrace for members opposite to seek to lecture us when they left us with \$187.5 billion in State debt after 12 years in government.

What did they do with the money? They did not buy the schools that we need for growing areas in Western Sydney like Leppington and Camden. Where was the new Leppington High School? Never mind the wages cap that drove teachers out of the State. We had the worst-paid teachers in all of Australia. This Government has delivered the highest-paid teachers in the country. For Birrong Boys High School and Birrong Girls High School, which could not get enough teachers because not even the most popular schools had permanent teachers and therefore no casual teachers trickled down to them, it has finally meant that students are not all sitting in a hall supervised by two teachers. We do not have police leaving in droves to go to other States, as they did in the last year of the Liberal-Nationals Government. Members opposite talk to us about law and order problems in the bush, but you cannot have law and order without police officers. The reality is that their Government saw the highest-ever officer turnover in the NSW Police Force.

So do not lecture us about the wages cap being some kind of enterprise bargaining. Those opposite took the most essential services in this State and drove them into the ground. Nurses who lived on the border with Queensland were not working in the New South Wales health system; they were going across the border. Around 1,200 nurses would have been sacked if members opposite had been returned to government. That would have meant 110 fewer nurses in areas like Western Sydney, where I live. In Liverpool in the South Western Sydney Local Health District, 119 nurses would have been lost if members opposite had returned to government. The lack of lifts at stations was also disgraceful. Places like Chester Hill, which has an ageing population and where 50 per cent of people do not work, was on top of the priority list for lifts, but those opposite did not build them. They let Western Sydney sink. [*Time expired.*]

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (17:28):** I thank the member for Cessnock for introducing this public interest debate. He is always trying to raise the bar. He is optimistic. A lot of redrafting is needed, but we will have a stab. This is a government that says a lot but does not do a lot. It is great with a press release but not so good with a vision for our State. They started with the slogan "A fresh start for New South Wales", but now their slogan is "Building a better New South Wales". A visit to the Fresh Start Plan website that Labor set up will show that it is no longer working; it has been shut down. The Fresh Start Plan is dead; it does not exist anymore. It has ceased to be—it is an ex-plan. It is not there anymore.

The marketing gurus have been hard at work, because that is what they are good at on that side of the House. "Building a better New South Wales—we'll go with that instead," they said. But after two years—and they should make the most of the celebration because they only have a couple more—what are they actually building? They are not building houses or metro stations, nor are they building up small business, because there have been record small business insolvencies. So what are they building? They are building up queues for cancelled trains and building up elective surgery waiting lists. They are building up State debt. They are even building up the odometer on the Kia Carnival.

Whatever happened to raising the bar, member for Cessnock? After two years of this Labor Government, New South Wales families are hurting, businesses are folding and economic growth has stalled. At a time when our health system is under unprecedented strain, the Minns Government's answer is to deliver two years of real health budget cuts. At a time when more couples are postponing having kids due to cost-of-living pressures, the Minns Government's answer is to cut IVF subsidies. With patients waiting longer in our hospitals, this Government's answer is to charge them more for car parking in public hospitals. It is raking in \$51 million.

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** No, that was under you guys. You signed those agreements.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** I know it is hard to hear this. These are the same Labor members who said that car parking fees in our hospitals are a sick tax. That is what they said. What else did they say? They said that it is a cash cow, but nothing happens when they are in government—same old story. The December quarter painted a very dire picture of the health system pressures. There were 800,000 presentations to our emergency departments, with nearly 68,000 patients leaving without completing treatment. That is a 6 per cent increase. More than

100,000 patients are on the elective surgery wait list. That is back to COVID levels, when surgeries were cancelled. It is up, up and up under Labor.

Those opposite talk about supporting nurses, but they are quick to blame them for those long wait lists in our hospitals. They say that their protests gave rise to our wait list increases. It is shameful. They talk about supporting our health workforce, but nurses are picketing Parliament, psychiatrists are resigning en masse and now the doctors working in our emergency departments are threatening their first walk-off since 1984. It seems like yesterday but was a long time ago—over 40 years ago. Those times were bad for industrial chaos but great for music. In the words of Daryl Hall and John Oates, this Labor Government is "out of touch". We have had two years of spin.

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** What about *Beat It*?

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** *Beat It*? Yes, that is what we need from this Government as well. Twisted Sister said, "We're not gonna take it", and that is what the unions are saying to Labor every day.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** That wasn't 1984.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE:** It was 1984. Go and check it—I am very good with my '80s data. What has happened in two years? Whether it is Chris Minns in Macquarie Street or whether it is Albo in Canberra, it is the same story. The people of New South Wales are worse off under this minority Labor Government. It has never been harder or more expensive to see a GP. The dollar does not stretch as far as it did. Ask anyone, "Are you better off now than you were two years ago?" The answer will be no. People cannot rely on their trains to run on time due to industrial chaos. We got New South Wales moving when we were in government. New South Wales is worse off now. This Government has no vision; it is tinkering at the edges. Its Fresh Start Plan could not even survive a domain name change. The people of New South Wales deserve much better.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (17:33):** It is two years since the last New South Wales State election. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minns Labor Government and all members of this Parliament on being elected. This is one of the hardest working governments and parliaments that I have seen in over a decade in this place. I support this motion and I thank the Premier and the Government for their strong and collaborative working relationship with the crossbench. Not a week goes by where we do not work together to help deliver and improve on the reforms outlined in this motion, as well as many others. I also highlight that the election saw a record number of Independents elected—more than have ever existed in this Parliament—and the largest crossbench in the history of the Legislative Assembly. For the first time there are more members of the crossbench than there are members of the National Party, and that is a significant fact. It is time we had our own meeting room—just putting that out there.

**Ms Lynda Voltz:** On level 12, up the end.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** Level 12, here we come! The crossbench is the only group in this Parliament that continues to increase in size, with the recent election of the member for Pittwater, and no doubt it will continue to grow in size. Importantly, the motion speaks to the priorities of this Government, which have been wages, a better public service and housing supply. A number of members of the crossbench share those priorities, so I take the opportunity to highlight some of our collaborative work together. We have established the Select Committee on Essential Worker Housing, one of the only committees not chaired by the member for Cessnock.

A number of members who have contributed to this debate are members of that committee, which I chair, and it has been a way for us to prioritise and highlight the shared priorities. It is so important that people are able to work close to their jobs. I look forward to working with my fellow committee members to deliver some really important outcomes, recommendations and hopefully policies for this Government to adopt. Obviously there is a lot more work to do. All the members of the Legislative Assembly crossbench are very different—we vote in different ways and we are very much our own people—but we are here to work with the Government and hold it accountable. I thank the Government for its hard work for the people of New South Wales. I support the motion.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (17:37):** In reply: I thank all the members who contributed to this debate. The member for Sydney made a really important point about the number of Independents that are in the House now and the fact that this is a minority government. The work that happens in this place is in many ways all the better for the indulgence of and the cooperation with the Independents. I arrived here at a time when the O'Farrell landside meant that those opposite literally had three-quarters of the seats in this entire establishment, and yet, despite that, they could not find a purpose for being here. Fortunately, we got rid of that bloke O'Farrell and finally Mike Baird arrived, and at least he had something he wanted to do.

I also acknowledge the other speakers. The member for Auburn drew our attention back to the role of privatisation and the very real impact it has on everyday workers. People need to travel on toll roads that used to

be in public hands just to get to and from work. It is an incredibly expensive pursuit for them each day and each year, and it is a result of privatisation. The member for Camden, who had an esteemed teaching career, knows very personally the importance of having permanent teachers in the workplace, so that our children can build connections and know who is going to turn up each day and so that we do not have collapsed classes. I also thank the member for Davidson for joining the pile-on about the size of the debt that the previous Government left us. He knows the budget. He knows that the debt left by members opposite is costing the people of New South Wales \$500,000 in interest for this debate alone! I acknowledge his willingness to talk about that ugly scar on the finances of the State.

The member for Manly lamented that the former Government failed to fund certain things on an ongoing basis. Members of the former Government went to the election pretending that there was money in the bank to pay for some of that stuff, but they did not actually have the money. I thank the member for Manly for bringing that to the attention of the House. I thank the member for Vacluse, who also piled on the former Liberal-Nationals Government. She was disappointed that it had not properly funded health, education and the many other services she mentioned. I state for the record that I am proud of the work of the current Labor Government to reduce teacher vacancies and to increase the numbers of nurses and police. I say to those opposite that if they want to campaign on the basis that they hate the extra nurses, teachers and police, I will volunteer to come doorknocking with them.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The member for Cessnock has moved a motion, to which the member for Davidson has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....32  
Noes .....53  
Majority.....21

**AYES**

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

James, T  
Kemp, M  
Lane, J  
Layzell, D  
Moylan, B  
Petinos, E  
Preston, R  
Provest, G  
Saunders, D  
Singh, G  
Sloane, K

Speakman, M  
Taylor, M  
Thompson, T  
Tuckerman, W  
Tudehope, M  
Wallace, J  
Ward, G  
Williams, R  
Williamson, R (teller)  
Wilson, F

**NOES**

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

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

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

## PAIRS

Roberts, A

Tesch, L

**Amendment negatived.**

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that the motion be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Bills***PRODUCT LIFECYCLE RESPONSIBILITY BILL 2025****First Reading**

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

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

*Community Recognition Statements***NORTH MACEDONIA NIGHTCLUB FIRE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:47):** I acknowledge the devastating tragedy in North Macedonia, where a horrific fire at a nightclub in the town of Kočani has claimed the lives of at least 59 people and injured over 150 others. The blaze, which broke out during a concert attended by hundreds of people, has left families shattered and a nation in mourning. Our hearts go out to the victims, their loved ones and all those affected by the unimaginable loss. Here in New South Wales, we stand in solidarity with our strong and proud North Macedonian Australian community, many of whom have deep ties to their homeland. The North Macedonian community has made invaluable contributions to the communities in south-west Sydney, including in my electorate of Leppington. We know this tragedy is deeply felt. I extend my deepest condolences to all those who are grieving and reaffirm our commitment to standing in solidarity with our North Macedonian community during this very difficult time.

**BARRABA POTTERS AND CRAFT GUILD**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (17:48):** I recognise the Barraba Potters and Craft Guild, which is an outstanding local group that I am proud to have worked with over many years. More than 55 years ago, a small group of Barraba women started a pottery group to help hone their skills and to spend some valuable time with their neighbours. All these years later, the group has evolved into the Barraba Potters and Craft Guild, which has more than 70 members. It is an incredibly important outlet for those members. I recently paid another visit to their great community space and was blown away by the craftsmanship on display. Outstanding pieces of pottery, patchwork, knitting, artwork, crochet, textiles, jewellery and more were displayed in every corner, nook and cranny of the guild. It was an outstanding display of extraordinary skill. I have been fortunate enough to assist the guild on several occasions to win grants to upgrade the facilities. I will continue to work with the guild to ensure it is available to the community for years to come. I thank Bronwyn Clinch and all the other members of the guild for their contributions to the Barraba community.

**ILLAWARRA HAWKS**

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (17:49):** After 24 years, the Illawarra Hawks are once again National Basketball League champions, taking out the fifth game of the grand final series 114-104 in Wollongong on Sunday in front of more than 5,600 fans. The team, consisting of players Daniel Grida, Darius Days, Hyunjung Lee, Kobe McDowell-White, Kuany Kuany, Lachlan Olbrich, Luca Yates, Mason Peatling, Sam Froling, Todd Blanchfield, Trey Kell III, Tyler Harvey, Wani Swaka Lo Buluk, William Hickey, Zac Triplett and Brad Ballinger; supported by coaching staff Justin Tatum, Joel Khalu, Sam Gruggen, Matt Flinn and Tom Cranney; and back office staff, including Stu Taggart and Amber Morrissey; along with owner, Jared Novelly, have done the City of Wollongong proud and given the region a real lift. I congratulate them on a great season and on taking out the title again. I look forward to them making it two in a row in 2025-26.

**CAPTAIN GARRY O'HARA**

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:50):** We have some wonderful volunteers in our communities. Allow me to tell members about one in the Upper Hunter. Captain Garry O'Hara has spent 60 years with the Bureen RFS Brigade, and I recently presented Garry with the NSW Government Community Service

Award. Since the winter of 1965, he has fought bushfires, assisted during times of flood and attended the scene of motor vehicle crashes. Additionally, he has taken a fire truck to deliver Christmas spirit with the annual Santa lolly run. Garry O'Hara has also served his nation. He is a Vietnam veteran, who has given back to other diggers through the local RSL sub-branch. Muswellbrook Shire Council presented Garry with an Australia Day Award earlier this year. I congratulate Garry O'Hara on his hard-earned and well-deserved awards. We thank him for his service to our community and our nation.

#### **EAST HILLS GOANNAS**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:51):** Congratulations to the East Hills Goannas Oztag Boys 15s team on its outstanding performance at the 2025 NSW Junior State Cup. The team went through the competition undefeated, showcasing exceptional skill and determination in every game to be ranked first out of 28 teams. The boys defeated South Sydney in the quarterfinal and Nepean in the semifinal before beating Central Coast in the final, with an impressive 5-3 victory. It was a tremendous effort from all of the players: Lenny, Ben, Masen, Seth, Bainyn, Callum, Patrick, Andrew, Cash, Jack, Damon, Luke and Dain. I send a huge congratulations to all the boys. I also congratulate coaches Dave Curtis, Michael Mallia and Adam Peek, and manager Sandy Grekas for their leadership and guidance throughout the tournament. I also thank the parents and volunteers who supported the team on its journey this season. It is an amazing achievement that I am sure was widely celebrated across the whole club.

#### **AMY CLARKE**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (17:52):** Some people simply shine brighter, and that is true of Amy Clarke, an inspiring member of our Pittwater community. Amy founded Confetti Rebels, an online business selling colourful, glittery apparel with empowering messages of equality and body positivity that encourage people to be unapologetically themselves. Her feminist T-shirt range addresses key societal issues, including her "Stop Killing Women" design, which has been worn by Federal MPs Zali Steggall and Zoe Daniel in Australia's Parliament House. Amy's brand has a loyal following, with customers pre-ordering her latest collections. She is also a strong advocate for small businesses, supporting local events and openly sharing her challenges in running a small business on her Instagram channel. Beyond her brand, Amy volunteers for the Alfresco Community Kitchen and supports the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, helping vulnerable women and children. She is also candid about her own health journey, openly and bravely discussing the positive role that Ozempic has played in managing her polycystic ovary syndrome and helping to drive reform. I deeply respect Amy. She leads by example, giving generously to our community.

#### **TRIBUTE TO MICK COOK**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (17:53):** It is with great sadness that I inform the House of the passing of Mick Cook, current president of the Toowoona Bay Surf Life Saving Club and respected member of The Entrance community, who passed away three days ago on 22 March. Cookie, as he was known, was born on 30 August 1941 and was a larger-than-life character who put his heart and soul into everything he did. Mick lived and breathed lifesaving through his 25 years of service and adhered to the motto of vigilance and service. Over the years Mick held executive club positions such as president and club captain, as well as captain of Patrol 5—Stay Alive with Patrol Five. He was recognised with life membership by Surf Life Saving NSW. Mick was also awarded the National Medal and received his 25-year clasp. Mick would volunteer for anything and was always the first to put up his hand whenever a community event, fundraising event or any event needed his help. Nothing was ever a problem. Mick will be dearly missed by our whole community, and my condolences go out to his wife, Ruth, and the whole family. Vale, Mick Cook.

#### **JEANNETTE OUJANI**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:54):** I ask the House to join me in recognising Jeannette Oujani, Ryde's 2025 Local Woman of the Year. Jeannette's decades of dedicated service to the community sector span both government and not-for-profit organisations. For nearly 30 years, she has worked tirelessly to support some of our most vulnerable residents, including seniors, people with disabilities, carers, new migrants and refugees. Beyond her professional contributions, Jeannette's extensive volunteer work and advocacy have uplifted and empowered diverse groups, from mentoring young women and supporting international students to advocating for First Nations people and the LGBTIQ+ community. As a multicultural ambassador for Mental Health Foundation Australia and Ryde City Council, Jeannette has championed mental health awareness in multicultural communities. Her leadership in the Supporting Inclusive Volunteering project, which received a highly commended award at the NSW Local Government Excellence Awards, further highlights her commitment to community service. Jeannette's recognition as the Local Woman of the Year is befitting of her unwavering passion, selflessness and dedication. On behalf of the Parliament, I thank Jeannette for making Ryde a better place.

**MORTEN KAI ELLERINGTON**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (17:55):** I acknowledge the outstanding achievements of Morten Kai Ellerington, a talented young athlete from Callala Bay whose dedication to sport is truly inspiring. Morten has excelled in representative AFL, netball, athletics and cross-country, and he is a formidable middle-distance runner. Morten specialises in the 800-metre and 1,500-metre events and will compete at the State athletics finals this month at Sydney Olympic Park. In August 2024 Morten participated in a two-day selection trial with the South Coast boys' netball team in Penrith and was selected to represent New South Wales at the NSW Primary Schools Sports Association boys' netball championship. This year Morten has been offered the opportunity to play in the boys' State netball titles in July in Sydney with the inner west team. Morten's achievements have taken him across New South Wales and beyond, supported by an Australian Government Local Sporting Champions grant. Morten exemplifies dedication, perseverance and talent. I congratulate Morten and look forward to celebrating his future successes.

**JULIE BRADY, OAM**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:56):** I recognise Julie Brady, who has given nearly 20 years to volunteering in the Myall Lakes community. Her contributions include roles with the Forster Neighbourhood Centre, the Great Lakes Women's Shelter and the Coomba Park hall committee, where she has served as a committee member, secretary and president. Julie has also dedicated time as a volunteer tutor at Pacific Palms Public School, all the while managing a small beef cattle enterprise with her partner in Coomba Park. In 2015 Julie was pivotal in establishing the Great Lakes Womens Shelter. She has made a huge impact on the lives of many vulnerable members of our community. Julie has received numerous accolades, including the 2016 Great Lakes Citizen of the Year Award and the Mid North Coast Volunteer of the Year Award in 2018. This year she was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community through social welfare organisations. I congratulate Julie on that well-deserved recognition, thank her for her service and wish her all the very best in her retirement.

**LIVERPOOL OLYMPIC FOOTBALL CLUB AMENITIES BLOCK**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:57):** I share some wonderful news with the House. After many years of campaigning and several months of construction, the brand-new toilet and amenities block at Hoxton Park Reserve is complete and ready for use by the many people who call Liverpool Olympic Football Club their home. The new amenities block will more than triple the available toilets for Liverpool Olympic Football Club's growing membership, which includes more women, seniors, people with disabilities and others who have traditionally found it difficult to access local sporting facilities. All members would agree that getting more people into physical activity to benefit from the social connections that come from being part of a sporting club, especially in Western Sydney, is worth every penny of the \$150,000 invested by this Labor Government. I thank and congratulate Liverpool Olympic Football Club president Charlie Demertzis, secretary Victoria Gauci, grants coordinator Damien Gauci and all the committee members for their advocacy on behalf of their club members and for their efforts to improve safety and accessibility in our community facilities.

**TRIBUTE TO AIRLIE MONTGOMERY**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (17:58):** Today I acknowledge the beautiful life of a little angel, Airlie Montgomery. Last week news that Airlie was missing saw people from across North Nowra get off their lounges and leave their homes to go searching for this special little girl. Airlie was on the autism spectrum and was non-verbal. Later that afternoon Airlie was found at the bottom of the Grotto, having fallen from a great height, leaving Airlie's parents, Corey and Katie, heartbroken for a loss that no parent should ever have to endure. No parent should ever have to bury their children. To honour Airlie's memory, her parents have asked me to request of the Premier a grant towards a new playground for children with sensory disabilities as part of Drexel Park in North Nowra near North Nowra Public School and Havenlee School. Both schools cater to children with additional needs. This project is also championed by Shoalhaven's mayor, Patricia White. Airlie's parents do not want any family to have to relive their tragedy, with this new park being a beacon to reflect the brightness and joy that Airlie brought to her family and our community, whilst providing a safe place for children with special needs to play. Rest in peace, Airlie. You are loved and you will be missed.

**CHALDEAN COMMUNITY DINNER**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (17:59):** On 16 March 2025 I had the privilege of attending the special dinner night organised by His Excellency Mar Amel Nona, the Archbishop of the Chaldean Diocese in Australia and New Zealand. The event was an extraordinary opportunity to gather with community leaders, esteemed guests and prominent figures in the Chaldean community. The Premier of New South Wales was the special guest for the evening and, together with our local State MPs, brought a sense of unity and support for the Chaldean

community. In addition to the Premier, the event also saw the presence of influential members of the Chaldean community, including business owners, experts and professionals, all of whom play a key role in the growth and success of the community. The evening was a wonderful occasion to celebrate the achievements of the Chaldean community, foster meaningful connections and discuss the importance of continued collaboration for the future.

#### **BLAKEY JOHNSTON**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (18:00):** I recognise Cronulla legend Blakey Johnston for recently uniting our community to break another world record, this time for the world's biggest paddle-out. The unforgettable morning saw an enthusiastic crowd lining the shore and 1,027 boardriders form a giant circle off Cronulla, before linking arms for two minutes to smash the previous record. Blakey lives by the motto "Everyone deserves to feel awesome". The community got behind him to shine a spotlight on youth mental health and raise money for OneWave and Find Ya Feet. Congratulations to Blakey and his organising team, led by wife Lauren Johnston, with Jenna Clark and Shelly Morgan; the Sutherland Shire Council lifeguards; Fletch Hayllar, who took care of water safety; the 44 team leaders; and Matt Dunbar, who led the photographers who captured this special day in our local history. Congratulations to Blakey for creating a moment of unity like never before and making a difference for youth mental health.

#### **PEARL MANTON**

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:01):** Tonight I introduce to Parliament Pearl Manton, the Port Stephens Local Woman of the Year for 2025. Over the years I have watched the Karuah Pearls netball team grow and thrive. Under Pearl's leadership, the club has gone from strength to strength in the small town of Karuah. A proud Wiradjuri woman, Pearl's contributions to local sport and her community are inspiring, especially as she lives with multiple sclerosis [MS]. At the recent Port Stephens International Women's Day breakfast, Pearl shared a powerful analogy. She likened herself to a glowstick, saying that in order to shine a glowstick must first be broken. In the early stages of her MS journey, it broke her. But she rebuilt herself, founded a netball club and now uses this lesson to show how challenges unlock our greatest strength. Pearl leads with passion, resilience and determination, both on and off the court. As an educator at Karuah Public School and St Philip's Christian College, she continues to inspire kindness, confidence and inclusivity. Thanks to Pearl, Port Stephens is a stronger, kinder and more connected place.

