

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday 27 March 2025

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

Bills

ROADS AMENDMENT (WILDLIFE IMPACTS) BILL 2024

Second Reading Speech

Debate resumed from 20 March 2025.

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (10:17): I continue my second reading speech on the Roads Amendment (Wildlife Impacts) Bill 2024. We know from the latest data that we will face some very tough decisions when it comes to protecting wildlife. Climate scientists are telling us that we have locked in a minimum of three degrees of warming. Last year and the year before defied all predictions, and we are in a time when we do not know what we have already baked in. The clash between what we need—homes for people and ecologically sustainable development—and what it does to our wildlife when we do not have the environment front and centre is devastating. As I said earlier in my speech, about 10 million animals will be affected each year.

I thank the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport, for meeting with me in the past week and engaging in a really positive way. I have great respect for her; I think we came to this place at the same time. Without verballing her, I am confident that we can work together to focus on wildlife strikes and ways that communities can record that data and give it to Transport for NSW. It is citizen science, even though it is a bit grim. It would also be very useful to include wildlife strike data in speed zone reviews.

I look forward to working with Minister Aitchison on those two things.

In combination with habitat loss and a changing climate, the NRMA's *Wildlife Road Safety* report 2022 highlights that, beyond vehicle damage, the societal costs across the system of all road incidents is about \$7 billion a year. In addition to the financial costs and the obvious impact on wildlife, this issue also has an impact on tourism. It is a cause for celebration in my community that we have a burgeoning tourism industry. However, with such a low rate base, we struggle to pay for the 2½ million tourist visits to our region each year. It is a constant battle. We now have a 60-day cap on short-term rental accommodation, which I am told is very successful.

Yesterday I spoke with the Minister for the Environment and the Minister for Roads. I said that we know the major parties do not like taxes, but wouldn't it be amazing if there was a bed levy or tourism levy? It could be called an environmental levy, and that money could be used to support conservation and environmental protection and provide greater social infrastructure in my region. Wildlife strikes impact tourism and also impact agriculture and ecosystems. We cannot afford to remain complacent any longer when it comes to properly considering the impact of our roadways on our native animals. From my conversations with the Minister and from my experiences with Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services prior to it, which I had a lot to do with during the Pacific Highway upgrade, I know that they take the impact on wildlife seriously. However, we do not see a real understanding of mitigation measures and whether they are successful. This breeds cynicism in the community, which I will come back to in a moment.

We know that threats to our wildlife are accelerating. In the past five years, in my electorate alone we have seen increasing and rolling disasters, including fires, multiple floods, drought and then the recent cyclonic event. Those disasters have absolutely had an impact on our wildlife, and I give a huge shout-out to everyone in the Northern Rivers wildlife network. The M1 opened again on the Monday and, as soon as they were able to, the wildlife carers and incredible volunteers in my community were up and at it. They knew that the impact of the storm event on wildlife was going to be significant. We see that every time.

Along with climate-related disasters, there has also been a sharp increase in the number of wildlife deaths. I keep saying that, but I have to emphasise it. Whilst we face an extinction crisis on one hand, we have an increase in wildlife strikes on the other. It is not a good combination. The connection between our developments and that impacts is not mysterious. I acknowledge some of the incredible organisations in my electorate that are doing everything they can to care for native wildlife injured on our roads. I believe that every member of this place regards all of their wildlife carers highly, including the vets that volunteer their time to care for wildlife—because, let's face it, there is no profit in rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife. It is also important to put on record the trauma that is felt not just by passersby or the person who has hit a koala but by the whole community. It is also extremely traumatic for the wildlife carers and vets.

It is important to note that 95 per cent of the conservation effort is conducted by volunteers. To that end, I express my deepest gratitude to the organisations and individuals who have taken the time to consult with me and my office about the amendments in the bill. Dr Colin Salter from WIRES was a wealth of information. I thank the incredible teams at both the Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital and the Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital. I thank Annette McKinley and Claire Oelrichs from the Conservation Ecologists Association and Shaunti Kiehl from Northern Rivers Wildlife Carers. I thank Bridget and Sophie Thomson, also known as the Wildlife Twins. Any member who is ever in my area has to meet them; they are incredible. I thank Anna Molloy from Goonengerry Landcare and koala ecologist Caitlin Weatherstone, who has been advising me for over a decade on all things ecological. I also thank Christine Lamerton from the Parliamentary Library and, of course, my colleagues in the other place, Cate Faehrmann and Sue Higginson, and their hardworking teams.

I also recognise the work of Bangalow Koalas, Friends of the Koala, World Wildlife Fund, the Nature Conservation Council of NSW, and the Environmental Defenders Office. They have all played a role in my region and continue to do so. It would be remiss of me not to mention koala whisperer Maria Matthes, who is known by everyone who has worked in the environmental space. I hope Minister Aitchison gets to meet Maria if she has not already. Maria has been working for decades. After the Black Summer bushfires, I managed to buy her a infrared camera, and she went out rescuing koalas in a very grim scenario. I also thank the North East Forest Alliance and Dailan Pugh for their tireless work over many decades to protect wildlife habitat in our region.

A report prepared by Ms Maddy Meredith from Byron Bay Wildlife Hospital states that collisions with vehicles is the most common cause of injury across all species, and nearly four out of five wildlife patients hit by cars die or need to be euthanised. That is a grim statistic. The same report states that driver behaviour is the single biggest contributor to motor vehicle accidents, which is an area the Minister certainly can affect. The report continues that more focus needs to be placed on driver education on how to protect oneself but also minimise the risk of accidents involving wildlife, particularly on country roads. Collaborative solutions are key. Moving forward, it is imperative that we take a collaborative approach.

Some mitigation measures in my region simply have not worked, even though millions of dollars have been spent. I give a shout-out to Meerschaum Vale residents, who have had a terrible time. Who knew that a Pacific Highway upgrade bypass was going to go three or four kilometres inland? That happened under The Nationals. We will probably never know what that was about, but it has certainly had a huge impact on that beautiful little community in Meerschaum Vale, in their lovely rainforest retreats. We love the highway, but there is no world in which it needed to go through that area. I saw firsthand how Roads and Maritime Services tried hard to mitigate what was going to be obvious harm to the Ballina koala population. Millions of dollars was spent on kilometres of fencing but, within a very short time, trees fell on the fence and no-one had the money or resources to maintain it. It simply did not work.

We look forward to working with the Minister, because it is necessary to include ecologists. I understand that it comes down to cost. There is another conversation to be had about compulsory acquisitions and sensitive receivers—that is a whole other kettle of fish. However, there is a paucity of funding available for mitigation, so the best mitigation is not always on offer. A lot of people from around the State wrote to us about scenarios in Appin Way. Some AI solutions have been proposed. I note that the member for Campbelltown is in the Chamber—I think that is in his electorate.

Mr Greg Warren: It is, yes.

Ms TAMARA SMITH: There is tension between the best practice—the best model, which is the underpass—and what is actually on offer and financially possible. Tough decisions need to be made. In conclusion, I leave the House with this thought. The measures we take today to ensure the best protection for wildlife on our roads in the face of a vast array of human-led challenges will help ensure the longevity of our precious wildlife. This is about our future. This is about our species on this planet. We are the people with the power to determine that fate. I urge members to support this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (SPLITTING OF THE MURRUMBIDGEE LOCAL HEALTH DISTRICT) BILL 2025**First Reading**

Bill introduced on motion by Mrs Helen Dalton, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (10:32): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Health Services Amendment (Splitting of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District) Bill 2025 will split the Murrumbidgee Local Health District into two local health districts. When someone lives in the city, it can be easy to mistakenly believe all rural areas are the same. Many city slickers seem to be removed from rural life. Too many kids seem to think chickens come from Colonel Sanders and not from a farm. Sadly, too many people in this place and the other place share that city-centric world view. It is clear in all sorts of legislation, whether that be agricultural policies, environmental policies, policing, education or whatever. There is also city-centric thinking when it comes to health.

Right now, my electorate is part of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District. I must say, it is incredibly deceptive to call it a local health district. To most people in the Murray electorate, there is nothing local about the Murrumbidgee Local Health District. It is effectively run from Wagga Wagga, which feels like a world away. It may as well be run from Melbourne. I remind members that my electorate is bigger than Scotland. Quite frankly, we deserve our own dedicated local health district. That is why I have introduced this private member's bill to give the people of Murray their own local health district, to be called the Western Riverina Local Health District.

The object of the bill is to split the Murrumbidgee Local Health District into two local health districts: the Murrumbidgee Local Health District and the new Western Riverina Local Health District. The creation of the Western Riverina Local Health District will provide proper locally based, locally planned and locally delivered healthcare services. Wagga Wagga Base Hospital is already at breaking point. The creation of the Western Riverina Local Health District will take the load off Wagga. It will reduce strain by decentralising patient care. That will help to reduce wait times and enhance the quality of services in my electorate. The creation of the Western Riverina Local Health District will also allow for more strategic deployment of resources.

Finally, investments in health care will be able to directly benefit our community. As a result, patient care in my area will be significantly better than it is now. With the establishment of the Western Riverina Local Health District, we will see secure 24/7 specialist services, including emergency orthopaedics and increased mental health services. That is not a wish or a want; it is desperately needed in the Murray electorate. Proximity to medical services should not be a luxury but, too often, governments act like it is. The new Western Riverina Local Health District will ensure that residents receive prompt, effective care without the undue burden of excessive travel. Long and arduous trips to get medical care are never good for anyone's health.

The creation of the Western Riverina Local Health District will also mean that we will finally be in control of our own health budget and investments can be tailored to our specific health landscape in Murray. That will allow us to ensure that our funds are used to address our unique health challenges, and not diluted across a broader, less focused area, as happens now. The people of Murray deserve a much higher standard of health services than we currently receive, and the creation of the Western Riverina Local Health District will achieve that. Not so long ago, when he was still in opposition, the current Premier shook my hand and promised me that Murray would get its own local health district if he became Premier. I believe Premier Minns to be a man of his word. Guess what? He is now the Premier. I ask the Premier and his Government to support the bill. Let us unite to make this vision a reality for the people of Murray. I call on all members in this place and the other place to support the bill. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

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

ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (VOTER ID AND ELECTRONIC MARK OFF) BILL 2024 (NO 2)**Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 15 November 2024.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (10:37): On behalf of the Government, I contribute to debate on the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2). The bill was introduced in the Legislative Assembly by the member for Kiama, who delivered the second reading speech on 15 November 2024. At the outset, I note that the Government is committed to ensuring the integrity of New South Wales elections and the overall health of the democratic system. The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters is currently conducting an inquiry into proposals to increase voter engagement, participation and confidence. That includes reforms to maintain confidence in the integrity of electoral processes, strengthen the security and integrity of the electoral system, and reduce barriers to participation. The Government looks forward to reviewing the joint standing committee's recommendations on those matters in due course.

The Government opposes the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill (No 2). The bill seeks to amend the Electoral Act 2017 to provide that voters must show evidence of their identity to be eligible to vote, with an exception for silent voters; election officials must mark off electors using an electronic authorised roll on a networked computer system to record that a ballot paper has been given to a voter; and, if an election official is unable to use the electronic authorised roll, the official must record on an authorised printed roll that a ballot paper has been given to a voter. The Government opposes the bill for several reasons.

Firstly, there is no evidence that the bill is required to address any significant electoral integrity issue. Voters do not currently have to produce proof of identity to vote in a New South Wales State election. Despite this, voter fraud and multiple voting has not been established as a significant issue in New South Wales. That issue was recently considered by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters during the conduct of its inquiry into the administration of the 2023 New South Wales State election. In its inquiry report entitled *Administration of the 2023 NSW state election and other matters*, the committee concluded that there was no evidence that multiple voting or voter fraud has affected election results. Finding 1 of the committee's 2023 report said:

There should be no change to New South Wales laws to require voters to produce proof of identity to vote at state elections.

In its report, the joint standing committee also noted that the former Acting Electoral Commissioner's advice to the inquiry was there was no evidence that prevention measures against multiple voting are needed, and the Acting Electoral Commissioner did not support the introduction of voter identification requirements. The findings of the committee are consistent with independent research commissioned by the NSW Electoral Commission in 2014 into the extent of multiple voting in New South Wales. The research by Professor Rodney Smith of the University of Sydney found that there is no large-scale impersonation of other electors nor evidence of systemic multiple voting threatening an election. The research concluded that cases of multiple voting were too few to affect election results and were accidental rather than strategic.

The NSW Electoral Commission has also conducted analysis of the occurrence of multiple voting. Following the 2019 New South Wales State election, the Electoral Commission reported that there were 2,197 instances of apparent double voting and 10 instances of multiple voting. The Electoral Commission found that the incidence of any multiple or double voting was not high enough to affect the election outcome in any district. The scale of apparent multiple and double voting has declined further since the 2019 election. The Electoral Commission's report on the administration of the 2023 election shows that there were 1,023 instances of apparent double voting and three instances of apparent multiple voting at the 2023 State election. The commission reported that the scale of actual double voting is likely lower, based on responses to notices sent out to apparent double voters by the commission following the 2019 election.

For example, in response to written notifications from the Electoral Commission following the 2019 State election, 75 per cent of the 419 apparent double voters who responded advised that they had voted only once. In its report on the 2023 State election, the Electoral Commission stated that no instance of apparent multiple voting had an impact on the election result. Secondly, a critical reason the Government opposes the bill is that the changes could disenfranchise vulnerable individuals. This was a key consideration of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters in 2019 and, most recently, in 2024, when it recommended that no changes should be made to voter ID laws. In its inquiry into the administration of the 2023 State election, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters heard from stakeholders that requiring voters to provide proof of identity would disenfranchise people who do not have identification documents, including homeless people, young people, the elderly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people with a disability.

That was consistent with the findings of the committee's 2019 inquiry into the administration of the 2019 New South Wales State election. In Finding 2 of the report from the 2019 inquiry, the committee concluded that there should be no change to New South Wales laws to require voters to produce proof of identity to vote at New South Wales State elections. During its 2019 inquiry, the committee heard from a number of stakeholders

that a requirement to produce proof of identity to vote could disenfranchise vulnerable individuals who may not have ready access to appropriate identification documents. That also included people experiencing homelessness, the elderly and people in domestic violence situations. Requiring voters to show ID also slows down the voting process on election day, making voting more inconvenient to electors, which may in turn act to reduce participation. That is particularly the case among older electors and those who may have a tenuous engagement with the democratic process.

In light of both the lack of evidence to indicate that rates of multiple voting had changed and valid concerns that voter identification may disenfranchise some voters, on both occasions the joint standing committee did not propose any changes to the current law to require voters to produce proof of identify at New South Wales State elections. In opposing the bill, the Government is taking an approach consistent with that of other jurisdictions. No other Australian jurisdiction requires voters to show evidence of their identity to be able to vote in a State, Territory or Commonwealth election. The only Australian jurisdiction to introduce voter identification requirements was Queensland in 2014. Those laws were in place for the 2015 Queensland State election. However, the laws were repealed in 2015 following the election.

In 2021 the Federal Coalition Government withdrew its Electoral Legislation Amendment (Voter Integrity) Bill 2021 from the Commonwealth Parliament. The Commonwealth bill had proposed to require voters to provide an acceptable form of identification or, alternatively, an attestation from another enrolled person who does have an acceptable form of identification in order to vote in Federal elections and referendums. In its report on the administration of the 2023 New South Wales State election, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters noted its concerns that implementing voter ID requirements at a State level when there are none at a Federal level may confuse voters.

Thirdly, the Government does not support changes to require electronic roll mark-off procedures that have not been recommended by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters. In its 2019 report, the committee recommended that a backup system such as a printed authorised roll be in place where electronic mark-off is used. It did not recommend requiring the electronic mark-off of electors by electoral officials. A key concern with requiring the use of an electronic authorised roll kept on a networked computer system is that mobile data networks can be unreliable in the locations of many voting centres, particularly in regional areas. Electronic mark-off relies on a reliable link between polling places and the central server, and that is not always available in many of our regional areas.

The Government has consulted with officers of the NSW Electoral Commission, who advised that electronic mark-off was used on networked laptop computers at early voting centres at the 2023 New South Wales State election. The commission had additional backup methods in place at early voting centres, including a paper printed copy of the authorised rolls and a register used to record electors' details. That is in line with the joint standing committee's recommendations in the 2019 report. I think many members would have experienced that issue in 2023, when there were delays at some voting centres because of computer failure due to lack of connectivity. Further consultation with the Electoral Commission and consideration by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters should occur before the proposal in the bill is adopted.

Finally, I note that this bill is in substantially the same form as the bill introduced by the member for Kiama in the budget session in 2024, which was considered by the Legislation Review Committee in the *Legislation Review Digest No. 11/58*, dated 19 March 2024. The Legislation Review Committee noted that, by requiring a person to produce identification to vote, the bill may infringe on a person's access to voting and therefore impact their right to vote and participate in the electoral process. The committee also noted that the bill may have the effect of putting a person at risk of committing the electoral offence of failing to vote. The current bill was considered by the Legislation Review Committee in the *Legislation Review Digest No. 24/58*, dated 11 February 2025. The committee noted that its comments in the report were consistent with its comments in the March 2024 digest, which were that the provisions of the bill may limit access to voting. It referred the report to Parliament for consideration.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (10:48): On behalf of the Opposition, I speak in support of the sensible measures in the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2).

There is nothing more important than the integrity of our electoral system. The notion that it is all too hard to have electronic confirmation of people's identity was absolutely killed by the COVID pandemic, when every person in this State used a QR code to enter premises for the purposes of contact tracing. The system worked absolutely impeccably and without any problems. New South Wales was the only State in the whole of Australia to have a government-supported QR code scheme for contact tracing, and it worked absolutely brilliantly. When every member of this Parliament goes into schools, they use the Service NSW venue check-in app for the purposes of noting their attendance, the reason for their attendance and their identity. There can be absolutely no excuse for not supporting the bill.

There is an old adage in the Labor Party: Vote early and vote often. An historical example from Premier Bob Carr's first election has been written about in the memoirs of former Labor Party members of this place, where miraculously at a booth in one nursing home the Labor candidate secured 100 per cent of the votes. This was critical in delivering the one-seat majority that put the Carr Labor Government into power. In their memoirs, Labor Party members wrote, "I can't believe the Liberal Party didn't challenge it. It was so obviously fraudulent."

Mr Greg Warren: Whatever it takes, comrade.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS: Gee, Graham Richardson has lost a lot of weight! We have junior Richo here agreeing with everything I have to say. I commend the member for doing so. It is refreshing for a sunbeam of truth to pierce the skylights of this Chamber. All members know that democracy needs to be taken as seriously as possible, and elections are the absolute apex of our political system. The integrity of the identity of people voting and the number of times they have voted is incredibly important, and the bill will deliver that. The systems from COVID are already in place, and they should be implemented in support of our important and great democracy in the State of New South Wales.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (10:52): I oppose the private member's Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2) to amend the Electoral Act. As a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, I will reflect on the evidence the committee heard and the submissions it received from the many disability groups who appeared. I somewhat agree with the member for Wahroonga that democracy is extremely important, but democracy only works when it applies to all and our most marginalised are also involved. Many people who spoke to the committee on behalf of multiple different disability groups said that there are already barriers to voting for people with a disability that they find confronting. Whether it be the myriad volunteers they need to walk through or the locations of voting places, especially pre-poll locations, it is extremely difficult for people to feel comfortable enough to come and exercise their democratic right. That does not include the people who do not have ID, such as members of culturally diverse communities, First Nations people or survivors of domestic violence. They would all have to have voter ID if the bill goes ahead, which is not right. They should not have to prove who they are.

I will dwell on what the Minister said, that no jurisdiction is asking for these changes. Queensland tried it and said, "You know what? No, we'll take that away. It didn't work." Part of the reason the bill would not work—and I am a little surprised the member for Kiama, as someone from a regional area, has introduced the bill—is that regional areas are renowned for sketchy, unreliable internet service. Both pre-poll locations in Camden, the Camden Civic Centre and for the last election the AH&I Hall, are internet and mobile phone black spots, yet they are the only places in the whole of the Camden electorate where voting in elections can happen because of the large numbers of people they can hold. The idea of requiring electronic mark-off in those locations is laughable.

I agree that during COVID people used QR codes, but in order to use a QR code in Camden people have to walk outside a building to check in. The only time they work inside is at a school on the wi-fi. If the voting location does not have its own wi-fi, there is no capacity for people to access mobile phone coverage, nor is there a reliable source of internet to electronically mark off names and have that information distributed. This seems to be an idea that is centred around voter suppression. Labor wants as many people as possible partaking in the democratic process. We do not want to put up barriers that make it harder for people to vote.

We want people to feel welcome to vote. The committee discussed many different ways to do that and recommended that there should be no change to New South Wales laws to require voters to produce proof of identity to vote at State elections, which was quite unpopular. It was interesting the scale of disability and interest groups who gave evidence to the committee and said, "This does not work for our people. This is a barrier to people voting and feeling that they can be comfortable casting their vote." Voting is a time when Australians are being asked to expose themselves politically and put on a piece of paper or speak over the phone something that is incredibly personal to them. I cannot support the idea of putting another barrier in front of that instead of making it easier for people.

It was interesting that following the 2019 election, the Electoral Commission reported that there were 2,197 instances of apparent double voting and 10 instances of multiple voting.

The Electoral Commission found that the incidents of any multi-voting or double voting were not high enough to have affected the election outcome in any district. That is very important to hold on to. Compulsory voting is a gift in this country. The idea that everybody, even minorities, get the chance to have a say in our democratic process is something we need to protect. We must not put things in front of people. Unreliability has been a massive issue, with internet coverage and making sure that people are able to get their name marked off—

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

Members

MEMBER FOR TWEED

MEMBER FOR LANE COVE

The SPEAKER: I acknowledge the upcoming birthdays of the member for Tweed, the Premier's appointed bodgie surfer, and of the Father of the House, the member for Lane Cove.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome guests, one and all, to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. I hope they enjoy their experience here in question time. I extend a warm welcome to Jeff Smith, the General Manager of Maitland City Council, guest of the member for Maitland. I have not met Jeff. I thought it was David Evans for life. I am glad he moved on for Jeff. I also welcome Mayor Jeff Drayton, Policy Officer Nick Mowbray and Denise Sully from Muswellbrook Shire Council, guests of the member for Swansea. I welcome Elouise Massa, Danny Massa, Alexandra Spurway and James Jooste, guests of the member for Keira. I acknowledge Ruby Woods, guest of the member for Blue Mountains. I also acknowledge Dugald and Justine Bucknell, guests of the member for Barwon. I also welcome Gary Lee, guest of the member for Oxley. Finally, I welcome to the Cooper gallery legal studies students and teachers from Northern Beaches Secondary College in the electorate of Manly and Inner Sydney High School in the electorate of Sydney.

Announcements

WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS WEEK

The SPEAKER: It is World Autism Awareness Week from 27 March to 2 April. World Autism Awareness Week reminds us of the need for greater inclusion, understanding and support for autistic individuals. I acknowledge Jacqui Borland, CEO of Aspect (Autism Spectrum Australia), and other members of Aspect in the public gallery, who are watching question time today. I also acknowledge the member for Lismore and the member for Castle Hill, who hosted an event in the Speaker's Garden this morning. I thank everyone for the work they do in that space.

Governor

ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message regarding the administration of the Government.

Announcements

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT DRESS CODE

The SPEAKER (11:08): Yesterday during a division following a suspension of standing orders a member appeared in the Chamber to vote in attire that would not generally be considered acceptable for this Chamber. I will put this matter to rest. Members might approach it with some levity, but the situation for the Temporary Speaker in the chair was not easy. I wish members to acknowledge the difficulty of adjudicating in that situation, particularly when a Temporary Speaker is in the chair, doing their absolute best to uphold the standing orders and principles of this place.

I have taken further advice and given consideration to how a member may be dressed during a vote in this Chamber. There is an expectation that all members will be suitably attired when they are in the Chamber. That is without question. Suitable attire is perhaps the way the member for Lane Cove or I dress—in a sartorially resplendent manner.

However, under the Constitution, the first responsibility of each and every member is to the people they represent, and they have a constitutional responsibility to be here and to exercise their vote. Therefore, I have to weigh the sensibilities of the House as to members' attire with their obligation to be here to vote. I place the responsibility to vote ahead of the sensibilities of the House. However, I expect every member to be aware that, when the mace is in the cradle and the House is sitting, they could be called to the Chamber to vote at any time. I expect every member to be aware of that and be prepared to come to the Chamber suitably attired within four minutes.

Perhaps from time to time there will be things beyond my imagination right now that will prevent members from achieving that. If there is a conflict between attire and presence in the Chamber, we will consider the circumstances. Members will be expected, first and foremost, to exercise their responsibility to vote. But every member will be very well aware of the expectations regarding suitable attire in this House. I hope that is the toughest thing I have to deal with today.

Mr David Mehan: Mr Speaker, I just want to back up your comments—

The SPEAKER: Don't make it worse.

Mr David Mehan: In particular, I acknowledge the difficult position the member for Drummoyne and the Clerks were placed in yesterday.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for The Entrance. It is not time for a personal explanation, and I do not need further assistance. I hope I have made very clear what my expectation is, and that will also be the expectation of the House.

Question Time

ROSEHILL RACECOURSE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:14): My question is directed to the Premier. On 3 April Australian Turf Club [ATC] members will vote on a proposed sale of Rosehill Gardens Racecourse to his Government, conditional on gross sale proceeds being no less than \$5 billion. Before the ATC media release on 12 March, did the Premier or anyone else from his Government suggest to the ATC a willingness to purchase Rosehill Gardens Racecourse for \$5 billion, or for any other figure?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:14): The Government has not entered into any agreement or negotiation with the ATC about a sale price. For ATC members, this gives the leadership of the organisation guidance as to the figure that ATC members would sell the racecourse for. It does not bind the New South Wales Government to anything. We have to enter negotiations with them if that vote gets up. But this is a matter for ATC members. They have to make the decision.

It would be on the table for us to compulsorily acquire the course under eminent domain and take it from the organisation, but we are not doing that. We made it clear from the very beginning that this must be led by ATC members. They have to make the decision on it, and we will live with the consequences. There is no guarantee it will get up. The vote is by all members of the ATC. I do not have an indication as to whether it is going to pass or not. But I have to say I think all members of this House have to take more of a risk when it comes to housing and development in Sydney.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will be heard in silence.

Mr Mark Speakman: It is not a question about whether the Government has made a decision or entered into negotiations. Has the Premier, or anyone else, indicated a willingness before this media release?

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition knows that the Presiding Officer cannot dictate how the Premier will answer a question. The Premier is being directly relevant.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The Leader of the Opposition takes points of order about relevance. I answer questions in the opening sentence, each and every time. I am not trying to mislead the House. I think his Government, when it was in office, was too meek and timid when it came to new housing in Sydney. It is one of the reasons why Sydney is the second most expensive city on earth. It is one of the reasons why the median house price in Sydney is \$1.6 million.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Again, honestly? Is it the same point?

The SPEAKER: I do not know what the point of order will be. The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Mark Speakman: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, direct relevance. The Premier has now gone beyond Rosehill to a general discussion. Did he say something before 12 March?

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition knows that will not fly with me. He will resume his seat. The Premier will continue his answer.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I already said it. It is not my fault if Opposition members do not listen to the answer. I make the point that the previous Government was too timid in relation to housing. It did not take chances to

bring on new housing or increase density in Sydney. We still have not worked out whether Opposition members are in support or otherwise in relation to Rosehill. I mean, what is the truth? Some days they say, "We're all for density. We need new housing, particularly for young people." The next day they say, "We don't want it in our area." The leader of that movement is the member for Wahroonga.

The SPEAKER: The member for Goulburn will cease interjecting.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: It is just constant hectoring, Mr Speaker. The constant interruptions and yelling out during answers make it seem as though they do not want an answer. They get the answer in the first second, and they hate it.

PUBLIC SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:18): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Deputy Premier advise the House on how the Minns Labor Government's record investment in school infrastructure is providing more opportunities for students to reach their potential?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:18): What a great question from the member for Leppington. He has advocated for school infrastructure in south-western Sydney for a long time. The population of his community has exploded, and he was elected very clearly on a platform of upgrading and building schools in south-western Sydney. I am happy that we have been able to work together on some of the projects that we are delivering as a government.

The member for Leppington advocates for his community every day in this House. We would not see him wagging Parliament to go to London to listen to Jordan Peterson. He is here every day advocating for the people of south-western Sydney.

In the past five years of the former Government, the enrolment growth in Leppington was so huge that it grew by 173 per cent, which is not news to anyone who lives in those communities. The people living in those communities have taken out huge mortgages to build dream homes in Western Sydney, like those in the part of Western Sydney that I proudly represent. Investment in new school infrastructure did not happen under the previous Government, but it is happening under this Government. I am very proud that next week the member for Leppington and I will deliver the plans for the upgrade of Leppington Public School and they will be exhibited publicly. That will bring 20 new classrooms, three new support classes, a brand-new hall and a new covered outdoor learning area. Importantly, a brand-new public preschool at Leppington Public School will come with the upgrade. Of course, the previous Government did not build any in the past 12 years, but we are building 100.

Construction of the new Leppington high school will get underway later this year, and that has been long awaited in the community the member for Leppington represents. It will be the first public high school in that area. It is absolutely insane that that is the case, but we are righting the wrongs of the lack of investment from past governments by delivering a public high school for those children. Austral is part of the growing community the member for Leppington represents, and this week we released plans for the urgently needed upgrade at Austral Public School. [*Extension of time*]

There will be 20 new classrooms, three new support classes and a significant upgrade to the library at Austral. The investment this Government has made will turn Eagle Vale High School into a sports high school, so that students from the Macarthur region can go to a high school that offers a Talented Sports Program and the upgrades that come with that. That is another thing that the member for Leppington pushed for while we were in opposition that we are delivering in government. We have already delivered brand-new cricket nets. I think the Premier tested them out when we were at Eagle Vale. There are also upgraded change rooms, a brand-new running track, a new hall and new pickleball courts. Anyone who has visited a school recently will know that pickleball is very popular with the kids, and we will build brand-new pickleball courts at Eagle Vale.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Ms PRUE CAR: We are really proud of our Talented Sports Program and of all of our schools. We are also proud of the investment the Government is making in our High Potential and Gifted Education Policy, so that kids will be able to push themselves to realise their full potential. Many high schools in Western Sydney, in particular, are getting High Potential and Gifted Education upgrades, such as Chifley College Dunheved Campus, Windsor High School—and the list goes on. The Government is upgrading secondary schools that are a little bit long in the tooth so that kids who go to older high schools have the opportunity to use upgraded equipment and upgraded specialist rooms. If they are gifted or have high potential in a particular area, a talented teacher can make

sure they can achieve their very best. That is what we want for all of our children, and that is what the children of Leppington will get under this Government.

MOORE PARK GOLF COURSE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (11:23): My question is directed to the Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism. Yesterday the Premier told the House:

... as part of the Government's plan for Moore Park, it will put in more sporting infrastructure, particularly football fields ...

How does the Government plan on building football fields on a hilly old rubbish tip, full of significant protected trees?

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I have complete confidence that the Minister will be able to answer the question without assistance. The Minister has the call.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism) (11:25): It is a construction and planning issue. Obviously we will do it. We build fields for communities every single day. I do not know why it is such a complex issue. I do not know why the notion of creating a football field, sports facilities or open space for children offends the member for Miranda. What is wrong with that? For goodness sake, come on! We will build the facilities for children.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Miranda to order for the first time. I call the member for Cronulla to order for the first time. I was right—the Minister was quite capable of answering the question, although I thank those members who provided assistance.

NSW POLICE FORCE

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (11:26): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plans to retain and recruit police officers?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:26): I would be delighted to.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: I thank the member for Shellharbour for her question and for her ongoing support for her local police. This is a very important question. I would love to update the House on the work that is being done right across New South Wales with the Police Force on the resources it needs to keep our community safe. When we took government two years ago, the NSW Police Force was on an alarming trajectory, left depleted by a former government that did not care about police. I am not saying that the Government has solved all of the former Government's problems, but we have been working extremely hard to rebuild the NSW Police Force and treat the police with the respect that they deserve.

While members opposite clearly did not have a plan, we do. We are paying our cops what they are worth, after 12 cruel years of a wages cap that sent their wages backwards. We are making it easier to become a police officer and we are supporting the cops to have long and fulfilling careers in the NSW Police Force. It is unfortunate that all that lot opposite can do is get all riled up on Facebook, posting about vacancies. But did they have a plan to recruit officers?

Government members: No!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Did they have a plan to keep our best officers healthy in the job?

Government members: No!

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: Did they have a plan to pay police? Absolutely not. They left us with the 12-year legacy of the wages cap. That is their legacy. What did the member for Bathurst do when he was the police Minister? He did absolutely nothing. It is unfortunate that the "unfinished business" lot on the Opposition side of the House left us with the job of rebuilding the NSW Police Force.

The SPEAKER: The member for Bathurst will resume his seat.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: We want people from all walks of life to become police officers. We want our police to reflect the community that they serve. In 2023 we made the historic announcement that we will pay our recruits at the Goulburn Police Academy.

Since we announced that plan, I am pleased to advise the House that we have received 3,667 applications to join the NSW Police Force. That is a 70 per cent increase. [*Extension of time*]

That is not all. We are also making it more attractive to enter the NSW Police Force, especially in regional towns. I have seen firsthand the impact of the Be a Cop in your Hometown initiative in regional areas. It is unlocking opportunities for people across regional New South Wales. I do not believe that people should have to choose between raising their families and fulfilling their lifelong dream of becoming a police officer. Right now at the Police Academy in Goulburn, a mother of four from Coffs Harbour is living her dream to become a police officer. Because of Be a Cop in your Hometown, she will return to Coffs Harbour to enjoy her wonderful career in the NSW Police Force. That has been enabled by the Minns Labor Government's policies.

Just a month ago I was in Wagga Wagga with the local member for the police recruitment roadshow. The police were telling hundreds of young people about the wonderful career they could have as New South Wales police. A week later I was at a local event with the member for Albury—who is a big fan of the cops—and they signed up 20 people right there at the club. I thank both members very much. I cannot wait for those young people to graduate from the academy and have fantastic careers in the NSW Police Force in their home towns. It took a government that backed the NSW Police Force instead of bashing them like members opposite do. I advise the House that the Minns Labor Government backs the cops 110 per cent, but the hard work is not over yet. There is so much more to do to repair the years of damage from members opposite.

WOLLONDILLY ELECTORATE POLICE RESOURCING

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (11:31): My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. For over 12 months her office has been aware of land that sits dormant in Picton. She would also know of calls from the police union, the council and me for more police services due to the growth that is hitting Wollondilly. Will the Minister advise when Wollondilly will get its own police area command, rather than being stuck between two overstretched PACs?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:32): I thank the member for Wollondilly for her question. She is a very passionate advocate for her community. I have visited Wollondilly and met with the member a number of times, and I thank her for working with the Government on those very important issues. The Government is fully committed to ensuring that police have the resources and facilities that they need to protect the community. I am focused on ensuring that we can recruit and retain the best police officers in the country. I want to see those officers in PACs right around New South Wales, including in Wollondilly.

For the benefit of the House, the Wollondilly shire local government area is serviced by two PACs and is close to another: Camden, Campbelltown City and Nepean. All police attached to those police area commands are flexible resources that can respond to incidents across her community. However, I know that the member's electorate is vast and that the community of Wollondilly is rapidly growing. Unfortunately, members opposite had no plans for our growing cities. As we just heard from the Deputy Premier, they have left suburbs without schools or public transport. They have left us thousands of police officers short.

The member for Wollondilly has discussed with me her desire for a new PAC to be established in the Wollondilly area and has asked for an expanded police presence at the southern end of her electorate. I appreciate where she is coming from and I understand why she is asking for that. In the short term, we are bolstering police numbers at the Camden PAC to service her community. I am pleased to report that, from the last attestation, Nepean received seven probationary constables, Campbelltown received six and Camden received three. There are more to come in May. I am also advised that, in the medium term, we are looking at resourcing for a boundary realignment in the Bradfield area. Although that is not in Wollondilly—

Mrs Sally Quinnell: It has a knock-on effect.

Ms YASMIN CATLEY: That's exactly right. It will have a knock-on effect on those northern PACs. We will therefore be looking at a realignment in that area. We will work with the member for Wollondilly and with police. I assure the member that I understand where she is coming from. I drive through her beautiful electorate quite a bit to get to Goulburn. We will absolutely be looking at that. It is absolutely necessary that the member has the police services that her community needs. Police are looking at New South Wales planning and demographic data to ensure that there is capability in the southern area in areas like Wilton, as members spoke about earlier. That work will inform any changes to the PAC boundaries, and I will ensure that the member for Wollondilly is included in those conversations. I have also been advised that the land the member is referring to

is subject to an unresolved Aboriginal land claim and that the current buildings on that site needed to be vacated—*[Time expired.]*

WESTERN HARBOUR TUNNEL AND WARRINGAH FREEWAY UPGRADE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (11:35): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads. Will the Minister please update the House on progress for the Western Harbour Tunnel and the Warringah Freeway upgrade?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (11:35): I am pleased to provide the House with a progress report on the Western Harbour Tunnel and the Warringah Freeway upgrade. I was with the Premier nice and early on Monday morning to see a significant milestone on two of our major infrastructure projects. It was literally the light at the end of the tunnel on the Warringah Freeway, as the 95,000-tonne road header broke through the final centimetres of rock connecting the Western Harbour Tunnel with the Warringah Freeway upgrade. That breakthrough is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all of the workforce onsite. That is amazing.