#### **EPHING ROTARY YOUTH PROGRAM OF ENRICHMENT**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (18:02):** I acknowledge the students who took part in the Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment, an initiative offered by the Epping Rotary Club and supported by Community Bank Epping. Epping Rotary's support for this program is a reflection of its commitment to supporting youth development. This weekend program helps to provide young people with life skills, confidence and motivation to succeed in an increasingly competitive world. I congratulate Christopher Rooke and Rhys Stewart from Epping Boys High School and Adwita Mallela, Esther Kim, Violet Hocking and Abbygail Walker from Cheltenham Girls' High School on their participation in this year's program. Positive reports from these year 9 and year 10 students on their experience with the program highlighted the impact it had on their personal development, as well as their commitment to strive to help the Epping community. I commend Epping Rotary Club and President Bruce Jacob for providing this valuable opportunity to young people in my region.

#### **SARAH ROWAN**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:03):** Helensburgh's Sarah Rowan is a renowned Australian speed painter, known for her ability to think quick and act fast. Sarah has boldly developed her studio-based painting practice into a captivating live performance genre that for 20 years has wowed over 20,000 people. Her popularity has found her speaking at over 500 events, raising nearly \$380,000 for charities. From teaching art to refugee children to producing stunning murals—like the one in her home town of Helensburgh that commemorates the 2024 Olympic BMX gold medal winner and finalists, the Sakakibara twins—Sarah is a committed community advocate. On behalf of my electorate I thank Sarah for her creative contributions to my community, for her considerable charity work and for serving as an inspiration to all.

#### **COLLARROY VETERINARY HOSPITAL**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (18:04):** Tonight I acknowledge Dr Peter Prendergast and his team at Collaroy Veterinary Hospital, who have been taking care of the beloved pets of the northern beaches since 1997. Recently my office was contacted by one of the vet hospital's clients, who had great things to say about the kind and compassionate service they received while their pet was in for treatment. On the northern beaches we love our pets, so when they get sick or injured it is such a great relief to know that our furry and feathered friends are receiving high-quality care. In recognition of his dedication to his work and decades of experience in surgery,

in 2016 Dr Prendergast was granted membership to the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists. I congratulate the amazing team at Collaroy Veterinary Hospital on their years of devotion to the pets of the northern beaches. On behalf of Wakehurst pet owners—and, basically, all of the northern beaches—well done on all the work they do.

### COBBITTY PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:05):** Cobbitty Public School has a long and proud tradition. On 20 February 2024 the school hosted an incredibly emotional student leadership induction, where the leaders were presented with badges and the captains were presented with blazers. I congratulate Annalise and Caius on being elected captains, Maddi and Jack on being elected vice-captains, and Harper, Dominik, Juliet, Beau and Allegra on being elected prefects. There were also sport house captains from Platypus, Wallaby and Koala, not to mention the student council representatives from all the way down in year 1 to all the way up to years 5 and 6, as well as the junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. Congratulations to the students. I look forward to working with the Cobbitty leadership teams further and seeing what incredible work they can accomplish in the 2025 school year.

### ROMA PIZZA

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:06):** I recognise an outstanding local business in South Hurstville, Roma Pizza, which is a long-time Coure family favourite. This year Roma Pizza is celebrating an incredible 65 years of service to my community. For more than six decades, the Russo family have not only served up some of the best pizza in Sydney but also created a welcoming space that brings people together. Their dedication to quality food, exceptional service and a strong community spirit has made Roma Pizza an institution in my local area. Small businesses like Roma Pizza are the backbone of our communities. The Russo family's commitment and hard work over the years exemplify the very best of local business. I will never forget how during the pandemic the team from Roma Pizza hosted a live how-to-make-lasagne class on Facebook for everyone to watch, which I participated in. As we celebrate this milestone, I congratulate the entire team at Roma Pizza. I thank them for their service to my community, for their generosity and for keeping traditions alive. I hope that the next 65 years are just as successful.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich):** I now feel like pizza.

### KNOX RUPRECHT

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (18:08):** It cannot often be said that a year 4 student has thought about anything for years, but one remarkable young man from Eleebana Public School, Knox Ruprecht, has been talking about growing out his hair and cutting it off for charity since he was in year 2. On Friday 7 March he followed through. Inspired by the experiences of a close family member, Knox said goodbye to his long locks in order to raise money for diabetes research through the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Knox had a big audience for the event. His fellow students, teachers and members of his family were there to celebrate the momentous occasion—and what an occasion it was. His shoulder-length curls were divided into hanks, with some of his mates getting in on the big chop as well. Knox surpassed his goal of raising \$2,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, but he went even further. His hair was donated to Wigs4Kids to help young people who lose their hair due to illness. Congratulations, Knox! What an inspiring young man.

### THE HORDERN TREE

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:09):** The saying "While I live, I'll grow," has long resonated with Wollondilly locals and others. A sign with that phrase on it is positioned on a magnificent fig tree, located in Razorback, which warmly marks the entrance to Wollondilly. That tree was planted 25 years ago to replace the original fig tree planted by the Hordern family, whose department store stood on George, Liverpool, Goulburn and Pitt streets in Sydney. Their business was established in 1825, and its symbol was an oak tree. The family's oaks from 1844 were removed in 1901. A fig tree, which had been planted there in the 1880s, remained. It began to resemble an oak as grazing cattle shaped it. The famous sign was built in 1952. The tree unfortunately succumbed to disease, pests and lightning, and it had disappeared along with the Hordern's department store by the 1970s. On 18 March 2000, a new fig tree was planted on council land. It was presided over by the mayor; the Deputy Premier at the time, Andrew Refshauge, who was a Hordern descendant; and Cliff Foley from Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land Council. I thank Razorback Landcare Group, which lovingly maintains it for the future.

### ST PATRICK'S COLLEGE FOR GIRLS

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:10):** On Wednesday 19 March, I was honoured to attend the 185th anniversary mass for the school of St Patrick's College, Campbelltown. That amazing event was hosted by

the school's principal, Mary Leask, and also the celebrant for the event, Bishop Brian Mascord. We were also joined by the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency Margaret Beazley, and Federal Senator Deborah O'Neill who is an old girl of the school. The event was a beautiful celebration of 185 years of Irish Catholic education. It is still run by the Sisters of the Good Samaritan. The land was donated for the school—the first school to be privately built in Australia. It is a testament to what can happen over 185 years. I reflect on the many generations of young women who have passed through the doors of the college and have been shaped by its wisdom, faith and love of community.

#### **GLENYS PARANIHI**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:11):** I rise to express pride and appreciation for Glenys Paranihi, the president of the Northern Suburbs Netball Association. She has been acknowledged as the Willoughby Local Woman of the Year 2025 for her selfless and enduring contribution to our community. Glenys' dedication to sport and community service has shaped the lives of countless children, adults and families. For over twenty years, her leadership in netball has provided tens of thousands of players and officials with valuable opportunities to develop and compete. Through key roles, including selections convenor and competition convenor, she has helped strengthen netball in our area and ensured the sport continues to thrive. Beyond netball, Glenys has served as the secretary of local school P&C groups and dedicated a decade to Meals on Wheels at the Dougherty Community Centre in Chatswood. Her generosity and commitment to community service are truly inspiring. The Local Woman of the Year Awards celebrate outstanding women across New South Wales, and Glenys is a most deserving recipient. I congratulate Glenys and thank her for her leadership and dedication to Willoughby.

#### **COMMUNITY KIDS HORNINGSEA PARK**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:12):** Reconciliation with our First Peoples requires a concerted effort by many different groups. It was a pleasure to join the member for Leppington at Community Kids Horningsea Park to see reconciliation in action at its flag raising ceremony. Community Kids Horningsea Park has implemented a reconciliation action plan based on the belief that reconciliation is about making change by building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and gaining a deep understanding of history and culture. A native garden has been established at the front of the centre. It has a flagpole. It was beautiful to see the community come together to affirm its commitment to reconciliation. I give special mention to the centre manager, Karleen Luximon, for implementing the preschool's reconciliation action plan and for her dedication to building understanding in the community.

#### **CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL HSC RESULTS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (18:13):** I celebrate the outstanding achievements of Castle Hill High School's 2024 HSC students. Their hard work, dedication and success are a credit to our community. I congratulate the 2024 dux, Imogen Browne, who earned an impressive ATAR of 99.85, and placed eighth in the State for ancient history. I also congratulate the students who placed in the top 10 in New South Wales: Ariana Boyd, who scored first place in Hungarian studies; Alina Hawron, who ranked tenth in engineering studies; and Nga Ching Amber Kwong, who achieved fourth in English as an additional language or dialect. Beyond these individual accomplishments, an incredible 68 students achieved an ATAR above 90. This success reflects the outstanding leadership of the principal, Georgina Fleming, and the dedication of the entire school staff. The teaching staff of Castle Hill High School continue to inspire students to excel in education. It is wonderful to see students excel in their studies. I am sure that all the students will have a very bright future.

#### **ILLAWARRA WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:14):** I acknowledge the amazing achievement of the Illawarra Women's Health Centre's compelling art exhibition, *Our Voices, Our Stories*, which showcases the untold stories of recovery and healing from domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors. Women who have experienced gendered violence discovered their voices and their strength through a 12-week project. They used the mediums of sketch art, creative writing and photography to explore recovery and healing. The exhibition features powerful photographic works by Sylvia Liber, a winner of a Walkley Award for photography. The works were created in collaboration with local women alongside sketching and creative writing. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate the Illawarra Women's Health Centre and the local women included in its art exhibition. It is a wonderful achievement.

#### **LOLITA LANDMAN**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:15):** I acknowledge Lolita Landman from Culcairn for her outstanding contributions to the HealthShare team at the Henty Multipurpose Service and her local community. Lolita works tirelessly to provide essential cleaning and meal services to residents and patients. Her warm personality and genuine interest in others have made her a favourite among the residents, and she sees many of

them more than their own families. Lolita takes pride in sharing stories about her family, including her children, Kyle and Emily, and updating the residents on life in her hometown of Culcairn. Outside of her role at Henty Multipurpose Service, Lolita is a dedicated community member in Culcairn. She serves as a director of the Culcairn Bowling and Recreation Club. She is also a member of the Culcairn Museum Committee and a past president of the Culcairn Garden Club. She is the newly appointed pavilion marshal for the Culcairn Agricultural Show. Her commitment to giving back reflects her gratitude for the life she has built in Australia, which she considers has given her so much since she moved here from the Philippines.

### **BANKSTOWN ELECTORATE**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (18:16):** Today marks two years since the last New South Wales election. I have been privileged to represent my community for a decade, particularly in my past two years in government. Two years ago, I told my community:

I have been proud to stand by our community through all the trials and tribulations over the past 8 years and I know I will continue to do so if I'm given the same honour again. I hope I have earned your trust through my actions ...

Our community has suffered much pain in the past two years. I have tried to be a voice for compassion and peace through that pain. Trust comes from actions that bear results. Whilst it takes time, we are making progress in delivering the infrastructure our community needs, including upgrades to Canterbury Road; funding for Bankstown Hospital; upgrades to schools, like Punchbowl Public School; and much needed toll relief. Our Government is embarking on planning reforms that will change the face of Bankstown but not its spirit. Our community is giving, compassionate, diverse and inclusive. It often does it tough, but it is always aspirational. I will always be its champion, and it is an honour to continue as its representative.

### **SUPERINTENDENT CHRISTINE MCDONALD**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:17):** I congratulate Superintendent Christine McDonald, who is the 2025 Drummoyne Local Woman of the Year. At the start of last year Superintendent McDonald was appointed to be the commander of Burwood Police Area Command. In that time, she has shown that she is dedicated to ensuring that safety, community-based policing and proactive crime prevention are priorities for our local police. She has organised many initiatives and local events to uplift and bring the community together. I commend her for that. In February, our community celebrated a fun Lunar New Year in Rhodes. One of the food stalls accidentally caught fire, and Superintendent McDonald acted swiftly. She ran towards the fire to ensure everyone was safe before firefighters arrived. She has served in the NSW Police Force for over 25 years, including roles in the Sex Crimes Squad, Marine Area Command and as the chief of staff to the police commissioner, Karen Webb. She was the first ever female chief of staff to a police commissioner. I congratulate Superintendent McDonald on behalf of our community, and I wish her all the best.

### *Bills*

### **SCREEN AND DIGITAL GAMES INDUSTRIES BILL 2025**

#### **First Reading**

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

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

### *Private Members' Statements*

### **CENTRAL COAST AND NEWCASTLE RAIL LINE**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:19):** The Central Coast and Newcastle Line of our intercity rail network is hugely important to the Central Coast community. It connects the State's two largest cities: Sydney and Newcastle. With 14 million passenger journeys per annum, it has the highest patronage of any of the five intercity lines. Its passage through the Hawkesbury River area is one of the most beautiful rail journeys in the State. However, for many of my constituents, reliability and punctuality are ongoing concerns. The Central Coast has a large commuter population, and those people rely on the Central Coast and Newcastle line to get to work. Publicly available punctuality information shows that line performance has declined steadily since 2021. Passengers often experience delays with trains running behind schedule. Skipping of stations has occurred. Issues such as signal failure, track maintenance, old rolling stock and overcrowding contribute significantly to those delays. When compared with other intercity lines, the Central Coast and Newcastle line performs below average.

The line consists of only one up and one down track along most of its length, which is a compounding factor when delays occur. Running freight services on the same line as the intercity service is a further operational

challenge. Declining performance is a disappointing situation to have inherited from the former Government. Other lines have benefited from more recent upgrades to track and signalling systems, helping reduce disruption and improve punctuality. In that regard, the 2023-24 Rail Repair Plan focused on the metropolitan area. My colleagues and I have made representations to the Minister many times—in my case, on nine occasions in the past 12 months. I appreciate the Minister's response to each of those and the meetings she arranged with Transport for NSW staff on two occasions to discuss the issue. I am advised that Sydney Trains is reviewing its worst performing services and is committed to improving on-time running. Action plans have been developed for both infrastructure and operations.

I am advised that the Central Coast is now being given priority under the repair plan. However, I remain frustrated with the progress of improvements and the continued reliability issues, of which the Friday 15 March signal failure was one of the worst examples we have seen in the past 12 months. I share my constituents' frustration. I give them this commitment: I will continue to use the rail network to ensure that I have the same experience as them, and I will continue to do all I can to make sure that my community gets the public transport services it expects and deserves, sooner rather than later.

### ALBURY ELECTORATE ROADS

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:21):** "The long and winding road that leads to your door will never disappear." The words of McCartney and Lennon could be alluding to the fight for better roads and transport options in the Albury electorate, for it is, if not literally then certainly metaphorically, a long and winding road. The process through various planning and funding gateways means that advocacy inherently needs to be persistent to obtain positive outcomes. Davey Road interchange, Grubben Road rail crossing, Jingellic Road bridge crossings, point to point transport in Greater Hume, improved bus services in Albury and well over \$40 million of State funding for local and regional roads are testament to successful advocacy over the past six years. However, advocacy does not stop, and I welcome the opportunity to update on current issues.

Where Tynan and Burma roads intersect with the Hume Freeway at Table Top is a busy intersection, only becoming busier as the population grows. Earlier this year I met with Transport for NSW, AlburyCity and community representatives to discuss their concerns, which I share, about the safety of the intersection. I report that Transport for NSW is currently undertaking crash cluster analysis for the identification of potential sites eligible for the Safer Roads Program. Given concerns about under-reporting of near misses, Transport for NSW is arranging for the installation of CCTV at the intersection to collect driver behaviour data, including near misses, at that location. That data, together with the crash cluster analysis, may be used to support any potential submission for project development. Potential projects are included on a regional priority list for assessment and submission for funding.

Transport for NSW has nominated the intersection as a trial site, as part of a new Smarter Highways program. It is hoped that through that program, innovative technologies will be harnessed to improve safety. Transport for NSW is also developing a Tumut to Hume Highway Corridor Strategy and a strategic regional integrated plan, with a "have your say" portal currently open. I encourage members of the community to take part in that process. It is pleasing to see a project manager appointed locally to work on business cases for the Thurgoona Drive interchange and the Borella Road and Riverina Highway, both major conduits for Thurgoona Wirringa. With a final business case being developed to prioritise upgrades for the Borella Road and Riverina Highway, I welcome the progress of smaller scale intersection and road upgrades that are to occur through existing funded programs between Young Street and East Street.

I am concerned that the intersection with the Riverina Highway and Airport Drive is not part of current considerations. I have raised that intersection in my discussions with AlburyCity, as I believe we need to explore the inclusion of that intersection, as well that of the intersection of Elizabeth Mitchell Drive and Table Top Road with the Riverina Highway. Following community consultation last year, concept designs have now been completed for the Thurgoona Drive interchange. Transport for NSW is reviewing concept designs to identify a preferred design option, and that process is estimated to be completed by the end of 2025. As design options are finalised, it is imperative that the Government moves forward with funding and construction. It is important that our community is also kept informed as to preferred design options.

With an updated Murray River Crossings report being finalised, the Mulwala Bridge continues to be a key focus of mine. The New South Wales Government reiterated its commitment to the green route. However, the Victorian Government is yet to confirm the green route and is to undertake a movement network study. Yarrawonga Mulwala continues to experience significant growth. With industry such as Thales, both State governments and the Commonwealth need to progress those vital cross-border linkages. There are many other transport projects across my electorate, from improving heavy vehicle parking and rest area amenity at Holbrook, to disability access for pedestrian crossings associated with the suite of Inland Rail works, to safety fencing at the Borella Road interchange, to school crossings in Jindera.

Across my electorate, I am grateful for those who constructively help to give visibility to those issues, including Mulwala Progress Association, Thurgoona Community Action Group and the newly formed Table Top Intersection Action Group. I acknowledge the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport, her office and Transport for NSW for their engagement on Albury electorate matters. Our region continues to grow and, whilst the path to better transport infrastructure can sometimes feel long and winding, consistent strong advocacy will continue to be my focus.

### SHELLHARBOUR CITY COUNCIL

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:26):** I update the House on an ongoing scandal engulfing Shellharbour City Council. Over the past week the mayor, Chris Homer, has continued to show his complete disregard for the safety and wellbeing of staff at the council, especially those who have raised concerns about the covering up of bullying and sexual harassment. Instead of taking matters raised by me in Parliament last week seriously, he has shown that he is not up to the task and tried to blame the whistleblowers and me for making the matter public. On Thursday last week he was quoted in *The Illawarra Mercury* newspaper as saying, "It's highly inappropriate to have ongoing public commentary in this regard," and "I urge the State member to focus on her State constituents as I know there are plenty of commitments to fulfill." He just does not get it. On the same day as the mayor gave those ill-informed quotes to the local paper, the council's acting general manager wrote me a letter titled "Request for Information", saying:

I have been advised internally that you have so far not provided council with the information provided to you by council staff so that council could act to investigate these matters.

That is after almost two years. He goes on to say:

Therefore, I respectfully request that any information you have regarding staff bullying and harassment be provided to myself as the acting CEO to be forwarded for independent external review.

The acting general manager went on to state:

It is important for the impacted staff who have reached out to you, that their information is included in the external reviews in order for Council to be able to implement any resulting rectification and improvement strategies.

Thank you in anticipation of your assistance and cooperation to help Council.

There we go: The mayor is asking for me to stay out of it. No surprise there—he loves a good cover-up—but the acting CEO is asking for my assistance. What is going on at that council? One hand does not know what the other is doing. It is in absolute chaos. The problem for council is that back on 14 February 2024, my office wrote to council's public officer letting her know:

Anna Watson MP is in receipt of two letters of correspondence from Shellharbour City Council employees where a number of concerns have been raised and your name is mentioned as a contact.

Ms Watson would like to have a meeting with you to discuss the content of the letters.

My office gave some possible dates and times to meet with the public officer and asked if they could advise of their availability. I then followed up the email with three phone calls to the public officer and received no response. No meeting ever took place. Unfortunately, there was no interest from council to undertake any investigation back in 2024, which may have stopped the behaviour of the CEO at the recent staff Christmas party. It is shameful. I will not be responding to the letter from council. I have no intention of forwarding any information to an organisation that covers up bullying and sexual harassment. However, I will be ensuring that any whistleblower who speaks to me is protected and that their identity remains confidential. I will not risk their safety by sending any materials to the council or to any external investigator that has been appointed by the council. I simply do not trust this council to investigate itself.

To ensure a fair-dinkum assessment of any information I provide, I will forward any complaints straight to the independent investigators at SafeWork, the Ombudsman and/or the Independent Commission Against Corruption. When Chris Homer first ran for the job of mayor, he promised—and this was his campaign slogan—a "fresh wave of leadership", but all we got was a stale ripple of ineptitude. Chris Homer is not a local leader; he is a local disgrace. He needs to resign and, if he does not, the Minister for Local Government should sack the council and appoint an administrator.

### HUNTER VALLEY SCHOOL TRANSPORT SERVICES

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (18:31):** I provide the House with an update on an issue causing considerable concern in the Upper Hunter electorate. The new school year commenced early in February, and within days parents made me aware of problems with the local school bus services. I acknowledge and thank the parents from the Branxton area for their prompt action in raising the matter with me as their local member. As many will be aware, Branxton is one of the communities located close to the location of the Hunter Valley bus

tragedy in June 2023. It must not be underestimated how that devastating event is still impacting my constituents almost two years later.

Key among the parents' concerns are the availability of sufficient school buses to transport students to and from school, the number of students being carried on the buses that are available and, very importantly, the students standing on buses when they cannot be seated and wear a seatbelt. At this point I make it quite clear that I apportion no blame, especially on the bus operators who are servicing a government contract to transport children to school. The Lower Hunter portion of the school bus network is, in short, complex. The Maitland, Kurri Kurri, Cessnock and Singleton area has a mix of public and independent schools attended by thousands of students. To service the morning and afternoon peaks, when students travel, requires buses servicing established routes to switch to school runs to keep the community moving from destination to destination.

Adding another layer of complexity to that picture is that some services then move from urban to rural road environments, which means a change in speed limit from 40 or 50 kilometres an hour to higher speeds on the open road. As a parent who lives in an outer rural community, I am thankful for the work done by The Nationals and Liberals in government on the Rural and Regional Bus Seatbelt Program. The \$237 million seatbelt program fitted more than 2½ thousand buses with seatbelts on every dedicated school bus in rural and regional New South Wales. Whilst safety has improved and passenger safety has been made a priority in the almost two years since the Hunter Valley bus tragedy, even I, as the shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, admit there is still more to be done.