Mr Kevin Anderson: You've got to give some credit.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The member for Winston Hills will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: It is always interesting to hear members opposite taking credit for using taxpayer dollars to deliver an outcome that workers deliver.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: They are significant projects for our State. I do acknowledge the former Government for starting the project, but we will finish it. The Western Harbour Tunnel is a 6.5-kilometre marvel of engineering. It is set to be Sydney's first new road crossing of the harbour in nearly 30 years. Once completed, it will connect the Warringah Freeway to WestConnex, the M4 and the M8 at the Rozelle interchange, providing a seamless bypass of the CBD. I come into the city from the north, and it is the most exciting road I ever drive on. It is like putting the balls into the clown's mouth at the funfair—you never know which lane you will end up in. That has been my experience.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Once the project is finished, it will be very clear which lane people will end up in, which is good. I note that at the moment, during the construction, Transport for NSW is working hard to make sure people get where they need to go. The project will not only ease congestion on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Harbour Tunnel, the Anzac Bridge and the Western Distributor but also save commuters hours of driving every week. The Western Harbour Tunnel will save drivers up to 20 minutes from Sydney Olympic Park to North Sydney, up to 20 minutes from Leichhardt to North Sydney, and up to 15 minutes from North Sydney to Kingsford Smith Airport. The Western Harbour Tunnel will also significantly reduce the traffic volume—by 35 per cent on the Western Distributor, by 20 per cent in the Sydney Harbour Tunnel and by 17 per cent on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Warringah Freeway upgrade, which is now more than 70 per cent complete, is equally transformative. *[Extension of time]*

It is streamlining one of Australia's busiest roads, making it safer and easier for motorists to travel. It includes the construction of new bridges, ramps and underpasses, as well as a dedicated bus lane to improve the reliability of public transport. To talk about workers again, there will be 7,500 full-time equivalent jobs in the construction of those two projects. That is a significant boost to our economy and a testament to the Government's commitment to creating and keeping opportunities for our local workforce.

We are really committed to that. I know an issue is that construction has been disruptive.

Ms Felicity Wilson: I'm looking forward to our meeting, Minister.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: It would be great if members opposite talked to me about that directly.

Ms Felicity Wilson: I did! We've spoken.

The SPEAKER: The member for North Shore will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: What? When you talk in the House for a second or, like the member for Davidson, when you give notice of a motion?

The SPEAKER: The Minister will not respond to interjections. I call the member for North Shore to order for the first time.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: It would be great to see them come along.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I acknowledge there have been complaints, but we want to have real conversations. I am sorry if that is what the member for North Shore thinks is consultation, as it was for her under those opposite. The Ministers on this side of the House would like to sit down and have real meetings with constructive solutions. That is what we do. I know the member for Upper Hunter cannot quite bring himself to do that, but that is okay. We have largely reached the peak of construction. The benefit of having the breakthrough in the Western Harbour Tunnel is that it will allow larger construction vehicles to travel in the tunnel rather than driving on the local road network. It is important to work together on projects, as we do.

GOULBURN PARAMEDICS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (11:40): My question is directed to the Premier. Paramedics at Goulburn have repeatedly warned the Government about the new rostering system, critical staffing shortages as a result of it and the risks involved. Yet on 14 March, a single paramedic responded to a 70-year-old man in cardiac arrest, performing CPR alone for 40 minutes until backup arrived—tragically, too late. Will the Premier personally intervene to ensure ambulance stations in Goulburn are appropriately staffed at all times?

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:41): I inform the House that the Goulburn community can be assured there is ambulance coverage to the region 24/7. That is incredibly important. Consultation has been undertaken with local staff and union representatives regarding rosters and on-call changes. The current roster pattern for Goulburn Ambulance station is two on-duty day shift crew and one on-duty night shift crew. Importantly, in June 2024 NSW Ambulance recruited an additional five paramedics to work in Goulburn. We believe following those staff enhancements, the proposed new roster will include two on-duty day shift crews and two on-duty night shift crews.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: It's not working, Premier.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Do we really have to take advice from someone who was the leading proponent of the wages cap in New South Wales, the member for Goulburn? That is the truth. I remember under the previous Government, day after day, the member for Goulburn would come into this House and demand that we keep the wages cap.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: There was no more strident supporter of a wages cap in New South Wales than the member for Goulburn, and she still is.

The SPEAKER: All members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: On 27 June, the Government moved a very simple motion that this House supports the removal of a wages cap. Guess who voted against it. The member for Goulburn. She says one thing to her electorate in Goulburn, one thing in Macquarie Street and a different thing when she is voting in this Chamber.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Point of order: It is relevance. The family deserves a better response from the Premier than what he is giving in playing politics.

The SPEAKER: The Premier is being directly relevant to the question. The question the member for Goulburn asked does not allow for a yes or no answer. The Premier has the call.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The truth of the matter is the way to fill the changes to rosters across regional New South Wales is to recruit paramedics and pay them appropriately.

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: Clearly you don't understand the issue.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The member for Goulburn just yelled out, "You don't understand." The implication there is that if we pay them less, they will stay in their jobs. That was the argument we heard from those opposite for 12 long years. The member for Goulburn has the gall to stand on Macquarie Street with signs that say, "Pay us 15 per cent." If she ever sat on the Treasury benches again, it would go back to 2.5 per cent.

PENRITH BEACH

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (11:44): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on how the people of Western Sydney have enjoyed Penrith Beach this summer?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:44): I thank the member for Penrith for her question and her tireless advocacy on behalf of Penrith residents and Western Sydney residents who are benefiting from being able to get to Penrith Beach.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: We cannot talk about the benefits of Penrith Beach and advocacy for Western Sydney without mentioning the work and advocacy of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney, who has been fighting to make sure that Penrith residents and surrounding Western Sydney residents have access to the beach. Billy Joel sung a legendary song:

Some folks like to get away
Take a holiday from the neighborhood
Hop a flight to Miami Beach or to Hollywood

Now they can add that iconic destination of Penrith Beach to that list of destinations. It had 116,000 visitors this year; they know how good it is. Opposition members do not like it.

The SPEAKER: All members will come to order.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Penrith Beach has become so famous that it has been featured recently in *The New York Times*. The Times reflected that the beach is a "welcome haven for those who live an hour or more inland from the coast and pay hefty tolls to get there".

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock.

Mr Ron Hoenig: The House is far too disorderly. I cannot hear the Minister's answer. It is time for the House to come to order. I ask that the Speaker call members to order.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. Members on both sides of the House will come to order. Their behaviour is out of control. The Minister can make some comments with levity without the decorum of the House declining. The Minister will be heard in silence.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: Even *The New York Times* journalist knew about the toll impact that the members opposite left on the people of Western Sydney. Not only is the Minns Government putting in place a toll cap—a \$556 million investment to cap tolls at \$60 a week—it is also investing in recreational infrastructure in Western Sydney, which has become internationally famous. Given the interest in recreational infrastructure in Moore Park from members opposite earlier, that was at the site of an old quarry.

Mr Chris Minns: They couldn't do it.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The Premier is right; they could not do it, but we have. The article in *The New York Times* summed it up well. It stated:

Like many cities, the fringes of Sydney's urban sprawl are made up of working-class families, newly arrived immigrants and those pushed out further and further from downtown by rising housing prices.

That is an astute observation because it highlights a failing of the former Government which meant we had to introduce some of the most significant planning reforms in this State's history to address housing affordability and availability in Sydney and across the State. [*Extension of time*]

Those homes need the infrastructure to support its residents. Penrith Beach was left padlocked for 12 long years. Members opposite left Western Sydney residents, a community that experiences some of the hottest temperatures in the world, stranded. Our reasoning was not only the heat but also the desperate need of many people in the west for relief. As outlined in *The New York Times*, one of the locals who was interviewed said that, due to her duties as a full-time carer, she could not travel over an hour to get to one of Sydney's beaches in the east. She said she popped down to Penrith Beach in the waning days of summer thinking she would take a quick 20-minute dip but ended up swimming for two hours.

She described the Blue Mountains behind it, one of our most visited sites as the Premier mentioned yesterday, as "majestically stretching beyond and an expansive azure sky reflecting in the serene waters". That does not sound too bad. That is the kind of support we are committed to providing to working people.

That is why this Government put \$2½ billion in the budget last year to reopen Penrith Beach. This season has had more to offer. There have been free activities like Sandy Cinema, Wildlife Wednesday and the learn-to-swim program. But do not take my word on how good Penrith Beach is, take the word of a Elhadi Dahia, originally from Darfur, who told *The New York Times* that he went there after his neighbour had been raving about it for four weeks.

Most importantly, it is about equality. It is about making sure that people, wherever they live and whatever they do, have equal access to great facilities and infrastructure. It was something forgotten about by members opposite for 12 years but it is something that this side of the House has dedicated itself to fixing over the past two years. As Billy Joel sang in *New York State of Mind*, "It was so easy living day by day, Out of touch with the rhythm and blues." We are in touch; they remain out of touch.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The member for Terrigal will talk to himself quietly or use his inside voice. He is being far too loud.

NSW AMBULANCE

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:50): My question is directed to the Premier. We have asked repeatedly whether the Minns Labor Government will commit to directing NSW Ambulance to keep taxpayer-funded paramedic crews in their allocated locations. This means that crews allocated to Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie, Taree and Goulburn stations will service those communities instead of being sent to fill in rosters that could be filled by casual or other available paramedics. The Premier declined to answer, and the Minister for Health was unable to provide an answer. Today, we ask the Premier, as the leader of the Government, whether he will step in and direct NSW Ambulance to keep taxpayer-funded paramedic crews in their allocated roster locations.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: The member for Coffs Harbour has well and truly exceeded what is permissible under Standing Order 128 (2). He needs to reduce the length of his question and make sure it contains only facts that are relevant. The member must be able to ask it quickly.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The question was much too long. It could easily be much more succinct. I give the member for Coffs Harbour one more opportunity to achieve that.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: Will the Premier, as the leader of the Government, step in and direct NSW Ambulance to keep taxpayer-funded paramedic crews in their allocated roster locations?

The SPEAKER: See how easy that was?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:51): Mr Speaker—

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Dubbo does not like the way in which the House is operating, then I have—

[Opposition members interjected.]

Order! I direct the member for Oatley to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the end of question time.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Oatley left the Chamber at 11:52.]

The SPEAKER: All members will come to order. Members will not comment about the Premier's referral of the question to the relevant Minister. I ruled on the matter recently. This is, prima facie, a perfect example of when a referral is applicable. The Minister has the call.

Mr RYAN PARK: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will—

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

Mrs Wendy Tuckerman: It's just dodgy. Why don't you—

The SPEAKER: I direct the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms to remove the member for Goulburn from the Chamber under Standing Order 249.

[The member for Goulburn left the Chamber at 11:52 accompanied by the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms.]

Mr RYAN PARK: It is ironic that the member for Goulburn, who was once a Minister, supported around the Cabinet table the implementation of a wages cap. It is also ironic—

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

Mr RYAN PARK: Seriously? Mate, I'll draw it next time. Do you want me to draw it? Do you want me to do a pictogram?

The SPEAKER: I call the Minister of Health to order for the first time. The member for Coffs Harbour has the call.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: My point of order relates to direct relevance under Standing Order 129. The question has nothing to do with the wages cap or wages. It is a question about rostering.

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. I uphold the point of order. The Minister's introductory comments do not need to be about the member for Goulburn. The Minister will address the question directly. I have dealt with the member for Goulburn.

Mr RYAN PARK: No wonder the Nats were never allowed around the Expenditure Review Committee table. The Strategic Workforce and Infrastructure Team is boosting and transforming NSW Ambulance frontline services. As we speak, the program is delivering 2½ thousand new staff, including 500 targeted paramedics for the bush. Ironically, that was not supported by those opposite when in government, even though their regions would have benefited. The Government is delivering on that commitment. Yesterday I announced that 250 are now in, and coming into, place throughout regional, rural and remote New South Wales. NSW Ambulance uses rostering best practice and provides a safe system of work for minimum staffing levels for paramedics through the concept of planned ambulance rosters, which was introduced—and this is important—in 2021.

Rosterings best practice considers multiple factors such as patient needs, staff needs, fatigue management—which is important in the bush—organisational needs, and the workforce and skills required to deliver those services. It also incorporates sufficient permanently approved double-crew ambulance rosters to meet the requirements of the performance agreement that NSW Ambulance has with NSW Health. The ambulance system continues to bolster the workforce, thanks to the investment of this Government. These staffing enhancements have been welcomed. Is the member for Coffs Harbour going to ask for more time or not?

[Opposition members interjected.]

The SPEAKER: The Minister's time has expired. The Minister will resume his seat.

NATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE GRAND FINAL

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (11:55): My question is addressed to the Minister for Sport. Will the Minister please advise the House about how the NRL Grand Final is remaining in New South Wales for 2025 and what that means for the State?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism) (11:56): I thank the member for East Hill for her question. The hardworking member, who is a serious NRL fan—a zealot—was no doubt jumping for joy on Sunday when she read the news. The Minns Labor Government has once again secured the 2025 NRL and NRLW grand finals. That is fantastic news. New South Wales is the home of rugby league and Sydney is unquestionably the greatest rugby league city in the world, so there really is no better place to be hosting the NRL's showpiece. The deal keeps the NRL's biggest event in its birthplace and its home, where it has been played every year since the birth of rugby league in Australia in 1908, except for the Covid-affected 2021 season.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: With the 2025 NRL season shaping up as one of the most competitive in years, and the NRLW continuing its rapid growth, fans from Australia, New Zealand and all around the world will head to Sydney for the grand final over the October long weekend. Sydney will be abuzz and Accor Stadium will be jam-packed with 82,500 rugby league fans on NRL Grand Final day. It will be great for pubs, hotels, restaurants and retailers in New South Wales, which will benefit from the influx of sports fans. As the NRL expands its audience in the United States and the Asia-Pacific, Sydney and New South Wales remain the heart of rugby league. The grand final will showcase the city to a growing international fan base. That is fantastic news for our visitor economy. It will mean more people will consider Sydney as their next holiday destination, promoting additional opportunities for our tourism sector.

Following an exciting season launch in Las Vegas, the NRL is expected to deliver more thrills in 2025. The Penrith Panthers will chase a fifth straight title—a feat I feel obliged to tell the House was last achieved by St George Dragons in the 1950s and 1960s. Of course, they went on to win 11 in a row. I am not sure the Penrith Panthers will be able to achieve that same feat, but we will see. There is no doubt that the Penrith Panthers have shown over the past few years the key to getting to the grand final. It is all about teamwork. They have had key players come and go and, except for 20 minutes in the 2023 NRL Grand Final, they have always done it together. I think that is an important lesson. *[Extension of time]*

I think that is something we can learn from. Our side of the fence has taken on board the importance of teamwork, but I am not sure the same can be said for those opposite. They are a house divided! We are trying to play the game, but they are too busy playing against themselves. Look at their team: They have four captains and no ideas. It is a shemozzle. The member for Oatley is trying to blindside his own team. You may have heard of the dummy half, Mr Speaker—I am sure you have. Here we have the full thing. The member for Willoughby seems to have taken up a new position on the ultra right wing. He is actually running outside of the sidelines.

From what I am hearing, it sounds like Mr Fang has requested a trade. We have not accepted, but he is already playing for us. I think the member for Kellyville is considering a dropout. Seriously, even the Opposition's question time strategy is all over the top—all over the shop, I should say. It is both over the top and over the shop. Just yesterday, the member for Wahoonga was taken for a head injury assessment. To everyone's surprise, he passed! Our message is clear. If people want to see a real contest, they should be sure to buy tickets for the 2025 NRL grand final.

HEALTH SERVICES

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:01): My question is directed to the Premier. Vision 2020 Australia reports that budget cuts, nurse shortages and ophthalmologist maldistribution have caused severe cataract surgery delays, leaving 1,700 patients overdue and facing potential blindness. Will the Premier personally apologise for his Government's mismanagement of cataract surgery in the health system?

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:02): It goes back to the question from earlier last week about the elective surgery waiting list, which is currently over 6,000. We want it to be lower, but that has to be put in context.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The elective surgery waiting list for those waiting longer than clinically recommended was at 14,000 under the Coalition.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: That was the number when we assumed government.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Opposition members do not get to change the parameters just because it suits their argument now. We have made inroads in relation to elective surgery waiting lists and patients waiting longer than clinically recommended. The way to do that is to recruit permanent nurses from the COVID emergency into the healthcare system. The House should note that the previous Government had proposed to sack them.

[Opposition members interjected.]

Yes, you did—or were they going to work for free?

Mr Ryan Park: Volunteers.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Yes, volunteers.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: There should be no doubt about this. There was no money in the budget for 1,100 nurses. The question is not whether or not they were going to be sacked—apparently, they were all going to volunteer for the health system. The second point is the removal of the wages cap in New South Wales, introduced by—Opposition members keep saying, "Come on, that's not relevant", as if paying real wages at less than inflation did not have a massive impact on service delivery across hospitals in New South Wales. Am I wrong?

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The third change is the introduction of safe staffing levels. Once again, that was opposed by those opposite. You will excuse me, Mr Speaker, if I question this latter-day conversion to interest in public health.

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

Mr CHRIS MINNS: For 12 years, members of the former Government could not care less about public health. Now, after this Government has introduced changes, they are poring through the results to determine how

individual health districts are performing. I report to the House that, while there is more work to do, New South Wales has the best-run emergency departments in the country. There have been improvements in ambulance ramping times and we have reduced the elective surgery waiting list.

The SPEAKER: I call the member for Hawkesbury to order for the first time. I remind the member for Cronulla that he is on one call to order.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Those are the three key indices in the health system. All members of this House will have to make a decision about health care when they consider the Government's bill to ban private providers in relation to emergency departments across New South Wales. We have not heard from the Opposition. If the Opposition has another question, we want to know its position on that crucial bill for public health in New South Wales.

ANZAC DAY

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (12:04): My question is addressed to the Minister for Veterans. As this year marks the 110th anniversary of the landings at Gallipoli, will the Minister inform the House of the importance of acknowledging the service and sacrifices of our veterans this Anzac Day?

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) (12:05): I thank the member for Fairfield for that very important question. This is the last question time before Anzac Day. I know members right across the House will be attending services in their electorates and supporting their communities. I pay my respects to all current and former members of the Defence Force across the country, and acknowledge, as I always do, all the members of the House who have served in our defence forces. As we know, 25 April was officially named Anzac Day in 1916 to mark the anniversary of the first major military action fought by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landing at Gallipoli in Turkey during World War I. The story of Anzac Day is one of courage and endurance in the face of trauma and tragedy. I will read an extract from someone who was at that landing and who describes actually landing on the beach. He writes:

To me was given the extreme honour of being actually the first man to put foot ashore on the peninsula, and to lead a portion of the men up the hill in that now historic charge.

What a living hell it was too, and how I managed to go through it from 4 o'clock in the morning of Sunday, the 25th April, to Wednesday, the 28th, under fire the whole time, without being hit, is a mystery to me.

We have firmly established ourselves now, and although the Unspeakable has made various attempts to dislodge us, and threatened to push us into the sea, his efforts have been abortive.

He has come to respect the fighting qualities of the Australian, and is now resorting to defensive measures, which, performed under the guidance of German Officers, are done pretty thoroughly.

I was promoted Captain on 26th April, and put in charge of a full Company of about 263 men. The responsibility is certainly great, especially as the lives of these men are practically given into one's keeping.

It is nine weeks since we landed here, and many poor fellows have tasted the horrors of a campaign.

Many noble acts have been performed, and courage is a quality that is not wanting among our fellows.

In the Turk we have a truly obstinate fighter, and he has well earned the title of the "Fighting Turk".

The heat here at the present time is unbearable, and the flies are that numerous that it is doubtful who gets the most when we uncover our tucker, and make an attempt to eat it.

Washing in fresh water is a thing of the past, and our changes of clothing and shaving mornings are few and far between.

I am very proud that those words have special pertinence to my family. My great-great-uncle Duncan Chapman penned those words and was the first ashore at Gallipoli. Stories like that are a reflection of the fighting spirit of the brave Anzacs and the unbelievable conditions they were forced to endure. [*Extension of time*]

The spirit of the Anzacs continues to live on through all Australians who served after World War I and who continue to serve our country in armed conflicts around the world. It is crucial that we honour the brave men and women who have served our country, and pay tribute to those who lost their lives fighting to defend our rights and maintain our freedom. However, it is important to remember that honouring our service men and women is not only for Anzac Day; it is something we need to do 365 days a year. The New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring we can continue to honour the service and sacrifice of our veterans. The final report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide has outlined what governments need to do to improve the lives of veterans and their families.

This year, to coincide with the 110th anniversary of Gallipoli, we are delivering projects such as the new New South Wales veterans strategy and action plans, and a new contemporary war memorial to acknowledge all those who have served in our modern Defence Force. I encourage everyone to commemorate our Anzacs and to

acknowledge the contributions of our servicemen and servicewomen, and those of their families. We have an obligation to all of them, particularly when they leave service, to make sure that all of our government services continue to support their lives moving forward.

I know people will attend their local Anzac service and do so in a respectful way. It is pleasing to see the crowds at the memorials growing every year. It shows that our community does respectfully acknowledge their service. In particular, I know that the young people, children and schoolkids who turn up, make speeches or march in memory of their fallen family members will have a very special day. Lest we forget.

NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (12:10): My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Recent media stories about the death of two-year-old Joe Massa and baby Harper Atkinson at Northern Beaches Hospital have shocked my community, and confidence in the hospital is deteriorating. What is the Government doing to restore community confidence in the Northern Beaches Hospital and ensure there are no more tragedies?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:11): I thank the member for Pittwater for her question and her advocacy, along with the member for Wakehurst. I recognise my first meetings with both of them were to discuss Northern Beaches Hospital. I also acknowledge that today the parents of Joe Massa, Elouise and Danny, are in and around the Parliament for the introduction of legislation later this afternoon that will be colloquially known as Joe's law.

A month ago, we were made aware of the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of Joe Massa. I do not think there is a more difficult thing for an individual to face than the passing of their child. No-one who has not experienced that can begin, for one moment, to walk in the shoes of Elouise and Danny. Over the past four weeks, our country, our State and their community on the Northern Beaches have seen what remarkable individuals they are. In the depths of the absolute agony of grief, pain and loss, they have decided to honour Joe by advocating for improvements to their local hospital. I am sure that all of us, including their local member, admire them for that. I think this House admires them for that as well.

As the Premier alluded to earlier, today we will bring forward a piece of legislation to ban public-private partnerships being imposed on our State's acute hospitals. This important piece of legislation will ensure that hospitals owned by the public are run by the public. We must get back to public health being first and profits being a distant second. We cannot have a model operating in New South Wales that sits between the public and the private like at Northern Beaches Hospital. It does not work. It is not a model we support. It is not a model we wanted to ever see put in place. Those of us who were around in that Parliament argued strongly against the proposal to bring forward five of those types of hospitals: one in Wyong, one in Bowral, one in Shellharbour, one in Maitland, and one on the Northern Beaches. The bill will ensure that future governments cannot bring about that type of privatisation. [*Extension of time*]

I acknowledge Elouise and Danny for the way in which they have advocated. Over the past four weeks, the Premier and I have had the absolute delight of getting to know them under the most difficult of circumstances. I certainly could not have done what they have done. I doubt that anyone in this Chamber could say that they could have easily done what they have done either. They have chosen to advocate, and for that we say thank you.

I will briefly touch on a number of other things we are doing to improve the performance of the hospital in addition to the legislation. An independent review into the emergency department and its performance will be undertaken by a professional health expert from Victoria who will bring with a fresh set of eyes to look at staffing, clinical expertise and other matters. In addition, we are working with Northern Beaches Hospital to implement the serious adverse event review report into the death of Joe Massa. The report was all about making sure that we, the hospital and Healthscope learn the lessons to improve safety. We are holding them to account on that.

In addition to a coronial inquiry, a parliamentary inquiry will be held, with submissions open until 20 May. In addition, the Auditor-General's report is due to be handed down in a few weeks. We are not just talking about preventing this from happening again; we are taking action to make it right and fix a wrong. None of us wants to do this as a result of a young child losing their life, but I hope when we debate and vote on the legislation we will all have in mind a baby boy who has been lost because improvements were needed to the health system in New South Wales.

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:16): My question is addressed to the Minister for Families and Communities. Will the Minister please update the House on the progress of the New South Wales Government's out-of-home care reforms?

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (12:16): I thank the member for Heathcote for her question. She has been a fierce advocate for vulnerable young people in her community since well before she was elected to this place. Two years ago the Government inherited a child protection system that was spiralling out of control and in desperate need of repair. From day one we have been open and honest about what we inherited: a child protection system that too often is unable to support children, families, carers, caseworkers and communities. Every stakeholder I have spoken with, even young people themselves, know we need to do better. We inherited a \$250 million deficit in out-of-home care alone, and an \$800 million budget black hole over the forward estimates. The system was haemorrhaging money and delivering poor outcomes for children and families in New South Wales. The worst of it was the rampant use of alternative care arrangements, or ACAs, where children were funnelled into hotels and motels with 24/7 shiftworkers instead of being in safe and loving homes.

Over the past two years, we have been stabilising and rebuilding that broken system with a comprehensive reform plan to create a world-class child protection system. First, we are banning unfit, unsafe and unaccredited alternative care arrangements. In 2023 there were 131 kids in these arrangements, leaving vulnerable children without the care and the stability they deserved. Since then, we have driven down that number by 94 per cent. Our imminent ban on ACAs will ensure unaccredited emergency arrangements are a thing of the past, but our ultimate KPI is to see fewer children in all types of high-cost emergency arrangements. Those number have already fallen by 35 per cent.

We have also opened Waratah Care Cottages so sibling groups, who had previously been separated in different ACAs, are now living in fit-for-purpose, high-quality homes, reunited with their brothers and sisters. We have also recruited 227 emergency foster care households, which has seen more than 1,000 children placed in homes, not hotels, when they need short-term emergency care. For our Department of Communities and Justice frontline caseworkers, who were neglected for so long under the former Government, we have delivered the largest pay increase in more than a decade, and we are providing new caseworkers with an additional \$8,000 a year.

Now that we are hiring 500 new caseworkers each year, the vacancy rate is going down, and worker retention is going up. Late last year, we redeployed our best and brightest casework specialists to the frontline. They have already seen and supported 300 of the most vulnerable families across the State. [*Extension of time*]

We are returning a range of critical functions back to the department, like the Waratah Care Cottages. These functions were previously outsourced by the former Government. We have employed 300 new family time workers to connect children and young people with their families. We have expanded the Pregnancy Family Conferencing program statewide to ensure that young mums at risk can keep their babies safe. We have enhanced family group conferencing for Aboriginal families to keep them safely together. We are taking back the responsibility to recruit foster carers. Piece by piece, we are reversing the damage done by the former Government, and we are charting a new path forward. My colleagues have also been tackling the tough issues. They have turned around the chronic teacher shortage in our schools, reduced the elective surgery waitlist, put more police back on the beat and are tackling the housing crisis.

We are doing all of this while inflation and interest rates are going down and real wages are going up. We have been methodical, careful and focused on what matters to the people of New South Wales. The Opposition privatised public assets and slapped a wage cap on essential workers. They left us to inherit the largest debt of any incoming government in the history of the State. When I was sworn in as the Minister for Families and Communities two years ago, I decided to approach this role with the simple proposition that it will be the most meaningful job I will have in my life. Our ambition is to create a world-class out-of-home care system that will see more children thriving in stable, safe and loving homes. We are getting on with the job, but there is so much more to do. We are absolutely committed to turning this ship around for the sake of the most vulnerable children in our State.

Announcements

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY PHOTOGRAPHS

The SPEAKER: I remind members that there will be a group photo in the Legislative Assembly Chamber for members from the Fifty-Third Parliament at 1.30 p.m. It should be easy for people who can still remember the Fifty-Third Parliament. It will be the member for Monaro, the member for Lane Cove and the member for Maroubra. It will be a big event, and we are going to have drinks afterwards. The group photo for members who were first elected to the Fifty-Seventh Parliament has been rescheduled for 9.50 a.m. tomorrow.

*Personal Explanation***PARLIAMENTARY SITTING DAYS**

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (12:22): By leave: I wish to correct the record of this place. Yesterday, the Leader of the House said that I "have not even turned up at times on Fridays and have not even got pairs." I have been in Parliament on every Friday sitting day since the 2023 election. It would mislead the House to claim otherwise.

PARLIAMENTARY SITTING DAYS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (12:23): By leave: I seek to clarify the record. On 26 March the Leader of the House commented on my attendance in this place in 2024. I was undergoing medical treatment during that period. I thank members of the House for their support during that time.

PARLIAMENTARY SITTING DAYS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (12:23): By leave: I was questioned by the Leader of the House in relation to my attendance on Fridays. I wish to confirm that I have been present for every single Friday except for one, on 20 September 2024, for which I received leave to attend the Master Plumbers awards event.

PARLIAMENTARY SITTING DAYS

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:24): By leave: Yesterday the Leader of the House also impugned my character by suggesting I had not attended Friday sittings of Parliament. I have attended all Friday sitting days since this Parliament has been in session.

*Committees***JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON THE OFFICE OF THE VALUER GENERAL****Government Response**

The CLERK: I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/58 of the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General, entitled *Sixteenth General Meeting with the Valuer General*, dated March 2024, received out of session on 25 March 2025 and authorised to be printed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH**Reports**

Dr JOE MCGIRR: As Chair: I table report No. 2/58 of the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health, entitled *The implementation of Portfolio Committee No. 2 recommendations relating to the delivery of specific health services and specialist care in remote, rural and regional NSW*, dated March 2025. I move:

That the report be printed.

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***ELECTORAL AMENDMENT (VOTER ID AND ELECTRONIC MARK OFF) BILL 2024 (NO 2)****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (12:26): I continue my contribution to debate on the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2) that was interrupted by question time. The electoral amendment that this private member's bill proposes has three parts, and all three are problematic. The first part says that voters must show evidence of their identity to be eligible. This is particularly problematic for our most vulnerable voters who are unable to show adequate ID in many cases. It is not something that is asked of them. There is a risk that they would fail to vote. That creates a twofold problem, and it means they are not a part of our democracy anymore. That would be a disgusting situation. The second part of the bill says that election officials must mark off electors using an electronic authorised roll. That is not possible. We do not have the mobile phone or wi-fi coverage to support it. We cannot make the assumption that this is able to be rolled out across the entire State.

The third part of this bill says that if an election official is unable to use the electronic authorised roll, that official must record on an authorised printed roll that a ballot paper has been given to the voter. That already happens. I worked for the Electoral Commission for many years before I became a member of the Labor Party. I find it extremely offensive that the member is calling the officers of the Electoral Commission into disrepute. These officers are involved in extensive training to do their job in pre-polling or on an election day. The way that we hold our elections is held in very high regard, and to call it into disrepute is disgusting. To try to suppress voters from minority groups is repugnant. For these very clear reasons, I cannot support this bill.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:28): I contribute to the debate on the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2). The bill seeks to amend the Electoral Act 2017 to provide that: first, voters must show evidence of their identity to be eligible to vote, with an exception for silent voters; secondly, election officials must mark off electors using an electronic authorised roll on a networked computer system to record that a ballot paper has been given to a voter; and thirdly, if an election official is unable to use the electronic authorised roll, the official must record, on an authorised printed roll, that a ballot paper has been given to a voter. I join with the Government and other members to oppose the bill because the member for Kiama has not given a substantive reason for New South Wales to be the only jurisdiction in Australia to introduce voter ID.

In all seriousness, this bill is a solution looking for a problem. Even at its strongest, the member for Kiama's argument fails to show that this is a significant issue for elections in New South Wales. In fact, the data shows that the far bigger problem for our democracy is not the vanishingly small number of people voting twice but the eligible voters whose votes were not counted. Unfortunately, that is a significant concern in western and south-western Sydney, where for each election there is an increase in the number of informal votes cast. That occurs for a number of reasons. One is a lack of voter awareness or education about the different types of voting systems and improvements to the way that each intended vote can be cast, acknowledged and counted. Some people make a decision to not cast a formal vote, as is their right. But, as many of us who have scrutineered the vote count know, most people who voted informally wanted to cast a valid vote. Those are the votes I am referring to. Those are the votes we should be trying to ensure are counted as much as possible.

Other people, for one reason or another, do not vote at all. After elections my office receives correspondence and also has constituents coming in to say that they wanted to vote on a particular date but they were not able to vote for a variety of reasons. That is a problem we should be seeking to address, rather than the vanishingly small problem this bill seeks to address. There are also people eligible to vote who remain unenrolled. Again, that is a problem for which we should be developing solutions. The Australia Institute's research on the 2019 Federal election showed:

... for every person who was – accurately or otherwise – marked as voting twice or more, there were over one thousand Australians who were entitled to vote but whose votes were not counted.

That is a much greater problem for our democracy to tackle than the non-existent problem that is the subject of the member's bill. In the dying days of the previous Federal Government, Prime Minister Morrison did a deal with Pauline Hanson to introduce a bill with similar features in the Australian Parliament. The Electoral Legislation Amendment (Voter Integrity) Bill 2021 was another solution looking for a problem. Thankfully, it was eventually shelved, but not before sparking another round of debate over this imported, right-wing, American culture war issue that seems to have gained traction in the past 18 months or so.

Election day is one of Australia's great traditions. It is marked by the peaceful and respectful exchange of views, even between political opponents. Volunteers may debate certain issues, and there is more robust debate at some times than at others. But, by and large, as anyone who has worked on a polling booth knows, people generally get along with the opposing side's volunteers. They wander down to their local school or community hall and grab a democracy sausage, sovereignty cupcake or Commonwealth lamington to help fundraise for the local P&C and to support their local community. They hope the line is not too long—sometimes it is longer than at others—and they politely take everyone's how-to-vote cards even though they do not really want to. They go in, give their name and address, and make their vote in secret. That is the Australian tradition, and it is also important to acknowledge that it is an Australian innovation. Australia gave the secret ballot to the world. That is something we are incredibly proud of and that we rightly maintain and value to this day.

Unnecessary extra layers of bureaucracy would double the queues, and the stress and confusion for everyone for no reason. Even though Australia and New South Wales have compulsory voting, and many people will grit their teeth and put up with the delays, queues and confusion that the bill's unnecessary layer of administration will cause, it does not mean the deterrent and voter suppression effects of sending this message are not real. During public commentary on the Morrison Government-Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party bill in 2021, Kate Colvin, from the Everybody's Home campaign, said the bill was "a deeply concerning development because

it compounds the exclusion felt by people without homes, adding another hurdle to participation in community life." She also said:

Governments should respond with greater support, not disenfranchising people and taking away basic rights of citizenship.

The chair of Homelessness Australia, Jenny Smith, said that people without homes "often feel unheard, excluded and that they matter less than others. Voting is one way in which they can be heard." She also said:

If you flee your home without your papers to escape violence, or have your documents stolen while sleeping on the street, you shouldn't lose your ability to vote.

That is important in a community that is currently facing rising rates of homelessness while addressing a crisis in domestic and family violence. We know that many vulnerable people in our community experience those circumstances on a daily basis, and those are the people whose access to fundamental democratic rights we should be thinking to preserve, not seeking to take away. The bill's requirements would add to the administrative burden, and stress and uncertainty for both voters and polling place workers on election days.

I speak from the personal experience of seeing stress and frustration on the faces of polling place workers at the most recent Liverpool City Council election in September 2024. That election was run by a private provider, and processes were up in the air. There was confusion and a lack of clarity about where polling booths were located. There was also a range of disconnections between elections conducted in neighbouring local government areas by the NSW Electoral Commission and the election conducted in the Liverpool City Council area. Unfortunately, that led to extremely long lines and frustration for voters throughout early voting and on election day.

To add icing to the cake, the member for Kiama coupled his voter suppression measure with an electronic mark off provision, just to make it minimally practical. To pretend to be another voter, a potential fraudster would have to know who has not already voted and where they might vote. When electoral commissions look into apparent incidents of double or multiple voting, they find that the vast majority of cases are likely to be clerical errors by election day staff. The practical and technical problems with electronic mark off are obvious. To avoid a total election day catastrophe, internet connections across the State would need to be at or close to 100 per cent reliability. Unfortunately, we are not yet there, notwithstanding all of my jumping up and down to improve broadband connections. Sadly, 100 per cent of the State's internet connections are not reliable.