As is currently being pointed out in my own electorate, parental expectation and the structural ability to meet those requirements still have a way to go to reach the desired destination. Whilst issues with the school services between Branxton, Maitland and Cessnock have been highlighted recently, I have had similar issues raised by parents concerned about buses between Muswellbrook and Aberdeen. Let me assure parents who have written to me that I have made representations on their behalf drawing the matter to the attention of the New South Wales Government. I note that the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport, is quoted in the *Singleton Argus* of Thursday 13 March as saying, "Reports of overcrowding on school buses are of concern." The Minister added:

I have asked the Transport for NSW Coordinator General to review the situation and provide advice on potential improvements that can be made to better manage capacity issues.

I look forward to the Minister informing the House when that review is received. I also thank Ashley Borg, the new principal of Rosary Park primary school, Branxton, for writing to me last week to express his concerns after observing the bus situation at his school for the past six weeks or so. He expressed a fear for the safety of not just the students from his school but all passengers on board the bus. Principal Borg added that one of the largest and most confusing issues is that students from the new and growing neighbouring suburb of Huntlee are collected by a recently authorised morning bus run. However, the same run is not extended to the area in the afternoons, when students need to get home safely. In closing, one observation in Principal Borg's correspondence resonated with me:

The safety of all passengers, not just the children at the Rosary Park and Branxton Public Schools, should be the government's number one priority.

I know that balancing the budget and ensuring that our State is in healthy fiscal shape is of the utmost importance in Macquarie Street - but to our humble townships of Branxton and Huntlee, the safety of the children, our future, is of vital, paramount and greater importance than the "bottom line".

Branxton and Upper Hunter parents have been heard, and I will endeavour to ensure that their children—our children—can travel safely to and from school.

### SOUTH WEST STUDENT FORUM

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:36):** Earlier this month I had the great pleasure of hosting the South West Student Forum at Western Sydney University's Liverpool CBD campus, a fantastic venue right in the heart of our city. It was the perfect setting for a truly inspiring day. The forum brought together almost 100 student leaders from high schools across south-west Sydney for a full day of discussion, learning, and connection. Participating schools included Ashcroft High School, Miller Technology High School, Minarah College, Liverpool Girls High School, James Busby High School, Bonnyrigg High School and Hurlstone Agricultural High School. I sincerely thank each school for supporting their students to be part of such an important event.

The focus of the forum was simple but powerful: to explore how young people can create change in their communities, build resilience in the face of life's challenges, and achieve their personal and collective goals. It was incredible to see so many talented young people in one room—students from a range of diverse backgrounds and experiences, all bringing their unique perspectives to the conversation. What stood out most was their energy,

their curiosity and their clear passion for making a positive difference in the world around them. Too often I find that young people, particularly those growing up in south-west Sydney, are left out of important conversations, especially in politics. Their voices are overlooked or dismissed, despite the fact that they are the future of our communities. They see firsthand the challenges and opportunities within our area and have clear-sighted ideas about what we can do better.

As their local representative in this place, I want to make sure that young people in our region feel heard, valued and empowered. I want to make sure that the capable leaders I see in our schools and local communities have a pathway to being the media, business and political leaders in years to come. I want them to know their voices matter, that they absolutely belong in these conversations and that they have the power to shape the future, not just for themselves but for the whole community. That is exactly what the forum was about. It aimed to give our student leaders the tools, inspiration and real-world examples of leadership so they can see themselves as change makers—because that is exactly what they are.

We were fortunate to have three incredible guest speakers who shared their stories, lessons and advice with the students. Each brought something unique to the day and left students with a lot to think about. Phillipa Collins from Western Sydney University spoke about the importance of youth voice, activism and empowerment, reminding students that change always starts with those brave enough to speak up. Merridy Thompson from the Holsworthy Air Force Cadets gave a powerful address on building resilience, setting goals and the importance of teamwork in overcoming challenges.

Finally, Liverpool's Young Citizen of the Year, Fariha Dean, reflected on her own journey as chair of Liverpool Youth Council and as a fierce advocate for our community. Also at the event were representatives from headspace Edmondson Park and from NSW Health's Fairfield Liverpool Youth Health Team, known as FLYHT. These importance services for young people are often underutilised, and having them there was a great way of sharing their presence and what they do with our student community. It was great to see so much interest in both services from the students.

The event was proudly presented by the Liverpool Youth Action Group [YAG]. I have previously spoken in this place with our YAG, and I established it last year to ensure that young people have a connection to the issues of the day and can build their skills to make a difference. The event was inspired by them, because they wanted to bring together students from various educational backgrounds—public, private and selective—to connect and build a network to help young people in south-west Sydney thrive and drive change. The YAG stepped up as peer facilitators on the day, working with groups of students during group activities to flesh out concepts, complete tasks and broaden the conversation.

For most of the group, this was new, but I am so proud to let the House know they are naturals. They took to it like ducks to water. I thank all the members of the Liverpool Youth Action Group—Yousef Al Masri, Dakota Collis, Valencia Fifita, Manasseh Mauga-Hall, Anjani Prakash, Mariam Qahramani, Jazion Semeatu, Manraj Singh Pannu, and Kuber Thakur—for their fantastic work. I cannot wait for what they achieve next, because I know with their voices and their energy and their enthusiasm, our future is in good hands, and the community of Liverpool will be in good hands in the years to come.

## RURAL AND REGIONAL MATERNITY SERVICES

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:41):** Members will recall that in the public interest debate last month I shared stories of women giving birth on roadsides or in bathrooms because of closed birthing centres in rural and regional areas. The Parliament, without dissent, supported the motion then that requires the Government to deliver an action plan this year to maintain and restore rural and regional maternity services. Today, to stress the importance of ensuring the absolute criticality of that plan, I will share another story. It is a story with a happy ending, but one that could have ended in heartache. It is a story with heroes—health workers, who would say they are only doing their job. It is a story of luck through geographic circumstance, and a story that should serve as a cautionary tale.

In October last year, a schoolteacher from Young, 30-year-old Alexandra Anderson, 29 weeks pregnant with twin girls, presented to Young Hospital with her babies in severe fetal distress. Her GP obstetrician, Dr Joe Murphy, planned to rush Mrs Anderson to Canberra for an emergency delivery, but it soon became clear the babies would not wait. The town's doctors and midwives were called in for an emergency caesarean, and a paediatrician was summoned from Wagga Wagga. Within two hours of presentation, the babies were born—distressed, but alive. The younger twin underwent 17 minutes of CPR and a blood transfusion to save her life. Mother and babies were later sent to Canberra Hospital, where they stayed for the next 88 days.

Thanks to the health team, three lives were potentially saved that night. A happy ending? Yes, indeed. But what if those doctors and midwives were not available? What if Mrs Anderson had presented in a community with

a closed maternity service, or one that was on bypass? Sadly, such a dire situation is increasingly confronting any number of expectant rural mothers, and therein lies the cautionary tale. While the Government's supporting the public interest debate for developing an action plan is commendable, we must now put those words into action. If we fail, future stories may not be triumphant but tragic. If it continues, not only will lives of rural woman and babies be under threat but small communities will also suffer. Health services are at the heart of rural communities, and maternity services should be at the heart of those health services.

Today I had the opportunity to meet with Jen Laurie of Bush Babies, a group leading a grassroots fight for rural and regional women to have what they deserve: a safe, reliable and open maternity services. It is not too much to ask. Bush Babies has collected stories from 70 examples of when rural and regional maternity services have fallen short. Some of those stories are very disturbing indeed. The group has collected more than 1,100 signatures on a petition calling for an inquiry into this issue, and I congratulate everyone involved in that campaign. What is needed right now is action. To give rural and regional women the care they deserve, we need an action plan that includes a fully functioning network of rural maternity services, where cooperation and collaboration are not just buzzwords, and GP obstetricians, midwives and specialists work together. We need a network of rural maternity services where we have enough midwives who are not underpaid or undervalued, where we have better training pathways for rural GP obstetricians that recognise rural generalists as the specialists they really are, and where rural centres are supported by specialists in a fully functioning network of services that are open.

If we fail, more women will suffer birth trauma. More babies will be born on the roadside and in bathrooms, and we will have failed in one of our most important duties: supporting families and creating new generations of rural Australians. We must fix this mess. Mrs Anderson's twins, Maggie and Callie, are now at home with their parents. The girls are thriving and putting on weight. A family is whole because the right team was available at the right time. Next time, in another place, those life-savers may simply not be there. As Mrs Anderson says, "Without GP obstetricians and midwives, there could be so many mothers and babies that will not be here in the future." That is an unacceptable risk. I encourage all here to ensure the Government's action plan offers real and tangible solutions to a major problem. The next generation of rural and regional families deserves no less.

#### PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:46):** This week marks a couple of important milestones. The first is the fact I was elected to this place 10 years ago by the wonderful people of Port Stephens. The second is the fact that today also marks two years since the Minns Labor Government was elected. It has been a ride, but one squarely focused on the people I represent, and the determination to make a difference. One of the most powerful forces for making a difference is, as we all know in this place, education. That is why I have never stopped fighting for Medowie's public high school. Medowie's public high school is a game changer. It is a school that our community fought for, for decades. It is a school that the former Liberal-Nationals Government said we did not need. It is a school that the Minns Labor Government is delivering.

We value public education, we value regional communities and we know the difference the school will make to local families for generations to come. I know I am not the only one who cannot wait to see the local students schooling locally on day one, term 1 in 2027. But our Government is not just giving love to Medowie families. We are also investing in education at Hunter River High School and Irrawang High School, too. Both schools have massive infrastructure upgrades underway, whilst all public schools have also seen the impact of us tackling the chronic teacher shortage that we inherited through delivering the biggest pay rise to teachers in a generation, because we know it is an investment in students and an investment in our future.

Since coming into government, we have also been focused on what matters most to the people of Port Stephens, and I know our local roads continue to be an issue for many. It took the Minns Labor Government to get more than \$10 million to Port Stephens Council to start fixing local roads, like Fairlands Road, Rookes Road, Tomaree Road, Avenue of the Allies and many more. Courtesy of collaboration with my Federal colleague, Meryl Swanson, the M1 extension to Raymond Terrace is going gangbusters. Of course, when it comes to roads, there is always much more to do, so I will keep working closely with Mayor Leah Anderson and member for Paterson, Meryl Swanson, to keep delivering safer roads.

In the past two years, boaties have been big beneficiaries. Half a million dollars has been invested in the Tea Gardens jetty and boat ramp. There has also been investment in the Little Beach boat ramp, at the jetties at Raymond Terrace, and the much-needed dredging of the Myall River is currently underway. One of the biggest challenges our community has faced has been the housing and homelessness crisis. After seeing no new social housing in Port Stephens for more than a decade, the Minns Labor Government is taking a very different approach. We take this issue seriously, and we are starting in Raymond Terrace with the transformation of three ageing

houses into three modern social and affordable homes, providing much-needed housing for those who need it most.

We have also repurposed homes at the Stockton Centre for families facing homelessness. The former Government said it was not possible, but we got on with the job and did it. While we work to tackle homelessness, we are also making Port Stephens safer for women and children. For the first time ever, Port Stephens will soon have its own domestic violence refuge, with a \$7.2 million investment into making sure that women and children fleeing family violence are finally safe. We are also committed to protecting our precious wildlife, delivering \$2 million in funding to help with the critical work at Port Stephens Koala Hospital. Having provided the initial seed funding for that facility many years ago, I am pleased to be able to continue to support the hospital's army of volunteers and the important work they do.

Since forming government, I have also ensured that our social services have the support they need with a \$100,000 funding boost to Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Services, the Tomaree Neighbourhood Centre, the Yacaaba Centre and our Jupiter youth counselling service. Another issue close to our community's heart is the future of Tomaree Lodge. It is finally being progressed, guided by a community engagement committee. Over the past decade, my mission has been clear: to work tirelessly for my community, to fight for what matters to them, and to ensure that Port Stephens gets what it deserves. While we have achieved so much together, there is still much more to do.

I remain incredibly grateful to my community for their continued support for me in my role. With their support, I now have additional responsibilities and opportunities. As the Minister for Families and Communities and the Minister for Disability Inclusion, I continue to work hard with the same goal I have held close to my heart for a decade: to make a difference. I am grateful to the people of Port Stephens for having my back so I can now do everything I can to tackle one of the biggest challenges of my life and in this State: fixing the broken child protection system. The past 10 years have been a wild ride. Working together with my community, we have achieved a lot but there is so much more to do. I am so grateful to represent the people of Port Stephens in this place.

#### **NORTHERN BEACHES TRANSPORT SERVICES**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (18:51):** On this day two years ago, New South Wales had a government with a bold vision for transport and infrastructure in this State. It was a vision that recognised the challenges posed by Sydney's congested roads and sought to revolutionise the way we live, commute and connect. It was a big-thinking, ambitious vision and one that aimed to ensure transport infrastructure kept pace with housing growth. However, two years ago today also marks the moment in time that New South Wales took its foot off the accelerator. With the election of this Labor Government, the bold vision that had once guided the State's infrastructure and transport planning was seemingly abandoned.

In stark contrast, under the previous Coalition Government, that vision was transformed into reality, with New South Wales witnessing one of the largest transport infrastructure programs in Australia's history. The Sydney Metro was Australia's biggest public transport project, bringing twenty-first-century rail technology to our city, the benefits of which the people of New South Wales are reaping today. WestConnex is Australia's largest and longest road tunnel, which has reshaped Sydney's road network, improving travel times for thousands of commuters. In the CBD, Newcastle and soon Paramatta, light rail services have taken cars off the road and pedestrianised stretches of the city, which are now revitalised and better for it.

This week, we have seen the realisation of another portion of the former Government's vision with the excavation of the Western Harbour Tunnel connecting through to the Warringah Freeway Upgrade—the first new harbour road crossing since the Sydney Harbour Tunnel was built almost 30 years ago. Those are real, tangible projects designed to improve lives and connectivity and futureproof our transport network. But they are also the product of a big-thinking, big-appetite Government agenda that embraced reform and sought to capture the public's imagination in the process.

I can say with certainty that the lack of vision is being felt acutely on the northern beaches. Two years ago today, the Beaches Link Tunnel was still a critical part of our future. It was a project designed to ease congestion, improve connectivity and ensure that the northern beaches had the infrastructure needed to support its growing population. Yet, the moment this Government was elected, the tunnel was scrapped and the funding redirected—not reinvested, not reworked, but simply discarded with no alternative vision for public transport on the northern beaches. Now, our bus network is stretched beyond its limits, with commuters experiencing unacceptable delays and cancellations.

While the recall of 43 articulated bendy buses late last year certainly contributed to those service disruptions, the issues we are seeing with bus services on the northern beaches are not just an isolated transport

failure; they are a direct symptom of this broader lack of vision. For two years, the northern beaches has been left without the necessary investment in public transport. Nowhere is that more evident than in the daily frustrations of my commuters. I note the member for Pittwater is also present in the Chamber. Every day both she and I receive emails and calls from frustrated residents about hundred-metre-long queues, people missing meetings, students missing class and essential appointments being cancelled due to unreliable bus services.

While I welcome the Government's recent announcement that it will purchase an additional 60 buses, two years ago today, we had a comprehensive plan for transport on the northern beaches. Today, we have stopgap measures, band-aid fixes and no long-term vision. Compounding the issue is the Government's recently passed stage two housing reforms, which will allow for multiple sites across the northern beaches, including in my electorate of Manly, to be developed into low- to mid-rise housing. There is no question that Sydney and the northern beaches needs more housing, but increased density must come with the necessary transport infrastructure to accommodate it.

Two years ago today, the Government understood that principle. Today we see the opposite approach, with more homes being built without addressing the transport constraints necessary to accommodate it. The residents of the northern beaches are not asking for special treatment. They are simply asking for their fair share: a reliable, efficient public transport system is a basic expectation in a modern city like Sydney. But two years ago today, we lost a government that was committed to building world-class, transformative infrastructure. In its place, we have one that has taken away critical projects without offering any bold solutions or meaningful alternatives, especially on the northern beaches. The people of the northern beaches deserve better. Two years ago today, New South Wales had a bold vision for the future. It is time that vision was restored.

### **TRIBUTE TO RIO FOWLER**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:55):** I speak about an important issue that, two years ago when I was elected, I would not have known that I would become so passionate about. Hearing about little Rio Fowler has really changed my perspective on a few things. Rio Fowler was Mearthar local. He was with us from 21 July 2016 until 15 January 2018. Little Rio was admitted to Sydney Children's Hospital with recurring gastro on 9 November 2017 and never came home. He was eventually diagnosed during that time with arterial vasculopathy, a condition meaning his arteries failed to supply blood to his major organs and blood vessels. It was so rare that doctors believe he may have been the first child in the world to be diagnosed with it. He passed away despite aggressive medical interventions, including five major surgeries and two amputations.

His is an important and very sad story. The reason I wanted to tell it this evening is because he and his family spent their last days at Bear Cottage. Bear Cottage gave the family the opportunity to spend time together as a family in a caring environment that did not feel like a hospital. They have told me openly that was invaluable to them. The care they received and the happiness they shared became the spark that created the vision of Rio's Legacy. After their experience at Bear Cottage, and from getting to know other parents of children with life-limiting conditions, Ryan and Karen Fowler, Rio's parents, became intent on ensuring that every family across Australia would have the option to choose hospice care for their children at end of life if needed. From there, Rio's Legacy was born.

Rio's Legacy has a very esteemed crew of people leading it. Mike Baird the former Premier is the patron. Angela Deacon is a director and founding member. Scott Fowler is the chairperson and founding member. Franz D'Lima is the company secretary a legal consultant. Dr Bijender Gautam is an associate professor. Karen Fowler is co-founder and director, and has the unbelievable esteem of being Rio's mum. Ryan Fowler is the co-founder and CEO, and he is Rio's dad. Ryan and Scott Fowler came to see me about a project that they were particularly passionate about: the fact that there is currently no children's hospice in Western Sydney.

In order for families to be supported like the Fowlers were at Bear Cottage, people from my area have a two- to three-hour commute to Bear Cottage to visit the family or sick child to support them in their time of need. The primary objective of Rio's Legacy is to establish a paediatric hospice dedicated to providing comprehensive care for children with life-limiting illnesses in collaboration with Rio's Legacy. They are working together with the George Centre on this, one of our local private hospitals in Gregory Hills. The design they are working on focuses on creating a nurturing environment that addresses the physical, emotional and psychological needs of the children and their families.

Bear Cottage is the only dedicated children's hospice in New South Wales, and it is part of the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network. It is very important that we recognise the importance of children's hospices. An article by Anthony Herbert from the University of Queensland contains a quote that palliative care "no longer means helping children die well; it means helping children and their families to live well and then, when the time is certain, to help them die gently". I call on the Federal Government and ourselves to look at expanding our hospice care for children to Western Sydney so that people who are part of our community are able to visit sick

children and children with limited time, as well as their families and siblings. I thank Rio's family for allowing me to be their champion. I will continue to fight.

### **GREY FERGIE TRACTOR MUSTER AND LAND ROVER GATHERING**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (19:00):** I recognise and celebrate the success of the 2025 Bendemeer Grey Fergie Tractor Muster and Land Rover Gathering held from 21 to 23 March 2025. The Bendemeer Grey Fergie Tractor Muster and Land Rover Gathering is a triannual event held on the banks of the beautiful Macdonald River that has been going since 2003 and brings the small township of Bendemeer together as a community to celebrate an iconic part of Australia's history. Many of the 120 tractors and 25 Land Rovers were rescued from paddocks and sheds and painstakingly restored, and then they travelled from across New South Wales and Australia. Some participants drove their heritage Fergies across the Great Divide and many came from the coast.

Starting with a grand parade down the main street of Bendemeer, the celebration continued with street stalls, food trucks, live music and plenty of kids' activities. Of course, these community events do not happen on their own. Local champions Anne and Winston Doak are hardworking and dedicated volunteers who, along with their fantastic committee, bring this event to life. The committee ensures that the town is in pristine condition and take pride in the appeal of such a picturesque village. With over 1,000 people attending the event, the entire Bendemeer community benefited from the committee's hard work. The local public school ran the canteen over the three days and the Country Women's Association [CWA] provided meals and hot drinks, which proved to be amazing fundraisers for those groups.

In amazing timing, Bendemeer also welcomed the re-opening of its general store on the same day as the muster. New owner Melissa Massey worked closely with the committee to make sure the store was not only ready for a re-opening date but ready to deal with the crowds and tractor devotees. Melissa says that the weekend was a "beautiful hive of activity", and the Bendemeer locals would "literally do anything to help each other out." Events like this are a lifeline for small towns. Thanks must be given to all sponsors, particularly the mighty Bendemeer Hotel which once again was a major sponsor of the Bendemeer Grey Fergie Tractor Muster and Land Rover Gathering. Mark and Leanne Summers not only sponsored the muster but their staff worked tirelessly as they provided breakfast, lunch, dinner and other special events over the three days.

I thank all involved in organising this year's muster and gathering. I thank all the participants who travelled from across Australia to descend on Bendemeer. I thank those who headed to beautiful Bendemeer to enjoy this spectacle of history. I encourage anyone who has an interest in these wonderful vintage pieces of machinery to put the Grey Fergie Tractor Muster on their bucket list!

### **SUPERMARKET PRICES**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:03):** Australians are doing it tough. Every trip to the supermarket is a painful reminder that the cost-of-living crisis is not just about inflation; it is about corporate greed. Families are paying more for everyday essentials, while Woolworths and Coles pocket some of the highest supermarket profits anywhere in the world. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission [ACCC] final report on the supermarket industry confirms what people in Leppington and right across Australia have known for years: Coles and Woolworths dominate, stifle competition, squeeze suppliers and inflate prices, all while pretending they face significant market pressure. Together, these two supermarket giants control 67 per cent of the national grocery market.

The ACCC debunked their claims of strong competition from Bunnings and Amazon, finding that only Aldi offers any meaningful alternative, while similar players like IGA lack the scale to challenge them. This is not a competitive market. It is an oligopoly that exists to enrich shareholders at the expense of Australian households. Supermarkets claim inflation is driving prices up, but the numbers tell a different story. Over the past five years, Woolworths and Coles have systematically increased product margins. Potatoes are up 43 per cent; cucumbers, 38 per cent; apples, 35 per cent; and eggs, 31 per cent.

An article published by the Australia Institute in September last year exposed a pricing strategy by Coles and Woolworths known as a "sales dance" whereby the two supermarket giants alternated product discounts to avoid direct competition. One example, over a 10-week period, showed that Coles and Woolworths took turns discounting Coca-Cola and Pepsi. In one week, Coles would have Coke on sale while Woolworths discounted Pepsi. The following week, the discounts would switch, with Coles offering Pepsi at a lower price while Woolworths reduced Coke, often with identical prices. This coordinated pattern was observed week after week across multiple product lines for nearly three months. This is not a coincidence. It is deliberate, anti-competitive behaviour designed to maintain their duopoly and limit genuine competition.

It is not just at the product level these two giants enforce their oligopoly. In 2016, Kaufland, a German supermarket giant, began its planned Australian expansion, securing over 20 sites, hiring 200 staff and building a \$255 million distribution centre in Victoria. However, in January 2020, after investing half a billion dollars into the expansion, Kaufland abruptly withdrew from the market. A key factor in its decision was the long-term, anti-competitive contracts that Coles and Woolies had with suppliers, making it difficult for new entrants to compete. Despite the cost-of-living crisis, Coles reported a \$1.1 billion profit, while Woolworths walked away with \$1.62 billion. If these companies were struggling with rising costs, their profits would not be growing, but they are because they are choosing to keep prices high instead of passing on savings to consumers.

The ACCC had a golden opportunity to stand up for Australians and take real action against the supermarket giants squeezing every last cent out of families and farmers. Instead, the ACCC pulled its punches. Yes, the report outlines 20 recommendations to improve transparency, stop deceptive pricing and protect suppliers. However, let's be honest. Recommendations do not lower grocery bills. Recommendations do not put power back in the hands of consumers. The ACCC was recently handed \$30 million over three years to investigate and enforce retail regulations, but what good are more investigations if the outcome is the same? The ACCC has been called a "toothless tiger", and this report proves why. It roars, it growls, but when it comes time to bite, nothing happens. It found Woolworths and Coles are among the most profitable supermarket chains in the world, that they have been ramping up their margins and they are not passing on savings to consumers. Somehow, there are no serious consequences.

Australians cannot afford to wait, and we should not have to. Grocery prices keep rising, supermarket profits keep soaring, and families are the ones paying the price. This has to stop. Here is what we need, and we need it now. Woolworths and Coles will not change on their own. They have had every opportunity to do the right thing, and they have chosen profits over people every single time. We need to increase competition. We need to have stronger market powers, and we need to have a stronger regulator. The time for polite recommendations is over. It is time for real action. It is time to stand up to corporate greed and put Australian families first. Enough is enough.

#### **E-BIKE SAFETY**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (19:08):** Whether you love them, whether you hate them—and in my electorate, it is either one or the other—e-bikes are everywhere, and they are not going away anytime soon. In Pittwater, fat bikes are featuring heavily on our roads and on our footpaths. I am hearing from my community about them, particularly about safety concerns both for users and for pedestrians. Of course, it is not all bad. E-bikes do have a lot going for them. They are obviously a great alternative to cars, they cut down traffic and, in my hilly electorate, they allow people to get around with limited public transport. They also give young people a real sense of freedom and more independence, allowing them to get to school, sport or their friend's place—and, of course, the beach—without the need for help from their parents. E-bikes get them off their phones and into the wild. There are real benefits, and it is no surprise that e-bikes have taken off in the way they have.

However, the increase in e-bikes on the northern beaches has led to rising concerns around safety and calls for regulation. One has only to spend a few minutes in Mona Vale, Narrabeen or Avalon to see young kids flying down footpaths without helmets and with multiple people on a bike, dodging pedestrians and treating their bikes more like motorcycles. That is because, by definition, they are motorcycles. In fact, an easily modified Dirodi bike can do over 50 kilometres per hour and is, by law, a motorcycle. If I jumped on a motorbike without a helmet or a motorbike licence then I would likely be fined, yet we are permitting our kids to ride unregistered, unlicensed and underaged, without a helmet and with friends on the back. But they are not subject to any law enforcement. Whilst most riders are doing the right thing, it is hard to find out what the right thing is. The regulations are not clear. The ones that are not doing the right thing are creating dangerous situations for themselves and everyone around them.

The recent parliamentary inquiry into e-mobility has made recommendations. We are waiting for the Government to respond to those recommendations, although I note that the E-micromobility Action Plan was released ahead of those findings. Those recommendations are welcome. They include a strict speed limit of 15 kilometres per hour on footpaths, third-party insurance, licence requirements and better definitions for bikes, e-bikes, e-scooters and so forth. They also have suggested the need for a public awareness campaign. I note that the council in my electorate has been very good in leading Australia's first awareness campaign; however, it has been—dare I say it—quite ineffective.

I put the Government on notice that I believe that we will have a death of a person hit by an e-bike—most likely a child or an elderly person—in the near future in my area. We have had serious accidents. In only the past few days, two boys in my electorate were taken to a children's hospital. One was a nine-year-old boy who was not wearing a helmet and was knocked unconscious. Earlier this year there were serious injuries in neighbouring suburbs and the electorate of Manly, and last year a 14-year-old boy was hit by an e-bike while walking with his

mother in Frenchs Forest. I have been inundated with messages, particularly from elderly constituents, who no longer feel safe on footpaths and some of whom have nearly been hit.

We need better regulation and rules in place because right now too many people feel that they can get away with anything with hardly any enforcement. The laws are confusing and they are barely enforced. I can hardly work out what the laws are. We need better regulation. That includes speed limits and preventing the modification, particularly of fat bikes, and a focus on enforcement. We already have helmet laws and motorcycle laws, but they are not being enforced when it comes to fat bikes. That needs to change. Maybe a few confiscations will make magic happen.

We also need to rethink the way we train kids. In Pittwater, a lot of kids 12 years old and up go for their boat licence so that they can get on the water. The New South Wales boat licensing system ensures that they learn the rules and apply those rules respectfully when they drive around on the water. Something similar for e-bikes would be welcome. We also need to consider licensing of the bikes themselves and mandating insurance, because accidents will happen. Finally, there needs to be better infrastructure. If we are going to have more e-bikes, we need to rethink bike lanes, shared paths and pedestrian areas. The uptake of e-bikes, particularly fat bikes, will continue to increase, so we need to regulate, set the rules, teach the rules and enforce the rules. We need to make sure we get the balance right.

### HORNSBY ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (19:13):** The development of the Hornsby town centre precinct is progressing under the leadership of Mayor Warren Waddell. The area was rezoned by the State Labor Government as part of its Transport Oriented Development Program. The rezoning was largely based on work that had already been undertaken by Hornsby Shire Council as part of its Hornsby Town Centre Masterplan. That plan envisages Hornsby remaining a hub for retail and residential activities. Hornsby station and its surrounds is, and will be into the future, one of the best places to live, work and raise a family. The State Labor Government's transport oriented development is bigger than what council had originally proposed, effectively increasing the number of storeys in the heart of Hornsby over the Westfield car park and train station from 36 storeys to 53 storeys. The Hornsby town centre precinct is now expected to result in big changes to Hornsby by 2040, including over 6,000 new dwellings and over 15,000 more residents.

The Hornsby community and council did not land on those projections—that was the State Government—but the council is getting on with the job in recognising the reality of the situation. Considerable growth has been proposed. It is not minor; it will be the most significant change in Hornsby in my lifetime, so we have to get it right. Hornsby Shire Council is progressing its plan to build community infrastructure to support growth. It has released its draft contributions plan, which includes a new library and multipurpose community facility in the heart of Hornsby, a facility which promises to be used by groups to host plays, musicals and events. A new open space area on Burdett Street will act as a landing zone for people who move from the west side of Hornsby across a new pedestrian bridge when visiting Hornsby Park. An improved mall with open space, cafes, restaurants and the existing Hornsby water fountain will give new vibrancy and life to the area. There will also be improvements to the local road network to ease traffic. The upgrades are needed and will benefit the community.

Hornsby Shire Council has done significant work to develop the plans and is now seeking community involvement and consultation. It is a pathway forward for local community infrastructure. None of Hornsby council's plans deal with other infrastructure to support State Government services in education, health and roads, which will all be required. Indeed, that is not the job of the council; it is the job of the State Government. Infrastructure like schools will be needed. Hornsby North Public School, Hornsby South Public School and Waitara Public School are already close to capacity. Many of the new residents we expect to come will be young families looking to access the high-quality educational opportunities northern Sydney is known for. The State must commit to expanding and upgrading schools in the Hornsby area to meet the projected increase in demand and consider the need for a new school in the heart of Hornsby.

Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Hospital is a world-class facility with great staff, but without any action it will be strained in the years to come by large population increases planned in Hornsby itself and in Cherrybrook. The hospital will require upgrades. State roads, including the Pacific Highway and Galston Road, will need significant improvements. Local traffic in the mornings and afternoons already causes significant delay as people move about Hornsby. To manage growth in Hornsby, we need the investments in education, health and State roads to be planned and made now, well in advance of any construction commencing.

I recognise all that requires funding. I do not think it is an easy problem or one for which there is an easy solution, but I believe a smart tax system should be able to fund the enabling infrastructure that growth requires. Developer contributions will assist Hornsby council in achieving its community infrastructure plans, but additional money will need to be committed by the State Government to fund services in the area. State

government services and infrastructure should be delivered first, not left as an afterthought once construction has already completed. Hornsby needs that investment to support growth and revitalisation.

### WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:18):** I rise this evening to again call for decisive, timely and lasting action to restore the reliability of my community's bus services. Bus issues have plagued the Willoughby electorate for years now. What was three years ago a pandemic-induced shortage of drivers has now become a shortage of buses. There is deep frustration out there across my community. People are late for work and kids are late for school. Some local residents have told me that public transport is no longer a viable option and they now choose to drive to work each day. Commuters just want to have the confidence their bus will consistently turn up and turn up on time. It is really not too much to ask. I thank everyone who has reached out to me to share their experiences and demand better. I well understand and share the concerns and frustrations of all who are and continue to be affected by it. Everyone is fed up; we just want action and outcomes.

The key cause of the present issues is a shortage of buses. Let us be crystal clear. Under the franchised model, it is the responsibility of the New South Wales Government to ensure the operators have sufficient buses that will deliver a reliable service. The Government has not been able to do this and is now scrambling to fill the gaps. I am advised that more than 10 per cent of the full fleet at the Willoughby bus depot is currently out of service. This includes eight articulated or bendy buses that require extensive repairs due to the discovery of cracks. A further five buses are at the end of their life and no longer serviceable. That shortfall of buses has resulted in many services being cancelled each and every day.

We desperately need extra buses, and we need them now. Unfortunately, the Government's solution cannot and will not deliver immediate results. I do welcome the recent announcement—after considerable pressure, it must be said—that the Government will replace the bendy bus fleet with an order of 50 new bendy buses. This is positive news and something we in this place have strongly advocated for. However, the delivery of these buses cannot come quickly enough. The Government needs to ensure the Willoughby depot receives its fair share in a timely—indeed, urgent—manner.

Local commuters need to see real improvements fast, and the timetable for the delivery of new buses and return of the bendy buses must be made clear. There must also be an immediate replacement of the withdrawn buses, including by fast-tracking the transfer of surplus buses from other areas to ease the shortage in the short term. Options to temporarily source buses from the private fleet should also be considered. Repairs to the bendy buses have been slow, but I welcome news that most will be returned to service, albeit over the coming months. Additionally, the Government must get the zero emissions bus fleet rollout back on track as these buses were meant to replace the ageing diesel bus fleet. We remain in the dark as to the timeline and scope for the electric conversion of the Willoughby bus depot.

The Government must pursue every option it can to ease the bus shortage immediately. It is not good enough for commuters to be left stranded for months longer until solutions are implemented. The New South Wales Auditor-General has been scathing of the Minns Government's management of bus contracts. Operators have performance standards they must meet and can be penalised for missing them, but this has not been happening. The Government needs to be more hands-on in managing the contracts. In the meantime, service must be prioritised on routes that serve schoolchildren to ensure none are left stranded, and also prioritised on routes with higher demand. I am aware that Busways is soon going to go about a campaign to encourage schoolchildren to tap on and off. Currently the levels are too low, and this makes data collection and planning more difficult.

I am also in touch with, and raising my voice for, local bus drivers who continue to raise concerns about certain shift and remuneration arrangements. We need to ensure we retain and respect our valued bus drivers. Much has been done to resolve the bus driver shortage. I understand it is a shortage that is not as pronounced as it once was, but it is a challenge in respect of which we must continue to be vigilant. We need to look after our drivers and ensure we retain existing staff and ensure a strong pool of drivers, both now and for the future. I will continue to listen to local bus drivers and will take on board their feedback. I hope the Government is responsive to their feedback.

I continue also to look at addressing the challenges at the Chatswood bus and rail interchange, and in particular the route to it in Chatswood, for it is unbearably slow. A major overhaul is needed if the interchange is to be fit for purpose and operate effectively. Indeed, prior to the last election, Dominic Perrotet and I stood at Chatswood station and made the commitment for funding to commence that important process. We would love to see that replicated under this Government. The issues here are well recognised and are a major source of bus delays in the area. I call on the Government to come to the table and conduct a feasibility study for a major upgrade. I will keep standing up for my community's interests and for its concerns about our local bus services.

I will keep holding this Government to account. I will keep listening and calling for better. The Willoughby community and I will not rest until our local bus service is once again meeting our needs.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 19:23 until  
Wednesday 26 March 2025 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**THAI PONGAL CELEBRATION AND HSC 2025 PRIZE GIVING**

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)**—I rise to recognise the Tamil Study Centre Homebush [TSCH] for its outstanding contribution to language education and cultural preservation in our community. In February, TSCH celebrated its 2024 HSC Graduation Ceremony, honouring students, teachers, and community leaders who have played a pivotal role in the Centre's success. I particularly commend TSCH's dedicated teachers, including Nirmala Dayalan, who has served for over 36 years, shaping generations of Tamil language learners. Additionally, 11 teachers have dedicated over 20 years to fostering academic excellence and preserving Tamil heritage. Their unwavering commitment has been instrumental in strengthening cultural identity and providing invaluable educational opportunities. I would also like to express my gratitude to President Mr Sivagnanasundaram Sivakumar, Vice president Mr Thiruvallagan Nadasor and Secretary Haranraja Ravindranelvi for their leadership and contributions to the community. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all graduates, teachers, and organisers for a successful event and thank TSCH.

**PORTIA WITTEY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the contribution of Cronulla's Portia Wittey who has been positively influencing the lives of children as a public school teacher for 40 years. Mrs Wittey is a revered teacher at Cronulla South Public School, where she's been a staff member for 35 years. The school marked her anniversary on 5 March and it was a special moment as students surrounded her in the playground and shouted cheers of congratulations. Currently a learning and support teacher, Mrs Wittey is admired for her dedication, passion and commitment to public education. In congratulating its "beloved" Mrs Wittey on four decades of teaching, the school said: "She has shaped the lives of countless students during her time at CSPS, guiding their futures and inspiring them to achieve their best. We thank Mrs Wittey for her continued support and wisdom in fostering a love of learning in our students." Going by comments on the school's social media post, the community knows it is lucky to have had a teacher like her. I congratulate Mrs Wittey on reaching this remarkable milestone and the lasting impact she has had on students from two generations, their families and her colleagues.

**BYRON HURST**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise the long-time contribution to our community of Cronulla's Byron Hurst. Byron recently retired from St Aloysius Catholic College Cronulla after 45 years of outstanding service to Catholic education. Principal Stephen Mahoney said "Mr Hurst has touched countless lives through his dedication to teaching and his tireless commitment to the arts and to our College community. His contributions to visual arts debating and public speaking and beyond have been extraordinary." Byron seemingly has endless energy in serving his community. In the 1990s he spent eight years as a hardworking Sutherland Shire councillor, his passion for the arts being pivotal in establishing the Hazelhurst Arts Centre. After retiring from Council he joined Hazelhurst's board and has since been an extraordinary contributor to its success and excellent reputation, including as chair. Byron has also played a key role in opening public access to what he sees as a "hidden treasure" of the Shire, Hungry Point Reserve. As a member of the volunteer management board, he championed plans for the clifftop walkway that is under construction. Byron's efforts continue to enhance the environmental stewardship and cultural enrichment of the Sutherland Shire.

**ANDERSON COOK**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Cronulla South Public School student Anderson Cook for publishing his first book aged just eight years old. Better known to his schoolmates as Andy, he loves reading books and when he told his family he wanted to write a book one day his dad Aaron asked him "why wait?". The year 3 student came up with the idea for the book called 'The Monkey Who Didn't Like Bananas' in the summer school holidays. In between holiday fun, Anderson put his head down for about an hour a day and after about two weeks had completed the story of Jack the monkey who was raised on the island of bananas. Having finished the story, Anderson turned to generative AI to come up with the perfect images to go with his words and with help from his parents and publishing software he completed with what is an impressive looking

children's book. Anderson is now hoping to sell copies of his book at the school's fete to raise money for charity. I wish Anderson well for his future writing; I hear he already has some ideas for a sequel!

#### **JAMBEROO COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Robyn Atkins and Jamberoo Country Women's Association. In two years, Robyn Atkins has helped grow Jamberoo's Country Women's Association [CWA] juniors from just six members to fifty-five. It all started with a realisation: there were no young people entering the CWA's famous handcraft, cookery or cultural competitions. Robyn and her sister Wendy and friend Robin Alexander realised that Jamberoo had some amazing women with so much knowledge to pass on – knitting, sewing, cooking – and no one to teach. Determined to change that, Robyn started spreading the word. She rallied support, reached out to local families, and before she knew it, the idea had taken on a life of its own. Local Jamberoo parents have signed up to help, local businesses have donated supplies, and even a generous benefactor stepped in to buy four brand new sewing machines and overlockers. The kids are learning to sew, put in zippers, bake scones, and crafts. A local Facebook group keeps families connected and the program continues to thrive. A huge congratulations and well done to Robyn Atkins and the Jamberoo County Women's Association.

#### **ADAM SPENCER**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to congratulate Adam Spencer, one of two Second Orange Scouts group members who have earned the prestigious Kings Scout award. Starting in Joeys, Adam has progressed through the various levels of the Scout movement and has participated in activities at local and State level. He has demonstrated considerable leadership skills throughout, being a Patrol Leader in the Scout section and Unit Chair in Venturers. Adam's affable and low-key style is appreciated by leaders and his fellow scouts. In Venturers, Adam and fellow Kings Scout Archie Casey, took charge of the management of the terrain database for recording the achievements of the Venturer unit. Adam thrives on adventure, achieving in abseiling, bushwalking, caving, canoeing and canyoning. He has also been active in teaching these skills. These activities feature throughout his King's Scout Award journey, which finished with a multi-day bushwalk across Warrumbungle National Park. Adam also helps with the Joey and Cub sections where his relaxed approach has enabled an excellent rapport with these younger scouts. Adam is an outstanding young adult with a zest for life, a positive approach and he will undoubtedly make significant contributions to the wider community going forward. Well done Adam.

#### **ARCHIE CASEY**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to congratulate Archie Casey, one of two Second Orange Scouts group members who have been awarded the prestigious Kings Scout award, the first for their group since 2006. Archie joined Second Orange as a scout in 2017 and has been a perfect fit with his commitment to scouting never wavering. He has grown in self-confidence, built excellent leadership skills and gained lifelong friendships. Archie has participated in local, NSW, national and international scouting events. Significantly, the 25th World Jamboree in South Korea (2023) and the 25th Australian Jamboree (2019). He has demonstrated leadership skills throughout, being a Patrol Leader in the scout section and Unit Chair in Venturers. In venturers, Archie along with Adam Spencer, took charge of the management of the Terrain database. Archie has a love for adventure and has achieved in abseiling, bushwalking, caving, canoeing and canyoning. He was active in teaching these skills. These activities feature throughout his King's Scout Award journey. When Archie's sister Olivia joined 2nd Orange, he started helping with the combined Joey and Cub sections. Archie is an outstanding young adult with an enthusiasm for adventure and a positive approach to all he does.

#### **SHARON JAMESON**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, the Seat of Orange is fortunate to have many outstanding individuals who do amazing things, very much under the radar, and today I would like to single out Sharon Jameson as one of those people. A member of the Orange Family History Society, Sharon has undertaken the enormous task of identifying soldiers resting in unmarked graves at Orange Cemetery. After discovering the first soldier in an unmarked grave four years ago, Sharon's connection with his long-lost family, who had been searching for him, led to her discovering around 100 Diggers interred in similar circumstances. The result is funding for a headstone or grave marker for those men, and one woman, finally acknowledging their service to their country. It's sad the majority died paupers at Orange's Bloomfield mental hospital, where they ended up after being unable to fit back into society. At the time of their return home, Australia was grappling with the Spanish Flu and then the Great Depression, leaving families with the choice of a headstone or putting food on the table. Sharon has been a champion for these Diggers and I salute her amazing detective skills and determination.

**CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS - ARMAAN PATNI**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Armaan Patni on his nomination for the Ryde Young Citizen of the Year. At just 14, Armaan demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to service and leadership in our community. His volunteer work with the Salvation Army, dedication to sustainability through the Lane Cove Bushcare Group, and efforts in youth advocacy through the passing of climate motions showcase his deep sense of civic responsibility. Armaan balanced these commitments alongside his studies at a selective school, all while organising multicultural events and mentoring his peers. His work embodies the values of resilience, community service, and environmental stewardship, setting a remarkable example for his generation and beyond. Armaan's nomination is a testament to the impact young people can have when they dedicate themselves to making a difference. His leadership and initiative will no doubt continue to shape Ryde for the better. Congratulations, Armaan, on this well-deserved recognition.

**CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS - ARMEN ARAKELIAN**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Armen Arakelian on his nomination for the Ryde Citizen of the Year. Armen's journey from refugee to philanthropist is a testament to resilience, service, and unwavering commitment to community. As the founder of Back to the Bush Indigenous Corporation, Armen dedicated himself to advancing Indigenous welfare, preserving cultural heritage, and providing disaster relief. His leadership in these areas has left an indelible mark on communities across our state. Beyond his organisation, Armen has served as a veteran volunteer firefighter, earning the National Emergency Medal for his bravery and dedication to community safety and environmental conservation. Armen's work extends beyond direct service - he has been a mentor and advocate for vulnerable communities, embodying the principles of environmental stewardship and social justice. His contributions in Ryde have fostered a more unified, empowered, and sustainable future for all. His nomination for Ryde Citizen of the Year is a well-earned recognition of his tireless efforts. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Armen and thank him for his ongoing service to our community.

**CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS - DR. YAGIZ ALP AKSOY**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Dr. Yagiz Alp Aksoy on his nomination for Ryde Sportsperson of the Year. Yagiz, the founder of the Macquarie University Table Tennis Club, has made an outstanding contribution to sports and community engagement in Ryde. Under his leadership, the club has thrived with over 200 members, ranging from local enthusiasts to Olympians. His dedication to fostering inclusivity and affordability in sport has made table tennis accessible to all, ensuring that athletes of all levels have a place to train, compete, and connect. Beyond the club, Yagiz has actively partnered with schools and community organisations to promote health and fitness. His efforts have not only encouraged participation in sport but have also strengthened community ties across Ryde. His commitment to volunteer-driven leadership and elite athlete development has earned him national recognition, cementing his legacy in the world of sports and community wellness. His nomination is a testament to the impact of his work, and I extend my sincere congratulations on this well-deserved recognition. Ryde is fortunate to have such a dedicated advocate for sport and community engagement. Thank you, Yagiz!