This kind of change should not and cannot be done without full involvement and consultation with the Electoral Commission. That has not been done. To return to where I started, this bill is a solution in search of a problem. It is the latest in a long line of conservative efforts to suppress the vote, make democracy narrower and smaller, and squeeze out the most marginalised and vulnerable people in our community. That is why I and the Government oppose the bill.

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (12:39): I contribute to debate on the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2). The bill seeks to amend the Electoral Act 2017 to provide that voters must show evidence of their identity to be eligible to vote, with an exception for silent voters; election officials must mark off electors using an electronic authorised roll on a networked computer system to record that a ballot paper has been given to a voter; and if an election official is unable to use the electronic authorised roll, the official must record on an authorised printed roll that a ballot paper has been given to a voter.

Rather than put up barriers to participation in our elections, the Government is committed to increasing turnout and so opposes the voter ID requirements in the bill as an unnecessary imposition and barrier to voting. The inquiry into the administration of the 2023 New South Wales State election and other matters conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters received many submissions from individuals, candidates, parties, civil society organisations, academics and other experts in various fields reflecting on matters related to the election. Many of those submissions addressed issues of accessibility and barriers to voting that still exist in New South Wales.

I will speak about one of those submissions to demonstrate that rather than putting up barriers to voting, as the bill would do, we should be removing them. The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW is one of the community organisations that made a submission to this inquiry. It is the statewide peak body representing culturally and linguistically diverse [CALD] communities, comprising hundreds of organisations and individuals. The council, in partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission and the NSW Electoral Commission, created the Vote Talk initiative to assist culturally and linguistically diverse communities to better understand how they can actively participate in, and make informed decisions about, voting during election processes in Australia. Culture and language barriers can hinder electoral participation and voting in culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and Vote Talk is aimed at addressing those barriers.

Those are the sorts of initiatives this Parliament should be discussing and supporting, not the proposal by the member for Kiama to suppress votes. Vote Talk is comprised of three components that aim to increase electoral awareness, electoral enrolments and voting formality rates for targeted communities: community education and engagement, bilingual café conversations, and live on-air broadcasts on radio aimed at ethnic communities. Bilingual facilitators underwent training to deliver key messages on enrolment, voting and working at elections, enabling communities to hear information in their community language from a trusted source. The six targeted languages in Western Sydney were Arabic, Cantonese, Greek, Korean, Mandarin, and Vietnamese.

CALD communities and frontline community leaders and staff were engaged in places like local libraries, community auditoriums, community events and halls attached to places of worship. The café conversations allowed the bilingual facilitators to provide accurate information and dispel misconceptions. The bilingual facilitators also engaged with local community radio stations and shows, where scripts for the facilitators and the hosts were developed in consultation with the NSW Electoral Commission. Those conversations were often available for on-demand listening and sharing and were often repeated multiple times on air. Feedback on the radio engagement strategy was positive. One radio station employee noted:

We were receiving calls from people asking why they did not receive this information during other previous elections.

Another said:

People stopped me while I was shopping to say they enjoyed the updates on radio and found it very interesting.

One person summed it up:

On radio we discussed politics around the world and in my country and how privileged we were to be here in Australia and have the freedom and right to have a say about what happens in this country.

The Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW reports that some of the benefits of that program during the 2023 election period included greater confidence in how to complete a formal ballot and greater awareness of absent voting and early voting options, which many people had been unaware of; more people, particularly younger people, being inspired and empowered to contact their local members of Parliament; a high satisfaction rate for the training of the bilingual facilitators; and negative perceptions and preconceived ideas about voting and the election process, which could depress turnout and formality, being addressed directly and accurate information being provided. I congratulate the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW on that important and effective initiative to expand democratic participation in our State.

In its report, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters found that there should be no change to New South Wales laws to require voters to produce proof of identity to vote at State elections. Rather than exaggerate the dangers of voter fraud, as the member for Kiama has done with this bill, we should instead be seeking ways to expand turnout, formality and participation in our democracy in general. We should send the message that everyone's participation in our democracy is welcomed and encouraged, and that our institutions belong to everyone. The provisions in the bill send the opposite message, so members must oppose it.

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (12:45): I voice my strong support for the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2), introduced by the member for Kiama. Importantly, the proposed legislation amends the Electoral Act 2017 to require a person to produce evidence of their identity to vote at an election and to require election officials to mark off an electronic roll after giving an elector a ballot paper for the election. Those two changes are integral to protect the integrity and sanctity of our elections and our democracy, particularly in the global context of increased distrust of institutions, governments and the media.

Regardless of the margin in any specific electorate or statewide election outcome, every single vote is important, even if the outcome is not decided by a single vote. The sanctity and respect for a vote is to be held in the highest regard, and that is diminished when voters are found to have voted fraudulently and/or voted more than once in a single election. Those electoral breaches have the disastrous effect of diminishing all other legitimate votes by a certain percentage. No vote anywhere across the State should be reduced in significance and value by the fact that another person has doubled their vote and/or voted fraudulently, irrespective of how minimal that percentage may be.

For those who disagree with that view and hold the belief that people voting twice and/or voting fraudulently is a concern only if it changes the outcome of a seat, they too should be concerned about people voting twice and/or voting fraudulently. History has shown that seats can be decided by only a few votes and overall elections decided by only a few seats. A report into the 2019 State election found that more than 3,000 people voted more than once. Practically, such figures can change the outcome of an election, so we must be proactive to prevent disaster from occurring. That is a better alternative to the reactive approach if a seat or an

entire election in the future were to be decided by fewer votes than the total number who had voted twice and/or voted fraudulently.

The law already recognises that voting twice is to be avoided, prescribing it as a criminal offence punishable by a significant fine or imprisonment. Under section 212 (1) (b) of the Electoral Act 2017, it is a criminal offence for a person to vote more than once at any election. The maximum penalty for breaching that provision is \$22,000 or imprisonment for three years, or both. If that is the case, why not introduce a simple mechanism so that the offence cannot occur? Government and society are full of examples of measures that are taken to prevent criminal offences being committed, beyond the legislation prohibiting the offence.

Why, then, do we not have practical and simple measures to prevent the offence of double voting?

I recognise that the actions of some people who have voted twice in an election did not constitute a criminal offence because they were the result of confusion rather than ill intent. The requirement of identification will prevent those people from mistakenly voting twice. As increased technology sees more people using their phones as a means of producing identification, there appears to be less inconvenience for people to have identification on them, compared with earlier times. Furthermore, identification is already required to conduct day-to-day tasks, including liaising with the State and Federal governments and agencies, so it would be surprising if there was a substantial number of people who could not produce identification.

As for those who, in fact, cannot produce identification, the method to address that is not to forfeit the requirement to produce it but rather to solve the issue of the person's inability to obtain and produce identification. In this day and age—and in any day and age—the ability to produce identification is a necessity. In circumstances where it is required, such as to obtain government services and assistance, the requirement is not bypassed when the individual does not have identification. Rather, the individual is directed to get identification. There is no reason that the same obligation cannot be imposed on individuals under the bill. It is a small inconvenience for any individual to pay for the purpose of protecting and strengthening the integrity of our democracy. If they obtain identification once and for all, it is likely that they will not have the same issues in the future.

The technology exists for people to be marked off rolls so that no more than one vote can be attributed to them anywhere in the State, as opposed to being physically crossed off at one location with no clarity at any other location that someone has already voted. That measure of electronic cross-off creates no obligation or work for the voter. In does not significantly increase the work for Electoral Commission staff, as they are already required to physically cross off names. Foreign countries with far more questionable democracy and human rights still show some respect for the election process by providing safeguards, such as dipping an individual's finger in ink to prevent them from voting twice, whether under their own name or once under their name and once under the name of another person. We cannot take the strength of our own democracy and freedom for granted and think that we can preserve it just through the goodwill and good values of our citizens and governments. Whilst goodwill and honest intentions by all are an important part of our democracy, they can never be a substitute for the legal rules and processes that enforce our democracy. Good intentions can complement those rules but can never be relied on in place of them.

Opponents to the bill may argue that it infringes their right to participate in public elections and impacts on a person's access to voting. I pre-empt such arguments by emphasising that they are nonsensical and can only be based on the fact that State of Federal governments are too incompetent to enable people to obtain identification in a practical form. If that is the case, the correct way to proceed is not to refrain from imposing identification requirements for voting but to simplify the process for individuals to obtain identification. That would also assist them with other tasks in life that require identification, such as engaging with other government agencies. On that note, governments do not waive identification requirements when an individual seeks to log in to government portals such as MyGov or claim entitlements from Services Australia. We do not hear arguments about a person's right to their social security entitlements or to obtain a driver licence being infringed because they need to supply identification.

In fact, the identification requirements in the bill are less onerous than those often imposed when dealing with government agencies. The bill allows for the use of a driver licence; a photo card; a proof of age card issued by Australia Post; a Medicare card; a pensioner concession card, Department of Veterans' Affairs entitlement card or other entitlement card issued by the Commonwealth or a State government; a student identity card issued by an educational institution; or an Australian passport. As such, why should the requirement to provide identification for voting be considered as disenfranchising the voter? The proposed legislation recognises the potential sensitivities associated with silent voters by providing that an election official must not ask a silent elector or an absent silent elector to produce a current identification document to establish the person's identity. I commend the member for Kiama for introducing the bill, which seeks to increase the integrity of our elections and our democracy with simple and commonsense measures. I wholeheartedly support the bill.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (12:54): I speak in opposition to the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2). The bill amends the Electoral Act 2017 to introduce mandatory voter identification requirements and electronic marking off systems. While the Government strongly supports measures that improve the electoral process, we must firmly oppose the provisions in this bill that create unnecessary barriers to voter participation. The fundamental principle of our democracy is that every eligible citizen should have the ability to cast their vote freely and without undue restriction. Requiring voters to provide identification at the ballot box introduces an additional hurdle that could disenfranchise thousands of eligible voters, particularly those from culturally and linguistically diverse—or CALD—backgrounds, the elderly, and people experiencing homelessness. The New South Wales Government is committed to increasing electoral participation, not restricting it.

The inquiry into the administration of the 2023 New South Wales State election and other matters, conducted by the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters, received numerous submissions from individuals, candidates, political parties, civil society organisations, academics and electoral experts. A recurring theme in those submissions was the existence of barriers to voting, particularly for marginalised communities. One submission that underscored the significance of those barriers was from the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. The council is a statewide peak body representing culturally and linguistically diverse communities, comprising hundreds of organisations and individuals.

In partnership with the Australian Electoral Commission and the NSW Electoral Commission, the council implemented the Vote Talk Program, which aimed to educate and empower CALD communities to participate fully in the electoral process. The Vote Talk initiative was structured around three key components: community education and engagement, providing accessible, community-driven electoral education; bilingual café conversations, offering informal discussions in native languages to address concerns and dispel misconceptions; and live broadcasts on ethnic community radio stations, ensuring that electoral information was available in multiple languages and in culturally familiar settings.

Bilingual facilitators were trained to deliver crucial messages about voter enrolment, ballot formality and election procedures in Arabic, Cantonese, Greek, Korean, Mandarin and Vietnamese—languages spoken widely in Western Sydney. Those efforts enabled community members to receive vital information in their own language from trusted sources, improving their understanding of their electoral rights and responsibilities. The engagement strategy received overwhelmingly positive feedback. The Ethnic Communities' Council reported several significant benefits from the initiative during the 2023 election period, including greater confidence in completing a formal ballot and increased awareness of early and absent voting options; increased civic engagement, particularly among younger voters, who were inspired to contact their local members of Parliament; high satisfaction rates with the training of bilingual facilitators; and the ability to counteract misinformation and negative perceptions about the electoral process, reducing deterrents to voter participation.

Those are the kinds of programs we should be discussing and supporting in Parliament, not proposals like this bill, which place additional obstacles in front of voters. The JSCEM report was clear in its conclusion: There should be no change to the New South Wales laws to require voters to produce proof of identity to vote at State elections. Proponents of this bill claim it is necessary to safeguard democracy and prevent voter fraud. However, voter fraud is not a widespread issue in Australia. The most recent report by the Electoral Commission following the 2019 State election noted that while some 3,000 cases of apparent double voting were recorded, there was no evidence to suggest deliberate fraud at a scale that could impact electoral outcomes.

Mr Gareth Ward: Only 3,000 people. How do you explain the 3,000 people?

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Out of what, eight million? More often, these cases result from administrative errors or misunderstandings, not malicious intent—maybe in Kiama; I don't know. Rather than exaggerating the dangers of voter fraud, we should focus on initiatives that encourage higher turnout, increase formal voting and greater democratic engagement. Every eligible citizen should feel welcomed and encouraged to vote—not be made to feel as though their right to vote is under suspicion. The introduction of voter ID requirements, as seen in other jurisdictions, disproportionately impacts marginalised communities. The argument that requiring identification will not create barriers ignores the lived experiences of many Australians who may struggle to obtain these documents.

Furthermore, the assumption that digital access solves this problem overlooks the reality that digital and bureaucratic barriers still exist for some of our most vulnerable citizens. Democracy thrives when participation is broad, inclusive, and equitable. This bill moves us in the opposite direction. If we are serious about strengthening our democracy, we should be investing in initiatives like the Vote Talk program, expanding civic education, and ensuring that language, socio-economic status and accessibility barriers do not prevent participation. For these reasons, I speak in opposition to this bill. Our focus must be on making voting easier, not harder. We must send

the message that democratic participation is for everyone and that our institutions belong to all citizens, not just those with the right documents in their wallets. I oppose the bill.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (13:02): On behalf of The Greens, I join in debate on the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2) and indicate that again The Greens oppose the bill. I note that this is the reintroduction of a bill that has already been debated. If the member for Kiama heard us last time, he should not be surprised that we have already contributed, but the issue has not yet been resolved in this House. The Greens still do not support the bill. I will take a moment to reiterate our reasons. I have been listening to some of the contributions in support of the bill and it has been incredibly disappointing to hear the type of rationale behind a bill of this type.

The bill will amend the Electoral Act 2017 so that voters must show evidence of their identity to be eligible to vote, and that election officials must use an electronic copy of the roll to record the distribution of ballot papers. The Greens position is clear: Voter ID laws are anti-democratic and place barriers to people with no fixed address, or who lack access to full official identity documentation. Of course, there are many reasons why a person could find themselves in such circumstances. The speeches made by some of the members on the Opposition side of the Chamber in this debate really speak to privilege. There is such a lack of understanding of why people might find themselves in a situation in which they do not have access to identity documents.

The bill has been introduced by the member for Kiama with no clear evidence to support it. No recommendations have been made by the NSW Electoral Commission in relation to the issues it purports to address. No guidance has been given to support the member's proposed reform. There is no current discussion or public commentary suggesting voter fraud or that multiple voting is rife throughout New South Wales. In fact, the only media mention to this issue in recent times seems to have been in the member for Kiama's own local paper. It appears to be a solution in search of a problem.

Mr Gareth Ward: Why are you attacking *The Bugle*?

Ms KOBI SHETTY: There is no problem here. Why is there this Trumpian need to over-inflate the issue and undermine the community's confidence in our democracy when it is not a problem? The NSW Electoral Commission has set out its regulatory priorities for 2024-25, none of which relate to voter fraud. Instead, the commission is concerned with delivering focused education initiatives for election participants and providing relevant and timely information to support their compliance; supporting privacy by educating authorised recipients of enrolment information about managing personal data securely; improving the transparency of our enforcement activities to raise awareness among political participants about their obligations, and to reduce future non-compliance; upholding the integrity of elections by responding in a timely manner to material that may mislead the community about the electoral processes in New South Wales; and supporting voting in person at elections in New South Wales to be safe and free of interference, including for election officials working at polling places.

When it comes to integrity around elections and voter behaviour our concern should be to minimise the harm caused by malicious actors rather than to indulge any unverified and unsupported suggestions that voter fraud is eroding confidence in our democracy. How about some truth in political advertising laws? To the extent that voter fraud is occurring, significant disincentives already apply to prevent multiple voting. Section 212 (1) (b) of the Act makes it an offence to vote more than once at any election, punishable by fines of up to \$22,000, imprisonment for three years, or both. Schedule 6 to the Act allows the commissioner to declare someone a "special elector" if they are convicted under section 212 (1) (b), or if the commissioner has reasonable grounds to suspect they have contravened that provision. Being declared a "special elector" subjects a voter to specific additional requirements before being offered a ballot paper to vote in an election. There is simply no need for voter ID laws to be introduced, and indeed there are genuine reasons to oppose them.

Regarding the electronic mark-off requirements, such a system is already in use across New South Wales, and it is also clear that there is no need to make it a statutory requirement. In fact, there could be risks associated with making the use of an electronic roll mandatory across all polling places. We have to take ourselves out of the city and think about some of the regional communities. Recently we had places with blackouts for days. What do they do if there is an election and they do not have access to an electronic roll? It disenfranchises entire communities. There are also challenges of providing enough devices to cover every booth is one issue; reliable internet connectivity, particularly in the bush; training of staff, who are generally employed on short-term contracts as well as potential cybersecurity concerns that could lead to malicious actors compromising the integrity of enrolment and electoral data. The bill simply makes no sense. The Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2) is both dangerous and unnecessary. My Greens colleagues and I do not support it.

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (13:07): Is anybody surprised that the member for Kiama comes into this House and brings the bill mark II? This is the second time the member for Kiama has had a go at it.

Mr Edmond Atalla: He did not understand it the first time.

Ms ANNA WATSON: He still has not got the message that this House again does not have any intention of supporting this ridiculous bill. I join in debate on the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2) and I must thank the member for Kiama for giving me the opportunity to give him another towel up in this place. This bill is just another stunt from the Donald Trump of the Illawarra. If members cannot imagine the member for Kiama looking like Trump, just google "Gareth Ward spray tan" and they will see exactly what I mean. He looks like Donald Trump, he acts like Donald Trump, and he takes his political cues from Donald Trump.

This private member's bill is not only ill-conceived but it is also dangerous. The contribution to this debate by the member for Balmain was spot-on. It was a fantastic contribution. The member for Balmain's statements were valid. The bill is ill thought out, rushed and will undermine electoral integrity by disenfranchising vulnerable individuals. Multiple voting where an elector votes more than once is not even close to being an issue in New South Wales. It does not come close to warranting any new laws.

No other State in Australia requires voters to show evidence of their identity to vote, and rightly so. The Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters recently conducted an inquiry into the 2019 State election and found that no change to New South Wales laws was required regarding voter identification or electronic marking off. The Electoral Commission found that the incidence of any multiple or double voting was not high enough to affect the 2019 State election outcome in any electorate.

Mr Gareth Ward: It was for your preselection.

Ms ANNA WATSON: I'll get to that.

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

Ms ANNA WATSON: The scale of apparent multiple and double voting has declined further since 2019 election. The Electoral Commission's report on the 2023 election shows there were only around 1,000 instances of apparent double voting, and three instances of apparent multiple voting. Only three. Let's rush in and get this done! Just like with the 2019 election, the Electoral Commission states that no instance of apparent multiple voting had an impact on the 2023 State election, either. Imagine how many people would not vote at all if they forgot to bring their ID to the polling place or if they did not have an ID that met the ridiculously high expectations of the member for Kiama. Likewise, if someone is homeless at election time, they should not lose their right to vote. Clearly, the member for Kiama thinks that is okay; should lose their right to vote if they have not got their ID, whether they are homeless or not.

All members of this House knows I am a fierce advocate for those fleeing family and domestic violence. I do not think this bill takes into account the rights of those people, either. Why should women who have fled a violent home without their papers or their identification lose their right to vote, especially at a time when they are desperately wanting to be heard? The member for Kiama could not care less about those women. The technical issues of implementing a system of electronic marking off clearly outweigh the benefits. In order to avoid a total election day disaster, all polling places would need internet connections that were 100 per cent reliable—obviously highly unlikely after the Liberals botched the NBN rollout. This kind of change should not be considered without the full involvement of and consultation with the Electoral Commission, which has not been done, as the member for Heathcote rightly pointed out. Quite simply, this is a voter suppression bill designed by a raging conservative to stop people who would never vote Liberal or never vote for Gareth Ward.

Mr Gareth Ward: Said no-one, ever!

Ms ANNA WATSON: They would never vote for you, mate. You can smell the air of absolute desperation in this bill brought to this place again by the member for Kiama. It mirrors similar campaigns run by right-wing conservatives in other jurisdictions, and it is shameful that the member for Kiama is trying to import an American culture war into this country. The Minns Labor Government supports as many eligible voters taking part in democracy as possible, not putting up unnecessary barriers to prevent them from doing so. This bill attempts to solve a problem that does not exist, as the member for Liverpool pointed out. The member for Kiama will go on social media as soon as this debate is over—

Mr Gareth Ward: I have already done it.

Ms ANNA WATSON: He has already done it, probably prerecorded. The member for Kiama will get onto social media and go on the radio to have a massive sook about how Labor is not fixing a non-existent problem, even though he and his beloved Liberal Party mates had 12 years in government and did nothing on this issue. There is a pattern there, of course. They did not build new schools in West Dapto or Cawdor, either. They had 12 years but, nonetheless, they did not do it. The member for Kiama comes in here to have a big whinge and a big sook about Labor not supporting his bill. But while the bill absolutely deserves to be defeated, maybe I should throw the member for Kiama a bone. Currently, he is doing it a little bit tough. His best mate, Mayor Chris Homer, has been in the media a little bit lately copping a shellacking, and rightly so.

Mr Gareth Ward: Point of order: The member's unhealthy obsession with the Mayor of Shellharbour has nothing to do with this debate. I ask that you draw her back to the leave of the bill.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): I thank the member for Kiama. The member for Shellharbour will return to the leave of the bill.

Ms ANNA WATSON: The member for Kiama is obviously desperate for friends. Alas, he will need to find some friends somewhere else to cheer him up, because I definitely will not be voting for this ill-conceived bill.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (13:14): Voting is one of our most cherished rights and responsibilities as citizens of this great nation and State. It is the cornerstone of our democratic process, ensuring that every eligible individual has a voice in how we are governed, and a privilege that billions around the globe do not enjoy. An ever-changing beast, our modern elections are increasing in complexity, so ensuring integrity and confidence in our voting system should be of paramount concern for members. The Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2) is an appropriate and needed step in the direction of improving integrity and ensuring confidence, with voter ID requirements providing the security that our system is desperately lacking. As we all know, this is not a radical idea. Frankly, we are behind the bell curve on this. It is a widespread and acceptable measure across dozens of liberal democracies, such as Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Denmark, Sweden, Japan, Luxembourg and more.

When discussing such an important reform as voter ID laws, and reforms more broadly, questions of "Why now?" or "Is this necessary?" are always asked. As the member for Kiama aptly pointed out, the Electoral Commission reported that more than 3,000 people voted multiple times in the 2019 State election. For what reasons, sinister or not, we can only speculate. But there is no acceptable justification for such an extraordinary number. It is a practice that completely undermines the confidence of citizens in the electoral process, at a time when global and local confidence in the political system sits at an all-time low. For the sake of our fragile but precious democratic processes, we need to invest in measures that demonstrate trustworthiness. Indeed, in my own experience in the electorate of Lowe some time ago, another member of this place and I saw two busloads of unionists turn up at a polling booth with beers in hand to go into the booth to vote. Those two busloads were seen around Lowe, which was a marginal seat at the time, going from booth to booth to vote.

Ms Anna Watson: How do you know they were unionists?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: They had CFMEU T-shirts on. That's how.

Ms Lynda Voltz: Point of order: The member for Lane Cove should direct his comments through the Chair, not across the Chamber. When the electorate of Lowe was around, there was not something called the CFMEU.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): There is no point of order.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I thank the member for Auburn for raising that point, though. They were obviously part of the Builders Labourers Federation, or the CFMEU as it is now. I was trying to bring the example into contemporary discussion.

Mr Gareth Ward: The corridor of corruption.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: The corridor of corruption. I again thank everyone who has fought so hard to bring the bill to the Parliament and those who have spoken in favour of it. In particular, I thank Mervyn and Anne Youl, who have been raising the importance of voter ID laws with the Liberal Party for years. I congratulate them and commend the bill to the House.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (13:17): I support the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2). I note this is the second time a bill in this form has come to the Chamber. The first one lapsed, so I hope we will have an up-down vote on the bill in this House. I support integrity measures when it comes to elections. I think every member of this House supports our democracy and knows the importance of

voting and of encouraging people to vote. It is the hallmark of our democracy in Australia and something that we need to continue to always fight for. Only earlier this week, I was at Lindfield East Public School, where I spoke to year 6 leaders before they went to Canberra. Of course, I spoke about the importance of being able to vote and of encouraging that. I also reminded them of the need to have a democracy sausage to support the P&C, but voting is just so important.

We can always strengthen the integrity of voting, and, as the member for Kiama identified, there have been problems in the past. In the 2019 election, over 3,000 people were identified as voting more than once. We hope they were honest mistakes but it is a concern, given the member for Ryde won his seat by 54 votes, the member for Holsworthy won her seat by roughly 300 votes and the member for Penrith won her seat by roughly 800 votes. One concern I had when I first read the bill was whether it promoted voter suppression. I did my homework on that, and the bill clearly says a person can turn up to a polling booth with a driver licence, a photo card, a proof of age card issued by Australia Post, a Medicare card, a pensioner's card, a Department of Veterans' Affairs entitlement card or any other entitlement card issued by a Commonwealth or State department, a student identity card issued by an educational institution or an Australian passport to use for identification. As members have pointed out, many of us carry digital identification on our phones now.

My concern was what happens if a person turns up to the polling booth without any of those forms of ID? Does that mean they will be turned away? Members should know there is a provision in the Electoral Act 2017 called a declaration vote. That means if a person turns up to a polling booth and they are not on the electoral roll but believe they would be on the electoral roll, they get to cast their ballot and it is put to the side while the matter is investigated by the Electoral Commission. It is exactly the same when it comes to this bill. If in the very rare instance somebody turns up, has forgotten their ID and does not have their phone, they would cast a declaration vote. The scaremongering, misinformation and exaggeration by those opposite is disappointing. They should get to know the Electoral Act 2017 and understand what a declaration vote is.

As a member of the Liberal Party for 24 years, I consistently attend the Liberal Party State council. For many years, the issue raised consistently by every single person in the room, who loyally stand at polling booths at every single election, is that we should have voter ID at elections. The State council has consistently called for it and motions have been moved on it. I agree. As an elected Liberal member of Parliament, I owe it to the members to listen to their concerns as they are the ones who see the issues that occur at polling booths. As I said, in 2019, 3,000 people were identified as voting twice. I owe it to the membership of the Liberal Party to say, "I have listened to you. I am coming into this House and I am supporting these measures." I commend the bill to the House.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (13:23): I make a brief contribution to debate on the Electoral Amendment (Voter ID and Electronic Mark Off) Bill 2024 (No 2). I was in the House for the purposes of Chamber duty and did not intend to speak. I support the bill. I have been listening to the contributions, and there has been some commentary about how marginalised communities would comply with the bill. My electorate has some of the most marginalised communities in all of New South Wales.

Ms Anna Watson: Yet they still vote Nat.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN: I do not know how they vote; it is a matter for them how they vote. But for members, particularly members representing Sydney electorates, to say that the bill makes the hurdle too high for marginalised communities is bordering on offensive because the people in marginalised communities in my electorate do have proof of identity. They carry the ID cards with them.

Ms Lynda Voltz: You think everybody in Tingha is carrying ID?

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN: Absolutely, because it is not hard to prove one's identity in 2025.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): I call the member for Auburn to order for the first time.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN: With respect, I do not think it is right for those opposite to say it sets a hurdle that is too high for marginalised communities. I respect those opposite and the positions they hold. As a regional MP who represents some of the most marginalised communities in New South Wales and as an acting duty solicitor in Boggabilla before I came to this place, I do not think one could find more marginalised communities in New South Wales than Boggabilla or Toomelah. When I was acting as a duty solicitor in Boggabilla for clients from that area or from the Toomelah mission and I sat down with them to fill out the Legal Aid form, overwhelmingly a form of identity would come across the bench—it is not a desk at Boggabilla Local Court—to prove the client's identity. I do not think anyone would argue that Boggabilla and Toomelah are incredibly marginalised communities. I do not think the bill sets the bar too high, and I support it. I respect the comments of

those opposite, but, as someone who has acted for and represents very marginalised communities, I believe the bill can be worked with and does not set the bar too high.

Ms Felicity Wilson: Madam Temporary Speaker—

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I move:

That the question be now put.

Ms Felicity Wilson: I had already been given the call.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): I have sought advice from the Clerk and the question can be put at any time. The question is that the question be now put.

The House divided.

Ayes50
Noes36
Majority.....14

AYES

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

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

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

NOES

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

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

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

PAIRS

Tesch, L

Hodges, M

Motion agreed to.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua): It being 1.33 p.m., debate is interrupted. Under Standing Order 87, the member for Kiama will have the opportunity to reply when the bill is next before the House. The time for consideration of general business orders of the day (for bills) having expired, I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later time.

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

Motions

REGIONAL YOUTH CRIME

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (14:30): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that crime in regional New South Wales is skyrocketing under the Government.
- (2) Recognises the NSW Police Force does an amazing job but needs legislative support to deal with young offenders.
- (3) Calls on the Government to increase police numbers across the regions to provide a proper police presence to help keep residents safe.
- (4) Urges the Government to get serious on young offenders, particularly repeat offenders.

The youth crime crisis is gripping our communities. Its reach extends to every corner of every regional area, and that grip is tightening. The Minns Government is constantly trying to downplay the situation. There is no doubt in our minds that things have spiralled out of control. It is the number one thing that people are talking about, and the top thing on everyone's mind. Chances are that if a person lives in a regional area right now, they or someone they know has been impacted by crime. That is the harsh reality of this epidemic.

Our residents are living in a constant state of panic and fear. Homes are broken into, cars are stolen and, even worse, loved ones are hurt. The trauma of waking in the middle of the night to a masked and armed intruder is not something that is easily forgotten. Enough is enough. People are absolutely fed up. That frustration has translated to the large rallies that have been held in a number of areas because people want to finally have their voices heard. I attended a rally in Kempsey a few weeks ago with several of my Nationals colleagues and more than 700 locals. The feeling on the ground was one of anger and helplessness. The message was clear: People want real change.

This week, as members have debated the Government's bail extension bill, we have had a unique opportunity to take a hard look at whether the changes implemented last year are actually working. The verdict from the jury in the regions is a clear and resounding no. I dare anyone in the Government to tell people in places like Dubbo, Wellington, Bourke, Bathurst, Tamworth, Gunnedah or Moree that their approach is making a difference. They would laugh them out of town and say they are absolutely kidding themselves. There is no doubt our police are doing an incredible job. The recent launch of Operation Soteria by the commissioner and the deputy commissioner in Dubbo demonstrates that they are firmly focused on addressing the issue. Dedicating 60 officers to patrol key hotspots will certainly empower our police to do what they need to do more efficiently. It is great that the operational arm will see high-visibility policing targeting hundreds of repeat offenders believed to be responsible for about 90 per cent of youth crime across regional New South Wales. That is something we see and feel every day.

Part of the plan needs to be better resourcing for the Police Force Youth Command. The new police operation is a good start, but police are stretched thin and there are simply not enough of them outside the city. We heard in budget estimates recently that by 2026 we are forecast to have more than 3,000 vacant authorised police positions, which is concerning. It makes it abundantly clear that the Minns Government is not attracting or retaining nearly enough police officers to meet the needs of our State, particularly in regional areas. Now that the police have taken a fantastic step with Operation Soteria, we need to back them in 100 per cent by giving them legislative support so that when they get kids off the streets, the kids are not constantly sent back to the same place that saw them offending previously. An alarming number of kids reoffend within 36 hours of being released from police custody. Any regional cop will talk about how frustrating that is; it feels like a revolving door. It is not good enough. We need to take a strong next step, like the laws in Queensland and those more recently being worked on by the Labor Government in Victoria.

The approach in New South Wales is undeniably falling short. When the Government introduced its bail bill a year ago, the Coalition said exactly that. Here we are, a year later, and serious repeat youth offenders are still holding our residents to ransom. It is a year later and residents are still terrified to walk the streets. It is a year later and families still do not feel safe in their own homes. It is a year later and we are still having the same conversation—but now more lives have been lost. In January, an incident involving a stolen car led to the death of a motorcycle rider in Gunnedah. More recently, an incident led to the death of a 17-year-old at Bourke in the west of the State. Those incidents need to be a wake-up call for the Government. We need a circuit breaker to stop incidents like those from happening again. We need to do better in the future, because those deaths cannot be in vain.

The path we are on will not lead to safe communities. That is why the Coalition moved amendments to the bail extension bill last week to make it stronger. Why would we just extend something that is not actually working? It was very disappointing that none of our amendments were supported. However, the Opposition is introducing its own legislation, of which notice was given today, to offer a more robust solution to the crisis. It will include expanding the definition of "serious offences" beyond serious break and enter and motor vehicle theft to include all serious indictable offences, such as murder and sexual assault. Why would it not?

The bill will introduce electronic monitoring and a mandatory curfew as conditions of bail, and revocation of bail if there is a breach of conditions or if another charge is laid whilst on bail. That is what our communities need and want. It is necessary to elevate the voices of victims by hearing directly from them in court. That is what is needed. A review of domestic violence electronic monitoring clearly shows that almost 35 per cent of offenders are less likely to commit a new domestic violence offence while under electronic monitoring. There is evidence it will make a difference, so it is something we will continue to push for. The Opposition will also continue working with the shadow Attorney General on potential changes to *doli incapax*, because more needs to be done in that space.

Legislative changes are not the entire solution. A holistic approach is needed—one that is tailored to each community. A one-size-fits-all approach will not cut it because every community is slightly different, and they all need different solutions based on the capacity on the ground. As I have said many times before, it will involve diversionary programs and different pathways for different kids, rather than constantly bailing them back into the same environment over and over again. However, giving police the legislative support they need is a crucial start. We also need to work on getting more boots on the ground. We have had two years of weakness in the face of a crisis that needs a strong and decisive response. The Minns Labor Government needs to step up and take every available measure to stop repeat youth offenders from carrying out crime sprees across regional New South Wales, or there will be more deaths as a result of this crisis. The time for change is now.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (14:37): I contribute to debate on the motion. The Government has heard the community's concerns around youth crime. It has initiated more measures in two years than the previous Government ever did. The member for Dubbo is not genuine; he is just grandstanding. The first paragraph of his motion notes that crime in regional New South Wales is skyrocketing under this Government. As the Leader of The Nationals, he should do his homework. Maybe he should take advice from the member for Bathurst. As a newbie to Parliament, and as a leader, he should be looking at the statistics and the real issues.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Tell that to the people of Moree, my friend.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Order! The member for Dubbo was heard in silence. He will extend that courtesy to other speakers.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Let me tell the people of Dubbo something. Property offences in the Dubbo area have reduced by 2.9 per cent over the past 10 years. It is true that crime has been reducing. However, in the past two years, under the Minns Labor Government, crime has reduced by 12.3 per cent.

Having said that, what we are experiencing is not good enough. The Government is doing something about it. But the member for Dubbo has been in Parliament since 2019, and not once did he raise this issue in his Cabinet meetings.

Mr Dugald Saunders: How do you know? Were you in the Cabinet?

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Because it would have been in the media. You are a media exaggerator, so you would have been beating your chest had you done something about it.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Is this a leadership challenge?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Coffs Harbour rises on a point of order. The member for Mount Druitt will resume his seat.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 73. If the member for Mount Druitt wants to debate the excellent media skills of the member for Dubbo, he should do so by way of substantive motion.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: You should open your ears. I am speaking through the Chair.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: That is not what Standing Order 73 is about. You've been here longer than me. You should know that.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The member for Coffs Harbour will resume his seat. I have heard the point of order. I call the member for Mount Druitt.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: As I said, members opposite had a chance to do something about it in the past 12 years. Crime did not start in March 2023.

Mr Richie Williamson: It got worse, mate.

Mr Dugald Saunders: It got way worse.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: I told you that it has not got worse. When the member for Dubbo was in government in April 2022, he was interviewed by Ray Hadley. The interview highlighted an incident in which a car was stolen from Dubbo and driven at high speed to Newcastle. When the incident was raised with the member for Dubbo, he said:

Unfortunately, social media, whether it's TikTok or Insta or Facebook or whatever it is, is the chosen method that people—young people, particularly—are using to, you know, I guess, boast these days about what they're doing.

What action did the member undertake to address the issue? He did absolutely nothing.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Is there a point you're making? You don't think I spoke to my people?