**AUSTRALIAN SOUTH EAST ASIAN NETWORK(ASEAN) SUMMIT 2025**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On the 18th of February 2025, I had the privilege of attending the Australian South East Asian Network[ASEAN] Summit 2025, which took place at New South Wales Parliament. It was a great experience to be part of such a significant event. The atmosphere was filled with optimism and a shared commitment to fostering collaboration across communities and groups. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Australian South East Asian Network [ASEAN] for their kind invitation to participate in this remarkable Summit. The event promoted Australian values of unity, inclusion, compassion, social cohesion and encouraged people to exercise their democratic freedoms. I thank the Network for the opportunity to engage with fellow attendees and Parliamentary colleagues to gain valuable insights. I congratulate Sawathey Ek and the network on the success of the Summit. Their dedication to promoting mutual understanding and cooperation is commendable. The event was not only a platform for dialogue but also a celebration of the strong ties that bind the many communities and organisations together. I look forward to future engagements and further strengthening the network and our friendship.

**REMEMBRANCE COMMEMORATION OF THE MOST VENERABLE THICH TUE SY (THÍCH TUỆ SỸ)**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—On 24 November 2024, I had the honour and privilege of attending the Remembrance Commemoration Day of the Most Venerable Thich Tue Sy, held at the Vietnamese Community Cultural Centre in Bonnyrigg. The Most Venerable Thich Tue Sy was an extraordinary scholar, poet, and spiritual

leader, renowned for his profound contributions to the intellectual and spiritual foundations of Vietnamese Buddhism. Beyond his scholarly and spiritual work, he was a resolute advocate for religious freedom and human rights. Despite enduring imprisonment and a death sentence for his peaceful resistance against religious oppression, he remained steadfast in defending the fundamental right to faith and spiritual expression. His legacy continues to serve as a guiding light for his followers, human rights advocates, and the Vietnamese refugee community in my electorate. On the first anniversary of his passing, the commemoration paid tribute to his profound impact to humanity and especially to Buddhism. I commend the Vietnamese Community in NSW and especially the organizers from the Vietnamese Buddhist community for successfully organizing the event and for preserving his memory. May his influence continue to inspire future generations.

#### **WHITLAM ORTHOPAEDIC RESEARCH CENTRE CHARITY GALA DINNER**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to weaken, increasing the risk of fractures. One of the biggest challenges in managing osteoporosis is underdiagnosis, particularly in my community. Early detection is crucial in preventing serious complications, and a bone density scanner can be an invaluable tool in identifying osteoporosis before fractures happen. On the 23 November 2024 I had the privilege of attending a charity gala dinner dedicated to raising funds for the purchase of a bone density scanner for Liverpool Hospital. It was a truly memorable evening, where we had the opportunity to hear from leading orthopaedic surgeons and bone health researchers about the vital role early diagnosis plays in improving patient outcomes. There were also wonderful live band entertainment, speeches from a number of local leaders, and interviews with a number of elderly people in the community about raising community awareness and the need for this fundraising effort. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Dr. Thuy Anh Bui and the organisers from Whitlam Orthopaedic Research Centre and Mr Ian Wells from Saigon Entertainment for the kind invitation and for hosting such a meaningful event.

#### **TORI HENDERSON**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Tori Henderson for being awarded the 2025 Young Citizen of the Year at the Shellharbour Community and Australia Day Awards ceremony in January. Tori has volunteered at both Roo Theatre - including classes, running the canteen, and conducting stage crew work - and at the NSW SES, where she attends numerous call outs. Whilst juggling both jobs, she is also Lake Illawarra High School captain. Through her tireless volunteer work across our community, there is no doubt Tori will be a role model in Shellharbour for years to come. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Tori on this amazing achievement.

#### **LOST AND FOUND PETS ILLAWARRA**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Lost and Found Pets Illawarra for being awarded the 2025 Community Group of the Year at the Shellharbour Community and Australia Day Awards ceremony in January. Anne McNaughton and Nicole Harrison are both dedicated to reuniting lost pets with their owners and run a pet rescue group, Lost and Found Pets Illawarra Inc. They offer free microchipping, and they assist community members with food and vet bills. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Lost and Found Pets Illawarra on this amazing achievement.

#### **EMJAE WOODS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to congratulate Emjae Woods for being awarded the 2025 Community Capacity Builder at the Shellharbour Community and Australia Day Awards ceremony in January. Emjae is a proud young Dhungutti woman who is deeply committed to empowering young Indigenous students and helping them connect with their culture and community. She is a leader in sharing cultural knowledge with younger students across multiple schools in the Shellharbour area. On behalf of the entire Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Emjae on this amazing achievement.

#### **ST BRENDAN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERS 2025**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Sophie McMillian, Emery Brown, Evannah Solman, Oliver DeBono, James Farrelly, Sophie Lobb, Willow McGrath, Charli Burns, Oliver Mitchell, Levi George, Alexia Gavidì and Samantha McDermott on being named the 2025 school leaders at St Brendan's Catholic Primary School. These students have demonstrated a strong work ethic and a commitment to their school community. They represent St Brendan's Catholic Primary 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 Sophie M, Emery, Evannah, Oliver, James, Sophie L, Willow, Charli, Oliver, Levi, Alexia and Samantha on this well-deserved achievement. I also wish them all the best with their final year of primary school.

#### **ALEX WALKER**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Alex Walker for their remarkable performance at the 2025 NSW Surf Life Saving Championships. This year, the Northern Beaches hosted the State's premier Surf Life Saving Competition, where thousands of dedicated competitors, spectators and volunteers gathered to take part in a wide range of surf lifesaving activities. It was a true celebration of skill, teamwork, and community, showcasing the incredible talent and commitment of all involved. Alex was awarded State Champion in the U19 Surf Race with Swansea-Belmont Surf Life Saving Club. This remarkable achievement demonstrates is a testament to their exceptional skill, determination, and relentless commitment to excellence in surf lifesaving. It reflects not only the high level of performance but also the value of discipline and perseverance that are so integral to the surf lifesaving community. Congratulations Alex on your exceptional effort, you are asset to the surf lifesaving community, and your dedication and hard work are inspiration to us all. I look forward to your continued contributions to and excellence in the surf lifesaving.

#### **BILLY FORAN**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Billy Foran for their remarkable performance at the 2025 NSW Surf Life Saving Championships. This year, the Northern Beaches hosted the State's premier Surf Life Saving Competition, where thousands of dedicated competitors, spectators and volunteers gathered to take part in a wide range of surf lifesaving activities. It was a true celebration of skill, teamwork, and community, showcasing the incredible talent and commitment of all involved. Billy placed 3rd in the U17 Board Race and was awarded State Champion in the U17 Ski Relay alongside Campbell Connolly and Darcy Masia. This remarkable achievement demonstrates is a testament to their exceptional skill, determination, and relentless commitment to excellence in surf lifesaving. It reflects not only the high level of performance but also the value of discipline and perseverance that are so integral to the surf lifesaving community. Congratulations Billy on your exceptional effort, you are asset to the surf lifesaving community, and your dedication and hard work are inspiration to us all. I look forward to your continued contributions to and excellence in the surf lifesaving.

#### **THURGOONA PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDRAISER**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge Thurgoona Public School for their outstanding contributions to the Albury Wodonga Paediatric Ward. Through their Student Representative Council's [SRC] fundraising efforts, the school raised and generously donated \$500. The funds raised by the school were used to purchase a sensory aquarium for the Paediatric Ward. This wonderful gift is now providing comfort and joy to children with sensory needs, providing the experience and care that these young patients need during their stay at the ward. Well done to the Student Representative Council of Thurgoona Public School for their kindness, generosity and efforts that went into organising this fundraiser.

#### **AMANDA WARD-MORCOM – PHARMACIST OF THE YEAR 2025**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Amanda Ward-Morcom from Albury, who has been named Victoria's Pharmacist of the Year for Priceline Pharmacy in 2025. This award recognises Amanda's exceptional foresight and drive for ongoing improvement, which have consistently set a high standard in the pharmacy industry. Amanda continues to deliver outstanding service and her commitment to innovative practices have significantly improved the community's health and well-being. I commend Amanda for her leadership and am grateful for her tireless efforts. Well done Amanda!

#### **HOLBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate the 15 talented students from Holbrook Public School who recently took to the big stage at Sydney Olympic Park as part of the Pulse Alive event. This large-scale performing arts extravaganza provides exceptional opportunities for students from Kindergarten to Year 12 and their teachers from NSW public schools. The 15 dance students who participated in this event displayed their skills and passion for performing arts. I commend their enthusiasm and dedication; I am proud of their achievements. I would also like to acknowledge the invaluable support and guidance provided by Mrs Henderson, whose leadership and encouragement, working with the artistic talented students in helping them shine on such a grand platform is truly appreciated. Well done Holbrook Public School, students and staff!

### SAINT ZAIA CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—It was an absolute privilege to be part of the Christmas Festival at Saint Zaia Cathedral on Sunday, 15th of December 2024. This community celebration truly captured the festive spirit, bringing everyone together for a memorable experience. The event featured a variety of stalls, a delicious selection of food and rides for the whole family. I took the liberty of picking up some last minute Christmas gifts along with some dinner and dessert for the family. This joyful occasion was a beautiful reminder of how the holiday season brings people closer together to share in the festivities. Thank you to the event organisers, church committee and clergy for their always welcoming hospitality. The vent looks set to grow from strength to strength and I look forward to seeing Saint Zaia Cathedral continue this cherished tradition in the years to come.

### AUSTRAL MEDICAL CENTRE OPENING

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—Healthcare workers are a backbone of our community, working tirelessly to keep us healthy and thriving. On the 23rd of February, I had the honour of cutting the ribbon at the brand-new Austral Health Medical Centre, a much-needed addition to our growing community. This modern facility will provide accessible, high-quality healthcare, offering everything from general check-ups and preventative care to women's health, chronic disease management, minor surgeries, and allied health services such as physiotherapy, dietetics, and mental health support. Having a strong, local healthcare network means earlier diagnoses, better treatment options, and improved well-being for families, seniors, and individuals. It also alleviates pressure on hospitals by ensuring people receive timely care close to home. A big Leppington welcome to the Austral Health team—their expertise and dedication will make a real difference in the lives of so many.

### RSL POPPY BALL

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—It was my honour to attend the RSL Poppy Ball 2024 in Victoria Barracks on the 23rd of November. The ball is a fundraising gala hosted by RSL LifeCare Veteran Services, to raise money for the free services offered to veterans and their families. We enjoyed many performances including from the Australian Federation Guard Precision's Drill team, the Scots College Pipe & Drum band and a guest performance from John Schumann. It was an immense privilege to receive exclusive access to the Victoria Barracks and its rich history. It was a great moment of reflection and honour to the brave Australians who have made great sacrifices for this nation. RSL LifeCare was able to raise \$176,000 for veterans and their families including financial assistance, housing, education and employment. I am so inspired by RSL LifeCare Veteran Services' dedication and continued support for our veterans. A big thank you to everyone who organised, hosted and contributed to the gala.

### ORCHARD HILLS VETERINARY HOSPITAL

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I thank and commend Dr Camille Brandt and her team at Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital for the first RSPCA-Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital Road trip for 2025, which was undertaken to advance their mission of improving animal welfare and strengthening the human-animal bond in high-priority communities. The trip involved Orchard Hills Veterinary Hospital partnering with the RSPCA Outreach team, Tenterfield Shire Council, Glen Innes Severn Council, Glen Innes RSPCA NSW Supporters Group, Tamworth Regional Council, Tenterfield Vet, Tenterfield Mobile Vet, Glen Innes Vet, Animal Rescue Collective and Petbarn Foundation to work towards removing barriers that prevent pet owners from accessing vital veterinary care for their cherished pets. Financial hardship is a factor that can impact the ability of pet owners to obtain veterinary visits for their pets. This program helped bridge that gap by providing the essential services of vaccinations, microchipping and desexing. I commend all involved in this important initiative.

### WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate the Western Sydney Wanderers for shattering their club record for most goals in a season, with their 4-2 home victory against Melbourne Victory on 15 March 2025 taking their season tally for the league campaign to 47. This surpasses their previous record of 45 goals in the 2020/21 season, with further matches remaining in the regular season. The Western Sydney Wanderers currently sit in third position on the A-League ladder and are in prime position to qualify for the finals series and attempt to claim the club's first A-League grand final victory. Such a title would add to a trophy cabinet which already includes an A-League Premiership and an Asian Champions League title. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I thank the Western Sydney Wanderers for the joy they bring to our community with their success and I wish them the very best for the rest of the season and beyond.

### NATIONAL PET ADOPTION MONTH

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—March is National Pet Adoption Month and I take this opportunity to thank and commend all local pet rescue organisations across my electorate of Badgerys Creek for their important work in rescuing animals. I extend my thanks and commendations to all individuals in my community who support these pets by choosing to adopt them from the local pet rescue organisations and giving them a loving home. I wish all local pet rescue organisations the very best as they continue their important work and I wish the very best to those who have supported the organisations and pets.

### GUYRA UNITED HOSPITAL AUXILIARY

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of the Guyra United Hospital Auxiliary, on their longevity and contribution to the Guyra community. The group was formed in May 1944 with the aim to raise funds to purchase much needed patient comfort items, medical equipment, and general health needs for local services. I congratulate the members of the group for their tireless efforts to raise funds, recently donating \$7,500 to the Multipurpose Health Service at Guyra, with this donation being for the purchase of equipment for patients and staff. Special thanks to volunteer committee members, including: President Di Burey, Vice President Patricia Fields, Treasurer Ann Williams, Secretary Gail Montague, Patron Gwen Williams and members Deidre Youman and Yvonne Hawthorne. I commend all those involved, for their hard work, selflessly giving to improve the lives of others and is appreciated by the whole community. Organisations such as this in regional towns, benefit greatly from the ongoing support and commitment such volunteers give.

### RECOGNITION OF ATKINS FAMILY

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Atkins family of Moree, on celebrating 50 years of continuous ownership of their real estate business, known today as Raine and Horne and trading under this name since 1988. I congratulate each generation of the Atkins family on this significant milestone. The real estate was established in 1975, trading originally as John S Atkins and Co and operated as a family business with wife June and daughter Kelly, whom is the current principal of the firm. Congratulations to past and present staff, including current team members, Karen Biggs, Brittany Madden, Brianna Harborne and Loren Burgmann, for their support and contribution to the success of this strong and dependable local business. I commend all involved on this significant anniversary, with this milestone being a credit to their hard work, commitment, and excellence in service to Moree and the surrounding districts.

### SIGNOR VERTELLI OF ARMIDALE

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Armidale's Signor Vertelli restaurant on landing a review in Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide, described in the guide as being "the closest thing to Naples in the Northern Tablelands." This is a notable accomplishment, given the Good Food Guide is the go-to guide to eating and includes venues of various price points, cuisines, and styles across New South Wales. I congratulate owners of Signor Vertelli, Matt Westhorpe and Nick Oxley on this accolade. Being recognised and reviewed by the SMH Good Food Guide is an impressive testament to the quality of cuisine and service provided at Signor Vertelli. I commend Matt, Nick and the team on their creativity and hard work behind the scenes. Signor Vertelli pizzeria and wine bar is indeed a local favourite, putting Armidale of the map for fine cuisine.

### SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – LINDSAY PARK 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 Missy Timmins, Lachlan Ardita, Daisy Shipway, Annabelle Ward, Remy Escamilla and Eli Jackson who have been named as the 2025 Lindsay Park 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 – MOUNT KEMBLA 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 Quillyn, Max, Abigail and Lucas who have been named as the 2025 Mount Kemplla 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 – KEIRAVILLE 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 Harrison Ohana, Lucy Malesevic, Anna Kilpatrick and Aleksander Lazicic who have been named as the 2025 Keiraville 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.

#### **LEVI WOODS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Levi Woods. Levi was recently nominated for the 2025 Australia Day Award, Sportsperson and Young Sportsperson of the Year in the Upper Lachlan Shire. Levi has been recognised for his mentorship and leadership roles in sport. Levi has demonstrated his commitment to the Junior Green Devils Football team as an assistant coach. Levi also plays rugby league and was top scorer for the Goulburn Bulldogs Senior Rugby League club, being awarded the 2024 Under 19's Leading Points Scorer. Levi is known for his innate attributes, which create an engaging and positive environment that enriches the teams and clubs he is involved in. I congratulate Levi on his well-earned nomination and recognise his significant contribution and commitment as a role model and leadership roles that he undertakes within the sporting and broader community.

#### **MR STEPHEN CARROLL**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Mr Stephen Carroll. Mr Carroll has studied with prominent artists at the Red Crane Gallery in Canberra, in Japan and China, and continues to work with the Director of the International Association of Sumi in Japan. He is well known for his sumi-e and Chinese brush painting. Sumi-e painting is the Japanese form with the simplicity of line, whilst Chinese brush painting uses shades of ink. Mr Carroll's work has been exhibited in China, Japan, and Australia, receiving an International Honour Award in 2024 at the Art Beyond Boundaries exhibition in Tokyo. Mr Carroll became the first Australian Director of the International Chinese Calligraphic and Brush Painters Society [ICCPs] and is now the Australian Advisor. Mr Carroll has a studio in Crockwell where he teaches and exhibits his works with other works being held in public and private collections. I take this time to recognise Mr Carroll's artistic talents and the recognition that he has deservedly received in his appointments and awards.

#### **MR NOEL BRIAN SYLVESTER**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Mr Noel Brian Sylvester. Mr Sylvester was recently nominated as a finalist for the 2025 Australia Day Award, Citizen of the Year in Goulburn Mulwaree. Mr Sylvester has been recognised for his significant contributions as a volunteer with emergency services and community organisations. Serving with the Windellama Rural Fire Brigade for twenty-two years and was a founding member of the Windellama First Responders and SES. Mr Sylvester has undertaken a key role in many local emergencies. Mr Sylvester also made significant contributions to the Tarago Men's Shed making toys for the Windellama Christmas Giving Tree. I take this time to congratulate and acknowledge the roles that Mr Sylvester has undertaken, demonstrating a genuine desire to serve the community and support those in need through a variety of situations. Thank you for your years of service to the community.

#### **CAISON DUNCAN**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Caison Duncan who has been selected to play Rugby 7's at the Raro 7s tournament in the Cook Islands as part of the Pacific Nomads Under 16's team. Caison is a proud Gamilaraay, Yuwaaliyaay young man and is currently a year ten student at Macquarie Anglican Grammar School in Dubbo. An outstanding young man, he is an honour student, who has

proudly represented his school in both sporting and academic events. Deeply connected to his culture, he takes on the responsibility of delivering the Acknowledgement to Country at his school, a role he performs with pride in the Gamilaraay language, taught to him by his Nan and Pop. Beyond his schooling achievements he has already built an impressive sporting career, including representing the Dubbo Touch Football Association and competing in the Ella 7's Rugby tournament for Koori Rugby. This tour in the Cook Islands, facilitated by Pacific Nomads Rugby, will allow Caison to showcase his talent on the international stage. The experience will not only help him further develop his skills but also provide meaningful cultural exchange through the game of rugby. Congratulations on this incredible achievement Caison!

#### **DUBBO MEN'S SHED**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge the Dubbo Men's Shed for their recent donation of a motorised wheelchair. Earlier this year, a generous local family donated a near-new, motorised wheelchair to the Dubbo Men's Shed worth nearly \$10,000. Knowing the impact that this chair could have, the club set out to find the worthiest recipient. They put the word out through local media, and it wasn't long until they were receiving letters recommending individuals that could really benefit from this wonderful gift. One letter that caught the attention of club members, was from the grandmother of Tijuana Keed, a young woman from Peak Hill. Tijuana got her first wheelchair at age 2. She is currently a teachers aid at Peak Hill Central School and wheels from home to work every day. When Tijuana was told that she was receiving the motorised wheelchair, she was beyond excited and thankful. She said even the seemingly small task of carrying something will be so much easier. The Dubbo Men's Shed have been an incredible conduit between a generous community donation and this asset finding a new home where it will be utilised and loved. Well done Dubbo Men's Shed!

#### **GREG O'MALLY AND ROBERT HANDSAKER**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Greg O'Mally and Robert Handsaker of Narromine who have both been recognised with Life Membership of the Narromine Turf Club. Both Greg and Robert are well deserving of this honour, making significant contributions to horse racing in Narromine. Greg and Robert have long associations with the Turf club. Although Greg is no longer an active committee member, the influential role he played and the significant impact he made on the club have left a legacy worthy of this honourable induction. Robert remains a key figure in the club, with his contributions having a meaningful impact. Racing is a vibrant sport that unites various aspects of the community, from the competition itself to fashions on the field and social networking. However, none of it would be possible without the commitment, passion, and hard work of dedicated individuals like Greg and Robert. Congratulations to you both, thank you for your invaluable contributions to both the Narromine Turf Club and the racing industry!

#### **SAM KONSTAS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to take the time to congratulate and acknowledge 19 year old Sam Konstas for his stunning Boxing Day debut. In front of tens of thousands of people, playing in one of the biggest games of the year, Sam rose to the occasion and helped Australia deliver a monumental win. As a youngster Sam first began drawing attention to himself as a batter for the St George District Cricket Club. During his tenure there, he scored the most runs for the club across all ages, and holds the record for most runs ever scored by a St George player in Green Shield. Across four seasons, he amassed 1243 runs in 24 innings, Les Favell another bonafide St George legend had 803 runs in 29 innings playing in that competition. "Watch this space - Special K will go places", wrote the team captain in his end of season report when Sam was 12. Congratulations Sam on a phenomenal debut and I'm looking forward to seeing more of what I have no doubt will be a long and illustrious career.

#### **SUPERTEE**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise the charity Supertee for providing practical and fun medical garments for children facing life-threatening conditions. The supertee medical garment is cleverly designed to be friendly to all types of medical tests such as MRI, PET scans and temperature taking, while bringing comfort and imaginative play to hospitals with the Marvel heroes and Space Commander superteers. Charity founder Jason Sotiris learnt about the awful challenges children can face when his daughter was diagnosed with a rare 1 in 10,000 cancer. He realised how hard it was for children when their clothes got in the way of their life saving treatments and decided to design a piece of clothing that is safe for child patients while providing a welcome distraction from the medical procedures. Once again, I recognise and thank the charity Supertee and everyone who has helped their cause, for their massive contribution to children in hospitals across Australia.

#### **SALVATION ARMY FESTIVE CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I voice my full support and thanks to the members and volunteers of the Salvation Army for coming together on December 11 to celebrate the Christmas season. The

Rockdale Salvation Army branch assists up to seventy families a week from the Rockdale, Bexley, Bexley North, Arncliffe and Ramsgate areas. Their food market during the Christmas season included a visit by Santa, Christmas carols and a festive lunch, providing relief for people over-burdened by financial stress as well as emotional stress. Hundreds of thousands of gifts and toys are donated to children each Christmas, special Christmas meals are provided for families in need, and a safe, welcoming community is fostered by the Salvation Army to combat loneliness and isolation. With an increase in demand for the services of the Salvation Army, I commend the Rockdale Centre for doing a superb job at uplifting families.

#### **DENIS GREEN – RETIREMENT AFTER 72 YEARS AS PHARMACIST**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to acknowledge Mr Denis Green, who at the age of 89 has retired after an incredible 72 years of service. Known for his unwavering devotion to his role, Denis has spent the vast majority of his life focussed on doing all that he can to help people and promote their health and well-being. Since moving to the Clarence Valley in 2006, Denis has provided reassurance and guidance for the many customers who he has assisted through his role as a pharmacist. He is also an active member of Grafton Rotary and is clearly committed to serving the local community. 72 years is a remarkable contribution in any job role, but I congratulate Denis on his dedication to spending so many years investing his time in service to others, educating and listening to people about their overall health. Though Denis would have loved to keep working, he has earned this well-deserved retirement after decades of selfless service and dedication and I wish him the best for the future. Congratulations Denis on such an amazing achievement.

#### **GRAFTON PUBLIC SCHOOL HOCKEY SUCCESS**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to the Grafton Public School hockey team for bringing home the gold medal after winning the 2024 NSW PSSA State Knockout Competition, held at the Newcastle International Hockey Stadium. The mixed team was made up of talented boys and girls from years 5 and 6. For a chance at the grand final on the same day, the team played against and defeated a team from Parkes. Their victory gave them the push to give their all to the final game. The players clearly demonstrated their speed, skills and agility to defeat their opponents from Timbumburi Public School with an impressive 3-0 score in the grand final. Congratulations are also in order for Coach Sue Buckley and Co-Coach Sean Waite for their efforts and dedication to helping the team achieve great results at the competition. Well done to the team for such dedication and commitment to hockey and the competition. The students represented Grafton Public School and the Clarence Valley community incredibly and should be very proud of their achievements. Congratulations on the great teamwork and determination that achieved top results.

#### **MERRELLE TRILL FAREWELLS GRAFTON VIEW CLUB**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate Ms Merrelle Trill, a valued member of the Grafton VIEW Club as she moves from Grafton to a new chapter in her life. Ms Trill has contributed significantly both as president and committee member bringing her enthusiasm, leadership, and commitment into everything she undertook. Ms Trill's presence in the club has been more than that of a leader, she has been a friend and mentor to all members, offering support and encouragement to those around her. Her tireless work and dedication to this cause has made a real difference. A morning tea was recently held to mark Ms Trill's departure where fellow members and friends gathered to wish her well. The Grafton VIEW Club offers a fantastic opportunity for those looking to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged children while enjoying good company, great food, and inspiring guest speakers. Currently Grafton VIEW sponsors three children, helping them access a better education. What an outstanding achievement and thank you Ms Trill for your tireless work and dedication. I'm sure you'll be missed by Grafton VIEW Club, and I wish you well on your new chapter.

#### **DOREEN WATTS**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray)**—Madam/Mister Speaker, Today I would like to recognise Doreen Watts of Leeton. Along with her husband Leo, she dedicates her spare time to supporting their friends and retired colleagues and is an important part of NSW Ambulance Legacy. NSW Ambulance Legacy recognises the strong bonds forged by employees over the course of their careers. If members find themselves doing it tough mateship and support can be found through the organisation and local supporters. Doreen has been part of the crucial support system for retired ambulance officers and paramedics. Regularly organising events and social gatherings and providing welfare checks on retired officers. The Bundawarra Centre Cultural Precinct in Temora includes the Ambulance Museum, where events for the Association are held. Their efforts to strengthen bonds within the community, preserve the history of the ambulance service, and provide welfare support are truly commendable. The acknowledgment they received with the Certificate of Recognition is clearly well-deserved.

**DAMIEN MILLER**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—** Congratulations to Damien Miller on receiving the Cricket NSW Community Distinguished Service Award. As the President and esteemed life member of the Tenambit Morpeth Cricket Club, his steadfast leadership and enduring commitment have truly made a difference in our community. Damien's tireless efforts in promoting grassroots cricket, nurturing emerging talent, and fostering an inclusive sporting culture have elevated the club into a vibrant hub for excellence and camaraderie in Maitland. Through his vision and unwavering dedication, the club has not only provided a platform for players to develop their skills but also strengthened the bonds of friendship and community spirit among its members. This prestigious award is a well-deserved recognition of Damien's many contributions and the positive impact you have made both on and off the field. It is heartening to see his passion for cricket celebrated at a state level. I extend my sincere congratulations and gratitude to Damien for his contribution to cricket in Maitland.

**LINDSAY WOOD OAM**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—** I am delighted to congratulate Lindsay Wood OAM on receiving the Cricket NSW Community Distinguished Service Award. Lindsay's exceptional contributions to the Maitland cricket community have set an inspiring benchmark for fairness, precision, and integrity. As a dedicated member of the Maitland District Umpires & Scorers Association, he consistently ensures that every game is conducted with the highest standards of sportsmanship and accuracy. His commitment to meticulous umpiring and scoring has not only supported local competitions but also fostered an environment of trust and respect among players, officials, and volunteers. Lindsay's willingness to mentor emerging umpires and scorers demonstrates your passion for preserving the traditions and spirit of cricket in our region. This prestigious award is a testament to his tireless efforts and the significant impact he has made over the years. On behalf of the people of Maitland, I extend my deepest gratitude and warmest congratulations.

**TELARAH PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESCHOOL**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—** Congratulations to Telarah Public School Preschool on their celebration of Harmony Week. The school describe this week as cherished time, celebrating the rich tapestry of cultures that make up their community. The youngest learners embraced this spirit wholeheartedly. They delighted in tasting diverse cuisines—sushi, naan, fried rice, tacos, and even our beloved fairy bread—broadening their palates and understanding of global traditions. The active participation of families enriched these celebrations also. A Māori family introduced the children to their heritage, teaching them to say "kia ora" and sharing stories of the demi-god Māui, familiar to many through the film "Moana." Such firsthand experiences are invaluable in fostering respect and appreciation for different cultures. Artistic expressions further deepened the children's connection to the theme. They painted self-portraits and added their handprints to a Harmony Week canvas, symbolising unity and belonging. I commend the students, staff, and families for their dedication to these values, embodying the essence of our community's spirit of harmony.

**GREG MASON**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—** On 12 December 2024, as part of the Wallsend 150th celebrations, Greg Mason from Hunter Water gave an interesting presentation at Wallsend Library about Water Supply for Newcastle. In 1874, the newly incorporated Municipality of Wallsend was suffering from a severe drought and desperate locals begged for water from the steam locomotives that came to Wallsend to carry coal from the mines. After many years of lobbying, Newcastle and Wallsend finally secured a piped water supply in 1885. It wasn't until the 1930s, however, that sewerage services began to be installed in the Wallsend area. Currently in progress is a Wallsend wastewater pump station and pipeline upgrade at 60 Sandgate Road, with new pipes being installed between the pump station and Shortland Wastewater Treatment Works. These upgrades will improve the efficiency and operation of the wastewater system in our area and ensure the station continues to meet environmental and safety requirements. This project, all being well, should be completed in early to mid-2025. Thank you, Greg, for shedding some light on the importance of water in our region and helping to celebrate Wallsend's sesquicentenary.

**JEANNETTE LECHNER-SCOTT**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—** Jeannette Lechner-Scott, internationally recognised neurologist and Conjoint Professor at the University of Newcastle has been awarded the 2024 MS Research Award by MS Australia. Since the early 1990s, Professor Lechner-Scott has played a pivotal role in MS research and improving care for people living with the disease. Professor Lechner-Scott has been instrumental in advancing

treatment options, expanding our understanding of MS, saying that improving lives is a lifelong mission. She has worked at John Hunter Hospital, University of Newcastle and Hunter Medical Research Institute, shaping both the scientific and clinical landscape of MS treatment. She helped establish the Hunter New England Neuroimmunology Clinic in 2005 and enjoys international recognition for work in MS cognition, epigenetics and novel MRI techniques, with over 25 years in clinical trials. Professor Lechner-Scott has been continuously funded over an extended period, has co-authored 314 articles and collaborated with over 320 institutions from 90 countries. She is a mentor to medical students and junior doctors and has established a mentor program for women in neurology. Congratulations, Professor Lechner-Scott, on your award and for all that you do for our community.

### **JESMOND LIONS CLUB**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—The Lions organisation turns 78 in 2025 and it has grown to be Australia's largest service club organisation. Jesmond Lions hold a special place in our community. They have built unique trails for blind and visually impaired visitors, along with pathways and bridges, at the Hunter Wetlands. A Sensory Trail made in 1997 needs continual upkeep, so working bees do a clean-up twice a month and, each year, Lions International exchange students take up an environment project at the Wetlands, such as building breeding hatches for endangered birds. In February, Jesmond Lions met with other Lions and Rotary Clubs to make 1800 sandwiches, a contribution to the Eat Up charity program, which were delivered to four local schools. The next challenge is to raise \$54,000 for the Mater Hospital to purchase a scalp cooling machine for chemotherapy patients, aiming to realise half, with the Australian Lions Foundation to contribute the remainder. Regular activities include Bunnings barbecues, raffles and helping Waratah West Public School with breakfasts each Wednesday. The upcoming Easter BBQ is a big event. Thank you for your continued service to our community.

### **LAKE MAC AMBASSADOR 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 for the city's highest accolade: Lake Mac Ambassador. Dr Alyce Barnes of Dudley is a physical activity researcher who has spearheaded groundbreaking campaigns to increase physical activity among girls and women. Aaron Carter of Dudley is Deputy Principal Wellbeing at Wiripaang Public School and has helped the school develop into a leader for community engagement. Ann-Maria Martin of Cardiff South is the founder of Survivor's R Us, a support and advocacy service for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence and advocating on their behalf. Leaders of Charlestown electorate-based organisations have also been nominated: Bradley Dunn, CEO of the Lake Macquarie and Newcastle Suicide Prevention Network, and Anna Noon, co-founder of the Groundswell Collective. My congratulations to the nominees and I wish them all the best!

### **CHARLESTOWN SES VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Volunteers make up such an important part of the community, contributing their time and energy to help others—nowhere is this dedication and commitment more apparent than in the NSW State Emergency Service. I am proud that so many SES volunteers recognised at a recent awards ceremony at the Wallsend Diggers Club are residents of the Charlestown electorate. Christine Speer of Hillsborough collected the Commissioner's Commendation for Service, while Michael Willing of Merewether secured the Commissioner's Unit Citation following the Northern Rivers flood event in February and March 2022. John Robertshaw of Tingira Heights and Jennifer Conrad of Warners Bay each received both a National Medal and a 15-Year Long Service Award. William Knight of Cardiff South received a 20-Year Long Service Award. David Alderton of Charlestown received a 15-Year Long Service Award. Charlestown electorate local Brittany Palmer received a 10-Year Long Service Award. These recipients represent the best of the SES and have demonstrated time and time again their bravery, dedication and selflessness. My congratulations and thanks to them all, to their fellow recipients and to all the SES volunteers in the Charlestown electorate and around the state.

### **OZHARVEST**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—2025 marks fifteen years of OzHarvest's work in the Hunter. OzHarvest's yellow van has become an icon in communities across the country, and this is very much the case in the Charlestown electorate. Indeed, OzHarvest Newcastle now has five vans rescuing food from locations all around the Hunter, from Raymond Terrace to Maitland, Cessnock and Lake Macquarie, as far south

as Wyong. They report over 175,000 meals delivered every month, partnering with 98 donors for a total of over nineteen million meals over the past fifteen years. They have also supported more than a hundred charities. Their food relief hub at PCYC Lake Macquarie in Windale was established in 2020, and helped to deliver almost a quarter of a million meals during the COVID-19 pandemic: an enormous help to so many people who did it particularly tough during lockdowns. OzHarvest also runs the Nourish Program, which helps young people aged between 16 and 25 who face barriers to education, employment and training attain a Cookery II qualification, alongside FEAST, a curriculum-aligned education program for school students, and NEST, a six-week nutrition and education program.

### HAKE HOUSE OF ART

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I acknowledge HAKE House of Art, located in my electorate of Manly, as it celebrates its third anniversary this month. Founded by Ash Holmes, Jake Elliott, and Sammy Nugent, HAKE has become an integral part of the Northern Beaches' thriving contemporary arts scene, providing an important platform and space for both emerging and established artists. Since opening its doors in 2022, HAKE has become more than just a gallery space; it is an artistic hub which fosters creativity, connection, and collaboration, built on a commitment to showcasing diverse talent and supporting artists in their creative pursuits. With a proud track record of partnering with local businesses and working in the charity space, HAKE has significantly enriched our local cultural community. I commend HAKE House of Art for its outstanding contribution to our local arts scene on the Northern Beaches and congratulate the team on this wonderful milestone.

### ST EUPHEMIA'S TAVERNA NIGHT

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On 22 February, St. Euphemia College held its Taverna Night, a resounding success in bringing together students, families, and the local community for an unforgettable celebration of Greek culture. The event featured the students' vibrant Greek dance performances, delicious taverna-style cuisine, and live entertainment that kept guests dancing throughout the night. "The Taverna" was born in the courtyard of White Village Tavern from the remnants of a meat platter, red wine, the fateful smudges of a Greek coffee, and a rather loud and audacious possum on the roof. The idea was to place them inside a Greek restaurant for one night to see what could happen. Taverna Night is important as it fosters a sense of community and connection, particularly for Greek Australians and those interested in Hellenic culture. The event offered a true taste of Greece, blending music, food, and traditional performances in a lively atmosphere. Everyone that attended this wonderful celebration was filled with culture and community spirit. This was a memorable night for the Bankstown Greek community. I congratulate St Euphemia College on a splendid event and for bringing the Greek culture to our community.

### HUMAN APPEAL YEAR 12 HIGH ACHIEVERS AWARDS

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to acknowledge and commend Human Appeal Australia for hosting the 18th Annual Year 12 High Achievers Awards, an event dedicated to celebrating the outstanding academic achievements of Muslim High School Certificate students across Australia. This prestigious ceremony celebrated the students who achieved an ATAR of over 90. I felt honoured to be part of this wonderful celebration and stand among our community's future Muslim leaders. I acknowledge the hard work and dedication these students have put into their studies to achieve such remarkable results and the continuous support of their parents and families. Education is a powerful tool that shapes the future, and it is inspiring to see organisations like Human Appeal fostering ambition and excellence in our youth. Their commitment to empowering young Australians to become active members of society reflects the values of hard work, perseverance, and community service. I sincerely thank Human Appeal Australia, its dedicated team, and all involved in organising this event. I also congratulate the students and their families on their remarkable achievements and wish them continued success in their future endeavours.

### EDUTECH AUSTRALIA'S CEO AND FOUNDER MS EMAN SOLIMAN WINNER OF THE GOLD AWARDS IN WOMEN CHANGING THE WORLD

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I am pleased to congratulate Ms Eman Soliman, EduTech Australia's Chief Executive Officer and Founder, on winning the Gold Award in the Cultural Diversity and Inclusion category in the Women Changing the World Awards. The Women Changing the World Awards is a global awards program that recognises the work of incredible women making a positive difference in the world across a range of industries and areas. There were hundreds of high-quality global entries in this category, with 14 finalists from around the world. This category was one of the largest awards entries in the whole summit. Eman

continues to put in the hard work and effort within EduTech and allows young women in the technology field to excel. She greatly influences many young females around my electorate through her encouragement and support of digital education. By participating in Edu Tech's programs, young women can apply these essential skills in future career paths. Thank you Eman and congratulations on your well-deserved award. Wishing you and your team all the best.

#### **THE WOMEN'S CONNECTION OF MILTON ULLADULLA**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—Mr. SPEAKER: On International Women's Day 2025, the Women's Connection of Milton Ulladulla brought the community together at Cuppitts Winery to honour the remarkable contributions of Shoalhaven women and to celebrate the achievements of Jemma Tribe, Mel Williams, and Dr. Katie Macartney. The event was enriched by the presence of First Nations leaders, with a heartfelt Welcome to Country delivered by Auntie Nell, and the recognition of inspiring First Nations business leaders. The Women's Connection of Milton Ulladulla was founded in 2019 by local business leaders Emily Jenkins and Mary-Jean Lewis and has become an integral part of the South Shoalhaven community. As a subgroup of the Milton Ulladulla Business Chamber, it has provided a vital platform for local women to connect, share their talents, and celebrate achievements in a supportive and inclusive environment. The group is run by a dedicated volunteer committee with administrative and marketing support from the Business Chamber. The group ensures its events remain accessible and inclusive, with thanks to financial contributions from Community Bank Milton and South Coast. The Women's Connection continues to empower, connect, and showcase the incredible women who shape our region.

#### **MCCI SHOALHAVEN MULTICULTURAL HUB**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—Mr. SPEAKER, I wish to acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding work of the MCCI Shoalhaven Multicultural HUB, not only for their efforts in organising this year's Harmony Week celebrations but for their ongoing commitment to fostering inclusivity and cultural connection in our community. This week, our community came together to mark the beginning of Harmony Week—a time to honour and reflect on the rich diversity that shapes and strengthens us. The event commenced with a heartfelt Welcome to Country and Smoking Ceremony led by Uncle Paul McLeod, followed by a barefoot walk around Harry Sawkins Park in a powerful symbol of our shared connection to Country. Harmony Week is a reminder that our diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and the work of MCCI Shoalhaven ensures that every member of our community feels valued, respected, and included. I extend my deepest thanks to them for their dedication to building a more united and inclusive Shoalhaven, today and every day.

#### **MULTI-FAITH IFTAR DINNER**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—It was an honour to attend the 2025 Multi-Faith Community Iftar Dinner, graciously hosted by the Bishop of Parramatta, Most Reverend Vincent Long Van Nguyen, and Reverend Dr. Patrick McInerney of the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations. The Diocese of Parramatta, in partnership with the Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations, organised this successful Multi-Faith Community Iftar Dinner, an event dedicated to fostering harmony and mutual respect among diverse religious communities. This significant gathering aimed to promote understanding and dialogue, in alignment with its theme of "Creating a Harmonious Multi-Religious Society." Among the distinguished guests in attendance was the President of the Australian Federation of Northern Lebanon, whose presence underscored the widespread community support for intercultural and interfaith initiatives. The President emphasised the importance of such events in strengthening relationships between various cultural and religious groups across Australia, highlighting their role in advancing peace, cooperation, and mutual respect in our society.

#### **BAPS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—Invited on behalf of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha I was delighted to attend the Women's Conference on 9 March 2025. This event was part of a festival celebrating the visit of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj to Australia. His Holiness Maharaj is the sixth spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and the spiritual leader of the BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha. His teachings reveal that peace begins with the individual and has the power to transform communities and unite nations. His Holiness embodies this peace, and in his presence countless souls experience peace.

#### **NOWRUZ CELEBRATIONS IN MERRYLANDS**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)**—On 22 March in Merrylands, I had the absolute delight of witnessing Merrylands Road fill up with 10,000 to 15,000 people celebrating the ancient Persian festival of Nowruz! The origin of Nowruz is rooted in Zoroastrianism, an ancient Persian religion that predates both Christianity and Islam and means new day, celebrating the arrival of spring and the first green shoots after months of snow. It's a 3000 year old tradition and a huge celebration for Persian, Afghan, Assyrian and Kurdish communities and many

others. The event is celebrated by millions who observe the holiday by doing a deep clean of their homes, celebrating a season of new life, and coming together to eat and celebrate and wish one another good luck in the year ahead. This fantastic public event was organised by Mayor Ola Hamed and Cumberland City Council, attended by Jason Clare MP, Councillor Diane Coleman, Councillor Suman Saha, Councillor Glen Elmore and myself. This event truly brought Nowruz to life for the people of Merrylands by incorporating a night of uniting together to watch great cultural performances, cuisine and activities with those celebrating. Nowruz Mubarak!

#### **NSW PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF THE UK**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 24th March, I was pleased to address consular officials and distinguished guests, as Co-Chair of the NSW Parliamentary Friends of the UK, at a reception celebrating the bilateral UK-NSW relationship at the British Consulate General, Sydney. The relationship between the UK and NSW is at the very core of modern Australia. In 1770, Lieutenant James Cook mapped the east coast of Australia, naming it as NSW, while the British Crown Colony of NSW was formally promulgated on 7 February 1788. In 2021, more than 14 million Australians identified as wholly or partially of Anglo-Celtic ancestry, including 8.4 million English Australians, the largest single ancestral background in Australia today. At the event, we gathered to celebrate the enduring bond between our two great nations, and the continued abundance in social, cultural, professional, sporting and economic opportunities between the UK and Australia's oldest State. I extend my warmest congratulations to Louise Cantillon, Consul General of the United Kingdom in Sydney, Edward Kitt, Deputy Consul General, and to all the hardworking consular team for their support of the Parliamentary Friends of the UK, and continued collaboration to propel our bilateral relationship further.

#### **NIDO EARLY SCHOOLS SEVEN HILLS**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Friday 7th March, I was delighted to meet with young learners and educators to celebrate Nido Early School Seven Hills' 6th Birthday celebrations. With over 100 centres across Australia and 5 in New South Wales, Nido Early Schools proudly offer exceptional education and care for children aged from six weeks through to school age. Taking inspiration from the Reggio Emilia philosophy, they hold that child, parent, community and environment are all essential to the early years learning process. At the event, I went on a tour of the facilities at Nido Early School Seven Hills, located in Seven Hills Plaza, where I was happy to check in on Prospect Electorate's next generation of early learners. It was wonderful to see Nido Seven Hills' approach to early learning reflected in our capable and resilient young students, even celebrating their 6 years of service to our local Seven Hills community with birthday cake and healthy fruit! My thanks go out to Jessica Azar, Curriculum Leader for the invitation, and I extend my warm congratulations to all the Nido Early School Seven Hills team on a wonderful celebration. Happy Birthday, Nido Seven Hills, and to many more!