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Order! The member for Dubbo is on his final warning. Members will be called to order if they continue to interject.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: It took the Minns Government to establish the post and boast offences. I am pleased to report that since the legislation came into effect 12 months ago, 53 individuals have been charged. Of those, 27 were under the age of 16. The Nationals have taken to beating their chests about bail. But when they had the chance to reform the bail laws, they sat on their hands and even argued against the reforms. One of the member for Dubbo's own constituents wrote to Ray Hadley about their experience with youth crime, and they were quoted in the interview as saying:

We had an aggravated break and enter—now, aggravated break and enter means someone's home—last Tuesday morning, a week ago. Two cars were stolen. One has been recovered. Our children are now terrified to go to sleep. The crime in Dubbo is currently out of control ... They appear before the courts and they're let out on bail.

That interview was not recorded during our time in government; it was when the member was in government. When Mr Hadley pushed the member for Dubbo on bail reform, he said that he would "leave that to the Deputy Premier and the Attorney General". He wanted to do nothing about it. He sat on his hands. Now that he is not in government, he wants to grandstand and say, "Crime is skyrocketing. Crime started in March 2023. We never had crime prior to March 2023."

Mr Dugald Saunders: Have I said that?

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: You are saying that it has skyrocketed under this Government, but it has not.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Have a look in the dictionary at what "skyrocketing" means. Look it up!

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: You look up BOCSAR, and see what the crime statistics were when you were in government and what they are today.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): Order! I remind the member for Coffs Harbour that he is on two calls to order.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA: Members opposite left the State thousands of police officers short, with bail laws that were not keeping up. When we took over government, we were 1,500 police short. Those opposite did absolutely nothing to address the shortage in their 12 years in government. We know we need more cops, and we are doing everything we can to make that happen. In the two years that we have been in government, we have given cops the biggest pay rise in recent history. That means we will retain our experienced cops and recruit more people to New South Wales. We are paying our recruits while they study at the academy. Those opposite did nothing.

We have launched the Professional Mobility Program so cops from other States can join at their current rank. We have started the "You Should Be a Cop in Your Hometown" campaign. The Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism spoke about that during question time today. Youth crime is complicated and requires a whole-of-government response. We cannot arrest our way out of this issue, which is why the Government is supporting wraparound programs and crime prevention programs. I ask the member for Dubbo to come on board and stop grandstanding. He should work with the Government and acknowledge what it has done in the past two years, which those opposite failed to do in 12 years in government.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (14:44): I start by acknowledging the contribution of the rural member for Mount Druitt. The second the inquiry was announced, I wrote to the member for Mount Druitt and invited him to visit my electorate. That offer still stands. I want the Government to understand what my community

goes through 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every single day of the year. The claim that crime has fallen in New South Wales is absolute rubbish. The Country Mayors Association is currently in town. If he would like, I can get the member for Mount Druitt 15 minutes with them tomorrow. If he tells them that crime has fallen in their council areas, they will be furious.

Decent, hardworking men and women in my electorate have been threatened with a machete. Victims of crime are not having their voices heard in the sentencing of these juveniles. In Coraki, 80-year-old women are locking themselves in their house at 4.30 p.m. every single day because they are petrified of what is happening in their community. I implore the member for Mount Druitt to come and talk to them, because their story needs to be heard by this Government. This is not playtime; this is ruining their lives. During the cyclone two weeks ago, the home of an SES volunteer was ransacked and all of her jewellery was stolen while she was volunteering. Members opposite should tell me if they are okay with that. It is not okay.

This is not a police issue; the cops do a top job. We speak with our local cops every week and support them 100 per cent. They are aware of the motion, and they are aware of what the Opposition tabled this morning. They want it; they are begging for it. They are crying out for judicial support for their actions. Members in this House cannot sit idly by and do nothing. If the Government wants to back the cops, like we do in our electorates, then they should make sure they understand the issues. The committee should go to my electorate. It should go to Tweed Heads.

Mr Gurmeh Singh: And Coffs Harbour.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON: It should go to Coffs Harbour.

Mr Kevin Anderson: And Tamworth.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON: It should go to Tamworth.

Mr Adam Crouch: And the Central Coast.

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON: It should go to the Central Coast. This issue is not going away. It needs the full support of this Parliament. I urge the Government to work with the Opposition to create stronger bail laws that support our communities. There are unresolved issues, and I will not stand idly by while people in my community are absolutely petrified. This is not just in Coraki, Casino, Yamba, Maclean, Grafton or South Grafton; this is right across regional New South Wales. The time for action is now. My community members have had a gutful and want this Parliament to protect them.

Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (14:49): I foreshadow that I will move an amendment to the motion. Prior to that, I will make a few remarks. I listened to the contribution by the member for Dubbo, who moved the motion. I waited to hear him suggest solutions or give examples of things, perhaps in other jurisdictions, that worked or did not work in the past, because this is an incredibly complicated space. For 12 years I sat in opposition. During that time I saw services cut back right across New South Wales—in every corner, every village, every town, every city. That included cutting back on services that helped women get out of domestic violence. It is a fact that meant women and children in dangerous situations could not get out. I saw money stripped out of schools and education programs.

Mr Kevin Anderson: Point of order: I ask that the member for Cessnock be directed to return to the substance of the motion.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): There is no point of order. The contribution by the member for Cessnock is completely relevant to the motion. The member for Cessnock has the call.

Mr CLAYTON BARR: I watched all of this happen. It was a recipe, like baking bread. It was obvious that if this and this and this was done, the consequence down the track would be these problems. Now we are seeing the consequences of stripping resources out from desperate regional communities where, from a Treasury perspective, spending money just did not add up. You could not really see a result and the cost-benefit analysis did not add up et cetera. Regional communities lost public sector workers, community-facing programs and education programs. There has been a lot of talk about the pay structure of our police and public servants. That was stripped out, and jobs were cut.

We have baked the bread in the community. The language of hatred and division is now often used in politics. People who are supposed to be leaders are giving people a sense that they are entitled to take what is not theirs, to attack those who they do not agree with and to punch down on the weak. That is the language that politicians and leaders are using, not just in this State and not just in this Chamber; it is happening federally and internationally. Young people are doing things that young people have never done before, and we as a society are responsible for that and the complexity of it. While it is important to recognise that crime is happening, this type

of debate and this type of language only deepens and entrenches hatred and division. The blame game does not help at all. I move:

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

- (1) Notes that the crime in regional New South Wales is a community concern.
- (2) Recognises that the NSW Police Force does an amazing job and has the legislative support to deal with young offenders.
- (3) Commends the Minns Labor Government for prioritising reform to increase police recruitment after 12 years of neglect by the Liberals and The Nationals.
- (4) Acknowledges there is more work to be done and that crime prevention initiatives are critical to addressing the structural issues driving youth crime.

The last paragraph is probably the most important. Initiatives are required. Some are in train, but we need to do more. This is just staging and platforming.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (14:53): The member for Mount Druitt pointed out statistics in Dubbo. With respect, I do not think quoting statistics is a good road to go down. I could point out that breaches of bail in the past two years are up by 94 per cent in Armidale and 56 per cent in Moree. I could point out that break and enters in Armidale over the past two years are up by over 70 per cent. With respect, we can all cherry-pick statistics. I appreciated the contribution of the member for Cessnock. I think he raises a good point about making suggestions. It is fine for us to yell and scream at each other, but that is not going to fix the problem. What is working in my electorate is BackTrack. I acknowledge that the Government funded a trial for BackTrack and that it is working. The bus goes out three times a week. It is in its fifth week, and we have not had one break-in in Armidale since the bus has been on the road. That is a home-grown solution to a very serious problem.

A lot of money has been spent in Moree. I have put questions on notice about where the money is going and what the KPIs are. The recipients of that taxpayer funding only have to submit monthly verbal reports. The money going to my community should have better accountability; it is taxpayers' money and we need value for it. BackTrack in Armidale is operating its program on the smell of an oily rag compared with the money going into Moree, yet we are getting better results from it in Armidale than some of the solutions in Moree.

There has to be a two-pronged approach. I cannot stress that enough. There has to be diversionary programs along with needed legislative reform. Two-thirds of offending in my home town of Moree is committed by young people on bail. If we could fix that in this place, I could go home and nearly two-thirds of the crime there would be gone. I note the member for Orange is in the Chamber. Anyone who has appeared in court knows that sentencing is an incredibly complex process. I will propose a solution for the member for Cessnock. The purpose of sentencing is clearly set out in section 3A of the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act, but section 21 is absolutely overflowing with factors that the court has to take into account. We have to get back to basics. We have to address what section 3A says about the purposes of sentencing and how we, as legislators, translate that through the balance of the section. The Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act has become an absolute lawyers' picnic. I move:

That the amendment of the member for Cessnock be amended by omitting paragraph (3).

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (14:57): The New South Wales Government acknowledges the concern in the community about youth crime. We have acted and we continue to act to support regional communities, including the establishment of the regional community safety inquiry and our \$26.2 million package to help prevent regional crime. I reiterate what the good member for Cessnock said about reducing funding for services in the community. As someone who worked in the community sector for many years before coming to this place, I know that those programs are absolutely crucial. Like all members, we want to get to the bottom of these complex problems and seek solutions that the Government can implement to tackle the root causes and drivers of offending. Often it is intergenerational, and those kids do not know another way of life. There are no programs for them, especially in regional areas. It will take the will and commitment of all sides of politics and all levels of government to continue to put money into those programs, instead of cutting them with each change of government, leading to the issues we have now.

As previous Government speakers have highlighted, we have invested in recruiting more police to keep our communities safe. The largest class in a decade attested in December 2024 and 1,000 recruits are on their way. It is extremely important that we build up police numbers, because when police stations are empty and we have no-one on the ground to round kids up at night we start to get into this situation.

I point out that the shadow police Minister—and former police Minister—and member for Bathurst is not in the Chamber for this speech. The Government has also expanded Youth Action Meetings to nine new locations and is investing in wraparound services to support the community.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Where's the police Minister?

Mr Richie Williamson: Where's the Attorney General?

Ms LIZA BUTLER: That upset you, didn't it? Police are working around the clock to fight these crimes and arrest offenders. They are doing everything they can possibly do. Operation Soteria has been set up to prevent, disrupt and respond to escalating instances of serious crime being committed by young people across regional New South Wales. It is a new operation to address an escalation of violence in offenders aged between 11 and 16 years of age across western and northern parts of the State. Operation Soteria will focus on aggravated break, enter and steal offences, stealing motor vehicles, and post and boast offences where kids use social media to gain notoriety for their crimes. The new unit of 80 dedicated police will target regional hotspots, including Moree, Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange, Tweed Heads, Coffs Harbour, Kempsey, Taree and Newcastle over the next three months. PolAir and roaming response units will complement high-visibility operations. Right now, police are working around the clock to fight crime and arrest offenders.

I point out to the member for Clarence that the police Minister and Deputy Commissioner Paul Pisanos addressed the Country Mayors Association last Friday and listened to everything they had to say to them. Members will know about changes we introduced to the 22C bail test. We also moved to extend the temporary bail test for young people for a further three years. Early data shows that 22C is working. The Minns Government is doing so much to help our regional communities and it will continue to work with communities and young people to steer them away from the criminal justice system.

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (15:01): By leave: I thank the House for its indulgence. I did not intend to speak on this motion but, while watching the debate in my office, I felt compelled to put some things on record. As a regional MP with my background, I am in a good position to talk on this motion. I am on the law and safety committee with the member for Mount Druitt, who chairs that committee. We have been travelling around the State, hearing from rural and regional communities about their crime issues, and we will continue to do that. We have been to Kempsey and Coffs Harbour, and we were recently in Wagga Wagga. I know the committee also went to Bourke and Broken Hill, but I was not able to join them on that visit. The committee is also looking at visiting other parts of the State.

Some members who made contributions to this debate were not members during the term of the previous Government, but the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data shows a clear correlation between the re-engineering of the NSW Police Force under the previous Government in 2017-18 and the increase in crime. I was critical of then police Minister Troy Grant and the police commissioner at the time, Mick Fuller. On 10 October 2017 I made a contribution in this place about police local area command amalgamations. I raised the concern that there would be fewer police in our regional communities and, because of the amalgamations, police would have to cover larger commands and there would be less supervision. What has happened? Over the past few years the strength of police on the street in local area commands has reduced. They are overworked and under-resourced. I speak to police weekly and, in their time, they have never seen numbers this low.

I credit the Government for taking steps and initiatives by paying police recruits to go to the Goulburn police academy. When I went through the academy in 1995, we were paid to attend. I would not have joined the Police Force if I was not able to earn an income for the six months I was studying at Goulburn. Many men and women who have very worthy trade backgrounds or university qualifications—whatever the case may be—are at a stage in their lives when they cannot afford six months of training with no guaranteed income and no guaranteed job at the end. I commend the Government for taking that step. I also commend them for the "Be a Cop in your Home Town" initiative that I know has been very well received in regional communities. They are going to take some time, but I believe those are good steps.

I place on record again that there is a clear correlation between the re-engineering of police numbers that occurred in 2017-18 and the uptick in offences we have seen since then, as shown in the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data. I note the post and boast legislation and the recent changes to the Bail Act. Had the judicial magistrate in Moree exercised proper discretion, a lot of this crime probably would not have happened and there would not be a need for change. We need magistrates and judges to represent the interests of the community when they are making decisions.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON: I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (15:05): By leave: I thank the House for the opportunity to contribute to this debate. My electorate has the worst results for youth crime. I do not talk about it much in public because I do not want to talk my towns down. Based on contribution from the member for Mount Druitt and the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research data, I understand that we have seen a downward trend in youth crime over 20-year period. However, the fear and anxiety related to crime has not abated. For the people who have experienced crime,

either directly or indirectly, the fear is real. The terror they feel having someone in their home, especially in an aggravated break and enter, is very real.

When listening to this debate with one ear while working on the computer and being in meetings, I really wanted to hear members talk about solutions. We should be focused on solutions. We should be solving the problem. To that end, I supported the extension of the bail laws. The reason is because, in the short term, it means that people who seek to harm others or who are dangerous in their community are not on the street. That is important. But I have said publicly, and I will say in this Chamber, that solution does not fix the problem. All it does is take the person out of the community for a little while. Eventually they will go back.

Magistrates in my electorate have only two choices when it comes to dealing with young offenders: bail or custody. The Young Offenders Act was created 27 years ago and was predicated on the basis that there would be diversionary programs available to send young people to. I have worked in prisons. I spent 10 years as a civilian regional manager of the Western Region police, so I have dealt with offenders quite a lot. When it comes to young offenders appearing before a magistrate in places like Bourke, Walgett, Brewarrina—not to the same extent—and Condobolin, a magistrate has only those two choices of bail or custody. They know that if they release offenders into the community there is a high likelihood that they will continue associating with the same people and engaging in the same antisocial behaviour. They also know that if they put young offenders in custody, the chances are that they will learn new tricks. I saw that happen plenty of times when working in a remand prison. They can come out as worse offenders after being in custody. It is a wicked problem.

The solutions lie in putting those diversionary programs in place. An option is having a magistrate mandating that a young offender must engage in a program and that they must reappear before the magistrate so they can be asked the question, "What has happened as a result of engaging in this program?" If they are showing no signs of changing their beliefs and values, because beliefs and values drive behaviours, then the magistrate still has the option of custody.

However, if they show signs that they are changing their beliefs and values and can potentially contribute to society, then we should give them that opportunity.

I know from experience that once these young people are "owned", 93 per cent of them stay in the criminal justice system and become a burden on the public purse for the rest of their lives. Sadly it is not until the age of 40 that they stop offending, or they are dead. But they continue to be a burden on society, because they have not built a superannuation fund and will require public benefits for the rest of their lives. We need to start early with diversionary programs. Maranguka at Bourke; Down The Track at Lake Cagelico, which is based on Bernie Shakeshaft's stuff up north; and the Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation with Ally Coe are examples of organisations that work that we need to replicate.

Mr GURMESH SINGH: I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr ADAM CROUCH: I seek leave to make a contribution to the debate.

Leave not granted.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (15:10): In reply: I start by saying how disappointing and pathetic it is that members opposite would not allow the member for Terrigal, the member for Coffs Harbour or the member for Tamworth to make a contribution to the debate. I acknowledge the attempt by the member for Cessnock to amend the original motion, which the member for Northern Tablelands further amended. I am happy to accept all of the member for Cessnock's amendments bar paragraph (3), because the motion is fundamentally about noting that there is an issue with crime, that the police do a great job and that we need to find a serious way forward on serious repeat offenders.

Dr Hugh McDermott: Shame you didn't support it, mate.

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS: I acknowledge the interjection of the member for Prospect. I suggest that part of the reason Opposition members do not agree with the bill to extend a provision in the Bail Act that was introduced this week is that it is not doing the job. Since March 2024 Opposition members have said that it would not do the job. If we ask the member for Northern Tablelands whether bail is working in Moree, his response is a very resounding no. If we ask the member for Clarence whether bail is working in Grafton or Casino, his response is a very resounding no. If we ask the member for Tweed whether bail is working in his electorate, the answer is no. If we ask any member who has requested that the regional crime inquiry meaningfully visits their electorate—as opposed to Coffs Harbour, where there was a boardroom meeting for an hour—whether bail is working, they would say no. The regional crime inquiry can do better than it has been doing.

The Opposition will introduce a bill, on which I gave a brief overview in my earlier contribution, to expand the definition of "repeat offences" beyond serious break and enter and motor vehicle theft to include all serious indictable offences, like murder or sexual assault. That bill would form part of the solution, as mentioned by the member for Barwon and maybe by the member for Orange as well. The Opposition is coming forward with solutions in the form of a bill, notice of which was given today, with the second reading debate due to happen tomorrow. That bill includes a curfew and electronic monitoring. I gave details about the difference that electronic monitoring can make in particular circumstances where research has been done, as opposed to the suggestion by some that I am pulling stuff out of a hat.

The other important thing that needs to happen is elevating the voices of victims, which has not happened so far. As every member on this side of the House has said in the debate, the voices of victims are crucial. People are scared. They are locking their doors at 4.30 p.m. because they are worried about a knock at the door. People have been confronted many times at their kitchen tables and assaulted with weapons, including machetes. There is a very real fear. The point of the bill the Opposition is introducing is to work with the Government on solutions. It is not grandstanding. It is about solution-driven, proactive ways forward. The member for Mount Druitt is the chair of the regional crime inquiry, so it will be very interesting to see what he does to make a tangible difference when the bill comes before the House in May. The Opposition is coming forward with solutions that will make a difference to people's lives. As I said earlier, the time for change is now.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The member for Dubbo has moved a motion, to which the member for Cessnock moved an amendment, to which the member for Northern Tablelands moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Northern Tablelands to the amendment of the member for Cessnock be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes48
Majority..... 14

AYES

Anderson, K	Henskens, A	Saunders, D
Ayyad, T	Hodges, M	Singh, G
Clancy, J	James, T	Sloane, K
Cooke, S	Kemp, M	Speakman, M
Coure, M	Lane, J	Taylor, M
Cross, M	Layzell, D	Toole, P
Crouch, A (teller)	Moylan, B	Wallace, J
Dalton, H	Petinos, E	Ward, G
Davies, T	Preston, R	Williams, R
Di Pasqua, S	Provest, G	Williamson, R (teller)
Griffin, J	Roberts, A	Wilson, F
Hannan, J		

NOES

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

PAIRS

Thompson, T

Tesch, L

Amendment of the member Northern Tablelands to the amendment of the member for Cessnock negatived.

The SPEAKER: The question now is that the amendment of the member for Cessnock be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes50
Noes35
Majority.....15

AYES

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
Davis, D
Dib, J
Donato, P
Doyle, T

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

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

NOES

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

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

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

PAIRS

Tesch, L

Tudehope, M

Amendment agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes50
Noes35
Majority.....15

AYES

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
Davis, D
Dib, J
Donato, P
Doyle, T

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

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

NOES

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

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

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

PAIRS

Tesch, L

Tudehope, M

Motion as amended agreed to.

DEMERIT POINTS RETURN TRIAL

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (15:32): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the Government's demerit points return trial rewards safe drivers with a one demerit point reduction for maintaining a clean driving record.
- (2) Welcomes that 15,005 motorists in the Granville electorate who have kept a clean record have benefited from the reward.
- (3) Supports the Government's focus on road safety amidst rising national road tolls across Australia.

I am advised that the demerit points scheme has been in place in New South Wales since 1969. While there have been several changes to the scheme over the course of time, the current provisions that relate to the three-year period for calculating demerit points for unrestricted licence holders has been in operation since December 1989. This means that when a driver commits a demerit point offence, that person would need to wait three years without offending before the demerit points for the offence can no longer be counted towards a licence suspension.

In August 2023 the Road Transport Act was amended to fulfil the Government's election commitment of implementing the 12-month trial to reward drivers who remain offence-free with the early removal of one demerit point from their record. Reducing the road toll and rewarding safe driving across New South Wales was the aim of the trial by giving drivers that little bit of extra incentive to achieve a spotless record. The trial provides a rare carrot for people to drive safely as a counterbalance to the longstanding stick approach of fines, double demerits and licence suspension. While legislation was introduced in the New South Wales Parliament in August 2023 to

allow the trial to be implemented, the start date of the initial trial period was backdated to commence on 17 January 2023. This was done to allow for the earlier return of demerit points to eligible drivers. Under the criteria established for the trial, to be eligible to have one demerit point removed, a person will generally be required to hold an active unrestricted licence for the duration of the 12-month trial period, with some exceptions made for non-safety related issues, such as medical suspension or short-term fine default suspensions.

Drivers excluded from the trial are those who were not offence-free during the trial period or those sanctioned at any time for road safety breaches—for example, drivers who had been disqualified or their licence has been suspended, cancelled or refused for demerit points or speeding offences. Learner and provisional licence holders, both P1 and P2, were also not included in the trial, given these drivers are subject to the strict conditions of the Graduated Licensing Scheme. Following completion of the first period of the trial's operation in 2024, more than 1.1 million drivers benefited from the early removal of a demerit point from their record. The trial was then extended for a second year to continue the Government's focus on road safety measures. This meant that drivers who had a demerit point removed under the first trial period remained eligible to have another point removed, if they continued to remain offence-free. There are now more than 420,000 eligible drivers who have a demerit point wiped two years running.

In January 2025 the New South Wales Government announced its trial would be extended for a third 12-month period with an important change to extend the end of the trial on 31 January 2026. The extension until the end of January 2026 is to take into account the full holiday period which, in the past, has been a time marred by holiday crashes and deaths. As at 17 January 2025 there were 1,483,926 drivers eligible to benefit from the third phase of the trial, provided they stayed within the rules until 1 January 2026. An evaluation of phase one of the trial is currently being finalised. The evaluation of the trial includes both quantitative analysis of offences and road safety impacts during the trial period as well as quantitative and qualitative measures, such as surveys of drivers impacted by this trial and the wider community. Interim findings from the evaluation indicate a positive reception among drivers to having an incentive to drive safely. The Government will continue the evaluation's findings before determining whether there is any merit in introducing the measures to continue the early return of demerit points on a permanent basis, or whether alternative measures might be considered instead.

The New South Wales Government is committed to improving safety on our roads across New South Wales. Lifesaving initiatives in the 2026 Road Safety Action Plan and New South Wales Government road safety commitments are delivered through the Community Road Safety Fund, which ensures that every dollar generated from road safety camera-detected offences goes back to the delivery of road safety initiatives. The New South Wales Government has a comprehensive road safety strategy that involves enhancing infrastructure, improving vehicle and equipment safety, delivering safer speed limits, enforcement to discourage dangerous behaviours and improving road user behaviour, including measures such as advertising campaigns, legislation, licensing systems and education to reinforce the need for positive road user behaviour change.

In February 2024 the Road Safety Forum brought together road safety stakeholders from New South Wales, interstate and around the world to tackle the issue of an increase in deaths on New South Wales roads and focused on improving road safety to save lives and reduce serious injuries. Since the Road Safety Forum in February 2024, the New South Wales Government has implemented several road safety initiatives to enhance overall road safety. These measures include the introduction of seatbelt enforcement by existing mobile phone detection cameras on 1 July 2024 with an extensive education campaign from 19 May to inform the community about this enforcement change. The Towards Zero collaboration hub was also launched as a single accessible platform to consolidate road safety information, data access and resources, and to build road safety knowledge among local councils, community organisations and other road safety stakeholders. A new Helmet STAR, or Safety Testing and Assessment Ratings program, is an Australian first, and means that bicycle riders in New South Wales will be able to choose a helmet based on a simple safety rating from one to five stars.

The driver knowledge test online has been introduced as a modern online learning and testing experience and an accessible path for learner drivers. Recent amendments were also made to road transport laws to ensure that all motorists driving on a foreign licence are to convert to a New South Wales licence within six months if they wish to continue driving. Transport for NSW is progressing further road safety initiatives, including the introduction of a trial of average speed camera enforcement for light vehicles, utilising two existing sites in regional sites in New South Wales at locations at the Pacific Highway between Kew and Port Macquarie and at the Hume Highway between Coolac and Gundagai, and adding 2,700 roadside enforcement sites and mobile speed cameras across the State, without increasing enforcement hours aimed at reducing speeding and enhancing unpredictability in camera locations. New South Wales also has joined with other States in a formal data-sharing agreement to better understand and address road safety issues by utilising comprehensive crash data from across Australia.

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (15:39): The Opposition does not oppose the motion. As a public policy enthusiast and a legislator in Parliament, I support the concept of having trials when it comes to public policy because they are a good way of understanding how things can work better. Many people may know that we all start with zero demerit points and that offences increase the number of demerit points, upwards of 13 for an unrestricted driver. Double demerit points periods are coming up. We need to get to zero deaths and injuries on our roads. There will be double demerits for the Easter long weekend, from 17 April to 21 April, and for Anzac Day, from 24 April to 27 April. So I ask drivers to please stay safe, follow the rules and take breaks. Fatigue on our roads is a major concern.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The time allocated for the debate has expired. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

Bills

HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (PPP PROHIBITION) BILL 2025

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Ryan Park, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (15:41): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to bring before the House the Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition) Bill 2025, but, in a sense, this is Joe's law. Before I talk through the details of the bill, I acknowledge two very important guests in the Chamber today, Elouise and Danny Massa. Five weeks ago to this day, Elouise and Danny shared with the public on Ben Fordham's 2GB show the most tragic of experiences, the death of their young son, Joe. I know I speak on behalf of all members of this House in expressing our sincere condolences to Elouise and Danny. The shadow Minister for Health and members from the northern beaches, including the member for Manly, the member for Pittwater and the member for Wakehurst, are in the Chamber, and I express those condolences on behalf of them all.

I also express my thanks because, despite suffering the unimaginable, they have found the courage to advocate for changes that ensure no parent has to go through the tragedy they have and to advocate for changes to improve health services across New South Wales. In the five weeks since I first met them, the Government has taken a number of steps in response to their heroic advocacy. We have established a parliamentary inquiry into Northern Beaches Hospital through the Public Accounts Committee. A review of the systems and processes surrounding paediatric care at Northern Beaches Hospital is being led by the Clinical Excellence Commission, with an independent interstate person looking at the situation in the hospital's emergency department. A round table to improve the accessibility of the REACH protocol—which stands for recognise, engage, act, call, help—is being developed. We are requesting, and commencing, a coronial inquest, and we make a commitment to ensure that Healthscope implements all recommendations of the serious adverse event review into Joe Massa's death.

Today, the Premier and I joined with Elouise and Danny to announce a further important reform, the introduction of the Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition) Bill 2025, which will no doubt be called Joe's law. The bill amends the Health Services Act to prohibit a public-private partnership [PPP] being entered into for the purpose of a private entity constructing an acute hospital and providing acute hospital services to public patients. That is the model at Northern Beaches Hospital, and it is the only model of this arrangement in place in New South Wales. The public-private partnership model employed for the Northern Beaches Hospital, where a private entity builds and operates an acute hospital to provide acute clinical services to public patients at the hospital, is one that our side of the House never supported. It is a model that not only raises a range of governance and oversight issues, increases cost to the public and leads to significant administrative complexity, but also the Minns Labor Government is opposed to as a matter of principle. We opposed them when we were in opposition when five of those types of hospitals were going to be delivered in New South Wales.

We firmly believe our local community hospitals should be run by the public system. Private health facilities can and do provide outstanding and excellent care. I think all members know that private hospitals have a very important role to play in our health system, but they are not public hospitals that are part of NSW Health. Within NSW Health, each public hospital is part of a local health district, specialty health network or affiliated health organisation, and has clinical and staffing links to other hospitals in the local health district or specialty health network. Each local health district or specialty health network then also has clinical and staffing links and

networks with other local health districts and specialty health networks. Patients will often have serious or multiple issues that require a transition of care between hospitals and/or local health districts or specialty health networks.

There are statewide models of care that apply within NSW Health. Planned or unplanned transfers that occur because of clinical need can easily take place between hospitals in appropriate cases, and staff from one local health district or specialty health network can seek advice about a patient from specialists in another local health district or specialty health network. For example, while the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network generally provides health services to people in correctional centres and at the Forensic Hospital, staff of the Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network will routinely provide expert advice on mental health matters in relation to patients being cared for by a local health district. While there are multiple organisations that make up NSW Health, the ease and ability of the different NSW Health organisations to work together collaboratively is one of the great strengths of our system, and it is why it is one of the greatest health systems in the world. That is also an essential component in running a statewide public health system.

Even in circumstances where the contract with a public-private partnership operator requires the PPP hospital to be integrated as far as possible with the NSW Health system, in practice the level of integration into the NSW Health networked system will be unlikely to be of the level experienced by public hospitals. That is due to different models of care and staffing requirements, levels of connectivity with other facilities and staff, and the fact that a PPP hospital is a standalone facility. Further, a public-private partnership for the purposes of both the construction of an acute hospital and a private entity providing acute hospital services to public patients raises significant and complex challenges and risks, including differences between private entities and NSW Health in relation to models of care and staffing profiles, potential inadequate interoperability of health systems, and potentially significant complexities and costs when the hospital is handed back to New South Wales at the end of contract, including issues in relation to medical records, system interoperability, transfer of staff, and updates to the hospital to ensure the hospital and ancillary services meet contemporary standards of care.

I say this again, and it is important that members understand. I am sure it is supported across the board. Through this legislation, I in no way mean to diminish the important role that the private sector and private hospitals play in our nation and our State. They help us through those elective surgery waiting lists. They played an important role during COVID and they play an important role in providing a range of different rehab and other services. We understand that. They continue to play a role in providing health care to the people of New South Wales. As the Minister, I recognise that. However, this Government believes that a hospital that is designed to be the local community hospital and to provide acute hospital care to public patients, as the Northern Beaches Hospital did, should be a public hospital. Public patients are entitled to all the benefits of the New South Wales health system as a right, and that right should not be subject to a contract between the State and a private entity.

The bill will ensure that, going forward, an acute hospital built and designed to provide acute hospital services to public patients must be a public hospital. The bill will prohibit the government, a local health district or a statutory health corporation from entering into a public-private partnership with a private entity for the purpose of that entity constructing an acute hospital and providing an acute hospital service to public patients. The bill applies only to new arrangements; we have been very clear about that from the beginning. It does not affect any arrangements currently in place, which I will talk about later.

The bill does not and is not intended to prohibit or impact on other arrangements entered into with the private sector, as I have outlined already. The private sector can and does have an important role to play in the public health system, as I have clearly indicated. The private sector can be contracted to provide facility management or ancillary services in a hospital, such as building maintenance services. It can also be contracted to provide specific clinical services to public patients, such as private health facilities providing elective surgery to public patients to reduce waiting lists after the COVID-19 pandemic—something that both sides of this House supported and that is still ongoing. Such arrangements can be beneficial to NSW Health, patients and the private sector and are generally relatively simple to administer.

The bill will allow those types of arrangements to continue. For example, it does not impact the important relationships and partnerships that we have to accelerate elective surgeries or to deliver other specialised services in partnership with a range of providers. The bill will also not impact on the ability of the State to enter into arrangements with affiliated health organisations, which are considered to be part of the public system. In addition, the bill will not impact on the ability of the State to enter into arrangements with another government or other government agencies.

That is an important exclusion to ensure that the bill does not impact on, for example, the ability of NSW Health to enter into arrangements with other governments in border areas for the construction and operation of an acute hospital. I also note that the bill includes a regulation-making power to exclude certain arrangements from the prohibition. The regulation-making power has been included to ensure that if there are any unintended

consequences down the track, regulations could be made to ensure that appropriate arrangements can proceed. It is important to note that any regulation is obviously subject to a disallowance by either House of Parliament.

I would like to end where I started, with Danny and Elouise Massa. Today we brought to the House a picture of Joe and one of Joe's shirts, which the Massa family kindly gave to the Premier and I a few weeks ago. It is a very difficult situation for the Massas. They are going through unimaginable grief that none of us who have not lost a child could imagine, but we have an opportunity today to get this right. We have an opportunity to say that Joe died in tragic and distressing circumstances, but he will not be forgotten. We will have an improved health system if we pass this legislation. When I first spoke in this Parliament 14 years ago, I quoted a lyrical poem by George Banks entitled *What I live for*. It talks about wrongs that must be righted and "the good that I can do". This legislation will right a wrong and address the good that I—and we as legislators—can do. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Budget

BUDGET ESTIMATES AND RELATED PAPERS 2024-2025

Debate resumed from 17 October 2024.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (15:56): Before I start taking note of the budget, I also express my condolences to Danny and Elouise Massa, who are in the gallery, on the tragic death of their son, Joe. As the Minister for Health so eloquently said, none of us can imagine the heartache and heartbreak that they must feel from the tragedy that they have experienced. The thoughts of everyone in the House are with them.

I take note of last year's budget. It may seem like quite a while since that budget was handed down, but that time has enabled us, as local members, to monitor and report on the progress of some of its measures in our electorates. I am pleased to have a brief opportunity to start my contribution. Whether I get to use all the allocated time in the longer term remains to be seen. In the short time I have available, I highlight that last year's budget had some important announcements for the schools in Monaro, which made some progress on my election commitments of funding for the Googong high school and stage two of Jerrabomberra High School. There were also new announcements in last year's budget for stage two of Googong Public School and to continue to fix the National Party's Bungendore High School debacle.

The Government has made good progress on a number of those things, and I highlight that in the time I have available. Possibly one day in the future I will get to finish my remarks.

Since the announcement of funding for Googong High School, the project is now out for public comment on the plan and there is a tender out for design and construction of the high school. A 700-student high school in one of the fastest growing areas of regional New South Wales is really important. Its current population of 17,000 is expected to grow to a population of 30,000 in a few years time. The high school will accommodate 700 students as part of an ultimate plan for 2,000 students.

The high school will be built in time for many students at Googong Public School to finish there. The project has a site reserved for it that is easy to build on and without a lot of problems. That is wonderful, and it enables us to get a facility that will cater for the future growth needs of Googong. It is a commitment that I made in the 2023 election and that I am pleased to see underway. It has an opening date of day one, term 1 in 2027. That is a fairly fast time frame, but on a very suitable site it should be achievable. Bungendore High School is also progressing. Currently, the plans for Bungendore High School are also out for comment, and the same tender process is underway. It will be built on a completely different site to the one announced by the previous Government, which caused incredible division in the community. There was quite vitriolic and awful debate at times, because the previous Government did not bother to consult on the site before it announced it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): It being 4.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for the petitions take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

Petitions

WEE WAA HOSPITAL

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The House will now consider the paper petition signed by 10,000 or more persons regarding Wee Waa Hospital, lodged by the member for Barwon. Having lived in Walgett for a long time, I understand why the petition was initiated and the debate is taking place. I welcome the guests from Wee Waa to the gallery.

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

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:01): Nearly two years ago, in late April 2023, Hunter New England Local Health District announced that on 8 May Wee Waa Hospital would be temporarily reducing opening hours due to a staff shortage. The hospital would only operate 8.00 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., and patients presenting outside those hours would have to go to Narrabri Hospital. But those temporarily reduced hours are still in place. Hunter New England has not resolved the problems that led to the temporary closure. This has gone on for far too long. There had been signs of problems long before the announcement of reduced hours. Hunter New England Local Health District had failed for several months to fill nursing positions at the hospital, and failed to hire a visiting medical officer [VMO], despite lengthy negotiations.

As soon as I heard about the reduction of hours at Wee Waa, I contacted the Minister for Health, who gave assurances that he wanted the hospital to remain open and return to normal operating hours with enhanced services. He reiterated that commitment on several occasions thereafter, in public and in private, and in writing to the community. I note the Minister for Health is in the Chamber, and I thank him for his ongoing commitment to supporting the Wee Waa Hospital. The Minister also endorsed the establishment of a community-based Wee Waa Hospital working group to work with the Hunter New England Health District to restore the hospital to normal operation. As a show of good faith, and as a sign that he was listening to the community's concerns, the Minister attended a meeting of the working group in August 2023. There was a reasonable expectation that the health district should work with the community and the Minister-approved working group to find a solution that would get the hospital back to full hours.

It had worked in Nyngan, where a shortage of staff had reduced the beds in October 2022. Nyngan's working group had worked well with the Western NSW Local Health District, and Nyngan Hospital reopened in January 2024. The executive at Hunter New England were not so cooperative. They seemed to deliberately undermine the working group, and even asked on multiple occasions that I disband the working group. Four different local health districts cover parts of my electorate—Hunter New England, Western NSW, Far West and Murrumbidgee. Three of those districts are good to deal with. They consult with their communities, give reasonable responses to correspondence and seem genuinely geared towards providing good care to the people in their districts.

Hunter New England is the exception. The executive often give poor responses to concerns raised about facilities and services, and they shift resources from regional areas to metropolitan areas. This is not a complaint about the hardworking NSW Health staff, who do the best they can, often under difficult conditions imposed on them by the Hunter New England Health District. They are actively discouraged from speaking out, or they are punished for speaking out. This is a complaint about the executive, and the decisions they make, their lack of transparency and their failure to engage with the communities they are supposed to serve. That is most evident in their reluctance to work with their community of Wee Waa and their failure to recruit the staff to make the town's hospital function properly.

It has now been nearly two years, and Hunter New England is still no closer to a solution. It is still without a VMO, still having to send people to Narrabri and still without a palliative care facility that was paid for by the community. The people of Wee Waa have therefore spoken, and I note a few of those people are in the gallery today. I thank them for their efforts in getting the petition to this place. They have collected around 1,200 signatures on the petition asking the Legislative Assembly to direct the Hunter New England Health District to provide the hospital with a doctor, to restore the 24-hour operation of the hospital, and to require monthly reports from the health district until services are restored. I acknowledge the work that was done. They travelled a lot—they even came down to Martin Place to collect signatures.

The petition is one part of the drive for accountability from the health district. It is subject to an independent review, looking at the decision-making processes of the health district executive, and that review will provide a road map for the restoration of health services at Wee Waa Hospital. There is also a bill before the Parliament to split the health district into two. The intent of the bill is to give the New England area some control back over its health services. I thank the Government for fast-tracking the bill and referring it to an inquiry, which will investigate the possible merits of splitting the health district. As it is, the local health district is not doing its job. It is the only metro-managed health district that looks after country areas, and it shows. The executive have shown they cannot be trusted to look after the best interests of people in the country. Their efforts are concentrated on larger population centres while regional medical facilities are stripped of resources, forcing regional patients to travel long distances to get proper health care.

The petition helps to raise awareness of these problems. Mayor of Narrabri Darrell Tiemens, who is in the gallery today, said, "Wee Waa has never been mentioned so often in Parliament." That is true. In the coming weeks, we will hear more about Hunter New England and how it operates. I look forward to revealing the decision-making process of the executive and why they have deprived the town of the medical services they

deserve. This situation is going to cost someone their life. Wee Waa services a much bigger area, where people are exposed to risks that would result in significant trauma. From everything that is happening—the bill, the debate, the petition and the independent review—the priority is to get a solution that will get the hospital back to serving the community as it should.

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:06): I acknowledge members of the Wee Waa community and Mayor of Narrabri Darrell Tiemens in the gallery today. I thank them for coming all the way from north-western New South Wales, especially during some of the difficult weather that might be there at the moment. As the Minister can testify, regional health and health in general is not an easy area of government. There are challenges at every step of the way. After meeting with some paramedics today, I know that when your health is suffering, or one of your loved ones is sick, you will give up almost anything to get the best care you can. The Wee Waa community should expect the same.

I am ashamed to admit the first time I went to Wee Waa was after being elected to this place. It was at the height of the drought. I had been as far as Narrabri, but never any further. As all communities ebb and flow, when I visited Wee Waa it was at an ebb. Right now, the community is relatively thriving, yet its hospital is not thriving. The community rightly expects at least 24-hour emergency care, given that an emergency could happen at any hour of the day. We know that cardiac incidents typically do not happen during business hours. To add an extra 40-minute to the beginning or end of someone's care can have life and death consequences, or someone's health outcomes can be significantly worse if they wait an extra 40 minutes for care. Life and death is obviously a huge concern that people have, but delayed care can make a huge difference to a person's wellbeing later in life.

I congratulate the community members from Wee Waa on taking the huge step of getting signatures in the centre of Sydney, because particularly Martin Place and Macquarie Street is about as far away from Wee Waa as can be culturally, physically and geographically.

It is important for people in Sydney to know what regional communities face when it comes to health care. From the spot where signatures were being collected, it is possible to throw a cricket ball to the nearest hospital. That is not the case in the regions, particularly at places like Wee Waa.

The petition's first request is that the Legislative Assembly direct the Hunter New England Local Health District to urgently provide Wee Waa Hospital access to an onsite doctor. I think that is a very reasonable request. The second request is to restore the 24-hour operation of the hospital. Especially for the emergency department, that is an absolute must. The Opposition stands right behind that request. The third point in the petition requires a monthly report from the health district to the ministry, the local member and the mayor. That is a very important step to increase accountability, not just within the hospital but also within the district. As the member for Barwon said, there is concern in the community about splitting the local health district. There is a bill to that effect before the House at the moment. The communities of New England need to have confidence in their health system, and that means they need to have confidence in their health district. That monthly reporting will go a long way towards giving the community a higher level of confidence than they might have at the moment.

Wee Waa is a town with a long history. The late 1840s is very long time ago. The region provides so much to the State in terms of agricultural output and financial value. It is only right that the State also reinvest back into the town, and that means 24-hour health facilities. We all know emergencies do not go by a clock and they do not go by a calendar. If someone has an accident out on a farm, or is bitten by a snake, or has a road accident, or has a cardiac accident—any of the myriad different things that can happen in regional New South Wales—it is natural to want the best care available 24/7. The Opposition is right behind the petition.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:11): I thank the member for Barwon and his community for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. I also acknowledge the organisers and signatories to this petition, near and far. The challenges relating to the recruitment of healthcare staff are well known in rural and regional communities. They have been broadly publicised, including the findings of the previous Government's rural health inquiry. I note that I am a member of the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health. The chair of that committee, the member for Wagga Wagga, is also in the Chamber. We are inquiring into the access—or lack of access—to health care in various communities.

My son, who is a paramedic, has told me stories of his time as a student, when he was sent to northern New South Wales. It was often the hospital that called in the paramedics because no doctors were available. I understand the petition. Attracting and retaining healthcare professionals in regional areas is a national problem, and demand for healthcare staff is outstripping supply both locally and globally. The Hunter New England Local Health District is working consistently to fill vacancies at Wee Waa Hospital. Attracting and retaining more appropriately skilled nursing staff is the current priority. Developing and sustaining that workforce is absolutely vital to delivering the right care, in the right place, at the right time for our communities.

NSW Health offers a range of scholarships for the medical, nursing, allied health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workforce to support staff and students living and working in rural and regional areas. Those scholarships are specifically designed to support and develop the rural and regional workforce. The Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme is a key means of attracting and retaining staff in rural, regional and remote locations, and that scheme provides additional incentives and benefits to attract, recruit and retain health workers in positions that have hard-to-fill or critical vacancies.

From 11 August 2023 to 30 June 2026, NSW Health is offering increased incentive packages of up to \$20,000 in the hardest to fill and critical roles in rural and regional areas where the existing \$10,000 incentive has not been successful. That doubles the previous incentive for the hardest to fill positions, encouraging more workers to take up opportunities in remote communities with critical staff vacancies. The increased package up to \$20,000 will apply for the first year of service, then up to \$10,000 per year for ongoing service. That has been made available in Wee Waa. Incentive packages include a range of benefits, including a rural and regional health allowance, relocation and accommodation assistance, additional leave and access to training and education.

I turn to the current recruitment activities. The district senior executive team has recently met with local stakeholders, including the local GP, who agreed that recruitment of nurses is the top priority for the service right now. The district advertises vacant roles extensively, including on the NSW Health careers portal, as well as Facebook, LinkedIn, Indeed, Seek, and with the Australian College of Nursing. The Hunter New England Local Health District is working with public and private health partners in surrounding areas, and with NSW Ambulance. The Minister for Regional Health is in Chamber, which is testament to his commitment to improving health care in this State. He is working tirelessly and collaboratively with NSW Health and the local health district to overcome these challenges and to ensure the Wee Waa health service continues to serve the community.

The Collaborative Care Program commenced in Wee Waa in May 2024. That is a place-based planning initiative aimed at developing community-led solutions to primary care and community health challenges. The program is facilitated by the Rural Doctors Network and includes representatives from the Hunter New England Local Health District, the Primary Health Network, local council and community and health organisations in the area. In late 2024, the project group consulted the local community on its health care needs via a community survey. That survey was completed by over 300 respondents, representing around 16 per cent of the Wee Waa population. The Minister for Health has commissioned an independent clinical review of health services and is getting on with the job of addressing those needs.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:16): It gives me great pleasure to say a few words in the take-note debate on this petition. First, I congratulate the member for Barwon on his fierce advocacy on behalf of his community. Wee Waa has a real champion in the member for Barwon, no question about that. I also acknowledge the visitors in the gallery, and the mayor of Narrabri, Darrell Tiemens. I acknowledge their continued advocacy and the evidence given to the committee I chair, which was mentioned by the member for Blue Mountains. The petition presented by the member for Barwon calls for the Hunter New England Local Health District to urgently provide Wee Waa Hospital access to an onsite doctor. It should not take a petition to identify something so blatantly obvious.

The community should have access to a doctor at the hospital. It is an appalling situation, which quite rightly alarms the community. The lack of service undermines the community's future. The petition also calls for the restoration of 24-hour operations, including emergency care. As a former emergency physician, I assure the House that 24-hour emergency care literally saves lives. We know that, and yet the Wee Waa community is expected to get by with emergency access only between 8.00 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. It is stating the obvious—and other speakers have said it—that emergencies do not confine themselves to office hours. In fact, Wee Waa has perhaps the only emergency department in Australia that closes at the end of the business day.

I understand that patients often have to travel to Narrabri Hospital, which itself is often on bypass. Patients are then sent even further to Tamworth or another centre to get the care they should be able to receive in their community. It brought to mind a tale I recently heard of a woman who was about to give birth—this was in another part of the State, but still in Hunter New England. She ended up travelling to four separate hospitals by ambulance and other means of transport before she could deliver her baby. As more and more hospitals go on bypass, it seems to me that we are at risk of more and more patients being shunted from town to town for their care.

Is rural healthcare devolving into treatment by transfer? We do not want that to happen. It is not good enough.

We need to understand the role of the Hunter New England Local Health District in Wee Waa. What action is it taking or not taking to support the health of people in Wee Waa and the surrounding area? There is a growing suspicion in rural and regional communities that small hospitals are too expensive to maintain. There is an emerging view that the bureaucracy thinks that people from small towns do not deserve services as much as people in larger cities. It is important to take a moment to consider that view, because there is a creeping decline in

services. Actions are not taken, and workforce shortages mean that it is too hard to keep services open. Over a period of time, the service just disappears. Wee Waa has been waiting for two years, but nothing has seemed to happen.

There are three aspects of this issue that we need to keep in mind. Firstly, people in rural communities have a right to expect services in their communities, not only as Australian citizens but also as contributors to our economy. Regional and rural communities contribute at least one-third of Australia's GDP. They should be able to share in the resources provided by our Government. Secondly, it is not cheaper; it is just a cost shift. When health districts close services, people have to travel. That is not cheaper. It shifts the cost onto the community, which has to pay for the travel and take the risk. I do not think it is safer for the community, although it may be for the health service on one level. Thirdly, health services are at the heart of rural communities. They play a special role in regional areas by bringing communities together.

Health services are a very important part of the community, not only economically but also in terms of the life and vibrancy of the community. It is important for us to maintain, restore and rebuild services in communities like Wee Waa, which is highlighted in today's petition. I acknowledge that the Minister for Health is in the Chamber today. I also acknowledge the major work that this Government has done. It has incentivised jobs to try and rebuild the rural workforce. The Minister for Health has also shown a commitment to rural health by supporting our committee. We are continuing to address this issue, but we are not there yet. This petition is a wake-up call to the creeping decline of services. Enough is enough. We need to stop this and restore services to our regional communities.

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (16:22): I acknowledge the Minister for Health and the member for Bega. Both of these members have offered fantastic access for me to discuss regional health with them during my time in this place. Wee Waa is a great town that contributes a huge amount to not only the New South Wales economy but also the Australian economy. When I look over at the guests in the public gallery, I can see the faces of people that I know. It is a fact that these visitors contribute so much in tax to our country, and yet we are still debating a petition about whether they deserve to have a hospital. Wee Waa deserves to have a hospital. Every regional town in New South Wales deserve to have a hospital.

The health of regional people is just as important as the health of people in Bellevue Hill, Double Bay, Rose Bay and all across Sydney. One of the main issues we have is staffing. I have spoken with the Minister for Health and the member for Bega about this ad nauseam. We do not have a doctor at Wee Waa. We cannot find a doctor to keep the facility open for 24 hours, and this creates a snowball effect. When we cannot get a doctor, the nurses get burnout. Nurses do not want to use a hospital as a triage centre, and so they begin to walk out and find work in bigger centres. We are seeing this problem throughout regional New South Wales.

The Federal Government needs to step up and do more to attract GPs to practise in the bush. If the Federal Government does not step up, then our hands are tied. We are restricted in what we can do to attract and retain GPs in regional New South Wales. I am concerned that the Wee Waa Hospital is the thin edge of the wedge in terms of rural and regional healthcare. The member for Barwon and I are neighbours, and Wee Waa sits on the edge of my electorate. Wee Waa deserves a 24-hour facility, not just a triage centre from nine to five. If we do not draw a line and address this issue now, where will it stop? Will it flow west and impact Walgett? Will it come north and impact Moree? Will it hit Inverell, which only has a triage centre at best? Inverell has a fantastic new facility, but we cannot staff it. The reason we cannot staff it, in my opinion, is that the Federal Government in Canberra is not doing enough to get doctors into the bush.

The Federal Government could be doing so much more. Why is it not looking at tax incentives for regional doctors? I am talking about real tax incentives, not just knocking a few bucks off their HECS debt. We have been doing it for a while, and it is not working. It is about time Canberra realised that regional New South Wales is crying out for doctors. I sometimes feel sorry for the Minister for Health, because he has a terrible portfolio. Every member respects the job that he does, but he can only do so much. Canberra has to step up. It is that simple. Every member in this place has to be working on Canberra and talking to our Federal members, whether it is an election year or not. For goodness' sake, we need to tell them to start doing something.

We need to look at tax incentives, HECS debts and regional incentives. The State Government is doing what it can, but at this stage Canberra is not. This is what is happening at Wee Waa. As I said, this is the thin edge of the wedge and we have to stop it. This issue crosses the political divide. When I looked behind me, I can see members of The Nationals and Independents. None of us are arguing. We all agree that we need to work together to get Wee Waa Hospital back up and running. We then need to go to town on our Federal members and demand that they extract their digit and start doing something to get doctors to the bush.

Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:27): By leave: I speak in contribution to this debate on the petition to save Wee Waa Hospital. I acknowledge those in the public gallery who have travelled a long distance

to witness this debate. This is a testament to how we live, breathe and work in regional New South Wales. We are used to travelling long distances. We want to make sure that, when we travel long distances, we get the services that we are travelling for. Members need to look at the geographical location of Wee Waa. We need to look at the Hunter New England Health District. We need to look at the services that used to be offered in 2015. We can look even further back to when those services were on offer at hospitals like Wee Waa Hospital.

Hunter New England Health District and other health districts across regional New South Wales talk about declining populations and reduced presentations at a particular location. They then look at how to staff these facilities, and whether presentations are being held at a level that needs to be maintained or if they are declining. I think it should be the opposite of that. The reason presentations at Wee Waa Hospital are low is that the community cannot trust that the services will be delivered. They will go to Narrabri, or even further afield, because they know when they get to Wee Waa Hospital they will be shuffled on. It might even be closed after 5.30 p.m. God bless the two nurses at Wee Waa Hospital. They do a great job during the day, but unfortunately people will still go to Narrabri and so the presentation numbers are down.

There is an old saying, "Build it, and they will come." I firmly believe that Hunter New England Health District should come to the table in goodwill and look at a plan for Wee Waa Hospital.

Over the next 18 months to 2½ years, the Government should grow that hospital back to where it was. It will not happen overnight. The 24-hour service should be reinstated at Wee Waa Hospital, and Hunter New England Local Health District has to come up with a plan. It has to come to the community in good faith and show that it is committed to reinstating the services that the Wee Waa community demands. The Minister for Health does a great job. He understands regional New South Wales, and I have worked closely with him. I believe the way forward is to look at a sustained, 18-month or 2½-year plan to get Wee Waa Hospital back to where it should be.

The other part is the accessibility of GPs as visiting medical officers [VMOs] in our rural and regional centres. There is a great disparity between fly-in fly-out locums and local GPs in a small community. At Gunnedah Hospital, for example, and across other regions, a fly-in fly-out doctor will come to a regional centre for the weekend and earn \$2,000 to \$3,000 or more to sit in a small rural or regional hospital and maybe see a few patients. If it gets a bit too difficult, they just ring an ambulance and shuttle patients off to Tamworth or elsewhere. Local GPs used to be that VMO, attending to their patients and then serving the hospital. Local GPs want their fair share. They are not getting the same rate of pay that a fly-in fly-out doctor receives. Local communities want continuity of care and to know they will see their local GP when they go to the local hospital. They want a doctor whose background they know is safe and who is following their healthcare plan, not someone coming in on a weekend with no idea who they are.

The workloads and risks of the past are no longer acceptable. There need to be new models dealing with VMOs and fly-in fly-out locums. I firmly believe that if you pay a local GP in a small regional centre the same amount of money that a fly-in fly-out doctor would receive, local GPs would act as VMOs quite easily and would be accepting of the community in terms of working with the local hospital. A new model needs to be brought forward, and that is where local health districts right across regional New South Wales need to work with their GPs to come up with a plan to get them back and servicing the community. They want to work at their local hospitals, but it is way too hard.

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:32): In response: I acknowledge and thank the member for Barwon. He and I have engaged a lot on this topic. I personally acknowledge his terrific advocacy for the bush. I have said this more than once in this place: He always gives a damn about the things that matter to his community. I thank the mayor and local community members who are here today, as well as my Parliamentary Secretary, who is a terrific advocate for regional and rural New South Wales. I also thank members from both sides of the Chamber for their advocacy on behalf of the communities that they represent, particularly those from regional, rural and remote communities.

Last week I joined with the member for Barwon in receiving the petition from the mayor and local community members. To receive a petition with more than 10,000 signatories is a testament both to the work and commitment of the member for Barwon, the mayor and, of course, the local community and to the deeply held concerns of the local community and its surrounds regarding their access to health services. I sincerely and honestly acknowledge their concerns and assure the community that this Government is committed to the delivery of essential health services in Wee Waa and surrounding communities.

I have said before in this House, and I will say it again: There are probably 100 things that keep me up at night as health Minister, but the biggest issue is the way we staff our health services and hospitals, and no more so than in rural and regional New South Wales, where we face significant staffing challenges. For that reason, as has been described, a temporary reduction of services did take place at Wee Waa in 2023. Under those temporary

arrangements and as recruitment efforts continue—I emphasise that—the Wee Waa health service emergency department has only been operating from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. seven days a week. I acknowledge that the community deserves better than that, and the Government is determined to work with the local community and the health district to get a doctor on site 24/7. We are committed to that health service going forward.

To support meeting that challenge, the member for Barwon and I last month announced an independent review into services at Wee Waa. From time to time in government—as I am sure the other side has faced—there are some wicked problems that, when the same people are looking at them over and over, perhaps continue to get the same solutions. And that is not to their discredit. But there is an opportunity now for people like me to step aside and allow a fresh set of eyes to look at the problem. The independent review will be led by subject matter experts. It will focus on the current and former service models and make recommendations to ensure that residents can access safe, sustainable services now and into the future. The group will be comprised of independent experts with a range of experience across nursing, midwifery, safety, Aboriginal health, and rural and regional health. The review will consider the health needs of the local community, workforce recruitment and retention—the biggest challenge we have—and decisions around services and models of care. The review began in March 2025 and it will deliver a report to Government in mid-2025.

I again thank the member for Barwon for bringing this petition to the House and for his ongoing advocacy. I again thank the mayor and local community representatives. I thank members in the House today, particularly those from regional, rural and remote New South Wales. We have a lot more to do. As the member for Wagga Wagga says, "The work is not done." To be honest, when I leave Parliament, I hope the next Minister says the same thing. We need to always be looking to improve our regional, rural and remote health services. We have more work to do to improve access to health care in communities like Wee Waa. I look forward to the findings of the independent review, to sharing them with the community in a transparent way, and to working further with the member and his community to ensure that they have confidence in their local health service.

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (16:36): In reply: I begin with a correction: I understand that I may have said 1,200, but the petition has almost 12,000 signatures. There are 11,788, from memory. I thank the members for Tamworth, Coffs Harbour, Blue Mountains, Wagga Wagga and Northern Tablelands, and the Minister and member for Keira. I thank the member for Coffs Harbour for acknowledging the efforts of our volunteers. He is right: The hospital services a much larger area, including the towns and localities of Rowena, Pilliga, Merah North, Burren Junction and Cuttabri. They are all in the catchment, and they all have lots of agricultural equipment that can cause traumatic injury. I thank the member for Blue Mountains, who talked about the national and global challenges in filling positions. That is absolutely true. All of the 27 hospitals and multi-purpose services in my electorate have staffing issues, but that would not be allowed to happen somewhere like John Hunter Hospital, and it should not be allowed to linger at Wee Waa.

The member for Wagga Wagga talked about delays in receiving care and the importance of timely care to ensure that people survive. That is a really good point. The member for Wagga Wagga touched on what we call the "bank model", as did a couple of members. That is the idea that the settings are changed so that traffic through the door drops to a point where it can be said that no-one is using the service and it is therefore no longer needed. A couple of other members talked about the same thing in different ways. A couple of speakers, including the member for Northern Tablelands, talked about the area's contribution to State and national GDP. That is a really important point, and that area should get health care. He also talked about the Federal GP pipeline. I would say that the State has done a lot more than the Federal Government in this space to try to improve situation.

The member for Tamworth talked about a lack of confidence in services and, at the moment, that is certainly the case. He also talked about fly-in fly-out locum services versus doctors living in the community, and I agree with him 100 per cent, although, at the moment, I would accept any sort of doctor to get the doors open at Wee Waa Hospital. I thank the Minister for his genuine approach to the problem. From this debate, we can see that the Minister is not the problem and is not the person stopping hospitals having staff. This is about recruitment and making sure there is motivation to do this. I look forward to working with the Minister to get the result.

Petition noted.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I thank the guests in the gallery who travelled a long way to visit Parliament and listen to the debate. I wish them a safe trip home.

Community Recognition Statements

JOHN EDMONDSON HIGH SCHOOL

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:39): With Anzac Day fast approaching, I congratulate John Edmondson High School in my electorate, which was a Joint NSW Winner of the Anzac Day Schools' Award for 2024. Hosted by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, the award recognises the work of students, teachers and

schools that engage with veterans and honour Australia's wartime history. The theme for 2024 was "Discover the stories of veterans in your local community". John Edmondson High School students from years 7 to 11 developed a comprehensive website that included veteran interviews, research, poetry and artwork, as well as personal reflections from the students. As this is the second consecutive year that John Edmondson has claimed this award, it is a testament to its commitment to recognising veterans and cultivating a meaningful understanding of our nation's wartime history. I commend the students, teachers and staff of John Edmondson High School for their consistent efforts and encourage all schools in Leppington and right across the State to participate in the 2025 theme "Remembering Gallipoli: 110 years."

BONDI BEACH LIFEGUARDS

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (16:40): I congratulate Bruce Hopkins and the Bondi lifeguards on another incredible summer season with zero drownings. With more than two million visitors every year, Bondi Beach is the busiest beach in Australia. The success this season is a testament to the training and professionalism of our lifeguards. Over the summer, Waverley Council ran its Summer Safety campaign, where beachgoers were told to follow the rules, swim between the flags, and listen to our lifeguards. I applaud it for this public safety campaign. The results speak for themselves. We know beach safety does not stop with summer. Our lifeguards are there all year round and to keep people safe, answer their questions and help with any issues or concerns. I thank all lifeguards for another successful summer. We are grateful for their service.

MOLLYMOOK SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (16:41): I congratulate the rowing teams from Mollymook Surf Club, who proudly competed at the recent State championships at North Steyne. In the 160-year division, the newly formed crew of Marty Drysdale, Brent Harding, Jordy McNalley, Simon Davies and Ryan Gough raced with heart and determination. While they finished outside the medals, their strong performance and team spirit were truly inspiring. The reserve women's crew of Tessa Lofts, Ebony Henry, Kiara Croker, Jorjah Drysdale and sweep Marty Drysdale put in a series of courageous performances, narrowly missing a spot in the finals by one place. The U19 men—Oscar Perry-Dickenson, Hugo Perry-Dickenson, Thomas James, Jacob Jones and Paul Jones—put in a tremendous effort, proudly finishing just outside the medals after two days of fierce racing. In the 220-year division, Marty Drysdale, Russell Bartlett, Paul Newman, Kevin Whitford and Paul Jones delivered a spectacular performance, claiming gold and the title of State champions. It was an outstanding achievement for the team and club. I congratulate all involved.

COFFS COAST ATHLETICS CLUB

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (16:42): Two rising stars at the Coffs Coast Athletics Club have secured their spots at the Australian junior championships in Perth, which will be held from 4 to 8 April. Evie Hill and Thomas Joyce carry the hopes of their club and the Coffs Coast with them. Evie, 15, from Sawtell, will compete in the under-16 heptathlon and the 90 metre hurdles. Known for her dedication and versatility, Evie has trained tirelessly to earn her place among the nation's top young athletes. Thomas, 13, from Coffs Harbour, will race in the 200 metres and 400 metres events. He has already made a name for himself locally with his speed and competitive spirit on the rugby field. Now he is ready to showcase his talent against Australia's elite junior sprinters. Our community is incredibly proud of Evie and Thomas, and we wish them well as they prepare to shine on the national stage.

GEORGE BASS TREFOIL GUILD

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (16:43): As a former girl guide, it was a pleasure to attend the George Bass Trefoil Guild's Annual General Meeting earlier this month. The Trefoil Guild is a way for adult members and supporters of the girl guides to stay involved and connected. I recognise the following Special Service Awards recipients: Wendy Davidson and Karen Thom for 20 years, Laura Donohue for 30 years, Anna Brennan for 35 years, Margaret Taylor for 45 years, Beryl Matthews, Yvonne Holcroft and Margaret Champness for 50 years, and Glenda Macdonald for a whopping 60 years of service. It was wonderful to hear about all the things the guild does for the community, including supporting girls in developing countries and refugee camps. I thank president Yvonne Holcroft, secretary Wendy Davidson and all members of the George Bass Trefoil Guild for their wonderful work and for keeping the spirit of the girl guides alive. I thoroughly enjoyed attending their meeting and look forward to catching up with them all again soon.

BARRENJOEY HIGH SCHOOL

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (16:44): I am very happy to acknowledge that Barrenjoey High School achieved exceptional results in the 2024 HSC exams. The efforts of students and teachers saw the school leap 220 places in the ranking tables, and the results were some of the best in the school's history. Nineteen students received an ATAR above 90, which is an incredible achievement. One hundred students achieved band 6

and 240 students achieved band 5. This shows the exceptional dedication and hard work that the students of Barrenjoey High School have put in. The principal, Mr Brett Blaker, credited the success to the dedication of teachers who ran study sessions outside school hours, including during holiday breaks, to provide additional sessions to students in the lead-up to the exams. Their unwavering commitment played a pivotal role in this outstanding achievement. I congratulate the class of 2024 at Barrenjoey High School for their enormous achievement and wish them all the best for their future.

BONNYRIGG HEIGHTS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:45): Over the past decade, wellbeing has rightly become a priority within our schools. Bonnyrigg Heights Primary School has developed a successful wellbeing room, which Josie McGann opens and runs every day during recess and lunch times. It is open to all students at Bonnyrigg Heights who can come in, make themselves comfortable, and make new friends. It is all part of the school's dedication to fostering a sense of belonging for its students. Central to the initiative is the concept of "good chaos". In the room, music is played, and there are board games, arts and crafts, dress ups, role play, jewellery making and much more. It allows for every student's needs to be met and understood. The initiative would not be possible without Josie's dedication to her school community. As community liaison officer at the school, Josie has an eye out for student wellbeing. I recently had the pleasure of meeting with Josie, and her passion for the school is infectious. So much so that she is affectionately known as the "Maltese Terrier." I thank you Josie for driving this fantastic initiative and all that she does.

TOM TSENG

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (16:46): It is an absolute privilege to acknowledge and celebrate the incredible dedication of Tom Tseng, president of Copacabana Surf Life Saving Club. Tom was recently nominated for a New South Wales Seniors Local Achievement Award by fellow board member Fiona Duignan. Tom is the definition of community spirit. He is always ready to lend a hand at club events, tirelessly supporting our nippers, and doing it all with an unfailingly good nature. Beyond his monthly beach patrols, branch presidents' meetings and board leadership, Tom somehow finds time to lead in another capacity as president of the Australia, New Zealand and South Pacific section of the International College of Dentists, all while running a successful dental practice in Kincumber. Tom's commitment to the surf club began when his own children were nippers. Decades later, even though his children have grown up and moved on, Tom remains a driving force behind the club's success. His leadership has helped to foster a strong and capable team and he continually inspires those around him. We are grateful for Tom's energy, his time and his unwavering dedication to our community. I thank him for everything he does. The Copacabana Surf Life Saving Club and our community are stronger because of him.

PREMIER'S HARMONY DINNER

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (16:47): On 12 March I had the honour of attending the Premier's Harmony Dinner 2025 at the Grand Ballroom of the International Convention Centre in Sydney. Hosted by the Minister for Multiculturalism, the event brought together over 1,600 community members from across New South Wales, including from my electorate. This vibrant annual gathering celebrates and honours the incredible contributions of people whose dedication and hard work have made our State one of the most successful multicultural societies in the world. As we listened to the inspiring stories of this year's Multicultural Community Award winners, we reflected on the power of collective effort, as well as the contributions that individuals have made, large and small, to shape our State into a successful, inclusive and harmonious place for all. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone whose efforts have made a meaningful difference in our community and congratulate the award recipients on their outstanding achievements.

CHANCE NORTH

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (16:48): I acknowledge Chance North who, at just 10 years old, is already demonstrating incredible compassion and empathy for others. Many people take wearing new shoes for granted. However, for some children, wearing a good pair of shoes is a dream. Thanks to Chance, a student at Dubbo Public School, that dream is becoming a reality. Chance noticed that some children around his age and from his area struggled to get new shoes. With maturity beyond his years, he took on the challenge of collecting donations of new shoes. His goal was to help less fortunate families and to ensure that children felt included and not embarrassed by the condition of their shoes. Thanks to the generosity of the local community, 67 pairs of new shoes will be distributed to children who may not otherwise have the opportunity to own a new pair. The shoes are shared between the Dubbo PCYC and Orana Support Services and provided to families in need. I say well done to Chance. His kindness is truly inspiring.

DIGNITY PARRAMATTA

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (16:49): Recently I visited Dignity's Parramatta warehouse, where I met with the inspiring CEO and founder, Suzanne Hopman, and the impact and communications manager, Kim Taylor. Their work at the Albert Street facility in North Parramatta is testament to the incredible impact Dignity has on my community. It receives donations of food, which are stored on site and then volunteers come to collect the ingredients to make home-cooked meals. Once the meals are prepared, they are brought back to Dignity and stored in freezers, ready for people to come and source a meal free of charge. The day I visited the freezers were filled with chicken fried rice, pesto pasta, schnitzel, chicken teriyaki and more. Dignity provides critical support to individuals experiencing homelessness, helping them regain stability and dignity through its various programs. Dignity not only offers immediate relief through its crisis response services, but it also assists individuals to access long-term support and opportunities for change, with the Albert Street site acting as a crucial hub for this work, providing much-needed support in my electorate.

VICTORY THROUGH ABILITY ORGANISATION

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (16:50): Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Victory Through Ability for its dedication to empowering people with disabilities by increasing their confidence, developing their skills and helping them achieve long-term, meaningful employment. Founded in July 2023 by Sarlie Drakos, a legally blind Kiama resident, Victory Through Ability is a disability employment and support work provider created by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities. It challenges misconceptions and breaks down barriers by demonstrating what people with disabilities can achieve when given the opportunity to participate in the workforce, while also educating and training employers in hiring managers with inclusive employment practices. Through personalised support, Victory Through Ability has helped clients secure employment in industries such as tourism, hospitality, retail management, banking and security. By combining direct job placement with disability advocacy and workplace education, Victory Through Ability is transforming attitudes and increasing opportunities for people with disabilities. Sarlie is determined not to be defined by her disability, nor allow it to impede her goals. I congratulate Sarlie. Well done to Victory Through Ability.

ELAINE LOLLBACK

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (16:51): The winner of the Monaro Woman of the Year 2025 is Elaine Lollback. Elaine is heavily involved in running the St Benedict's Community Centre in Queanbeyan, based on the former Annie's Place site. St Benedict's has been assisting my community with housing and food security for several years. It is wholly volunteer run and relies on funding from donations and government grants. I have noticed a real decline in the availability and affordability of housing not just in Queanbeyan but across the Monaro since I have been the member for Monaro. Elaine and her team do wonderful work to help the people who are most in need in this space. A wonderful role model for my community, Elaine runs on faith, goodwill and chocolate to ensure that the people who come to St Benedict's receive as much assistance as humanly possible. My staff get calls from Elaine on weekends and after hours, when she is still busily working away. She never asks for anything in return and always puts in an effort, which is why she has been named Monaro Woman of the Year 2025. I thank Elaine.

EILEEN RYAN

Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (16:52): I acknowledge an incredible woman, Eileen Ryan, whose dedication to community service is truly inspiring. At 78 years old, Eileen is a proud grandmother of six and a valued volunteer with the NSW State Emergency Service in Liverpool. Eileen joined the SES in 2020, initially believing her role would involve making tea and sandwiches for volunteers. However, with the support of her team, she stepped outside her comfort zone and became an active field team member. Through hard work and continuous training, she is now qualified to assist with storm damage and has even completed heights training. Eileen's journey reminds us that it is never too late to break down our biases, push past expectations and serve our community in meaningful ways. Her bravery, dedication and willingness to learn sets an example for us all. On behalf of my community, I thank Eileen for her service and commitment.

ELEVATE ITT

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (16:53): I acknowledge Jinane Afioni, owner of the beautiful Levant cafe in Chullora, who has been working in partnership with the women at Elevate ITT to every Monday during Ramadan put together a full meal for 80 women. The meal is generous, with soup and dessert, and it is top-quality food. Jinane is not someone who puts on an event and does not put out their best stuff. The meal is available to women who would otherwise be alone during such a special community time: single mums, single women, older women, international student women, victims of domestic and family violence, people living

in public housing, or people who are just feeling a bit lonely. Ramadan is a special time for Muslims, during which they are asked to be generous, think of others and do whatever they can to support people, especially those in need. Jinane and the team at Elevate ITT embody that spirit most beautifully. I wish them a Ramadan Mubarak. May Allah reward them for their kindness to others.

CAROL SMITH

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (16:54): I recognise and congratulate Carol Smith, who has been named the 2025 Bathurst Living Legend. Carol is a citizen of Bathurst who has made an incredible difference to the lives of many as a dedicated advocate for empowering individuals of all abilities through creating inclusive opportunities within the community. Her community impacts include being a founder of Cafe on Corporation in 2019, which offers employment and social opportunities for those living with disability. Since the opening of the cafe, people of all abilities have been able to gather, thrive and participate in the Bathurst community in a supportive and inclusive environment. Carol's dedication is deeply personal, driven by her desire to create opportunities for her son and others living with disability. Through her knowledge, Carol has mentored and offered support to others in relation to the NDIS. Her charitable contributions and volunteer work have also seen a commitment of a combined 15 years on various not-for-profit boards. I congratulate Carol Smith on her outstanding contribution to her community and the acknowledgement of her endeavours as a Bathurst Living Legend.

HEAD ABOVE WATER SWIM

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:55): I acknowledge the extraordinary efforts of the organisers and volunteers behind Head Above Water, an annual 24-hour swim raising funds and awareness for mental fitness and suicide prevention. This year's event saw a phenomenal 603 swimmers take part, clocking a staggering 27,587 laps. That is like swimming from Sydney to Adelaide—amazing! Together they have already raised \$120,000, with donations open until Sunday evening. Among the standout achievers were Matt Harris, who swam 1,000 laps, or 50 kilometres; and Mooseman, aged 61 and new to swimming, who completed 480 laps, or 24 kilometres. Together as team Gotta Keep Showing Up they raised \$12,5000. There were also young swimmers, including Seren Johnson, who swam 300 laps, and Connor Ward, who swam 251 laps. This year's relay event was especially meaningful because it was named in honour of Bruce Murray, a dear friend of Head Above Water and TV industry legend, who passed away last October. Since its first swim in 2019, Head Above Water has raised an incredible \$880,000 for mental health initiatives, and it now has its sights set on reaching the \$1 million milestone next year. Amazing effort, you guys.

NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE WILDLIFE RESCUE VOLUNTEERS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (16:56): I recognise the outstanding dedication of local wildlife rescue volunteers and vets in the Newcastle electorate, who have worked tirelessly over the past week to save native corellas. Thanks to Hunter Wildlife Rescue and Hamilton Veterinary Clinic staff, more than 100 corellas have been nursed back to health following the suspected mass poisoning of hundreds of corellas in Newcastle. I also recognise the Newcastle community, who have once again stepped up to raise an outstanding \$9,000 to support the recovery of the sick corellas. This small yet significant win is testament to the commitment of local wildlife carers, vets and the community. I thank them for their hard work and dedication to the care of these beautiful birds.

SING AUSTRALIA ST GEORGE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (16:57): I recognise Sue Allison and all the team from Sing Australia St George. This fantastic local singing group just celebrated its thirtieth birthday. Sing Australia St George is a community choir that performs all across my local area, specialising in community events and bringing people together through the joy of music. It is currently the largest singing group operating in the St George area. I also recognise a very special member, Dorothy Mammet of South Hurstville. Dorothy joined the group at the age of 90, and at 98 is still singing today. The group recently celebrated Dorothy's birthday at their weekly singing night, singing *Happy Birthday* along with her favourite song, *What a Wonderful World*. Groups like Sing Australia St George play an important role in our community, providing seniors with an opportunity to stay active and socially connected and engaged while enjoying the benefits of music. I thank all the members of Sing Australia St George for continuing to provide these valuable services to my community.

MEMBER FOR THE ENTRANCE

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:58): Friday 28 March 2025 marks 10 years since I was given the opportunity to represent the incredible electorate of The Entrance in this place, the oldest Parliament in the nation. It has been a real honour to work alongside so many passionate and dedicated individuals, groups and organisations to create positive change in the place I call home. We have achieved much together. I acknowledge

and thank my dear colleagues in the electorates of Wyong, Gosford and Swansea. It is a joy to work with them. I also acknowledge and thank my staff—Catherine, Danielle, Alfat and Bridget—who prop up the office and make me look fantastic in front of my community. This position comes with many challenges. I have always given it my best shot and I will continue to do so. We have much more to do in The Entrance but, just like 10 years ago, I will continue to work hard to make our community a better place for everyone.

TRIBUTE TO MARTHA LAMPREY

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (16:59): I pay tribute to the late Martha Lamprey of Gumly Gumly, who is remembered as a community champion and a light in the lives of the many people who loved her. Born in 1932, Ms Lamprey moved to Gumly with her parents and 12 siblings in 1934 and devoted her long life to her family and community. She passed away in February at the age of 92, but she has left a legacy of lasting improvements to her village. Married to Trevor Lamprey for 70 years, she leaves five children—Marilyn Masters, Colleen George, Phillip Lamprey, Rhonda Thomson and Trevlyn Noble—and 60 grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. Ms Lamprey was president of the Gumly Gumly Progress Association, a life member of the East Wagga football club and president of the Gumly Gumly Public School P&C. Empathetic and kind, she was nonetheless a determined advocate for the betterment of Gumly. Recently, I was proud to congratulate her for receiving an award recognising her 37 years as a Crown Lands manager of Gumly Oval. Lamprey Avenue in Gumly was named in her honour, a fitting recognition for a beloved lady who did so much for so many.

PADSTOW COMMUNITY CARE

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (17:00): This Seniors Week I was honoured to speak at and officially open the Padstow Community Care's Seniors Hub. Padstow Community Care is a fantastic local organisation making a real difference in the lives of many. It provides crucial services for our senior citizens, helping them to stay independent, healthy, supported and connected to our community. The Seniors Hub brought together seniors, caregivers and local service providers to share resources and support. It was inspiring to hear from seniors whose lives have been positively impacted by the services of Padstow Community Care, whether through improved health programs or simply the provision of companionship. Seniors Week is an important reminder of the value and contributions of older Australians in our community. I am grateful for Padstow Community Care's ongoing commitment to ensuring that older Australians have the resources and care they deserve. I thank Grant Heslop and everyone at Padstow Community Care for the work they do and for organising an amazing event for the seniors in our community.

RYDE ELECTORATE CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:01): I acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the Ryde community in this year's Clean Up Australia Day. Across our suburbs, dedicated volunteers rolled up their sleeves to keep our parks, streets and waterways clean. I extend a special thanks to Macquarie Anglican church, which once again played a leading role in that vital initiative. Under the leadership of senior minister Fergus Semler, the church organised a fantastic clean-up event at ELS Hall Park in North Ryde. It was a pleasure to join them on the day, working alongside community members who gave their time to make a tangible difference to our local environment. The collective efforts of all those who participated, from individuals to community groups, have made a visible impact. It is this spirit of service that makes Ryde such a wonderful place to live. Let us continue to work together to keep our community clean and green for generations to come. I thank all involved.

CHALDEAN BABYLONIAN NEW YEAR

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:02): I recognise the upcoming Chaldean Babylonian New Year, an event that serves as a vibrant testament to the rich cultural heritage and enduring traditions of the Chaldean community. Also known as Akitu, it is a time of reflection, renewal and celebration. It marks a new beginning in the Chaldean calendar, with deep roots in ancient traditions and customs that have been passed down through generations. We begin year 7325, for those counting. I extend my congratulations to the Chaldean community on another successful and meaningful celebration of Akitu. I commend the Chaldean League for organising a celebration that fosters a sense of community and pride—in particular, Sam Yousif, Laith Alchinno and Marlin Toma, as well as Archbishop Nona and other clergy members. For many years they have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to preserving their cultural identity, as well as contributing to the diversity and vibrancy of south-west Sydney. May this celebration inspire unity, understanding and mutual respect amongst all members of our community.

OLD BLOKES DRIVING FOR A CANCER CURE

Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (17:03): I acknowledge the incredible efforts of the Old Blokes Driving for a Cancer Cure driving fundraising for the Australian Cancer Research Foundation. The charity drive

will see the Old Blokes Driving for a Cancer Cure leave Gympie on 30 April in their classic cars and see them drive through Narooma, Eden, Tumut, Beechworth, Young and Mittagong, before returning to Sydney, with the hope of raising \$100,000 to support the work of the Australian Cancer Research Foundation. To achieve their mission of raising cancer awareness, these amazing men will also host a fundraising dinner at Doltone House Sylvania Waters on 17 October, as they did last year and raised \$102,000 for the Australian Cancer Research Foundation. I recognise the dedicated team of Sutherland shire residents, Mario Nearchou, Harry Moustakas, Nick Harris, Michael Skyllas, John Assarapin and Vince Thompson, participating in the important charitable endeavour. I commend the Old Blokes Driving for a Cancer Cure for their selfless fundraising efforts and wish them well as they depart on their seven-day journey. Drive safely.

RUBY WOODS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:04): Tonight I recognise a young woman, Ruby Woods, who is doing work experience in my office this week. I note her incredible contribution as a young voice about watching what happens to women in places like the New South Wales Parliament. She has been inspired by meeting not only members in this place and the other place but also women from behind the scenes, such as the chefs and the Clerk. Wandering around the place, she has considered a life in politics in the future. She is a fantastic public speaker. She attends Oxley High School in Tamworth, and I met her recently during the State championships, where she was runner-up in the regional schools public speaking.

TIMOTHY KNIGHT

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (17:05): I congratulate local author Timothy Knight of Como on the publication of his new book titled *Gallipoli Soup*. An engineer by trade, Tim, like many of us, during his schooling years developed a deep respect for the brave Australian soldiers who fought in Gallipoli. While he was at school, a young woman of Turkish origins whose father fought with Turkish forces against the Anzacs shared her views in class. That woman, Leyla, is now Tim's beautiful wife and one of the inspirations for his unique telling of that rich part of our nation's history. *Gallipoli Soup* is written to read like a novel and mixes fact and fiction to tell the story of the Gallipoli campaign through the eyes of characters involved in the conflict, including press correspondents, an ambassador, infantry privates, army and navy officers, politicians and spies from the Australian, Turkish, English and German sides of the conflict. I commend Tim for his efforts in telling the story of Gallipoli in such a unique way coming into Anzac Day, and wish him every success as he continues his journey as a writer.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (17:06): It was an absolute pleasure to visit Young People's Theatre this week to congratulate the team on being the proud recipients of \$200,000 in New South Wales Government grant funding for the redevelopment of their rehearsal, theatrical and public spaces. Based in Hamilton, Young People's Theatre has been Newcastle's premier theatrical organisation for youth aged six to 20 for over 75 years and is an important part of the social and cultural fabric of our city. In addition to teaching over 450 students each week, the not-for-profit organisation offers educational, disability, multicultural and First Nations support to the local community. The funding will ensure that more young Novocastrians can benefit from that important community hub, and I look forward to the amazing projects they will deliver.

PENNANT HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:07): One of the excellent schools in the Wahroonga electorate, Pennant Hills Public School, recently celebrated its centenary. I had the pleasure of joining the students, staff, parents and ex-students at an assembly to celebrate 100 years of academic growth and success. The students and teachers celebrated the milestone by eating watermelon in front of the original school building, just as the students and teachers did on the first day of the school, 100 years ago. I congratulate all the students, parents, staff and other members of the community who have, over 100 years, made the school a fantastic place for students to gain a strong education and endless opportunities. I thank Principal Alison Filipic and relieving Deputy Principal Melissa Griffith for putting on such a great event to mark the centenary. The school was open before the Sydney Harbour Bridge was completed or the Federal Parliament commenced sitting in Canberra. The school is great, and it will have another great 100 years. I congratulate the whole school community.

HURLEY BURLEY CLUB

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:08): I recognise the Burwood Football Club and the Hurlstone Park Football Club for putting on the Hurley Burley Club, which I had the pleasure of attending last weekend. It was a fantastic fundraising event. It was in memory of the late Marin "Muddy" Sardelic, who was a passionate philanthropist and one of the legends of Hurlstone Park Football Club. "Muddy" sadly passed about a year ago from brain cancer, so the fundraising focus of the Hurley Burley Club is supporting brain cancer research

institutes, such as the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse centre as well as other brain cancer research organisations. It has been a fantastic success. It started off with only 25 players five years ago and now, in 2025, there are more than 440 players. One of the really nice things I noticed when I arrived at the event was that it was not just for youngsters; it was also for older gentlemen, who were playing. Congratulations to the Hurley Burley Club.

Private Members' Statements

ART NORTH EXHIBITION

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (17:10): Recently, I was once again delighted to attend the annual Art North Exhibition at the Grace Cossington Smith Gallery at Abbotsleigh. This year, the gallery showcased artworks from the 2024 year 12 visual arts students across the Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby district. The students put a significant amount of time and effort into their pieces and hanging them in the gallery is a lovely way to honour that hard work and excellence. Dylan Ahern from Normanhurst Boys High School created the sculpture titled *Echoes of the Machine*. This sculpture is described as a conjugation of discarded machine parts in various states of disrepair and has been made from old machine parts to be given a new life. Mia Benson from Barker College designed, using textiles and fibre, four portraits titled *Fibres of Love (Fabrication of My Heritage)*. The portraits progress generationally and examine how individual heritage shapes identity.

Zoe Chan from Loreto Normanhurst painted an artwork titled *Family*, which was inspired by the importance of food in contemporary society and throughout centuries—specifically, how food is a universal product that brings people together. Another incredible painting was done by Belle Harvey from St Leo's Catholic College. The painting titled, *Lost in Animation*, demonstrates the changes that technology brings to our lives as it becomes a more prominent and effortless element of the world. From Abbotsleigh, Cici He painted *Roll UP! Roll UP*, a painting that explores the beauty of the circus and its disappearance in today's electronically fuelled society. Henry Hua from Knox Grammar School made a collection of works titled *Deconstruction of the Monolithic*. Henry describes the artwork as the bittersweet essence of the brutalist architecture—something that Dominic Perrottet has never got. Lincoln James from Barker College painted a triptych oil painting titled *It is what it is*. He describes it as existential questioning through the philosophy of absurdism. When I was opening the exhibition, I had a chat to Lincoln about his painting and how he likes this form of art because he can amalgamate realistic and nonsensical imagery, reflecting the idea of *It is what it is*.

Thenuki Jayasekara from Pymble Ladies' College drew an amazing artwork titled *Cultural Fluidity*, which was centred on the artist's Sri Lankan background and cultural heritage. Thenuki created this artwork to represent the ways in which culture forms around identity. Turrumurra High School student Holly-Ann Keen created a photo media artwork, which she describes as displaying the exposure and vulnerability of the body and human form and explores the need to cover or distort insecurities, or guard one's identity from projecting. Will Kim from Normanhurst Boys High School drew an artwork titled *Amidst the Gradation of History*. The triptych of portraits illustrates a family lineage and its relationship of mutual dependency with modern South Korean history. Olivia Lee-Jackson from Loreto Normanhurst used printmaking to create *Bird Brain: Together We Serve, Together We Mourn*. This artwork plays into the irony that birds and humans share many cognitive abilities, yet we can discount, underestimate and even consider them intrusive in our daily lives.

From Pymble Ladies' College, Angela Liu drew *In His Name*, which is an artwork representing the inner strength and character of her father. Her drawing is incredibly lifelike and incredibly meaningful. Harrison Robb from Knox Grammar School made a collection of works titled *Out of the Ashes*. He predominantly used postmodern media to create a body of work that explores the inherent beauty and resilience of the banksia through realistic and stylised forms. Luka Simonovic from Turrumurra High School drew an artwork titled *The Herd*. Rosemary Willett from St Leo's Catholic College drew a piece titled *Night Walks*. From Hornsby Girls High School, Talise Xu painted *Life as an Opera*, which critiques the inherent performativity of living within a society that demands conformity. Also from Hornsby Girls High School, Fiona Yee painted *Two Homes*. Finally, Ella Yu from Abbotsleigh painted *Passenger Reveries—Past, Present and Future*, which explores the connections and beauty of urban landscapes and natural skylscapes. I must say that the art was absolutely outstanding. Our future is in great hands with these wonderful young artists.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INTEGRITY AGENCIES

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (17:15): I have spoken on many occasions in this place about how my electorate of Strathfield is one of the most culturally diverse in Australia. Today I wish to speak about how cultural diversity must be taken into account in the work of our integrity agencies. I am also the Chair of the Independent Commission Against Corruption oversight committee, and I speak about the human cost that can accompany public investigations—and the steps we must take to ensure that our institutions act with both strength and care. The Independent Commission Against Corruption has a vital job: rooting out corruption, defending public

confidence and holding power to account. But in doing so, it must also protect the dignity and welfare of the people caught in the process, especially those who are vulnerable.

In 2018, Dr Quanbao "Leo" Liao, a 67-year-old engineer and executive, died by suicide on the morning he was due to give evidence in a private ICAC hearing. He left behind notes for his wife and daughter, describing the intense fear and shame he felt—not of guilt, but of the consequences for his family and his name. In 2022, Dr Clifton Wong, another witness of Chinese heritage, also died by suicide shortly after giving evidence at a public hearing. In his notes to his wife and daughter, Dr Liao outlined why he had chosen to take his life. He wrote, "When you receive this letter, I will have left you. I have decided to leave this world, which is also my last hardest attempt to prevent you and our daughter from becoming family members of a criminal; this is because I am still innocent at the time I wrote this letter." He also explained, "You know that all my life, I've always been eager to excel, preserve my reputation, or maybe it was because of integrity that I chose to take my own life."

Both men had been drawn into investigations. Both were under intense scrutiny. Neither had been found guilty of any wrongdoing at the time of their deaths. As someone of Chinese background, I understand the power of cultural norms like "face"—the profound sense of honour and shame that shapes how many in our communities perceive public exposure. I understand how the concept of "face" is the fabric of social relationships and undergirds our concepts of self-worth, status, identity, confidence and belonging, as well as that of our families. In short, it is a really big deal. To be associated with criminal conduct, even by implication, can bring a burden far heavier than we might understand. In 2023 the Inspector of the ICAC, Gail Furness, SC, conducted an audit into the welfare of witnesses and others involved in ICAC investigations and published a landmark report. To the commission's credit, it responded to the report's recommendations.

According to its most recent annual report, ICAC has now appointed a dedicated Witness Liaison Officer, who received 17 referrals over the past year; developed a Witness Wellbeing Policy and Procedure; and commenced mandatory training for officers on managing mental health and psychological risks. These are important steps. At that time, it did not mention the cultural sensitivities that I have spoken about.

That is why I raised the issue during hearings of the parliamentary committee and why I called for reform, not to weaken the commission's work but to make it stronger, fairer and more humane.

This week, I was so pleased to attend a training seminar organised by ICAC for its staff as well as other integrity agencies across Australia. It featured Associate Professor Pan Wang from the University of New South Wales exploring the concept of face in Asian cultures. That marks a clear recognition that cultural understanding must be part of any effective witness support strategy. Understanding concepts of face in Asian cultures is also important to ensuring that the commission can elicit the most effective evidence, rather than a witness just shutting down. I acknowledge and thank the chief commissioner and his team for their leadership. That is exactly the kind of thoughtful, culturally informed response we need to see embedded across all levels of government and oversight, because justice must be strong but it must also be just, and that means recognising that people experience pressure differently.

If we want a system that is truly fair and accountable, then we must take into account not just what people are accused of but how they are treated in the process and whether they are supported, especially when at risk. We must be clear that this is not the end of the work; it is just the beginning. We need deeper cultural understanding embedded in practice. We need ongoing evaluation and improvement. Justice must be pursued with vigour, but it must also be delivered with humanity. That is how we uphold public trust and how we ensure that integrity means not only doing what is right but doing it in the right way.

ST PATRICK'S MARIST COLLEGE DUNDAS

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (17:20): When my eldest son started year 7 at St Patrick's Marist College Dundas in 2012, like many new parents to a school I went along to a P&C meeting. At that time, the school had a 40 kilometres per hour school zone on Kirby Street. The flashing signs were on the nature strip of a family's home, and I recall that the P&C would organise to give them a hamper at Christmas to thank them for their generosity in powering the flashing signs to help keep the students safe. In addition to the 40 kilometres per hour school zone in Kirby Street, the parents and teachers were desperately seeking a 40 kilometres per hour school zone on Kissing Point Road, a six-lane State road with a 70 kilometre per hour zone directly outside the school.

Hundreds of students pour off the buses in the morning and out of the school gates every afternoon to cross that road or wait beside that road with cars and trucks whizzing past at 70 kilometres per hour. Requests from the school leadership, the P&C and parents all fell on deaf ears. I recall a petition was circulated and there were several incidents that put students' lives in danger, but to no avail. In 2017 I saw a student almost skittled, so

I wrote to former State member Geoff Lee, and the response from the then Minister for Roads, Maritime and Freight, Melinda Pavey, was underwhelming. She wrote:

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of Mrs Donna Davis about a request for a 40 km/h school zone on Kissing Point Road, Dundas. I was sorry to read about the incident involving a student and I hope the student has made a full recovery. Please assure Mrs Davis, the NSW Government is committed to improving safety on the road network and delivering practical solutions which protect our most vulnerable road users, our children. I asked Roads and Maritime Services to look into this matter.

Roads and Maritime ... will undertake future investigations into pedestrian safety improvements at this location ... [and] advises feasibility of any improvements will be subject to funding.

...

School zones are provided on roads with an active, direct access point to the school. They are not typically intended for routes to school.

When I came to Parliament six years later, addressing the school zone at St Pat's was on my advocacy list from day one. It was quite timely when I was approached by assistant principal Matthew Paton during a visit to St Pats in 2023 to discuss the dangerous intersection of Kissing Point Road and Kirby Street, the lack of safety for the students on the street and potential advocacy on behalf of the school. I did what all members do: I made representations. The response I received made proposals for safety measures straight up. It said:

Dear Ms Davis,

Thank you for your correspondence on behalf of Mr Matthew Peyton

...

The safety of children travelling to and from school is of the critical importance to the NSW Government. Therefore, I am pleased to note that Transport for NSW will recalibrate the traffic signal timings across Kissing Point Road with a view to increase the crossing time available for pedestrians during the afternoon school hours. These improvements will provide additional walk times at traffic signals to assist the number of school children waiting to cross Kissing Point Road.

In general, 40km/h Schools Zones have been provided on all roads with an active direct access point from the school, or on all roads where a Transport for NSW School Crossing Supervisor is employed.

I knew there were exceptions to this rule in other electorates, Riverside Girls High School on Victoria Road being one of them. For years I have driven past that school and there is a tiny garden gate in the fence on Victoria Road. It probably does not even have working hinges, but there is a 40 kilometres per hour school zone there on a 70 kilometres per hour road. I could not understand why we could not do something in Dundas to improve the safety of local pedestrians. I went back to the Minister for Roads and requested a change to the school zone policy. My request was met with the advice that safety measures for St Pat's and Kissing Point Road would be considered as part of the agenda of the NSW Road Safety Forum on 22 February 2024. That was great and welcome news.

In response to that, the Minister asked Transport for NSW to review options for pedestrians near school zones to increase the safety of students travelling to and from school. A safety audit was done and we now have new traffic signals. The consultants have been out and identified how many kids are crossing that road. We have had a wonderful outcome for the community. It is community advocacy at work. The community and the school called for the safety measure. We have put new kerb ramps, improved the safety of that intersection and we now have a 40 kilometres per hour school zone on Kissing Point Road.

MELANOMA MARCH

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (17:25): Australia has the highest rates of melanoma in the world. It is the most common cancer affecting 20- to 39-year-old Australians. One Australian is diagnosed with the disease every 30 minutes, and it is estimated that 1,300 Australians will die from melanoma this year. I bring to the attention of the House the Melanoma March, which is facilitated by the Melanoma Institute Australia. Each year it brings together melanoma patients, their families and local communities to raise awareness and funds for research to reach the goal of zero deaths from melanoma. The march originally began as a community fundraising event in Manly in 2012, but it has grown and grown over the years and is now a national campaign. The first Melanoma March for Dubbo was scheduled to be held in 2020, but unfortunately could not go ahead due to COVID.

One of the driving forces in bringing the awareness campaign to Dubbo was Carrie-Ann Beggs. Carrie-Ann was diagnosed with stage 3 melanoma in September 2017, and within six months it had progressed to stage 4. It started on her leg and sadly metastasised to her lymph nodes, bowel, lung, shoulder and abdomen. Following the COVID pandemic, the first melanoma march was held in Dubbo in 2022. Although Carrie-Anne sadly died the year earlier and did not see it come to fruition, her parents, Anne and Garry, have carried her dream forward with determination. Their efforts, along with fellow committee members, who are equally as passionate, have seen the march become an annual event that grows significantly each year, creating a phenomenal amount of awareness and education, while at the same time raising important funds.

This year, I had the honour of welcoming to Dubbo and the march the chief executive of the Melanoma Institute Australia, Matthew Browne. He was delighted to be in Dubbo with his wife on that day. There was a notable absence from the march: melanoma warrior and committee member Toni McMillon. Currently fighting melanoma, Toni was unfortunately unable to attend as she was in Sydney undergoing a number of surgeries. But she was definitely in the hearts and thoughts of all participants who sent their best wishes for her recovery on that day. In 2025, the innovative Dubbo Melanoma March committee took the event to a whole new level. Alongside a variety of community groups participating in the morning, offering activities such as food vans, a barbeque and children's entertainment, the committee also arranged for the Australian Skin Cancer Foundation's Skin Check Truck to be at the event. Providing free skin checks, the vital addition reinforced the importance of early detection in the fight against melanoma.

The Australian Skin Cancer Foundation took its mission to save lives from skin cancer to the next level in June 2023 when it launched Australia's first mobile national Skin Check Truck.

Recognising the challenges of affordability and accessibility for skin checks, particularly for regional and rural areas, the truck provides free skin checks while further educating visitors on skin cancer and how to take preventative measures. The truck was an incredibly popular addition to the march, with the meticulous melanographers working tirelessly to provide skin checks throughout the event.

Their dedication and expertise was greatly appreciated by all who attended. Many lesions were detected and referred for further investigation, including possible melanomas. Those crucial findings highlight the impact of having the Skin Check Truck at the Dubbo march. The reality is some of those lesions may well have gone unnoticed without that initiative. Not only did the foundation make vital, life-saving contributions at the march; it also announced a significant monetary contribution to Melanoma Institute Australia's zero deaths from melanoma mission.

The collaboration between the Melanoma March committee and the Australian Skin Cancer Foundation was outstanding. On behalf of the community, I thank the Dubbo Melanoma March committee for its dedication to inspiring others to join the fight against the deadly disease. I commend the committee for the incredible amount of funds it has raised, which contribute to finding better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat melanoma, as well as improving the quality of life for melanoma patients. The good news is that we are looking at bringing the Australian Skin Cancer Foundation's Skin Check Truck to Parliament this year. Before I finish, I have a question for everyone: When was your last skin check? A simple appointment could just save your life.

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE BARTOLO, OAM

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (17:30): Having only a few minutes to record the contribution of George Bartolo to maintaining and advancing multiculturalism and social cohesion seems inadequate, but George's story is one of those great Australian migrant stories that deserves recognition in this place. Current and former MPs, Ministers, mayors and councillors joined hundreds of others last Friday at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in Warrawong—where George married his late wife, Doris, in 1964—to recognise his contribution. George was born in Malta and arrived in Australia in 1959, on what was supposed to be a two-year adventure. He started his new life in Wollongong with a job in the steelworks, as many migrants did at the time. While he made Australia his home, he never forgot his Maltese roots, visiting Malta many times. In an interview after being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia on Australia Day in 2018, he said:

I am Maltese, of course I am. But I am also Australian. Naturalised, but especially in my heart. I felt like that mere months after I arrived. This is my country. That is why the recognition of an OAM, on Australia Day, felt so good. It was a confirmation of the bonds between me and Australia.

Support for migrants was virtually non-existent when George arrived in Australia but, because he could speak English, he was often asked to translate for people in all sorts of settings. At the same time that he helped to fill the service gap for those he could, he worked to improve services for everyone else. In the earliest years of Australian multiculturalism, George was instrumental in the work of the Good Neighbour Council, representing the Maltese community in Wollongong. He organised the inaugural migrant section of the Wollongong show and was involved in the show committee for 12 years as chief steward, secretary and president.

George was also president and secretary of the George Cross Club between 1963 and 1979. He was a foundation member of the Maltese Community Council of NSW and served as vice-president, president, secretary and treasurer. After helping to negotiate the amalgamation of the George Cross Club and the Maltese Falcons to form the George Cross Falcons Club, George served as president from 1986 to 2014. He initiated and managed the construction of the George Cross Club in Cringila, helped secure funding for a Maltese welfare worker and was a long-term contributor to *The Maltese Herald* as the Wollongong representative.

It was not just the Maltese community who benefited from George's commitment to improving things for migrants. In 1975 George was a founding member of the Illawarra Ethnic Council, which later became the Multicultural Communities Council of the Illawarra [MCCI]. Over a 42-year contribution to that organisation, he helped take it from a small operation in a fibro house to one providing services to thousands of people across New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. He was also a foundation member of Cringila United Soccer Club, a foundation member of the Wollongong Wolves Football Club and a member of the Illawarra Dog Training Club, serving as chief instructor and president. He was recognised with a life membership of the Illawarra Dog Training Club, a life membership of the Maltese Community Council of NSW and a life membership of MCCI. There have been many reflections on George's life and contributions. Chris Lacey, CEO of MCCI, said:

George epitomised this community spirit, helping not only the thousands of Maltese migrants to our region and NSW, but many others in our community who needed a helping hand. And he played an instrumental role in advancing Australia's new policy of multiculturalism as a founding member of the nation's first regional ethnic council based in the Illawarra formed in 1975.

He leaves our community with a legacy of impact and contribution that will be remembered long into the future.

As part of his eulogy, chairman of MCCI Ken Habak—whom George served alongside for 20 years—said:

George's volunteer work and involvement in community life began over 60 years ago translating for the Maltese people, promoting harmony, social cohesion and inclusion and advocating for stronger aged care services to CALD and Multicultural communities in the Illawarra and across NSW, especially for the Maltese community and at MCCI.

I got to know George over three decades in the Labor Party, another organisation of which he was a life member. I enjoyed his support and encouragement and benefited from his advice. He had a desire to get things done, to make improvements when they were needed and to change things that needed changing. He was guided by an unwavering desire to maintain and enhance social cohesion. I described George as one of the loveliest people in the world because he was. He was liked and respected, even though some of his jokes were not.

I am pleased that George's daughters, Karen and Janet, are here today, and I thank them for sharing him with us. At a time when many people are trying to test and break the bonds of social cohesion, George's life and commitment remind us of how multiculturalism can and should be done. George's lifelong dedication to advancing multiculturalism has changed policy, improved services and helped to build a better community and better society for everyone—a series of achievements few can genuinely lay claim to. Vale, George Bartolo.

RAMADAN

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (17:35): Each year I join 1.8 billion Muslims in observing Ramadan. As people would know, Ramadan is about fasting—abstaining from food and drink—and good deeds, prayer and charity. We also have to try to abstain from swearing, which is sometimes a bit of a struggle in this place. This year Ramadan started on 1 March, which makes it easy to keep track of the days. The uniqueness of Ramadan is that the exact timing of Eid al-Fitr, which means breaking of the fast, is not known until it happens. This weekend families and communities will turn their eyes to the sky, waiting for the waxing crescent of a new moon, which symbolises the end of Ramadan and the beginning of celebrations for Eid al-Fitr. The sighting of the moon is a moment that connects generations, communities and lands.

In Ramadan, no prayer goes unheard, no act of charity goes unchecked and no good deed goes unnoticed. Ramadan is about extending compassion and kindness without limits. Last night I was joined by many people in the Muslim community in Western Sydney at the Lakemba Mosque for the holiest of nights, Laylat al-Qadr, which is the equivalent of 1,000 months of worship. It is the sacred night on which the Koran was first revealed to the Prophet Mohammed, peace and blessings be upon him. We broke our fast with 2,000 people on Wangee Road in Lakemba, which was so fantastic. Then I went to the United Muslim Association centre later in the evening to join them for their events. Both of those places of worship were recipients of disgusting online attacks over the past two weeks. I was glad to see that the community turned out to support those wonderful places. The place that we can be is one where everyone is welcome and everyone comes together. It was so special to be surrounded by people of my community on that night. It was a great reminder that unity is much easier and much more important than division. It is a greater force.

One thing that I have a laugh about with people who know me is that my punctuality can be a little bit hit-and-miss but during Ramadan, I am perfectly punctual. I know exactly when the sun rises—first light this morning was 5.41 a.m. and the sun will start dipping today at 6.59 p.m. I know that because during Ramadan Muslims have to fast from first light to sunset; it is the only time that I know those times absolutely precisely. Any observing Muslim will know exactly when the sun sets, which is obviously lots of fun. Many colleagues have attended iftars in the past, which is a breaking of the fast. It is a great opportunity to spend time with people from all different faiths and all different communities. I am always so glad to see them. Back in the old days, when

I was a principal at a school in Punchbowl, we did the first school iftar. I am so proud to see so many schools do it now.

It is about bringing everyone together over a share plate. It is about the human connection that makes us who we are. We have had parliamentary iftars, and there was also an incredibly important iftar with the Australian National Imams Council. Ramadan is an important time to reflect on things in the community. It has been a challenging Ramadan this year, and not because of the food. One can get through the food and drink stuff—that is self-discipline. The acts of worship are important, but it is also about the community's understanding of what people are going through overseas.

We turn our eyes to what is happening in Gaza—it is tragic that it has started again. At the end of the night I can break my fast. I know I will be in a safe place and I will eat food. But people in Gaza, Syria, and other parts of the world do not have that assurance, and that makes it very hard for the community to celebrate. We think about what those people are going through. During Ramadan, the whole idea is to continue with the usual activities. I do not believe it is an excuse not to do things. Obviously, Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred interrupted Ramadan for me a little bit. It summed up what I thought I would see, which is, most fittingly, a time of community.

In conclusion, Eid al-Fitr is an incredibly significant celebration in the Islamic calendar. As I said earlier, several moments connect Muslims around the world, and this is one of those moments. It is a special moment when we can all come together. It is an accomplishment to have the strength to fast, but, as a Muslim person, I also love it when a non-Muslim person shares a meal with me, or asks me how I am going, or helps me with an act of charity. That is really important. It is not just about one or the other; it is about all of us. I wish my Muslim brothers and sisters Ramadan Mubarak. Eid Mubarak. Inshallah, all their acts of fasting are well received. I thank my non-Muslim brothers and sisters for their support during this time.

ROCK AT THE RACES

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (17:40): What an incredible day it was at Rock at the Races. First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the organisers and sponsors who made that fantastic event possible: Triple M, the Entertainment Grounds and Empire Touring. Their dedication and hard work has once again delivered a spectacular festival that celebrates the best of Australian rock and pop music. The event has grown into a true highlight on the Central Coast. It is a date that must be pencilled into everyone's diary, and it is easy to see why. Year after year, Rock at the Races sells out well in advance, drawing thousands of music lovers from near and far. It is a must-attend festival for locals and visitors alike, bringing together generations, boosting tourism and giving the local economy a well-deserved musical lift. The hospitality industry thrives with the influx of festivalgoers, who stay for the weekend, dine at local restaurants and support small businesses. It is not just a concert; it is a community celebration.

This year's line-up was nothing short of legendary. From the anthemic sounds of Thirsty Merc and Dragon to the powerhouse performances from Rose Tattoo and Swanee, every act had the crowd singing along. Performers like Wendy Matthews, the amazing Eurogliders, Spy vs. Spy and many more gave us a truly unforgettable experience, proving once again that Aussie rock is alive and kicking. It was a joy for gen Xers, including me, to be part of that and belt out our old favourites.

Mr Stephen Kamper: What about the baby boomers?

Mr ADAM CROUCH: There was the odd boomer in the stadium, I suspect, but the music meant it was really the home of the gen Xers. I say to the gen Zs that they should get on board and listen to some great music. They should come to Rock at the Races and belt out the old favourites with us. I give a special shout-out to the fantastic Paddy Gerrard, who did an amazing job as the MC, keeping the energy high throughout the entire event. Let us not forget the young talent from Big Music School and Studios. The Bandits took the stage for the second year running. Watching those kids rock out was absolutely inspiring. I was particularly proud to see my godson Max perform. What a thrill for them and for all of us. I congratulate the Bandits on a truly professional and impressive performance in front of thousands of Central Coast locals.

The Entertainment Grounds, with its incredible facilities, has proven to be the perfect venue for an event of that scale. There are no long queues, but there is great seating, delicious food trucks and the convenience of shuttle buses to and from Gosford railway station. It is everything one could want for the ultimate festival experience. I thank CEO Daniel Lacey and the entire team at the Entertainment Grounds for their continued commitment to live music. The member for Wyong is in the Chamber, and he knows what a great job they do at the Entertainment Grounds. Daniel and his team should be commended for the great work they do.

I thank everyone who attended for coming out in full force, singing at the top of their lungs and making the event so special. There was even a lady in a leg brace. She had obviously broken her leg, but she was not going

to miss the event. She was belting out tunes with the Eurogliders. Good on her for not missing a beat, even with a leg brace on. That passion for live music keeps the festival thriving. If anyone missed out this year, they should not make the same mistake twice. People should mark their calendars and get ready for Rock at the Races in 2026.

People of all ages came from right around the Central Coast, along with visitors to our spectacular region. They got to enjoy some brilliant music. I am a big Wendy Matthews fan, but it was also great seeing the Eurogliders again. They were absolutely on note the entire afternoon. It was great to enjoy the festivities with so many people. It was a great weekend of weather. With the music and the food, it was really the place to be. Once again, I congratulate everyone involved in making the event a roaring success. Let us keep the spirit of Aussie rock alive and get ready to do it all again next year.

Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (17:45): I congratulate the member for Terrigal on his speech. I also acknowledge the Entertainment Grounds for its commitment to live music. I did not get to that particular festival, but I was at the previous one with Ganggajang, the Allnitters and the Hoodoo Gurus. I congratulate Daniel and his team on the work they do, not just in the racing industry but also in making sure that live music and entertainment is a number one priority on the Central Coast.

NORTH MACEDONIA NIGHTCLUB FIRE

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism) (17:46): I express my sympathy and solidarity with the Macedonian community in Rockdale and throughout New South Wales. On 16 March fire engulfed a nightclub in Kočani, North Macedonia, resulting in the tragic death of 59 people. It is hard to express the pain caused by the loss of so many young people under such horrific circumstances. My heart breaks for the parents, families and friends left behind to mourn.