#### **GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Monday 24th March, our proud Greek-Australian community celebrated the 204th anniversary of Greek Independence Day with a special event held in the Parliament of New South Wales. Greek-Australians are an integral part of modern Australia, with the first Greeks recorded in the 1820s and with thriving multicultural organisations dating back to the late 19th century. Today, our Greek-Australian community features prominently throughout our local Prospect Electorate and across Western Sydney, from Blacktown and Seven Hills to Wentworthville, Greystanes, Smithfield and beyond. The event, hosted by the Consulate General of Greece in Sydney, was an opportunity to acknowledge the friendship of the Greek people, their common values and their historic contribution as the birthplace of democracy and cradle of modern civilisation. Minister Sophie Cotsis addressed those in attendance on behalf of Premier Chris Minns, and I was pleased to be represented by my Electorate Officer, George Mpliakas, also President of the Greek-Australian Society, GAS. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Yiannis Mallikourtis, Consul General of Greece in Sydney, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Australia, and to all our amazing Greek-Australians in Prospect Electorate and across the State. Happy Greek Independence Day. Zito I Ellas!

#### **RECOVERY COORDINATOR SUPERINTENDENT SCOTT TANNER, APM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—I WISH to pay tribute to the sterling job being done by our Recovery Coordinator - Tropical Cyclone Alfred Superintendent Scott Tanner APM. Superintendent Tanner has the perfect skill set for this challenging role – a critical thinker and strong leader with decades of operational experience. We need cool heads in a crisis. In my former role as Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery and now as Minister for Recovery, Small Business and the North Coast, I have valued his wise counsel and his can-do attitude. Superintendent Tanner retains his role as Richmond Police District Commander, allowing him to deploy the full resources of the NSW Police Force while effectively marshalling all other Government resources. Mr Tanner

played a critical role in the 2022 Northern Rivers floods, serving as local operations controller and assisting the coordination of recovery efforts across the region. In June 2024, Mr Tanner was awarded the Australian Police Medal for his role during the 2022 floods. Superintendent Tanner soon will be leaving us to become Liverpool Police District Commander, his first metropolitan posting. We warmly welcome Tweed-Byron Police District Commander Superintendent Dave Roptell, who will be taking charge of the Richmond Police District.

### RESILIENT UKI PREPARED FOR CYCLONE THREAT

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—A few weeks ago, Northern NSW and Southern Queensland faced the threat of what became Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, looming off the coast. I want to comment on the incredible job that was done to prepare for this potential disaster. We have learned the lessons of 2022 and the preparation was very different. There was a big focus on community safety. I wish to commend Resilient Uki for the brilliant job it has done supporting the community to prepare for wild weather events. In the last edition of The Uki News Resilient Uki had clear and practical advice and a preparation checklist along with the link to their webpage with further resources. That proved very timely advice. I dropped in on Mel Bloor and Brendan Esposito from Resilient Uki and they gave me a debrief on how Uki fared during the event. In Uki and across the region we saw that homes were prepped for high winds and potential flooding, people had their battery radios, their torches, some had generators ready. There were two-way radio networks in place. There were many acts of kindness, food drops, people taking in friends and family, neighbours helping neighbours.

### TENTERFIELD'S BOY FROM OZ CELEBRATED WITH A BLUE PLAQUE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—ONE of Australia's most beloved and successful performers, the late Peter Allen is one of 16 new blue plaque recipients at Armidale's New England Hotel, where he gave his early performances. Born Peter Woolnough in Tenterfield, Peter's ambition and extraordinary talent took him all around the world. Despite his international success, Peter never lost touch with his roots, often reflecting on his small-town upbringing in his music. He wrote the quintessential Australian songs 'Tenterfield Saddler' and 'I Still Call Australia Home' as well as a dazzling entertainer known for his flamboyant persona. I've told neighbouring Northern Tablelands MP Brendan Moylan that we're claiming Peter Allen as a proud son of Tenterfield but we're happy to share him with Armidale. I'm thrilled that Peter's Northern Tablelands musical beginnings and his incredible contributions to Australia's cultural landscape will be honoured with this blue plaque in the region. His legacy is that of singer-songwriter burning with talent and charisma whose star shone brightly on the world stage but who never forgot where he came from. Chosen from 184 public nominations, these 16 new blue plaques announced this week join 49 blue plaques already announced.

### PITTWATER ARTISTS TRAIL

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—The Pittwater Artists Trail is a wonderful initiative that embodies the Pittwater community. Founded by Linda Haig 15 years ago, and now led by Jan Cristaudo and Karen Hick, this annual exhibition showcases the diverse talents of 20 local artists. Their work spans a variety of mediums, from abstract art and watercolours to ceramics and metal, ensuring the exhibition is both creatively diverse and engaging. This year, the Artists Trail has welcomed five new Pittwater artists to the lineup who are replacing those who have moved out of the area. The open studio event allows visitors to meet the artists in their own creative spaces throughout our beautiful electorate. Signs that are scattered around the electorate provide an artistic treasure hunt for visitors to discover studios tucked away under trees or in boat sheds by the water. A unique aspect of this event is its commitment to giving back; half of the proceeds from the sale of their silent auction artwork is donated to Be Centre, a local charity providing essential art therapy to children in need. I want to thank everyone involved for their passion and generosity in sharing their creativity with us.

### LAKESIDE FISH MARKET

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—I am pleased to recognise the Lakeside Fish Market, a true institution in our community. Since Philip Monteleone opened the doors 35 years ago in 1990, the market has been a staple of Narrabeen, providing both fresh and cooked seafood with exceptional service. Lakeside Fish Market has built a well-deserved reputation for quality and reliability with queues out the door! Philip and his team don't just serve the community through their fresh and cooked offerings, they also give back generously, sponsoring several local organisations that make a difference in our area. From the Pittwater RSL and Pittwater Bowling Club to the Narrabeen Football Club and North Narrabeen Surf Club, Lakeside Fish Market is deeply committed to supporting the groups that bring us together and enhance our community. On behalf of the people of Pittwater, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to Philip and the team at Lakeside Fish Market for their outstanding contributions over the last 35 years to both our local economy and community spirit.

**ROBYN HUTCHINSON**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—Robyn Hutchinson of Mona Vale has been with the Women's Reconciliation Network for 30 years and works closely with the local Aboriginal Support group, led by local elder Uncle Neil Evers. She was also a founding convenor of the Voice from the Heart Alliance, a national grassroots coalition of organisations and individuals supporting the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart. Despite the loss of the 2023 Voice Referendum, the Alliance and local groups continue to listen, amplify, connect and educate people on the importance of continuing the journey towards truth and reconciliation for First Nations peoples. I commend Robyn for her longstanding dedication to this important cause. Robyn is also a strong advocate for seniors, recently she pushed for fairness in retirement village and aged care contracts following the sudden closure of Wesley Taylor Village and Taylor Village in Narrabeen.

**BLINKY BILL PRE-SCHOOL**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Blinky Bill Pre-School has been awarded the Lithgow Service to the Community Award for their special program at Tabulam Aged Care in Portland. The Children from the Pre-School undertake regular visits to the aged care facility and engage with residents providing a much welcome level of social interaction which is enjoyed across generations. This is an activity which results in mutual benefits for both with young and old sharing activities together and developing relationships – bringing new energy, knowledge and enthusiasm to each other's lives. Creating early learning opportunities in a caring environment is an enriching pathway for all involved and I congratulate Blinky Bill Pre-School and the recognition they have been given through this award.

**BATHURST LIVING LEGEND GARTH DEAN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Congratulations to Garth Dean of Bathurst and the recognition he has received as a 2025 Bathurst Living Legend. Garth established the Calare Civil business in Bathurst in 1990 as a young structural engineer and has built an organisation which now employs 25 staff. From those grass beginnings and over a period of some 34 years the company has undertaken some 37,500 projects and is a reflection of the outstanding success of a regional business. Further community engagement by Garth has also been his involvement in coaching junior cricket at a local, zone and State levels and in 2023 he was awarded the NSW Country Coach of the Year. Garth Dean is a wonderful Citizen, one who has significantly contributed to his community at both a professional and personal level. I congratulate him on this prestigious acknowledgement and his most worthy induction as a Bathurst Living Legend.

**MAREE FARR**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—I extend my congratulations to Maree Farr who has been named as the Blayney Shire Australia Day Citizen of the Year. Maree is a very valued resident of Carcoar and has demonstrated unwavering dedication to supporting her community through her outstanding attributes of kindness and selflessness. Extending right across her community Maree reaches out to offer invaluable assistance to elderly residents through transport to shopping, appointments and assistance with the care of their homes when they are away and looking after their animals. Maree has demonstrated her willingness to support her fellow citizens and to always extend a helping hand to those in need. She is a wonderful and most worthy ambassador for her community and area. I commend Maree's endeavours and congratulate her on being recognised and acknowledged as the Blayney Shire Citizen of the Year.

**BRIAN PIPPEN**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—Brian Phippen has been volunteering in the Camden community for over sixty years. He is a long-term member of the Camden West Rural Fire Service, and not only participates in normal jobs required by the RFS, but will also maintain sheds and gardens on his weekends. During the last devastating floods, he worked day and night helping people to relocate, and to rebuild the Camden Sports Club. He also assists regularly at the annual Camden Show. On top of this, Brian is valued member of the Camden Men's Shed, who speak so highly of him. I thank Brian for all his service. He is an inspiration to the wider community.

**MOST BLESSED NIGHTS**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I rise to recognise Most Blessed Nights, a vibrant street food market hosted by Liverpool City Council that celebrates both Ramadan and Easter—two significant occasions for many in our diverse community. Held over five weekends, this free, family-friendly event brings together residents of all backgrounds to enjoy global street food, live entertainment, and a warm atmosphere of unity. It reflects the heart of Liverpool's multicultural identity—where people of different faiths and cultures come together in mutual respect and celebration. Most Blessed Nights honours the spiritual significance of Ramadan for our Muslim

community, while also embracing Easter traditions important to many Christian families. This inclusive celebration highlights how cultural and religious diversity can enrich our community and promote social harmony. I commend Liverpool City Council, council staff, stallholders, and volunteers for their commitment to fostering understanding, belonging, and togetherness through this wonderful initiative. Multiculturalism is not just a feature of Liverpool—it is its foundation and its future.

#### IFTAR EVENTS

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy)**—I rise to acknowledge the privilege of attending a number of Iftar dinners this Ramadan, each offering a powerful reminder of the strength and generosity of our Muslim community. From the Muslim Women's Welfare Australia Iftar to the Lakemba Branch of the Liberal Party Iftar, the joint AAM and ANIC Iftar, the NSW Government Iftar, and the Australian Muslim Youth League Iftar—each gathering has been a testament to the spirit of Ramadan: reflection, compassion, and community. These Iftars bring together people of all faiths and backgrounds to break bread, share stories, and strengthen the bonds that unite us. They are powerful demonstrations of inclusion and harmony in action. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the many community organisations, faith leaders, and volunteers who have opened their doors with warmth and hospitality. In a state as wonderfully diverse as New South Wales, events like these remind us that multiculturalism is not just something we respect—it's something we live. Ramadan Mubarak to all observing.

#### NORTHERN BEACHES RURAL FIRE SERVICE AWARDS

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 11 March 2025, the Northern Beaches District of the NSW Rural Fire Service held an Awards Presentation for National Medals and Long Service Medals at the Northern Beaches Headquarters Station. I recognise Commissioner Rob Rogers AFSM and Deputy Commissioner Kyle Stewart APM for their leadership and unwavering support of the RFS. It was an honour to attend and congratulate the dedicated volunteers of the RFS that includes the 15 years National Medal to Piers Hemphill and Timothy Eliot; 25 years National Medal 1st Clasp to Brian Geach, Fred Hijazi, Jamie Horsfield, Matthew Creagh, Colin Brooker and Trent Dowling; 45 years National Medal 3rd Clasp to Kenneth Hughes; 55 years National Medal 4th Clasp to Christopher Ballantine; 30 years Long Service Medal 1st & 2nd Clasp to Noel Kessel; 40 years Long Service Medal 3rd Class to Peter Devaney. Thank you to all volunteers dedicated to the safety of our community. I am proud to recognise their committed service in the Parliament of NSW and will continue to eagerly support the Northern Beaches RFS.

#### DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY BISHOP'S BREAKFAST 2025

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise the Bishop of Broken Bay Catholic Diocese Most Rev Anthony Randazzo for organising the fourth annual Broken Bay Bishop's Breakfast. The breakfast helps bring together leaders from business, social services, healthcare, politics, education, and the wider community. Bringing us together remind us of the strength found in unity and community. In 2025, the breakfast takes place during the Holy Jubilee Year, a once-in-25-year event designated by Pope Francis. The theme for 2025 is "Hope". I recognise guest speaker Barnaby Howarth, who shared his powerful and moving story of hope. He is a former Sydney Swans player that overcame a stroke following an unprovoked attack at age 25, later losing his wife to cancer. It is heartbreaking, but it is through his faith he keeps the memories and hope alive. I also recognise the Davidson electorate parishes of Frenchs Forest, Killara-Lindfield, and St Ives; as well as Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School St Ives, Holy Family Catholic Primary School Lindfield and St Martin's Catholic Primary School Davidson. I am proud to represent you and the Diocese of Broken Bay in the Parliament of NSW.

#### ANDREW TAYLOR AND IMOGEN TAYLOR: BONDI TO BARRENJOEY WALK

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On the weekend of 22-23 February 2025, Andrew Taylor and Imogen Taylor walked over 20km between Bondi Beach to Barrenjoey Lighthouse to raise funds for the Sydney Football Club (FC) Foundation. This event supports mental health and wellbeing education for over 1,500 adults and young people with a disability who participate in the Sydney FC Empowers Me programs. It also assists families, carers and support networks. Sadly, statistics show people with a disability are more likely to have a mental health illness. Our community is fortunate to have generous individuals like Andrew and Imogen who lead by example, support our most vulnerable and strive to make a positive difference.

#### CASS LUNAR NEW YEAR

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I acknowledge CASS and its invaluable contributions to our multicultural community, including through its Lunar New Year celebrations. Founded in 1981 CASS has grown into a vital organisation providing services in aged care, disability support, childcare, settlement and health to over 7,000 families each week. With a dedicated team of more than 800 staff and 350 volunteers CASS continues to make a significant impact on the lives of many. I was pleased to join the Chatswood Activity Group's Lunar New Year celebration marking the Year of the Snake. These events bring people together fostering inclusivity

and strengthening community ties. It was a privilege to take part in the festivities and share in the joy of the occasion with local residents and community leaders. I commend the leadership of CASS including Dr Leng Tan, Mr Anthony Pang OAM and the many staff and volunteers who ensure the success of these initiatives. Their dedication enriches our community and I look forward to seeing their continued work in the years ahead.

#### **NORTHERN SYDNEY WELLBEING COLLABORATIVE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The launch of the Northern Sydney Wellbeing Collaborative by the Sydney North Health Network is an important initiative bringing together leaders from government, business, philanthropy, community and university sectors to improve primary care and community wellbeing. The Collaborative's approach focuses on prevention-based healthcare, reducing hospital admissions and enhancing the overall health and wellbeing of people across Northern Sydney. By working together, this initiative aims to bridge the gap between lifespan and health span, ensuring more people live longer in good health. I was pleased to attend the launch event and hear from experts including Dr JR Baker, Nick Goodwin, Annie Elias, Luigi Fontana, Fay Jackson and Karyn Walsh. Their insights reinforced the need for integrated care and proactive health strategies that put communities at the centre of decision-making. I commend Kevin Barrow and the Sydney North Health Network for their leadership in driving these important reforms. Their commitment to better health, better care and stronger communities is making a real difference, and I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes of this initiative.

#### **WILLOUGHBY SENIORS MORNING TEA 2025**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Willoughby Seniors Morning Tea is always a highlight and this year was no exception as we marked the NSW Seniors Festival. Our local senior community came together to celebrate, connect and enjoy a morning of camaraderie. Seniors play a vital role in our community, contributing their wisdom, experience and ongoing involvement in local organisations, volunteer groups and family life. Events like this provide an opportunity to recognise their contributions, share stories and ensure they feel valued and supported. The morning tea was a fantastic occasion, with lively conversation, engagement and a strong sense of community spirit. It was heartening to see so many familiar faces and to welcome new attendees. I extend my gratitude to all those who helped organise this event, including the volunteers and community groups who made it possible as well as my staff. Their efforts ensure that our seniors remain connected and engaged in Willoughby's vibrant community. I look forward to continuing to support and advocate for our senior residents, ensuring they have the services, activities and recognition they deserve.

#### **BARCO DOG TRAINING**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise BARCO Dog Training for their valuable contribution to our community and their pets. As a dedicated not-for-profit dog training service, BARCO continue to play a vital role in promoting and facilitating responsible dog ownership through a selection of accessible classes. Through the unwavering commitment of highly experienced trainers Jenny Garrett, Leonie Davis, Cindy Squires and Virginia Beavis, who volunteer their time each weekend, BARCO enables community members to build strong connections with their pets, while also advocating for safety in our neighbourhoods. Their efforts, and those of BARCO President Chris Parker and Tim Parker, are a true testament to the value of community-driven initiatives, as well as the importance of responsible and knowledgeable pet ownership. A big thank you to BARCO for being such a great resource in our community. Keep up the great work.

#### **BYRON BAY ANGLING CLUB - SUPPORTING LOCAL FAMILIES**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—I would like to recognise the Byron Bay Angling Club for their generosity and community spirit in supporting children with chronic illness across the Northern Rivers. The club recently donated \$5,000 to the Our Kids Charity, an organisation dedicated to funding paediatric equipment for hospitals throughout the Northern Rivers. The funds, raised through raffles will provide homecoming care packages for children who have endured extended hospital stays -some lasting up to two years. These care packages, worth \$1,000 each, help families ease the financial burden of returning home, providing vouchers for essentials such as fuel, groceries, clothing and a special gift for the child. This initiative ensures that local families know their community stands with them in challenging times. Since its founding in 2001, Our Kids has raised \$2.7 million for vital paediatric equipment, demonstrating the power of grassroots generosity. The Byron Bay Angling Club's contribution is a testament to the kindness and generosity of our local community. I commend President Trevor Mead and the Byron Bay Angling Club for their outstanding commitment to making a difference for families in need.

#### **QANTAS AUSTRALIAN TOURISM AWARDS**

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—The Tweed has triumphed at the Qantas Australian Tourism Awards held last week, with three accolades coming home to the Tweed. The Tweed Tourism Company was awarded

gold in the Tourism Marketing and Campaigns category, a wonderful achievement for this hard-working and successful organisation. The Northern Rivers Rail Trail was awarded Silver in the Tourist Attractions just two years after opening. And Potager – A Kitchen Garden in Carool received bronze in the Tourism Restaurants and Catering Services category, another prestigious award win for this celebrated Tweed restaurant. The Qantas Australian Tourism Awards, now in their 40th year, celebrate excellence across the industry, with finalists from every state and territory competing for top honours. Congratulations to the three Tweed award winners.

#### LIAM BRIAN

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—**Charmhaven resident Liam Brian is acknowledged for his brave act in saving the lives of two men caught in a rip off Catherine Hill Bay Beach. December 2018, just at the age of 18, Mr Brian saw his friend struggling against the rough waves. When Brian attended his friend, he saw two men jump off the pier and they were caught in a rip. Mr Brian approached the elderly man and his nephew in the water and brought them both back to shore. This traumatic event arose challenges for Mr Brian especially in the first year. His bravery in the face of extraordinary circumstances exemplifies the highest qualities of selflessness and compassion. By acting on the impulse to assist two people in need, he not only demonstrated remarkable courage but also inspired others with his willingness to put himself at risk for the sake of another. Such noble actions embody the spirit of community, and his recognition is a testament to the profound impact one individual can have in times of crisis. Thank you for being a beacon of hope and resilience. Governor-General Sam Mostyn will officially commend Mr Brian for brave conduct.

#### HARMONY WEEK

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)—**Harmony Week (17th to 23rd March) is a time to celebrate the harmonious convergence of cultures we have in New South Wales. It is a reminder to continue to welcome the cultural contributions of people of diverse backgrounds who call Australia home. I'm proud to represent one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse electorates in the state. I am continually delighted to see such a harmonious confluence of cultures around Parramatta, contributing to the rich character of the electorate. Cultural and faith celebrations across Parramatta included Nowruz, the celebration of the Persian New Year, featuring Persian buffets and dance; the Christian observation of Lent, facilitated by churches across Parramatta; the Muslim observation of Ramadan, with prayer services and Iftars hosted at home and in local restaurants. Schools and local organisations celebrated with a wide range of activities including Frangipani House. Operated by One Door Mental Health, Jack, Valerie and the team support adults from across Western Sydney, providing them a safe place to go and socialise, be creative, and not be judged. On Harmony Day I was invited to talk about this year's theme, Everyone Belongs - and that's exactly what it is like at Frangipani House.

#### RED MASS AT ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—**The Red Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral Parramatta has been held annually since 2019 to mark the beginning of the legal year. The Mass on Monday 3 February was an opportunity for legal and judicial professionals, law students and government representatives, including the NSW Attorney General, Michael Daley MP and Hugh McDermott MP, to come together in a service of thanks. This tradition has continued since the early Middle Ages. Parramatta has a significant legal precinct including prosecutor's offices, law firms, barristers' chambers, Local and District Court of NSW, Drug Court of NSW, Children's Court of NSW along with the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia. I enjoyed attending the mass where I had the honour of delivering a reading. Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv reflected that, "We pray that the administration of justice that you have been entrusted with may serve the common good and bring about a more just and compassionate society." Thanks to Rebecca Hegarty, President of the Parramatta and District Regional Law Society for coordinating the event along with the St Thomas More Society - a fellowship of lawyers inspired by the example of St Thomas More (1478-1535).

#### CATHERINE MACAULEY INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY ASSEMBLY

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—**It was a pleasure to represent the Deputy Premier at Catherine MacAuley Westmead's International Women's Day Assembly. International Women's Day is an important opportunity to reach out to the young women who will become tomorrow's leaders. It was great to join with the student community to speak about my experiences, the importance of school years to explore their potential, and recognise celebrated educators alongside the former school Vice-Captain of the Class of 1982, Melissa Doueihy. Congratulations to Indira Fernandez, who worked for 50 years as a Visual Arts Teacher, Elizabeth Newman, for 22 years across English and Drama studies, Martin Lennon, for 22 years across multiple disciplines and Marina Kazzi, for 28 years across multiple roles. This year's International Women's Day theme, 'Accelerate Action',

emphasizes the importance of taking action toward gender equality, which includes providing access to quality education and training to support women in their future career paths, whatever industry that may be. Catherine MacAuley is certainly taking action, and it was a delight to celebrate International Women's Day with the strong female tradespeople, artists, scientists, mathematicians and maybe even a few politicians of the future.

#### **JONNO EVERETT AND HANNAH CHEETHAM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—A huge congratulations to Novocastrian creators Jonno Everett (Everett Creative) and Hannah Cheetham (Built-In-Kind) for the feature of their work 'Morphology' in this year's prestigious Enlighten Festival program. Following Morphology's outstanding debut in last year's New Annual Festival, Morphology was selected to exhibit at on the forecourt of the High Court of Australia in Canberra earlier this month. The innovative sculpture was made by Jonno and Hannah in collaboration with 180 community at the iconic Soap Factory. Crafted from hundreds of discarded items of furniture, the work has received critical acclaim for its reflection on the emotional significance of everyday items once common in Australian homes. Jonno and Hannah's success is a testament to their passion and leadership in ensuring the arts remain an integral part of life in Newcastle, and I thank them for their commitment to our community.

#### **"COOKED" FILM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—A huge congratulations to local writer and film maker Cameron Utiger for the upcoming debut of his coming-of-age comedy 'Cooked'. The highly anticipated film follows a group of school friends as they navigate quintessential teenage experiences, exploring themes of friendship, regret, hope, and hangovers. Filmed and produced in Newcastle, Cooked features several iconic local sites, including the Obelisk, Newcastle Beach, The Hill, Newcastle Foreshore, Nobby's Beach, the Grand Hotel, Bar Beach, and even his parents' house in The Junction! The film will premiere at Event Cinema's Kotara on March 27 before being released to Amazon Prime Video, Google Play and Apple TV+ next month. Cooked not only captures the essence of Newcastle, but reflects Cameron's own grit and resilience, and I can't wait to see our city come to life on the screen!

#### **ST MARYS SAINTS RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—We proudly celebrate 117 years of St Marys Saints Rugby League Club, showing the club's steadfast dedication to the sport and the community. Saints have been privileged to host rugby league legends such as Mark Geyer, John Cartwright, Jerome Luai, and Brian To'o, who left lasting imprints that are still being felt. The club has a record 67 teams to date, which is a testament to the strong foundation Saints have established over a century. The growth says a lot about the passion, collaboration, and commitment infused in the players, coaches, and supporters. As we celebrate 117 years, we salute not just the club's great tradition, but the sense of community it continues to foster so powerfully. Congratulations to the Saints on their magnificent success. We wish you many more years of success, pride, and service to our local rugby league community. Good luck to the Saints—a great club with a wonderful future ahead!

#### **MORGAN COFFEE, EQUINE SPORTS**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—It is a sheer honour to recognise Agnes Banks pupil Morgan Coffey as she begins the ride of a lifetime, representing Pony Club Australia in a world showjumping competition in China. Morgan's determination, talent, and passion for equine sports have already brought her successive State Showjumping championships and numerous other accolades, and now she receives the wonderful opportunity to represent Australia on the world stage. To ride a foreign country, on a borrowed horse, is no simple task, but Morgan's tenacity and hard work have set her up for this exciting challenge. Her success is testament to the unrelenting perseverance of her family, trainers, and Pony Club network, who have devoted themselves to building her into the model athlete she is today. Morgan, your community is proud of you. Everybody wishes you all the best in China. This is hopefully the first of many more international victories to come!

#### **WSU FOOD DRIVE**

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney)**—It is an honour to recognise the commitment and philanthropy that has been behind Western Sydney University's food Security initiatives, and most of all the re-opening of the Western Sydney Pantry on the Kingswood Campus. The Dedication and hygiene products are remarkable. A huge thank you to the Food Security and Student Community team, student volunteers, community partners, and Chaplains for all the hard work they have done to provide thousands of meals and groceries to vulnerable students. Your efforts not only impact student wellbeing but also contribute to a sense of community and belonging. Special appreciation to the local farms and organizations that provide fresh fruits and vegetables, your kindness makes

this program sustainable and successful. This project demonstrates the power of collaboration in creating a compassionate and diverse university community. Congratulations to all of those involved, your efforts are truly making a difference to students' lives!

### **2025 DOMREMY LEADERS**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge two newly appointed student leaders of Domremy College in Five Dock. This year, Domremy College has introduced two new student Houses to cater for the College's continued growth, creating further opportunities for students to develop their leadership skills and engage with the school community. Joseph House has been named in honour of the Presentation Sisters and Mother Joseph Dunne, the Foundress of Domremy College. Siena House has been named in honour of St Catherine of Siena and encourages students to embody the spirit and example of St Catherine. I wish to sincerely congratulate the inaugural House Captains of Joseph and Siena, Georgia Kelly and Mia Di Giacomo on their appointments. I recognise Georgia and Mia for their achievements. It is a true honour to represent your peers as a student leader and I trust these young women will set an outstanding example for their colour houses and for future House Captains. I know that the examples and values of Mother Joseph Dunne and St Catherine will help to guide them. Congratulations Georgia and Mia. I look forward to seeing the work you will achieve for the school community.

### **CARMELA LAMACCHIA**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to warmly congratulate my local constituent Mrs Carmela LaMacchia of Chiswick who is celebrating her 100th Birthday today, 25 March 2025. I sincerely wish Carmela all the very best of this very special occasion. I hope that she has a lovely time celebrating this special milestone. I know Carmela will be celebrating her 100th Birthday this Sunday 30 March, surrounded by her family and loved ones, including her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. I am sure it will be a joyous day remembering a century of memories she has made. I sincerely wish Carmela a Happy 100th Birthday and congratulate her on this significant milestone. On behalf of our local community, I extend my best wishes to Carmela and her family. Auguri!

### **PAUL PETTENON**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I wish to congratulate a local constituent, Mr Paul Pettenon, on his contributions to the community and his work in local real estate. This year marks Paul's 30th Anniversary at Raine & Horne Concord/Strathfield. As Principal, he has grown and led the business to employ over 30 staff, who are mostly locals. Over the past 30 years, Paul has built a strong connection with the local community. He was recently named the recipient of the Chairman's Club Salespeople Award, in recognition of his professionalism, hard work, and dedication. Paul is also a longtime member and Board Committee Member of the Majors Bay Chamber of Commerce which supports local businesses in the 2137 postcode and supports the promotion of Majors Bay Road in Concord through various events and activities. I sincerely congratulate Paul for his achievements and wish him all the very best.

### **ANGELA MONKMAN**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I acknowledge the resilience and tenacity of a member of our local community, Angela Monkman. Angela is a HomesNSW tenant who has had a rough time of it recently, as her property suffered with recurrent leaks, mould and rot. No one should have to live in conditions like that, and Angela was determined to find a more suitable place to live for the safety and health of her family. It took a mighty long time, and a lot of work, but Angela was able to secure her transfer and she and her family are now settling into their new home. My team and I are absolutely thrilled at this resolution. Angela's story tells us a lot about the work we need to do to support members of our community, to help them find and maintain their resilience and to ensure that everyone has the dignity of a safe home. I thank the sustaining tenancies team at HomesNSW and Tim Ftouh at NEAMI for their help in this process. Most of all I thank Angela for not giving up.

### **BALMAIN BIKE BUS**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I would like to acknowledge the success of a great community initiative, the Balmain Bike Bus. Put together by the Sustainable Transport Group at Climate Change Balmain-Rozelle, the Bike Bus organises riders to travel together from Balmain into the city by bike. It is a fantastic way to encourage less confident riders to make the switch from car-centric travel to active transport. Cycling is one of the best ways to get around whilst staying active. We all know that encouraging people to make part of their journey via active transport has great results for health and for our environment, which is why I am so grateful for the efforts of the Balmain Bike Bus. I had a great ride with the Bike Bus earlier this month and can report that my commute to Parliament or to the Electorate Office is often quicker by bike than by car. I would like

to thank Rebecca and the Sustainable Transport group from Climate-Change Balmain-Rozelle for getting this initiative started. I hope to join you again soon.

#### **ST VINCENT'S COLLEGE ASHFIELD, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I'd like to acknowledge St Vincent's College in Ashfield, who recently hosted a special assembly to celebrate International Women's Day. I was honoured to be able to join the Q&A panel on the day, alongside Eleni Zacharia and Kimberley Gago. I was deeply impressed by the student's insight in our discussions and their commitment to advancing the cause of women's rights and making the world a more equal place. This is in keeping with the theme of International Women's Day 2025, Accelerate Action, which serves as a powerful reminder to take bold steps toward achieving gender equality. I am very grateful for the opportunity to talk to so many young people about the importance of this commitment. I would like to thank the staff at St Vincent's College, the members of the senior rock band 'Heatstroke' for their performance and, most of all, the students who made this event so meaningful. I trust that the intelligent and engaged young people I had the pleasure of talking to will ensure that the future is in safe hands.

#### **MS LAUREN KERJAN**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker— I wish to congratulate Lane Cove's own Ms Lauren Kerjan on her extraordinary achievement at the 2025 Special Olympics World Winter Games in Turin, Italy. Lauren's gold-medal performance in the Intermediate Super G event, completed in a swift 51.67 seconds, is a powerful testament to her determination, discipline, and sporting excellence. A familiar face in our community, Lauren's success is not only a personal triumph but also a proud moment for Lane Cove and NSW as a whole. Her efforts shine as a beacon of inspiration for young athletes everywhere, particularly those living with intellectual disabilities. I commend Lauren, her coaches, and her family for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout her journey.

#### **LANE COVE TOY LIBRARY**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker— I commend the Lane Cove Toy Library for its innovative pilot program offering meaningful volunteer work opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Partnering with Luz All Abilities and Omnia Inclusive Employment Solutions, the program enables participants to develop valuable skills and contribute meaningfully to community life. I extend my gratitude to the volunteers, program partners, and Toy Library committee members for their vision and commitment. Their leadership sets a powerful example of what community support looks like in action.

#### **CELEBRATION OF HOLI, THE FESTIVAL OF COLOURS**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker— I wish to acknowledge the celebration of Holi, the Festival of Colours, held on 14 March at The Canopy in Lane Cove. This vibrant cultural event, attended by more than 800 residents, brought together families and individuals from across the community to celebrate the values of unity, renewal, and cultural diversity. The performances by the Ruchi Sanghi Dance Company and students from local schools enlivened the atmosphere, showcasing the strength of our multicultural fabric. I commend all organisers and volunteers involved for their dedication to fostering inclusiveness and cross-cultural appreciation. Events like these deepen our understanding of one another and reaffirm the enduring spirit of community in Lane Cove.

#### **LA CARRETTA ITALIAN RESTAURANT**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I recognise Liz and Nick Nardo for providing wonderful family friendly service and great Italian food to the communities of Cherrybrook and West Pennant Hills. It was about 36 years ago that Liz and Nick commenced business trading as La Carretta Italian Restaurant at the Cherrybrook Shopping Village. In 2018 they relocated the restaurant to West Pennant Hills. Over the years La Carretta has become more than just a restaurant, it has become a place where friends gather, countless memories have been made, whilst enjoying some great food. The friendly staff, great service and wonderful Italian food has always meant that La Carretta was a true favourite restaurant for everyone. Over the years Liz and Nick's daughters, Natalie, Amanda, and Laura have worked in the family friendly restaurant. Liz and Nick have recently sold the restaurant to new owners who will no doubt continue the legacy of great service and wonderful food. We wish Liz, Nick, and their entire family the very best as they enter the next chapter of their lives.

#### **ZONTA CLUB OF SYDNEY, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY BREAKFAST**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise and congratulate the Zonta Club of Sydney Hills for hosting an inspiring and thought-provoking International Women's Day breakfast on 7 March 2025. The breakfast was hosted to highlight and recognise the importance of Zonta's work in ensuring that women have access to economic opportunities, health and well-being, and participation in the community. The breakfast

provided the opportunity to hear from an inspirational speaker including Associate Professor Dr. Kate Patterson and Inika Narayan. Inika was selected to be the observer representative for Zonta International Youth for the United Nations 69th Commission on the Status of Woman (CSW) held in New York between 10 March 2025 and 21 March 2025. Inika described Zonta International as an amazing organisation which uplifts and motivates young women to continue to embrace commitment to volunteering and service. I express my appreciation to President Brenda Bradbury and to all members of the Zonta Club of Sydney Hills for your tireless efforts to support International Women's Day.

#### **THE ROTARY CLUB OF CASTLE HILL AWARDS**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to inform the house of some wonderful awards which were bestowed on very worthy Rotarians recently. The Castle Hill Rotary Club held its 60th anniversary Gala Dinner on 7 March 2025 at Rydges Hotel, Norwest. I have spoken previously about the Gala Dinner. I have also spoken about the dedication and service of members of the Rotary Clubs within my electorate. It would be remiss of me to not acknowledge those who received awards at the recent Gala Dinner. I acknowledge and congratulate the following award recipients: Terry O'Mara who received the Legacy of Service Award; Phil Dunn who received the Community Champion Awards; Natasha Nugent who received the Rising Star Award; Nicola Fox who received the Innovation in Service Award; Ubah Gabric who received the Youth Engagement Award; Mike Blair OAM who received the Community Engagement Award; John Piperata and Will Musso who received the Rotary Family Award; Lisa Pelayo who received the Club Service Above Self Award; and finally Hannibal Shabz who received the Lifetime Achievement in Service Award. I acknowledge, recognise, and extend my appreciation to all Rotarians for your service to our community.

#### **AMAYA CROSS**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge Amaya Cross, a talented young swimmer from Wallabi Point and Manning River Times-Iguana Sportstar of the Week. At just 14 years of age, Amaya delivered an outstanding performance at the NSW Country Regional Championships held at Manning Aquatic Leisure Centre, winning four gold medals across multiple events. She also secured silver in three races. Amaya's dedication to swimming is evident in her training, and her success goes beyond the pool. Having only recently taken up surf lifesaving, she has already achieved podium finishes at the NSW Country Championships representing Black Head. With upcoming events at Sydney Olympic Park and later at Nationals in Brisbane, Amaya continues to pursue excellence in her sport. I congratulate her on her achievements so far and wish her all the best in the competitions ahead.

#### **BROOKE SMITH**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge Brooke Smith, the recipient of the Pride of Workmanship Award at the Wingham Rotary Australia Day ceremony. Brooke is the owner of Beautique on Bella Skin Clinic, a business that has been recognised for excellence in both Health and Wellbeing and Best Personal Service categories at the Mid North Coast Business Awards. Her clinic's reputation speaks to her skill and expertise in the field. Brooke also supports high school student placements, offering young people valuable opportunities to explore career pathways. In 2024, she expanded her business by opening a second clinic in Taree, further contributing to the local economy. It's a privilege to celebrate Brooke's achievements and the positive impact she continues to have on our community. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition Brooke.

#### **RAY WAKELING**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Ray Wakeling, a volunteer with Forster Tuncurry Marine Rescue. For five years, Ray has worked from the radio tower atop the Forster Tuncurry break wall, ensuring the safety of boaties on our waters. Ray's volunteering began long before his move to Forster. After retiring from a successful career in South Australia, he was drawn to the water and joined Marine Rescue. He quickly became a respected radio operator and trainer, always ready to lend a hand at the Tuncurry Markets. Ray recently became the first coxswain-restricted crew member in Marine Rescue NSW, a significant achievement. He is now qualified to navigate, operate radar, tow vessels, and provide first aid when out on the water - skills that are invaluable given the isolation of our waterways. Ray continues to give his time to the community and making Forster Tuncurry a safer place for all who enjoy the water.

#### **BEACH VOLLEYBALL IN COOTAMUNDRA!**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—A big beach weekend in Cootamundra saw 3,000 people descend on the town for the annual Coota Beach Volleyball. 900 tonnes of sand, found their way to Murray Street which created "Coota Beach". Council staff and volunteers created 10 volleyball courts, installed crowd seating and ensured safety for players and spectators alike. The weekend kicked off on Friday for the All-Schools Beach

Volleyball Carnival with over 600 students from schools across the region participating. Saturday saw 193 teams compete over the two-day carnival with the A Grade being won by the Wagga Startts and Blazing AMG winning the reserves. Graeme Sloan, CEO for Adina Care and his volunteers are to be congratulated for another amazing event. I must also recognise the added financial boost for the town's businesses this event brings. Energetic fun in the sun with lots of sand, laughs and friendships were the order of the day for the Coota Beach Volleyball. I invite you all to next year's Coota Beach.

#### **YOUNG GARDEN CLUB**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations and sincere gratitude to the Young Garden Club for their ongoing dedication to fundraising and their unwavering efforts to support the youth in our community. Recently, the club generously donated \$2,500 to both the Boys to the Bush and the Young Army Cadets. Representatives from each organisation were present to accept these donations. These funds were raised through a highly successful raffle held just before Christmas 2024. The annual raffle is a key part of the Young Garden Club's commitment to community involvement, and this year's event enabled them to make such a significant contribution. A special thank you goes to Bunnings in Young for their generous donations of all the raffle prizes. This donation is yet another example of this wonderful group, punching well above their weight, and making a real impact on the community and especially young people in and around the town of Young.

#### **VALE JAMES HARRISON, OAM**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Mr James Harrison, affectionately known as the "Man with the Golden Arm," leaves behind an extraordinary legacy of selflessness and generosity. A tireless blood donor from Junee, Mr Harrison dedicated 64 years of his life to saving others, donating blood and plasma 1,173 times. Mr Harrison's blood contained a rare and life-saving antibody, Anti-D, which played a crucial role in preventing haemolytic disease of the foetus and newborn, saving over 2.4 million babies' lives. Mr Harrison's dedication to giving, despite personal health challenges, inspired countless Australians to follow his example. Awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 1999, Mr Harrison remained humble, always attributing his achievements to the collective efforts of all donors. His legacy is not only a reminder of the power of community and selfless giving but also continues to impact future generations through research projects aimed at producing his rare antibody synthetically. Vale Mr Harrison, our thoughts and prayers are with your family and loved ones, your spirit of compassion will live on forever.

#### **ROTARY CLUB OF GERRINGONG**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the Rotary Club of Gerringong. A few weeks ago, Gerringong Rotarians were treated to an armchair expedition to Antarctica, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands, courtesy of member Andrejs Medenis, who presented a slide show of his recent cruise. He set off from Ushuaia in the very south of Argentina, snuggled between the Andes and the Beagle Channel. Ushuaia claims to be the southernmost city in the world. It has a 10,000 year indigenous history. Wild weather caused a change in route, with the ship visiting the Falklands and South Georgia before heading across to Antarctica. South Georgia has an incredible history of sealers, whalers and explorers. Visitors were not allowed to venture closer than 200 metres to deserted whaling stations, due to the danger of loose materials and asbestos, apart from in the administrative capital, Grytviken, where they visited the small township's museum. After several days at sea the ship reached the South Shetland Islands, part of Antarctica. Choosing to explore by kayak, Andrejs paddled through sea ice. A retired vet, Andrejs loved the wildlife, photographing numerous species of penguins and seals.

#### **KIAMA-JAMBEROO RSL SUB-BRANCH**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub-Branch who are launching a Veterans' Assistance Centre at its hall on Allowrie Street, Jamberoo. Starting on Saturday, 5th April 2025, the centre will be open on the first Saturday of each month from 9am to 12pm, providing free support and advice for veterans and their families. RSL member and veteran Craig "Clarry" Claridge, a highly qualified Wellbeing Support Officer, will be available for consultations. A former Chief Petty Officer Medic with expertise in remote healthcare, Clarry has served with the Royal Australian Navy, Queensland Ambulance Service, and on international operations. For over a decade, he has dedicated himself to supporting veterans and their families in the Illawarra region, helping them access essential services. Craig and his wife, Danielle, also run Better Planning, a Wollongong-based NDIS company, offering free assistance to veterans and their families navigating the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The centre will provide Justice of the Peace services and a welcoming space for veterans to drop in for a chat over a cup of tea or coffee. For more information, contact Kiama-Jamberoo RSL Sub-Branch President Gary McKay.

### YERRINBOOL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Residents of Yerrinbool have access to a new public toilet, which was officially opened in early February. The accessible facility is located at M. F. Vickers Memorial Park, and was welcomed by Yerrinbool residents, including the Yerrinbool Village Collective who were active in engaging with Wingecarribee Shire Council throughout the consultation process. Their advocacy ensured that the views of the small and tight knit village residents were reflected in the final design and location. The location chosen is situated at the well kept and peaceful Memorial Park, a convenient distance from the Sunset Drive Playground and the Yerrinbool Railway Station. Facilities such as these make a positive impact on people visiting the parks, playground and railway station, and provide convenience, safety and peace of mind for those who are out and about enjoying all our small and characterful villages have to offer. Thank you to Wingecarribee Shire council for providing this facility, and to the Yerrinbool Village Collective for your consistent efforts in advocating for your village needs and ensuring that Yerrinbool retains its community spirit.

### MARJO HALLOWELL

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Of Marjo Hollowell, it was written in Good Morning Macarthur that ‘you name it, she’s done it’. She has been a journalist, a historian, a volunteer, and a community advocate. Now, we can add ‘individual community champion’ to Marjo’s list of honours. On 6 February this year, Marjo was awarded the Clean Up Australia Individual Community Champion Award at Parliament House in Canberra. This is well-deserved recognition for her efforts to clean up Australia and to ensure that the beautification of the Southern Highlands continues for future generations. Of this honour, Marjo writes that she was ‘honoured and humbled’ when she received the award. She is thankful to Ian Kiernan for starting this initiative and to Pip Kiernan for continuing it. Marjo is inspired by the stories of the past and is confident in the future of Clean Up Australia. Congratulations, Marjo, and thank you for your continued service to our community.

### MITTAGONG PRESCHOOL WINS GRANTS

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Mittagong Preschool Kindergarten Inc. has been awarded two grants through the NSW Government’s Early Childhood Education and Care Flexible Initiatives Trial Round 2. One grant will allow the preschool to extend their opening hours, and the second grant increases the licensed places by 3. This will allow the preschool to increase access for local families, addressing the needs of the area and giving more children the benefit of the preschool experience before starting primary school. Mittagong Preschool is a not-for-profit community preschool established in 1976, with Pauline Lacono as Director leading a team of enthusiastic and dedicated teachers and staff. Pauline has been involved in the preschool for over 30 years and has seen many of the second generation of families return, a testament to the longevity and excellence of this community based preschool. The focus on creating an environment in which children can thrive is further enhanced by an active and engaged Parent Committee. Thanks to the funding, more children will be able to access the preschool program, and I congratulate the Preschool on these insightful initiatives.

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