Australian Macedonians are outward looking and globally engaged, so the impact of the disaster is being felt deeply here in New South Wales. The conversations I have had with community leaders have been difficult. They speak first of shock, then of sadness, followed by a resolution to act. The response of the Australian Macedonian community has been remarkable. In my electorate, the Rockdale Ilinden Football Club has provided a focus for the collective grief of many of my constituents. Last weekend the club commenced a fundraising drive for affected families in Kočani at its home game against Blacktown City. They donated gate takings and passed donation boxes through the crowd. I am proud to say the minute of silence was impeccably observed by fans of both teams.

Rockdale Ilinden Football Club was supported by a number of its club sponsors, as well as other not-for-profit organisations—in particular MKUD Ilinden, a cultural and folk dancing group, and the Prilepsko Drustvo association. They had hoped to raise \$10,000; today the total stands at \$80,000 and rising. We can all admire the profound generosity of that community and the way it has rallied around this cause. The president of Rockdale Ilinden, Dennis Loether, summed it up when he said, "We are a football club, but we also serve and represent our wonderful local community." I thank Dennis and general manager and club secretary Louie Belevski, along with everyone associated with the Rockdale Ilinden Football Club.

All the people of our State support the New South Wales Macedonian community at this difficult time. As a sign of that support, I am pleased to announce the famous tower at Central station will be lit up in red and yellow, the colours of the flag of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The lighting will take place a week from today, on Thursday 3 April. I hope that public act will send a profound message to all Macedonian Australians and to the people of Kočani. We honour those who were lost, and we stand in solidarity with those who remain.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:49): Popular community leader and wildlife warrior Tiga Cross is the 2025 International Women's Day Coffs Coast Woman of the Year. Tiga was among six inspirational finalists for the prestigious award, which was presented at the International Women's Day breakfast at the Coffs Harbour Racing Club and Function Centre. International Women's Day in Coffs Harbour is celebrated each year as a joint initiative of the Zonta Club of Coffs Harbour Inc., the Business and Professional Women's Association Coffs Coast and the Coffs Coast Business Women's Network. The breakfast attracted over 450 attendees, including senior students from some of our local high schools. Tiga Cross is the managing director of the Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary. Her leadership is driven by a deep passion for both community enrichment and environmental stewardship. When the Dolphin Marine Conservation Park faced potential closure, Tiga decided to put everything on the line. In October 2023 she led a successful campaign to raise funds and save the iconic Coffs Coast destination.

Since that time, Tiga has transformed the sanctuary into a not-for-profit organisation and has developed partnerships with local organisations, including the Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour, WIRES, the New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage, Southern Cross University and TAFE NSW. It will support educational programs and research that connects future leaders to practical, community-focused experiences. Tiga is inspiring the next generation of wildlife ambassadors with her visionary leadership and creating a lasting impact on both the wildlife and the Coffs Harbour community. Tiga received a plaque, a certificate and a cash prize of \$1,500 towards continuing her work. The award was jointly sponsored by The Physio Movement and the Hoey Moey.

The runner-up award, which was sponsored by One Agency Coffs Harbour, was won by Lee Millard-Newton. A former midwife, Lee's experience of breast cancer motivated her to improve the journeys of other people who had been diagnosed. She became a breast care nurse, working with BreastScreen NSW and the Mid North Coast Cancer Institute Coffs Harbour. Since then, the impact of her career on the breast cancer community has been significant. She has established support groups; facilitated seminars, forums and webinars; and educated community groups on breast cancer and lymphoedema awareness. Lee established a local Dragons Abreast dragon boat club at Urunga. She also brought the YWCA encore exercise program to the area. As a Cancer Council volunteer, Lee has trained volunteers and held barbeques, fashion parades and cake stalls to raise awareness. Even after retirement, Lee maintains her association with professionals and the breast cancer community as a prosthetic and mastectomy garment fitter. Lee remains a strong advocate for the people she cares for.

The other finalists were Michele Greenwood, Anna Joy, Noelene Skinner and Kellie Small, all of them outstanding women who are making a positive difference in our community. Other awards were also presented on the day. Southern Cross University awarded the SCU International Women's Day Scholarship to Kadie Vignes. Betelhem Tesfamariam was recognised with the Zonta International Young Women in Leadership Award. Siobhan O'Mara was awarded the Business and Professional Women Wendy Martin Encouragement Award, and Kayla Dyson was awarded the Business and Professional Women Maude Spielvogel Scholarship.

I make special mention of a community leader and cultural champion, Lesley Schoer, who is the 2025 Local Woman of the Year for the Coffs Harbour electorate. Lesley is honoured in recognition of her many years of significant work and strong leadership at the Coffs Harbour Regional Conservatorium. Last year Lesley retired as president and chair of the board of directors after 14 years at the helm of our beloved Con, leaving a lasting legacy. She has been instrumental in the Con's phenomenal success and in shaping its status as an iconic institution in our community.

Under Lesley's visionary leadership and close work with her colleagues, the Con is firmly established as a leading educational organisation on the Coffs Coast. It is renowned for its pursuit of excellence in both teaching and performance. Her dedication, guidance and support for the Con has allowed it to reach, teach and inspire many people in our region. Lesley is a nurturer who is much loved in our community for her warmth, grace and passion. She is a very worthy Local Woman of the Year for the Coffs Harbour electorate.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:54): Women's health is not just a women's problem. An inherent gender bias impacts the New South Wales health system, including in the electorate of Prospect. The electorate covers Blacktown Hospital, Westmead Hospital and Fairfield Hospital, and even down to Liverpool. We have a fantastic medical workforce in my electorate of Prospect and across our State. It is made up of dedicated, hardworking, passionate and extremely capable doctors, nurses, midwives, psychiatrists, psychologists, geriatricians, paediatricians, gynaecologists et cetera. I thank them all for the dedicated care that they offer, but that does not change the fact that women's health needs our attention.

Polycystic ovarian syndrome [PCOS] is a common hormonal condition for women in New South Wales. Caused by an excess of androgens, PCOS can cause painful cysts on women's ovaries and disrupt the menstrual cycle. Other symptoms can include weight gain, facial hair, anxiety, depression, acne and a higher risk of diabetes. PCOS can also impact a woman's fertility. Another issue is endometriosis, which is a condition where tissue that is similar to the lining of the uterus grows outside the uterus. Endometriosis is a progressive chronic condition that worsens over time and can also lead to infertility. Endometriosis affects over one million women and girls in Australia, which is one in seven, including in the electorate of Prospect. PCOS affects 21 per cent of Australian women, which is one in 10.

Endometriosis and PCOS are both extremely difficult to diagnose, and they both have no cure. Diagnosis of endometriosis takes an average of six years and requires a laparoscopy, which is an invasive surgery. PCOS is difficult to diagnose because symptoms present differently for every woman. Treatment plans are predominantly limited to contraceptives. In the third century BCE, Aristotle said that the female body was the "inverse of the

male body". Women were marked by their differences to men, with a focus was on the one thing that women had and men did not—a uterus. That organ once defined a woman's purpose. As a result, female biology was centred around the capacity to reproduce. Throughout history, that notion has informed the evolution of female health, care, including in Western Sydney and throughout New South Wales. It has led to an ingrained bias in diagnosis, treatment and funding for women's health.

Two out of three women have experienced healthcare-related bias in New South Wales, including in hospitals in the electorate of Prospect. Many women feel that their pain must be validated before it can be treated. Women report sitting in EDs, only to be sent home with paracetamol and a hot water bottle. I have heard that time and again in my electorate of Prospect. Women are twice as likely to die of heart attack and half as likely to be adequately treated for associated pain. Women are twice as likely to reject a hip replacement because they are designed for a male pelvis. Women are more likely to be overmedicated because they were excluded from clinical trials until the 1990s.

Women's Health Centres play an integral role in addressing that gap. They provide safe and affordable access to health care. I acknowledge the work of the Women's Health Centres that support the community of Prospect. I thank the Blacktown Women's and Girls' Health Centre, in particular, for providing holistic, gender-informed services and for promoting health, wellbeing and empowerment. The Fairfield Women's Health Service has a multilingual, passionate and dedicated team that goes above and beyond to provide culturally considerate health care to women.

I also thank the hardworking team at the Cumberland Women's Health Centre, which has provided women's health services for over 26 years. Those centres provide many services, including counselling, domestic and family violence assistance, screenings and massage therapy. They are a place for women to be heard and supported. Women make up over half of our population, and our government responses and policies must reflect that. We must look after women's health and the health care workers who support our community.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (17:59): The people of Monaro are concerned about two aspects of energy. Firstly, the electorate of Monaro has been consistently concerned about global warming for many years. That is a reflection of what the rest of New South Wales, including country New South Wales, believes: They want to see global warming tackled and greenhouse gases reduced. It is also particularly pertinent because Monaro has the snowfields, and a significant amount of its economic benefit comes from the snow. Obviously, global warming presents a threat to the ski industry. Residents want to see action on climate change, but they also want to see power prices that are not too high.

I have been watching with interest the lead-up to the soon-to-be-called Federal election and the contest for who is likely to deliver lower power prices. I say to the people of Monaro and the rest of New South Wales that Mr Dutton's prescription for lowering power prices is nothing more than a fantasy. He thinks he will get his imaginary nuclear power plants online in 2036. They will then be the most expensive form of power production in New South Wales. In contrast, Labor is moving to ensure we are making the transition to net zero as quickly as possible.

The thing that is driving power prices higher at the moment is not the cost of producing power from renewables; it is the capital cost of the various energy transmission systems via which we deliver it. Those systems will be largely built before any future Dutton Government could build its nuclear power plants, so there is no chance of nuclear power lowering the cost for consumers in any near future. Things like EnergyConnect, HumeLink and the Central-West Orana network will all be built before the Coalition delivers on its prescription for future energy sources. The real concern for people and for a future Federal Government is the way that consumers are asked to pay for those consumer energy networks.

As the CEO of the National Irrigators' Council and while involved in the Agricultural Energy Taskforce, I looked at this for some time. It is my view that the Australian Energy Regulator [AER], in making its recommendations about the energy networks' returns, is currently allowing them to get well over an economically justifiable return for their network investments. The AER allows them to get a return that ignores the fact that they are operating in a monopoly environment. They built their networks, and there is no choice about using them. A number of the pieces of work done by the taskforce I was involved with found that they are getting an economic return that is well above what is justifiable and comparable with many other parts of the world. I would suggest that those who want to see that addressed should be urging future Federal governments to look at the way the AER makes its analyses and charges back. We have seen that demonstrated in the past couple of weeks in the recommendations that would see New South Wales electricity prices go up again because of the returns that the AER has judged that the networks should be allowed to get.

To my way of thinking, that is a practical way of looking at the components of electricity prices. The Federal Coalition's prescription of nuclear reactors by 2036 is nothing more than a fantasy designed to divert attention from the things that need to be done immediately to both achieve the transition to net zero and keep power prices low over the medium term. While I am on that topic, I represent a semirural electorate, and I emphasise that some of the debate we see over land use in New South Wales is not based in fact. If we were to power all of Australia's energy needs via solar power in New South Wales, it would take up 0.15 per cent of the total land area of the State. If it was to address the more reasonable energy needs of New South Wales alone, it would take up only 30,000 hectares. If the average farm size is about 4,000 hectares, that means only eight or nine farms are needed to meet all of New South Wales's energy needs with solar power. I urge people to look at the debates about this topic more rationally. Solar energy and farming can coexist, and we can make the energy transition without the extra costs that the Federal Coalition wants to put upon us.

MEN'S HEALTH EDUCATION RURAL VAN

Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (18:04): This month the Minister for Health and I embarked on a virtual tour of the Men's Health Education Rural Van [MHERV]. While we were at Teralba Bowling Club, MHERV was in Nowra on one of its two scheduled tours per year. MHERV is a mobile health unit that travels throughout rural and regional New South Wales with a registered nurse offering free health checks. MHERV seeks out men who, for whatever reason, have not seen the inside of a doctor's rooms for years. It is aiming to reach the one in four Australian men who die from preventable conditions. There are 41,000 men each year who might overlook or not know the signs of their ill health until it is too late.

We know that blokes are less likely than women to regularly see a doctor. That might be for a few reasons, like lack of time, limited access to GPs outside of cities or, more likely, a stoic, "she'll be right" attitude. MHERV is helping to address that by offering free health checks that screen for high blood pressure, sugars and cholesterol. While the program focuses on men, it is open to men and women. Roughly 22,000 people have been tested at MHERV since 2017, with about 10,000 people found to need treatment and around 650 people found to be in immediate danger of a stroke or heart attack. It is certainly not an exaggeration to say that five minutes at MHERV can save someone's life. It is also a safe space to help educate people, mainly men, about the importance of routine check-ups. That education, along with the early detection of health issues, helps alleviate pressure on the public health system by catching ailments early.

I am proud to have had a long history with MHERV, ever since the Rotary Club of Warners Bay approached me in 2017 to champion its cause and help secure State Government funding. With the help of the New South Wales Government and the generous assistance of community partners and local Rotarians, MHERV has toured New South Wales for the past eight years. I welcome the news of a \$50,000 New South Wales Government grant, which will cover the cost of MHERV's nurse on its next tour. This valuable service is truly deserving of public funds. MHERV visits Lake Macquarie and its surrounds, with recent stops including Wallsend, Lake Haven and Morisset. We are deeply grateful for MHERV's services in southern Lake Macquarie, which struggles with limited GP availability and public health services. I encourage men living in Lake Macquarie and, indeed, throughout regional New South Wales to check MHERV's calendar and pop by if it comes to town. It could save their lives.

When MHERV initially reached out to me, I approached the then Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard. There was no easily available pot of money for the service, but the Minister found a way to give MHERV help in 2017. He made it clear that I was to give MHERV a message. He said, "Greg, tell them that this is it. It is a one-off. Do not be coming back next year." Guess what! I went back the next year. The data was already coming in, and the number of people they had reached out to and helped made it very difficult for the Minister to deny the further request. I am so pleased that he supported that, and I was also pleased that Minister Park visited with MHERV the other day. It was tacked on to the topping out ceremony at the John Hunter Hospital, a major event that the Minister found time for in his day. That was really appreciated. In 2017 I found an ironic and funny picture of a billboard in the United States. The billboard said, "This year thousands of men will die from stubbornness", and someone graffitied the billboard with, "No, we won't."

BEVERLY HILLS COMMUTER CAR PARK

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:08): I raise the issue of parking in Beverly Hills, particularly with regard to the brand new Beverly Hills Commuter Car Park that officially opened earlier this year. As many members would know, that issue has been a priority of mine for over 10 years, and I am incredibly pleased to see the car park finally completed and open for use. Anyone who lives or works in the St George area knows that one of the biggest challenges in our community is finding free, accessible parking.

My office hears regularly from locals who drive around searching for a parking spot, only to give up, turn around and head home out of frustration. This is not just an inconvenience but a barrier to locals who wish to use the

public transport network and support local small businesses. This is why I have worked tirelessly to provide more free and accessible parking, ensuring that local residents spend less time searching for a spot and more time commuting to work, shopping locally and enjoying the community.

Commuter car parking in my local area is an important issue for those who regularly commute from home to the city or out west. We need more people catching public transport to ensure that the number of cars on our roads is reduced, avoiding unnecessary and frustrating congestion on local roads. To achieve that, local residents need access to commuter car parking that is close to local train stations. This will allow them to drive to the station, park for the day, and come home to a safe and secure car spot. I am proud to say that, as part of the former Government, I helped to deliver a number of brand-new commuter car parks in my local area, including 100 new spaces at Oatley station, 200 spaces at the recently opened Beverly Hills Commuter Car park and 142 additional parking spots at Riverwood station—promises made, promises kept—providing a significant boost to local infrastructure and strengthening the Coalition's record of delivering the services my local community deserves.

The Beverly Hills car park features new lifts and stairwell access on each level, CCTV and lighting for enhanced security, and wayfinding signage to assist users get around. There are also provisions for electric vehicle charging points and a convenient walkway and staircase, providing direct access to Beverly Hills railway station. It is clear that this is a fantastic piece of local infrastructure that will support the local area for many generations to come as the population continues to grow. However, while both the Riverwood and Oatley commuter car parks are free to the public, the same cannot be said for Beverly Hills Commuter Car Park. Locals who wish to use the parking facilities at Beverly Hills but are not travelling on the Opal network are forced to pay fees of up to \$30 during peak periods. Whilst rates are discounted outside peak periods and on weekends, this does little to encourage greater use of the car park for those wanting to visit some of the fantastic small businesses in Beverly Hills.

I want more people visiting those business in Beverly Hills and shopping and buying locally, which is why I have started a campaign calling on the Government to provide up to three hours of free parking for non-commuters. This will ensure that local businesses continue to grow and thrive, while making it easy for commuters and shoppers alike to access the area. A strong local economy is dependent on the success of local businesses. At a time when they are already facing rising costs, we must ensure that local economies are given every opportunity to succeed, especially by providing accessible parking close to shops and restaurants. Introducing three hours of free parking would revitalise the Beverly Hills precinct, particularly at night and on weekends. The restaurants and parking infrastructure are already in place; the Government simply needs to come to the table.

I have written to the Minister for Transport about this issue, but my office is yet to receive a response. This is incredibly disappointing. The Minister's non-response makes it clear that the Government does not care about the needs of the community in Beverly Hills. This inaction is hurting local business. Already the cinemas in Beverly Hills have closed permanently. The Government must act now. I have launched a petition that I encourage all locals to sign to show their support for three hours of free parking at Beverly Hills Commuter Car Park. I will continue to fight for this change. I urge the Minister to step up and deliver the outcomes that my local residents deserve.

WYONG ELECTORATE

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) (18:13): I take this opportunity to acknowledge my local community generally. As members know, this week is the two-year anniversary of the 2023 election, but for me it is also the 10-year anniversary of being re-elected to Parliament in 2015. I previously had the privilege of representing the electorate of Wyong between 2007 and 2011. When I lost the 2011 election I felt I had had my chance, and was very privileged to have represented my community. So I was blessed that I got a second chance and was re-elected.

The 2023 election was my strongest ever showing. I won 52.2 per cent of the primary vote and 69.8 per cent of the two-party preferred vote, resulting in a 6.9 per cent swing. I would like to think that was because I have always demonstrated that I am able to work with whoever is in government. During my 14 years as a member, I have been in government for six years and in opposition for eight. I have always had the philosophy that members must work with the government of the day to get what they need for their community. I thank both Labor and Coalition Ministers of former governments for their willingness to listen to my cases for infrastructure and deliver all the necessary resources to support the growth of my community.

The Wyong electorate is a growing area but it has a lot of greenfield sites, which means that it is reliant on new infrastructure. Over my 14 years as a member, I have worked with the government of the day to help deliver two upgrades to Tuggerah railway station, the second of which is set to open in the coming weeks. The upgrades

include a transport interchange, improved parking and new lifts. The first upgrade was delivered in my first term in government and the second will be delivered soon, but I acknowledge that a lot of the planning was ongoing when I was in opposition. During my time I have helped to deliver a brand-new police station at Wyong; two major upgrades at Wyong hospital, with a number of other upgrades currently underway; a brand-new ambulance station and fire station at Hamlyn Terrace; an upgrade to Toukley ambulance station; and the Tuggerah Straight Commercial Centre. The new upgrade to the Pacific Highway at Wyong is also about to start.

I have also helped to deliver multiple upgrades to local schools, as well as two brand-new schools at Porters Creek and Warnervale. The one at Warnervale was delivered when Labor was in government and the one at Porters Creek was delivered when the Coalition was in government. New car parks have also been built at Wyong and Tuggerah. This goes to show that if members take the approach of working with the government of the day, not engaging too much in politics but representing their community honestly and demonstrating through factual information the need for infrastructure, governments will listen. As I said, there have been some great Ministers for the Central Coast over the years, including more recently the member for Lane Cove and Rob Stokes. You could sit down with them and have a really decent conversation, and if you showed them that work needed to be done then they would support it.

Finally, I thank Brad Hazzard for his work on Wyong hospital. There was a big community campaign—and there is some legislation currently before Parliament relating to the hospital, which I will talk more about in the future—against a proposal to privatise the operation of the hospital. Brad Hazzard not only listened and changed the Government's policy, but also delivered a \$200 million upgrade to the hospital. Brad Hazzard is an amazing person, a great listener, and someone you could really sit down and talk to. He is the epitome of what a Minister should be, and I certainly try to replicate him in my role as a Minister.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:18): As we approach Anzac Day, a day of immense reflection on our history, it is important to remember the courage, mateship, endurance and sacrifice that defence personnel have shown from our early days as a nation in World War I to Australia's participation in current world conflicts. In the Hawkesbury electorate, preparations for Anzac Day commemorations are a top priority for members of local RSL sub-branches, community leaders, serving members, volunteers and school communities. RAAF Base Richmond is part of the State's defence history. It is regarded as being the leading contributor to the welfare and stability of the area, providing strong economic stimulus and connection.

This year it celebrates its 100th anniversary, and I congratulate Wing Commander Andrew Burke and the serving members and their families of the RAAF base on their engagement with the Hawkesbury community, especially when we have needed their support in times of flood, bushfire and pandemic.

RAAF Base Richmond is the oldest base in New South Wales and the second oldest in Australia. Established on 30 June 1925, the Richmond base has been home to a military flying school, Royal aircraft factory and various squadrons, several of which remain in operation today. RAAF Base Richmond has been a vital component in New South Wales defence, allowing for various intelligence and communication operations that have aided the Commonwealth in extremely significant conflicts, wars and peacekeeping operations. One of Australia's longest surviving RAAF veterans from World War II, Mr David Bruce Robertson, endearingly known as Bruce Robertson, was once posted to the No. 30 Squadron at RAAF Base Richmond. Bruce shared special stories with me as we recently celebrated his 105th birthday, when I learned about the operations he was involved in. I acknowledge that the Minister for Veterans, who is in the Chamber, joined me for the celebrations. Bruce talked about the detection and interception of foreign communications, resulting in the successful defence against Japanese submarines in 1942. I sincerely thank Bruce Robertson for his service.

Hawkesbury is also home to the Veterans, Families and Community Centre at Scheyville National Park, which officially opened on 22 February 2025. Again, the Minister and I were there to share that occasion. That site has an interesting history. Before World War I, a program called the Dreadnought Scheme operated at the Scheyville farm to educate teenage British migrant boys in agriculture. Following the end of World War II, the Scheyville site was converted to migrant accommodation to house the hundreds who fled post-war Europe. From 1965 to 1973 Scheyville became the officer training unit for officers in the Australian Army. The current refurbishment of the site was spearheaded by Warrant Officer Brett Wild (Retired) who, together with his board, Taskforce Veteran, and other volunteers, have delivered what we all thought was the impossible. Brett tells me that you never say no to a warrant officer, and his vision, tenacity and determination have achieved this fantastic result. The veterans centre is set within the Scheyville National Park, amongst grazing kangaroos. It showcases military vehicles and SSARs and Nissen huts, with landscaping to complement the surrounds. It is a safe and friendly destination for veterans, families and all the community.

Hawkesbury is also home to many war memorials honouring those who fought and died for the freedoms we enjoy today. The Hawkesbury Agricultural College First World War Memorial on the Western Sydney University campus is one such memorial, commemorating the 750 men who attended the Hawkesbury Agricultural College and served in World War I. I am fortunate to participate in many commemorative services in Hawkesbury, due to the proactive approach of local RSL sub-branch members from Kurrajong, Wilberforce, Freemans Reach, Cob River, Windsor, Richmond, Wisemans Ferry and Glenorie to name a few. War memorials are sacred locations where we honour and pay our respects throughout the year. There is no tolerance for desecration of those war memorials, and I look forward to presenting the private member's bill titled Summary Offences Amendment (War Memorials and other Protected Places) Bill 2025 in this Parliament shortly. That will be an opportunity for all members in this place to support tougher penalties for those who disrespect our war memorials. It provides an opportunity for all of us to come together in a united front for our diggers' sake.

NEWCASTLE OCEAN BATHS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle) (18:23): I am very excited to announce to the House that New South Wales Minister for Heritage Penny Sharpe officially approved the listing of the Newcastle Ocean Baths complex on the State Heritage Register last week. The Newcastle Ocean Baths have been a much-loved icon for over 100 years and are deeply embedded in the cultural and historical fabric of Newcastle. Set on Awabakal land, the Newcastle Ocean Baths complex offers something for everyone, whether it is swimming laps in the baths, paddling with the kids in the canoe pool or appreciating the distinctive Art Deco heritage of the pavilion. Together, the pavilion, baths and canoe pool form one of the largest ocean bath complexes in the State and are all included in the listing.

In addition to being a beloved Novocastrian landmark, the heritage of the site reflects Newcastle's identity as a progressive city. Prior to the baths being constructed, the regulations of the Police Act prohibited public mixed-gender bathing. That had been a source of ire to Novocastrians for years. As such, the New South Wales Labor Government granted funding to build the baths in 1911 on the provision that the facility could be enjoyed by everyone. That not only marked the end of gender-segregated bathing in Newcastle but also established the baths as the first government-funded mixed-gender ocean baths in New South Wales. Over the decades, the baths have attracted celebrities from around the world. Champion swimmers Alick Wickham and Fanny Durack famously utilised the baths in their attempts to break world records, whilst renowned Hawaiian surfing pioneer Duke Kahanamoku performed his legendary exhibition at the baths in 1915. Over the past century the baths have withstood the impacts of several natural disasters, including the infamous Sygna storm of 1974, when parts of the catwalk ended up in the clifftop Tramway Reserve. The baths also survived the 1989 earthquake, which caused major structural damage to the pavilion.

The listing of Newcastle Ocean Baths could not have happened without the incredible dedication and support of the Newcastle community. The baths were nominated for heritage consideration in December 2023 by local community organisation Friends of Newcastle Ocean Baths, with support from the Hunter branch of the National Trust. I have been a long-time champion of the Friends of Newcastle Ocean Baths and formally supported their nomination for the baths to be heritage listed. The nomination sparked a surge of local support, resulting in an incredible 646 community submissions to the State Heritage Register Committee advocating for the nomination. Newcastle has a long history of coming together in support of our city, and the community went above and beyond to preserve the future of this beloved site. I congratulate Peter Wickham and the Friends of Newcastle Oceans Baths team on their sensational advocacy and thank the Newcastle community for supporting the listing.

Every Novocastrian has a story involving the Newcastle Ocean Baths. It is a place that locals and visitors have been drawn to for generations. I have many fond memories of the baths. As a father of four young and very active kids, I found that Newcastle Oceans Baths were, and still are, a great place for us to hang out as a family and tire out the kids. Heritage NSW will continue to work with the City of Newcastle and its heritage consultants to make sure that the heritage values of the Newcastle Ocean Baths complex are appropriately retained, while allowing stage two of the renovations to be undertaken. This heritage listing is a huge win for Newcastle, and I commend the Minns Labor Government for its commitment to preserving New South Wales's rich heritage. Novocastrians love their beaches, and the Newcastle Ocean Baths ensure that locals and visitors can continue to safely engage with our beautiful coastline. By including the baths on the State Heritage Register, we have made sure that that iconic landmark will be managed and preserved for generations to come.

SOCIAL HOUSING

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:28): I recently received a response to a question on notice I put to the Minister for Housing. I asked what percentage of social housing tenants were born overseas as at the last reporting period. The answer stunned me. The Minister said that 30 per cent of people in social housing were from overseas. My mum is a migrant; I am supportive of sensible levels of migration. But in spite of all the rhetoric of

Government members about housing, never do I hear them say a thing about migration and the need to tap the breaks to help our country catch up. There are women living in cars, people sleeping under bridges, regional showgrounds becoming tent cities, people couch surfing because of unstable or unsuitable housing, and a public housing waiting list that stretches into the tens of thousands. But, apparently, 30 per cent of people in social housing come from overseas?

This number is perplexing, and I will be asking further questions about it. During this housing crisis we need to put Australians first. If people come to this country, they need to share our values, have a skill set that helps to build our nation and be able to support themselves.

After commencing a campaign almost two years ago, I am pleased that both sides of politics have embraced a ban on foreign overseas property developers from buying Australian land. This ban will start on 1 April. Whilst it is only a two-year ban at this point, this measure will help to take pressure off rents and housing prices and also help our country to catch up. Whilst the Government is happy to say that anyone who opposes any aspect of its big development agenda is a nimby, what is needed is a mature debate that holistically and strategically considers sustainability, tax reform, planning reform, infrastructure delivery and population planning. First home buyers should be able to use part of their super to purchase their first home because home ownership drives down rates of poverty. Stamp duty that was first introduced in 1865 should not be a barrier to home ownership with other models available that allow for annual payments rather than a barrier that requires people to work on average for an extra 2½ years just to pay a government tax.

Recently, I wrote to the NSW Rental Commissioner, inviting her to come to the Kiama electorate to meet with key stakeholders. When Labor announced this commission, I was critical on the basis that the rental commission was not a real commission. This commission does not have an enabling Act. It does not have statutory independence or parliamentary oversight. The Rental Commissioner said that if I want her to come to my electorate then I need to ask her boss, the Minister. Well, Minister, I am asking. The Rental Commissioner is either a guard dog for renters or a lapdog for this Government. I will let the community work out which metaphor is most appropriate. I want people to have access to affordable rents and the opportunity to buy their own home. Whilst housing supply is not the only issue, it remains an issue that needs to be addressed. Together with Labor's high immigration agenda, it is a leading cause of the cost of living.

Kiama Council is currently exhibiting its Draft Local Housing Strategy with submissions closing on 27 April, and I encourage locals to have their say. The strategy anticipates that an additional 6,917 people will call Kiama home by 2040—only 15 years away. The New South Wales Government has set a five-year housing target for the Kiama local government area of 900 additional dwellings. Whilst I want to see more homes, these need to be in the right locations, and these locations should be decided by our community and not big Sydney developers. The people in my community want to see their children able to afford to live closer to home, but growth needs to be balanced against the maintenance of village character and the need for people to have a say in the future of our urban and natural environment. More and more, governments in this place are taking away the community's right to determine the future of local communities.

There are plenty of people in this place who oppose all development without offering a solution. I do not want to be one of those people, so I have some suggestions based on consistent community feedback. The Bombo quarry site, according to the draft strategy, has the opportunity to generate 2,100 lots with a variety of different housing types. Having pressed the Government on this issue, I am pleased that the planning department and the Minister are working with council to develop a vision for the future of this site, including a master plan. I look forward to continuing to work with the department and council on this great opportunity. The Government must also consider land it owns for key worker housing.

With the Shellharbour Hospital project rising out of the ground, the Government should start work on a masterplan for what will become the old hospital site. Located close to shops and public transport, the Government should redevelop the old hospital site for key workers in order to address housing shortages. Once again, I call on the Government to rezone the Nowra CBD. The Nowra CBD needs to go up. Increases in height and density will allow for the redevelopment of buildings with commercial and residential components. More people will bring nightlife to the CBD, which is also helpful for crime prevention. We need to address the housing shortage in our region, and these are just some suggestions that I believe will assist with the delivery of these goals.

TROPICAL CYCLONE ALFRED

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (18:33): A couple of weeks ago northern New South Wales and southern Queensland faced the threat of Cyclone Alfred looming off the coast. I speak today about the incredible job done to prepare for this potential disaster. We have learned the lessons of 2022. The preparation was very different but with every event there are more lessons to be learned. This preparedness was at every level, from the grassroots members of the

community right through to our State and Federal leaders, elected local MPs and mayors, councils and their workers. There was a big focus on safety.

Firstly, I thank the community. People were prepared. Homes were prepped for high winds and potential flooding, and people had battery radios and torches. Some had generators ready. Two-way radio networks were in place, and people listened to the warnings and evacuation orders. That was a tough call, but they listened and acted. Businesses moved their stock and equipment. In packing up and unpacking, they bore the cost of lost days of business, and I thank them. I thank the truck drivers who worked hard to get supplies into towns with challenging weather. I also thank John Robertson and Foodbank, which initially sent 2,600 packages and followed up with more when were needed. They were very popular.

The State Emergency Service was magnificent. I commend SES Commissioner Michael Wassing and the local team, and acting Chief Superintendent Stuart Fisher, who flew in from Sydney to take the lead. He was acting in the position while Greg Swindells was on leave, but Greg turned up as well because he could not stay away. Premier Chris Minns and the Minister for Emergency Services flew up on Wednesday 5 March and were hands on in the preparation. They stayed for days and really experienced what we were going through. This was greatly appreciated by the community. People felt supported and like we were not alone facing this threat. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese came up during this time as well. The whole country was focused on the threat of cyclone and floods. We had State and Federal Ministers and shadow Ministers for emergency services onsite. The Minister for Emergency Management, Jenny McAllister, was there as well. She is a local resident who was born in Murwillumbah.

I received regular briefings and updates from the SES, police and other combat agencies. My message to the community was to listen to their advice and be prepared for a rare and unpredictable weather event in our region. These briefings were shared with State and Federal MPs and local mayors across northern New South Wales and the North Coast who kept their local communities up to date with information. Senator Tony Sheldon, the Federal Special Envoy for Disaster Recovery, organised hook-ups with all local mayors up and down the coast and inland to the Mayor of Tenterfield. The shadow Minister for Emergency Management, Perin Davey, was also part of the hook-ups. It is another example of how well we work together in our region. We all get the same information, and it is the right way to work. The community listened and did their prep by securing their properties or businesses. There were many acts of kindness such as food drops, people taking in friends and family, neighbours helping neighbours and looking after pets.

There are so many to thank. I will not be able to acknowledge everyone tonight, but I will continue to talk about this. I thank the RFS, Fire and Rescue NSW, Marine Rescue NSW, VRA Rescue NSW, Surf Life Saving, paramedics and the Australian Army. I recognise the 41st Battalion, Royal New South Wales Regiment, which is headquartered in Lismore, and thank Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Healy. They have operations in other areas across the Northern Rivers and North Coast. I also recognise the support of Brigadier Jodie Lording, commander of the 5th Brigade - Australian Army, who arrived with about 500 soldiers.

The round-the-clock media coverage was important, particularly that of ABC Radio Brisbane, which broadcast to the whole region on Friday night and kept everyone informed, including those who had lost power and internet. We have not seen this level of preparedness before. Everyone commented on this, so we now have a high bar to meet when we have other weather events. The strong leadership, coordination of agencies, regular briefings and updates, community preparedness and cooperation gave everyone confidence that systems were in place and that we were not on our own. As we faced this threat, government financial support for disaster recovery was already in place. As I said, the NSW Reconstruction Authority worked in lockstep with the Queensland Reconstruction Authority, the SES and other agencies. I commend everyone's efforts.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp): I thank the Minister. I recognise her efforts and the efforts of all the emergency services that she mentioned.

LIVERPOOL TO AIRPORT TRANSIT CORRIDOR

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:38): Every Federal election is labelled as the most important in a generation. But for suburbs like Austral, Middleton Grange and West Hoxton, this upcoming one truly is. This election is a clear choice between a Labor government and its \$1 billion commitment to build Fifteenth Avenue, and a Liberal Party that ignored that road for 12 years and is now attacking the project, laying the groundwork to walk away from it. For more than a decade, the Liberals watched our community grow and did nothing to support it—no planning, no funding, no upgrades and no solutions. They let development rip, created the congestion, then turned their backs. They caused the problem, and now they are trying to white-ant the solution.

After years of hard work and advocacy from local members of Parliament Anne Stanley and me, Labor acted. In January the Federal and State Labor governments committed \$1 billion to finally upgrade Fifteenth Avenue—a generational investment to fix the mess that the Liberals left behind. Unlike the Liberals, this is not spin; it is genuine progress. Early works are underway at Cowpasture Road, surveying and planning are progressing along the corridor, and I commend the new Minister for meeting with me in one of her first meetings to talk about this important project. This upgrade will ease congestion, support the new Western Sydney airport, create local jobs and unlock economic opportunity right across the south-west. Labor is building it; the Liberals did not even try.

How have the Liberals responded? It is not with support, and not with cooperation. Instead, they have launched a full-blown misinformation campaign. With the help of their anonymous Facebook troll army, they have falsely claimed that the project will not be finished until 2040, questioning the funding and implying delays where there are none. They are not raising legitimate concerns; they are lighting political fires and hoping they catch. This is political arson, plain and simple. They have ignored this road for 12 years, and now that it is finally being upgraded they are undermining it. They are setting up excuses now so they can quietly walk away from the project later—and blame Labor while they do it. It is the same Liberal playbook: promise delivery, undermine progress, cut funding and shift the blame. Once again, it is the community of south-west Sydney that will pay the price.

Let us be clear about the Liberal Party's legacy when it comes to south-western Sydney. For 12 long years, at all levels of government, the Liberals oversaw rapid growth with no plans to support it. They approved thousands of homes without proper infrastructure. They ignored road upgrades, underfunded public transport, overcrowded our schools and neglected parks, sports fields and open spaces. Here is the biggest irony: The same Liberal councillors that are now attacking Labor's road project online cannot even get the potholes fixed on existing local roads. They failed on the basics, and now they want to tell us how to deliver major infrastructure. Now that Labor is delivering, they are throwing rocks from the sidelines. Instead of cooperating and acting in the best interests of our community, they are obstructing.

A billion-dollar road project does not happen overnight—nor should it. It requires proper planning, environmental approvals, community consultation and careful staging. Rushing it leads to costly mistakes. Labor is taking the time to get it right. The Liberals started none of this and now they are rewriting history to cover up for their abject failure. This election is not about hypotheticals. It is about real consequences for real communities. For residents of Austral, Middleton Grange, West Hoxton and beyond, the choice is crystal clear: a Labor Government that has committed \$1 billion, has started the work and is delivering with a clear plan, or a Liberal Party that ignored Fifteenth Avenue for over a decade and is now undermining a project it never truly supported. Make no mistake, if the Liberals win, they will do what they always do: delay, undermine, cut and blame.

If the Liberals actually cared about Fifteenth Avenue, they had a decade to act. They did not. They ignored the problem, and they ignored my community. Now that Labor is delivering, they are doing everything they can to tear it down. The people of south-west Sydney deserve better. They deserve roads that work and governments that listen. They deserve infrastructure that keeps pace with our growth. Labor is building it, and the Liberals are undermining it. Do not risk the Liberals and do not let them abandon us again.

Bills

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

CLAIM FARMING PRACTICES PROHIBITION BILL 2025

Returned

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

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 18:44 until
Friday 28 March at 10:00.**

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

FLORENCE DARK

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Florence Dark. Florence was recently nominated and announced the winner of the 2025 Australia Day Award, Shire Young Citizen of the Year in the

Upper Lachlan Shire. Florence has been recognised for her outstanding academic achievements and leadership roles at Crookwell High School. Florence has taken on the roles of School Captain, long standing Student Representative Council member, sporting Captain and peer support. She has demonstrated exemplary role model qualities and attributes, displaying kindness, inclusivity and caring within her school and wider community. Florence also participates in volunteer work with a variety of organisations and paid employment. I congratulate Florence on her well-deserved award and recognise her significant contribution as a role model for her peers and the leadership roles that she undertakes within her school and broader community.

MS ELAINE DELANEY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Ms Elaine Delaney. Ms Delaney was recently nominated as a finalist for the 2025 Australia Day Award, Citizen of the Year in the Upper Lachlan Shire. A resident of Laggan, Ms Delaney has been recognised for her significant service to the community of Laggan. Ms Delaney has been pivotal in establishing the Laggan Bush Poets which meet at the Laggan Pub on the first Wednesday of each month and is welcoming of all bush poets and musicians and everyone else. She has also established Horses Teaching Humans, a pleasure and therapy experience for children and adults with a disability. Ms Delaney has coordinated a range of performances for the residents of Viewhaven Lodge, and the Laggan Revisited celebration which drew over two thousand visitors to the region. I thank Ms Delaney for her exceptional contribution to the community of Laggan and congratulate her on her well-deserved nomination.

KIAMA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises a local family history at Kiama Public School. When five-year-old Lachie walked through the gates of Kiama Public School last month, he became the fourth generation of his family to do so, a tradition that began in the 1930s. This remarkable family connection of more than 90 years offers a glimpse into the school's progression. Lachie's great-grandfather, Alisdair Tarbert, who moved to Kiama when he was three, was the first in the family to attend the school. His daughter, Karen Rossiter, explains that he started kindergarten around 1938-39 at Kiama Infants when it was down where The Sebel is. Karen began her education in 1966 at the original site that opened in 1861 which catered for infants and as the town started to grow, a new school was built in 1965. After a few years of renovations, the schools amalgamated in 2001. The school milk program is a memory of Karen's education. Karen's parents and her two sons continue to share a connection with our Kiama community. I acknowledge Kiama Public School's Principal Natalie Marshall.

DR NEIL MOSS

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Dr Neil Moss from Kiama Heights. When the 2019-20 bushfires tore through the South Coast, sending thousands fleeing north, Dr Neil Moss was heading in the opposite direction. Seconded by the Department of Primary Industries, he drove into the heart of the disaster in Bega, through thick smoke and chaos to help dairy farmers. The Kiama Heights resident's extraordinary service has been recognised with the National Emergency Medal. For two weeks, Dr Moss, senior consultant and co-director at Scibus worked up to 14-hour days, assessing the damage, ensuring farmers were safe and coordinating urgent supplies. Power was out, roads were blocked and cattle were stranded with no food or water. With the support of Local Land Services, DPI and agricultural industry bodies, he helped secure fuel, generators and fodder. He brought together DPI, Dairy Australia, NSW Farmers, Local Land Services and Bega Cheese, to map out a long-term plan for farmers. Dr Moss continued supporting flood-hit dairy farms in 2021 and 2022 and leading a major risk analysis project to help farmers to prepare for future disasters. Well done to Dr Neil Moss.

2025 KIAMASALA FESTIVAL

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the 2025 Kiamasala Festival. The Kiamasala Festival brings together the sights, sounds and flavours of India to Kiama for a celebration. Kiama Harbour was transformed into a delicious street food market, a market stall bazaar and a vibrant performance space where community members can soak in a mix of classical and contemporary dance and music to transport us and educate us on the rich ancient Indian culture. It was time to dance, come together, share a plate and party with friends. The festivities included yoga workshops, cooking Demonstrations, cricket games, Bollywood Buffet Night, travel talk, Indian handicrafts and fashion stalls. Food is deeply intertwined with Indian culture, going beyond sustenance to represent tradition, hospitality, spirituality and identity. Take a food journey at Kiamasala, starting in the North with the Nepalese Fare Stall and travel through the various regions down to our South Indian Kerala style stall. I was delighted to join the fun at colour of fun in Hindmarsh Park, Kiama – what an amazing celebration of culture, tradition, community cohesion and togetherness! I congratulate and thank the organisers on a job well done.

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY DOREEN STEWART

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I would like to congratulate Mrs. Doreen Stewart on reaching the incredible milestone of 100 years of age. Family members travelled from all over Australia to join Doreen in celebrating this significant milestone. Doreen was proud to have served as an army nurse during WWII. Doreen was excited to be with family and friends at her celebration party. Doreen's family had organised an extensive collection of dignitary certificates to present to her. These included certificates from notable figures such as the Governor of New South Wales, Her Excellency the Honourable Mrs Margaret Beazley, The Hon. Chris Minns, Premier of NSW, and The Hon. Greg Piper MP, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Parliament of NSW, Mr Stephen Jones, Federal Member for Whitlam, a certificate from myself and lastly, the King of the United Kingdom, Monarch of the UK, Charles III. Doreen, we wish you the happiest of birthdays. I hope you continue to enjoy good health and happiness in the years to come.

PICTON PROBUS CLUB

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I was delighted to join the members of Picton Probus at their recent meeting at Picton Bowling Club. It was great to spend time speaking with and listening to many of those who attended, and having a few laughs along the way. The life experiences of those I spoke with are heart warming and I look forward to catching up again soon. Probus Clubs play a vital role in fostering a strong sense of community, bringing people together, and encouraging meaningful social connections. These connections are valuable at any stage of life, and the dedication of the Picton Probus Club to creating a welcoming and supportive environment is truly commendable. Their ongoing efforts to keep people engaged, connected, and active in the community deserve appreciation. It was wonderful to see firsthand the friendship and support that Probus provides, and I encourage anyone looking to stay socially engaged to consider getting involved. Thank you to the members of Picton Probus for your warm welcome and I look forward to the next opportunity to join you all again.

WOLLONDILLY COMMUNITY MUSIC ASSOCIATION LAUNCHES YOUTH BAND

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Wollondilly youth have the opportunity to join a newly created Youth Band. Initiated by the Wollondilly Community Music Association, and led by Musical Director Heather Davies, the band is available to youth throughout Wollondilly at a very minimal cost. The group already has fourteen members and is a wonderful opportunity for local musicians to connect, grow, and share their passion for music. This new Youth Band joins River Road in Tahmoor and Vocal Muster in the Southern Highlands in providing a creative outlet for young people. Making music together not only strengthens musical skills but also fosters friendships, connection, and a sense of belonging. These positive experiences contribute to the overall wellbeing of young people, offering them a supportive and encouraging environment in which to thrive. The dedication of the Wollondilly Community Music Association to nurturing local talent is commendable. Their commitment to making music accessible and fostering a strong musical community will have a lasting impact on those involved and I look forward to seeing the band grow and flourish in the years to come.

PAUL AND MAREE WESTCOTT

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, family-owned small businesses are the backbone of our country's economy, and I would like to acknowledge the work of Paul and Maree Westcott in this field. In 1988 the couple established Forbes Small Engines as a thriving, reliable business that supports its regional agricultural clients and those from within the township. Now the couple are ensuring that support will continue with their daughter Melissa Milford taking over the business, meaning clients continue to see familiar faces with a good understanding of their needs. It's the next chapter for a business that was established in a rented shed last century but has grown to a purpose-built workshop with retail space. Melissa has also grown up with the business which now employs a small team and an apprentice. She has studied business management and has helped move the business into the Cloud-based technology. The Westcotts have also been involved in community through the Forbes Business Chamber and Forbes Show and are regular sponsorships of motorbike racing and junior soccer. I congratulate Paul and Maree on their well-deserved retirement and wish Melissa all the best as Forbes Small Engines moves into its next phase.

CHRIS COLVIN

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I would like to thank and commend my constituent Chris Colvin on his long-term commitment to the way the Orange community commemorates ANZAC Day. Since moving to our city over a decade ago, Mr Colvin has emerged himself in the City of Orange RSL Sub-Branch and its work preserving Orange's significant links to its military heritage. A trained artillery gunman and signalman, Mr Colvin has modernised Orange's ANZAC service to make it more about understanding the sacrifice of those who died, or served in conflict and the legacy of their sacrifice. Not, as it was commented to him, 'the glorification of war'.

His work, with his Orange sub-branch colleagues, has extended well past ANZAC Day and other commemorative days, with a project to identify and mark around 100 unmarked World War I veteran graves, the latest to enhance Orange's links to its military past. He has also worked hard to establish support for veterans battling PTSD. Orange's 2025 citizen of the year and the recipient of an Australia Day RSL Achievement Medallion, one of 15 handed out, Mr Colvin has had an enormous, yet unheralded impact on his community. I thank him on its behalf.

ANDREW SPACKMAN

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate Andrew Spackman of Cumnock on his distinguished career in law enforcement and public service. Andrew began his service with the NSW Police Force, working in country areas until his retirement in 2006 as Senior Constable after 20 years. He then joined the NSW Sheriff's Office in 2008 and serves as the Inspector/Officer in Charge at Dubbo. At a recent morning tea with the NSW Governor at Government House in Sydney, it was announced that all NSW Sheriff's officers with the rank of Inspector and above would receive their Commissioning certificates. This is a well-deserved recognition of Andrew's dedication to his role. The NSW Sheriff's Office ensures the smooth operation of state courts and the effective administration of the NSW Jury system. Andrew's leadership has been integral to its success. Outside of work, Andrew and his wife, Rose, have made a beautiful home in Cumnock, in the "Bruce Street Church." They also contribute to the community by hosting an AirBNB, drawing visitors to appreciate the village's heritage. I congratulate Andrew on his Commissioning certificate and thank him for his ongoing contributions to the community.

JP - JACOB LEES

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Jacob Lees who was recently appointed a Justice of the Peace in my electorate of Ryde! JPs play such an important role and reflect the community face of our justice system. At its core, the appointment of a person to Justice of the Peace is all about service. I thank Jacob for this service. As a JP, you are responsible for upholding the values of honesty and impartiality as you execute your official duties for the benefit of our local community. In a fast growing community like Ryde, the demand for JP services is growing exponentially, and I feel fortunate as the local Member of Parliament to see so many high-quality individuals willing to raise their hands. Your appointment as a JP underscores your character, integrity, and dedication to public service. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved appointment and thank you for the difference I know you will make in the lives of those you serve.

JP - SOYOEN BAE

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Soyoen Bae who was recently appointed a Justice of the Peace in my electorate of Ryde! JPs play such an important role and reflect the community face of our justice system. At its core, the appointment of a person to Justice of the Peace is all about service. I thank Soyoen for this service. As a JP, you are responsible for upholding the values of honesty and impartiality as you execute your official duties for the benefit of our local community. In a fast growing community like Ryde, the demand for JP services is growing exponentially, and I feel fortunate as the local Member of Parliament to see so many high-quality individuals willing to raise their hands. Your appointment as a JP underscores your character, integrity, and dedication to public service. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved appointment and thank you for the difference I know you will make in the lives of those you serve.

JP - TIMOTHY BLOWES

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Timothy Blowes who was recently appointed a Justice of the Peace in my electorate of Ryde! JPs play such an important role and reflect the community face of our justice system. At its core, the appointment of a person to Justice of the Peace is all about service. I thank Timothy for this service. As a JP, you are responsible for upholding the values of honesty and impartiality as you execute your official duties for the benefit of our local community. In a fast growing community like Ryde, the demand for JP services is growing exponentially, and I feel fortunate as the local Member of Parliament to see so many high-quality individuals willing to raise their hands. Your appointment as a JP underscores your character, integrity, and dedication to public service. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved appointment and thank you for the difference I know you will make in the lives of those you serve.

DYLAN KINKADE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Dylan Kinkade, a talented young athlete who had recent success at the NSW Country Surf Lifesaving Championship. Competing at Warilla Barrack Point, Dylan won gold in the under-17 Sprint and Flags, silver in the open sprint, and bronze in the open men's sprint relay. Dylan has represented NSW at the Interstate Championships and the Super Surf Teams League, where he was part of the winning under-17 team. Dylan also competed in New Zealand for the Trans Tasman Tri

Series as a member of the NSW Country team, securing yet another victory. Balancing a demanding training schedule with lifeguarding, Dylan not only excels in competition but also contributes to the safety of our local beaches. His efforts reflect the strong surf lifesaving culture in our community, and I congratulate him on his continued success.

MYLEE CHEERS

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Mylee Cheers, who has recently become a registered civil celebrant. Mylee's journey to this role has been shaped by her connections with family and community. After 12 months of study, Mylee is now officiating weddings, funerals, naming days, and other ceremonies. Her decision to take this path was encouraged by her father-in-law, who saw her natural ability to support others during life's most significant moments. Mylee has already presided over several ceremonies, bringing warmth and understanding to each occasion. Her husband, Mike, has been by her side, assisting with music and setup, making this a true family effort. With a background as a preschool teacher and school administrator, Mylee's ability to connect with people of all ages is evident. She now looks forward to growing her presence in the community, ensuring that each ceremony she conducts is meaningful and personal. I congratulate Mylee on this new chapter and wish her all the best as she continues to bring people together for life's important moments.

TRACEY AND KEL WEEKES

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Tinonee General Store and its owners, Kel and Tracey Weekes, for their role in serving the Tinonee community. Since purchasing the store in 2019, they have provided an essential hub for locals, offering everything from car fuses and fresh produce to coffee and bulk dog food. Their willingness to adapt and expand has kept the store thriving. Whether installing an ATM, increasing their product range, or launching an online liquor sales platform, Kel and Tracey continue to respond to the needs of their customers. The couple give back - supporting the local soccer club, museum, and pony club, and donating proceeds from every coffee sold to Beyond Blue. Recognising the impact of natural disasters on their town, they even installed a generator to ensure the store remains operational during power outages. I thank Kel and Tracey for their hard work and the service they provide to the people of Tinonee and beyond.

LOCAL LADIES REPRESENT REGIONAL NSW

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—It is wonderful to see two amazing ladies in the Cootamundra electorate recognised for their remarkable achievements in the Zone 7 finals of the AgShows NSW Young Woman of the Year competition, held recently in Griffith. Weethalle Primary School teacher, Brianna Fyfe, and Cassandra Bush from Cootamundra. Brianna and Cassandra were two of seven winners selected and will now advance to the next stage of the competition at the prestigious Sydney Royal Easter Show. This is an exciting opportunity for both Brianna and Cassandra, who will participate in a six-day program, culminating in a public speaking showcase at the showground amphitheatre, where the overall winner will be announced. This historic competition, with deep roots in our region, continues to highlight the talent and commitment of young women who strive to make a difference. Congratulations Brianna and Cassandra on this well-deserved recognition and I wish you both all the best of luck as you progress forward in the competition.

TURNING A HOBBY INTO A BUSINESS

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—In 2018, Coolamon's Nadine Lucas picked up tools to create some arty inspiration with a friend but she had no idea her first crafty workshop would burgeon into a flourishing new career. Nadine is the creator of "Make it your Own" and hosts two to three workshops a fortnight and is looking to develop online tutorials for her international Facebook followers who want to learn the tricks of the trade. Originally Nadine started the creative workshops as her way of winding down but, her garden art and decorative items from "swirly" barbed wire balls to birdhouses, no weld flowers, carved Hebel art, rustic wooden pigs, fibre baskets and Christmas reindeer have kept her busier than ever. Nadine grew up on a farm surrounded by tools and tinkering came naturally to her. She was originally a truck driver and then held the maintenance role at Coolamon Central School for 20 years before a suggestion from the "girls in the office", sparked the idea of Make it Your Own. Never one to back down from a challenge, Nadine took a leap of faith, leaving her maintenance role and has never looked back.

LUSI AUSTIN WINS CAT AWARD

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I wish to congratulate Lusi Austin from Cowra, in her success in taking out the "Best Original Work Award" at the Canberra Area Theatre [CAT] Awards. Lusi was awarded this prestigious award for her highly original and widely received play "Intertwined", which I had the great fortune of attending at the Cowra Civic Centre in July 2024. Ms Austin wrote "Intertwined" aimed at exploring the

intersection of three distinct characters' lives who all have one thing in common. The town of Cowra. This original play explores Cowra culture, history and portrays the town's significance in these areas. Intertwined, tells the story of three characters, a teenage girl, an Australian Soldier and an indigenous Australian, and explores the aftermath of the Cowra Breakout in 1944. The Canberra Area Theatre [CAT] Awards have been a cornerstone of the region's performing arts community since 1994, celebrating the exceptional contributions of non-professional theatre groups across Canberra and its surrounding districts. The 2025 awards ceremony, held on Saturday, February 15, marked the 30th anniversary of the CAT Awards. The event was a sold-out celebration, reflecting the vibrant and dedicated theatre community in the area.

MIRANDA MUSICAL THEATRE COMPANY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I applaud the volunteers of the Miranda Musical Theatre Company for their passion and dedication to bringing quality theatre productions to the Shire. The company has entertained our community with more than 130 productions since it began as the Miranda Musical Society in 1967, including *Les Misérables*, *The Boy from Oz*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Addams Family*. I had the pleasure recently of seeing its latest production *Georgy Girl* and the impressive singing, choreography, costumes and sets made it hard to believe it was an amateur production. Its talented people work to stage three productions each year, throwing themselves into tasks like costuming, designing, building and painting sets, lighting, selling tickets and making and selling refreshments. The Company has encouraged social participation and wellbeing in the Shire by providing opportunities for members of the community to participate in cultural activities and promoting interest and knowledge in all aspects of musical theatre. I acknowledge the efforts of the Company's enthusiastic members and the leadership of its honorary committee members Tim Dennis, Karen Moseley, Mark Gardner, Meredith Simpson, Amelie Downie, Lauren Dennis, Melissa Bush, Daniel Simpson and Murray Baker.

CRONULLA MEMORY WALK AND JOG

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—It was great to be part of the Cronulla Memory Walk and Jog earlier this month, which was held to raise awareness of dementia and raise money to support people living with the condition and their families and carers. It's also an opportunity to get active for brain health that research shows can reduce the risk of dementia. About 800 people joined the event, some in costume, and together the 47 teams have raised more than \$128,000 to help Dementia Australia provide invaluable support services, education and resources. The highest individual fundraisers were Kelsey Casaceli, Chelsea Horton, Roy Eagle and Brittany Donohue. The top fundraising team was Vickstaaa with more than \$10,000, with team members Lizzie Smith and Jessica Cook leading the way. An estimated 141,800 people in NSW are living with all forms of dementia and this figure is projected to increase to an estimated 252,800 by 2054. In the Cronulla electorate, the number is expected to rise from 1,545 to 2,738 between now and 2054. As the second leading cause of death in Australia, dementia touches so many lives and I congratulate everyone who joined the event to support such an important cause.

OUR LADY OF MERCY COLLEGE BURRANEER 90TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I join with Our Lady of Mercy College at Burraneer in celebrating its 90 years of providing a quality secondary education for young women. A celebratory morning tea was held on Saturday 8 March for 140 members of the college's alumni community, who rekindled friendship and shared stories from their time at the school and enjoyed tours of the school's modern facilities by current student leaders. The College was established in a Cronulla cottage in 1935 by the Sisters of Mercy (Parramatta congregation) when there were no Catholic all girls secondary schools between Hurstville and Wollongong. With growing student numbers and the need for expanded facilities the school moved to its current site overlooking Burraneer Bay and Royal National Park in 1960. It is the only specialist all-girls school in the Shire. Its first ever year 11 cohort in 2024 will this year become the College's first year 12 graduates, as part of an expansion to offer local families all-girls schooling for all of the secondary school years. I congratulate current and former staff and students on living out the school's motto 'Encouraging Girls and Empowering Women' for 90 years.

GENEROUS \$1000 DONATION TO MARINE RESCUE

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—The Nambucca Heads Offshore Fishing Club is more than just a group of fishing enthusiasts. With approximately 80 members, including a strong and passionate junior division, they are committed to marine conservation, sustainable fishing practices, and fostering the next generation of anglers. The club recognises that in order to enjoy fishing, they must protect the waterways. Recently the club donated \$1,000 to Marine Rescue Nambucca, an essential organisation that ensures the safety of boaters, fishers, and visitors along our coastline. This generous contribution will go directly toward replacing key equipment that helps Marine Rescue volunteers carry out their life-saving work. Marine Rescue's volunteers are often the first responders when emergencies arise in Nambucca Heads, particularly during peak holiday periods when waterways are at their busiest. It's heartening to see local groups like the Nambucca Heads Offshore Fishing Club rallying

behind them. Whether it's promoting sustainable fishing, mentoring young anglers, or backing vital emergency services, the Nambucca Heads Offshore Fishing Club continues to make a meaningful impact. Their contributions highlight the importance of working together to protect our shared resources.

DORRIGO'S WARM WELCOME

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—When challenging weather conditions put pressure on communities, the true character of a town is revealed. In Dorrigo, that character is one of warmth, generosity, and resilience. Following the latest landslips along Waterfall Way caused by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred, traffic control workers have been stationed along the route, working tirelessly in wet and windy conditions to manage the safety of motorists and assist with recovery efforts. While working in such unpredictable weather is never easy, the support from Dorrigo's residents made all the difference. One traffic controller who travelled from Glen Innes, was overwhelmed by the kindness shown by the local community, claiming it was next level. She praised the Heritage Hotel Motel team, local cafes, and residents who had gone out of their way to make them feel welcome with big hearts. Time and time again, Waterfall Way has been impacted by landslips, and time and time again, the community has shown patience, resilience, and support for those working to restore access. To the people of Dorrigo, thank you for your patience, your kindness, and your unwavering community spirit.

LOCAL INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Over 100 residents gathered for the launch of the Homes for Health initiative, a new program designed to address the impact of the region's affordable housing shortage on health services in Bellingen and Dorrigo. The initiative, a partnership between Bellingen Shire Council, the Bellinger Health Action Group, and the Housing Matters Action Group, comes in response to the closure of key medical services, including up to 16 hospital beds across the region. Local healthcare has been under significant strain with shortages, the main cause being housing shortages. The Homes for Health initiative aims to solve this problem by utilising spare bedrooms, secondary dwellings, and short-term holiday rentals to house healthcare workers. The response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive, with more than 40 expressions of interest from locals willing to offer accommodation. This initiative shows the power of collaboration, as residents come together to support our healthcare workers and ensure the continued viability of local medical services. Well done to the locals of Bellingen and Dorrigo who are supporting this initiative and making a difference in the community.

MAJOR IAN N. BROOKES GOM

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to congratulate Mosman resident, Major Ian N. Brookes GOM, who was recently honoured by the King of Cambodia. At 84, Major Brookes was appointed as a Knight Grand Officer of the Royal Order of Monisaraphon for his exceptional service in the prevention of blindness and restoration of sight in Cambodia. For years, he has been instrumental in establishing and now supporting the Battambang Ophthalmic [BOC]; Cambodia's most advanced eye care unit. Despite no government or international funding, BOC performed 23% of Cambodia's eye surgeries last year and employs 30 Cambodians, including two ophthalmologists. A proud Mosman local of 50 years, Major Brookes previously served as Operations Officer of 10 Terminal Regiment at Middle Head and later commanded the Army Maritime School at Chowder Bay. After 26 years in the Australian Army, he became a United Nations official, contributing to the UN mission in Cambodia. He also played a key role in the successful Save Middle Head campaign in 2013. I congratulate Major Brookes on this honour, recognising a lifetime of service to both Australia and Cambodia. Thank you, Major Brookes, for making such a difference in the lives of so many.

MOSMAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERTS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to acknowledge the Mosman Symphony Orchestra, who are about to celebrate the opening of their 2025 season. The season kicks off with the Orchestral Concert 1: Youth on Saturday, 29th March and Sunday, 30th March at the Mosman Art Gallery. This exciting concert will feature Agathe Backer-Grøndahl's Scherzo, a lively and lyrical piece. The orchestra will also welcome 15-year old violinist Ellie Malonzo, who will perform Mendelssohn's beloved Violin Concerto in E minor. Ellie has performed with the Mosman Symphony Choir before, and holds an impressive resume, having been accepted into the University of Western Australia's Conservatorium of Music at just 14. It is always heartening to see exceptional talent being fostered and displayed within my community, and I thank everyone involved behind the scenes in pulling together such an impressive season, once again. I extend my best wishes to the Mosman Symphony Orchestra for their upcoming concerts over the weekend and congratulate them for their ongoing dedication to fostering young talent and delivering exceptional performances to our community.

OPENING OF SOUTH MOSMAN WHARF

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I am proud to acknowledge the opening of the newly upgraded South Mosman Wharf. The extensive upgrades are the legacy of the former Liberal Government's vision, planning, and funding. The upgraded floating pontoon, complete with a covered waiting area, seating, and weather protective glass screens, ensures a safer and more comfortable experience for passengers. With the addition of a new lift, the wharf is now fully accessible for everyone, regardless of their mobility level. This project is a testament to the commitment of the former Liberal Government, who allocated the budget to improve infrastructure, ensuring safe and accessible public transport for those in my community, and those visiting. The South Mosman Wharf is not just a transport stop, it is a valued local asset that supports our daily needs. I want to thank the 223 workers who dedicated over 20,000 hours to deliver this impressive upgrade. Finally, I thank the residents of Musgrave Street for their endless patience as I know this work was ongoing and at times loud and disruptive. The final product is so impressive, and I know my community truly appreciates such an investment in their access to transport.

FUNDRAISING FOR DISABLED VETERANS

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 14 February 2025, I had the privilege of joining my constituents at a heartfelt event to raise funds for the Disabled Veterans of the former Republic of Vietnam, many of whom continue to endure significant hardship in Vietnam today. The event brought together members of the Vietnamese refugee community, including former officers, servicemen and women of the Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces, and their descendants, all gathering to honour and pay tribute to those who sacrificed for democracy and freedom. The spirit of honouring disabled veterans was beautifully lifted through poignant, soldier-themed songs. The program was further enriched by special guests, renowned singers, entertainers, and an MC from America, all of whom are strong advocates for the welfare of South Vietnam's disabled veterans. I would like to thank Mr Nguyen Khang Phan and Ms Kim Hoang, representatives of Viet TV Australia, for their kind invitation and for organising such a meaningful event. I commend the organisers and everyone involved for their thoughtful gesture of gratitude and remembrance.

2025 LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION (MULTICULTURAL NSW)

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On the 4th of February 2025, I had the privilege of attending the 2025 Lunar New Year Celebration, an event organized by the Hon Steve Kamper, Minister for Multiculturalism, at the Museum of Contemporary Art. The celebration marked a special occasion, bringing together people from diverse cultural backgrounds to celebrate the traditions of the Lunar New Year. The event was attended by the Hon Chris Minns, Premier of New South Wales, who delivered an inspiring address, highlighting the significance of multiculturalism and the importance of celebrating the contributions of various communities to the vibrant fabric of our society. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and joy, from traditional lion dancing to modern hip-hop dancing. We met and caught up with members of the many diverse communities, wished each other a happy lunar new year, while we appreciated the magnificent iconic Sydney view of our Harbour Bridge and Opera House. The evening was a true reflection of the spirit of inclusion and celebration that makes our state and country so unique. I look forward to more events like this in the future.

LUNAR NEW YEAR BUDDHIST BLESSING CEREMONY

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I had the honour of representing the Hon Steve Kamper, Minister for Multiculturalism at the Lunar New Year Buddhist Blessing Ceremony at Freedom Plaza Cabramatta on 16 February 2025. The event had the Buddhist blessings and ceremonies, along with vibrant cultural performances, to celebrate the arrival of the Year of the Wood Snake and to wish the community a year filled with blessings, peace, and prosperity. It was a privilege to witness this auspicious moment, joined by the NSW Premier, the Hon Chris Minns, along with my State and Federal Parliamentary colleagues. I would like to recognise the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society [ACBS] and the Chinese Associations of Greater Western Sydney [CAGWS] for organising such a meaningful celebration for our community, bringing people together in a spirit of harmony and multicultural celebration. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Mr. James Chan OAM Chair of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society, and Mr. Vincent Kong OAM President of the Australian Chinese Buddhist Society, for their kind invitation. May the Year of the Wood Snake bring everyone happiness, health and prosperity.

THE HAPPY DANCE PROJECT SHOOTS FOR GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—More power to Kyogle Mayor Cr Danielle Mulholland and her small but dedicated group of fellow volunteers who have formed a committee to host Kyogle's first attempt at a world record – a Mass Happy Dance. Danielle told The Northern Rivers Times she drew inspiration from Jeanette Foy, who last year toured the

Northern Rivers on her mobility scooter to raise awareness and funds for domestic violence victims. The Happy Dance Project has its own Facebook page and their attempt to make it into the Guinness Book of World Records will be held at the Kyogle Showgrounds on Saturday 14 June 2025, between 2pm to 4pm. All proceeds will go towards raising much-needed funds for the wonderful Kyogle Family Support Services to deliver a program in schools about healthy relationships, to combat Domestic Violence. The theme is purple with the motif being a butterfly. Participants will be asked to come dressed in deep purple and be ready to shake their tail feathers. This will be promoted as a regional event; the more money raised, the more schools will benefit the program. Feedback from a pilot program run in Kyogle was overwhelmingly positive.

OLIVE COTTON PHOTOGRAPHIC AWARD TURNS 20 THIS YEAR

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—The Tweed Regional Gallery & Margaret Olley Art Centre is inviting photographers to submit entries for the 2025 Olive Cotton Award until the deadline of 5pm Tuesday May 13. Named after iconic Australian photographer the late Olive Cotton and funded by her family, the prestigious \$20,000 award recognises excellence in photographic portraiture and is open to photographic artists around Australia. Madeleine Murray in The Tweed Valley Weekly interviewed Olive's daughter, photographer Sally McInerney, who will be one of the judges this year. Sally told The Tweed Valley Weekly that artists with limited funds know what a difference it makes to win a prize or get a grant. "When Olive was 73, she got a modest grant from the Visual Arts Board. It meant she could step back from the commissioned work she'd been doing for 20 years at her own small studio in Cowra, about 25 kilometres from the farm where she and her family lived," Sally said. "That grant gave her time to concentrate on her personal photography at last." The exhibition will run at the Tweed Regional Gallery in Murwillumbah from Saturday 17 August until Sunday 2 November this year.

RAINBOW WALK A SOURCE OF PRIDE FOR NIMBIN COMMUNITY

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I wish to congratulate the Nimbin community on the recent opening of the \$2.54-million Nimbin Rainbow Walk and Aquarius Park, funded by the NSW and Australian governments. I backed this project from the outset and it was fitting that community representative and former Lismore City councillor Diana Roberts OAM had the honour of cutting the ribbon. Quoted in The Lismore App, Diana revealed that writing the grant application took almost three months of her life and she acknowledged locals like Dr Wil Polson and Dr Kitty van Vuuren for updating a business plan. "And here we are. I think to me personally; it's probably the biggest legacy that I will leave Nimbin and I'm really proud of it." The walk is much more than a public pathway; it's a well-planned tactile and visual experience, improving connectivity for local residents of all ages and abilities through the heart of Nimbin, and offering an easy-to-access tourist attraction for visitors. I acknowledge the Nimbin Community Centre, Nimbin Chamber of Commerce, Nimbin Headers Sports Club, the Rainbow Power Company, private landowners, and the Aquarius Landcare Group on their contributions to this Lismore City Council-managed project.

SUNSHINE RIDE – FUNDRAISER ALBURY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Steve & Debbie Ballard from Albury for their efforts with this year's fifth annual Sunshine Ride Fundraiser. The event took place on March 14-15 with an ambitious fundraising goal of \$150,000. The proceeds aimed at supporting cancer care here in Albury. The event brought together musicians, celebrities, sports personalities, politicians, and community members — all united by a shared cause: supporting the Albury Wodonga Regional Cancer Centre Trust Fund. One of the highlights this year was the introduction of the "Lock Up Your Boss" concept, a fun and creative twist on the event that sparked even greater participation. As Mr Ballard put it, "Simone and Albury Police Chief Inspector Scott Russell, long-time champions of community fundraising, are fantastic people. Well done Simone, who came up with this brilliant idea of 'Lock Up Your Boss' in the gym, taking the event to the next level." I thank everyone who participated, contributed, and worked tirelessly to ensure this year's event was such a tremendous success, as we continue to make a difference for those affected by cancer.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – BWAU ALBURY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge Business Women Albury Wodonga [BWAU], for hosting the International Women's Day event March 8, that celebrated the accomplishments of inspiring local women and supported a Charity event. It was also an honour to witness the announcement of the 2025 BWAU Grant winners: First Prize: Kara Chanter of Dying to Help, awarded a \$7,500 grant for a cooling plate to aid grieving families. Second Prize: Anita Geary of Insight Therapies Wodonga, who received \$5,000 to continue her therapeutic work. Third Prize: Emilia Barrow of Redefined Counselling, who was awarded \$2,500 to further empower individuals overcoming hardship. Well done to all the other finalists! A special thankyou to Willow Bank Events for the beautiful setup and delicious food, and to our generous sponsors, Que Property Group

and Starfish Marketing, for making these grants possible. Thank you to panellists Allison, Narelle, and Carmen for sharing powerful stories of resilience. I thank BWAU for their continuous efforts honouring remarkable women and creating truly inspiring events.

ANDREA JOUKADOR

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Andrea Joukador, from the Shellharbour City Swim School. Andrea has an impressive 35 years of experience as a Learn to Swim instructor, having taught thousands of children across the Illawarra region. Known for her calm and nurturing teaching style, Andrea's passion for helping children thrive in the water is the foundation of her approach. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Andrea for her dedication to teaching children to swim.

TINA PATTERSON

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Tina Patterson, from the Shellharbour City Swim School. With 13 years of experience as a Swim Instructor for Shellharbour Council, Tina has played a pivotal role in teaching countless children how to swim, building both their skills and confidence in the water. Her dedication to aquatic safety began when she was part of the first group of females in the Illawarra to earn her Bronze Medallion in Surf Lifesaving, reflecting her lifelong commitment to water safety and education. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Tina for her dedication to teaching children to swim.

KARLIE ZEC

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Karlie Zec, from Horsley, who was awarded the Environment Achievement Award at the recent City of Wollongong Awards. Through her business Tiny Tins, Karlie takes a holistic approach to waste management, encompassing education, fundraising, and innovative solutions, showcasing new approaches to foster a cleaner, more sustainable and resilient Wollongong community. Also, through her fundraising, she's contributed more than a quarter of a million dollars to Illawarra Convoy. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Karlie on this wonderful achievement.

CAMDEN AND COBBITTY CRICKET CLUB

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—This past week, the 2024/25 cricket season drew to a close, with some of our talented local groups finishing their successful runs with a grand final win. I want to congratulate Camden Cricket Club, whose 7th grade, 3rd grade, and 9th grade Blue teams all won their grand final matches. Cobbitty-Narellan Cricket Club also took home the grand final victory for their 1st grade and 8th grade teams. The 1st grade side successfully ended a 20-year drought with the win. Congratulations to everyone involved. These wins are an incredible achievement and showcase the incredible teamwork and sportsmanship skills our Camden citizens have.

MICHAEL LEE

Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)—For the last two years, the Camden Men's Shed has been engaged in the rigorous process of rebuilding their location. A driving force behind this project has been one of the group's longtime members, Michael Lee. Over the past two years, Michael has demonstrated incredible mental strength as he tackled the project. His fellow group members have praised his incredible mental strength, describing how well he overcame the issues that were thrown his way. Michael has also been instrumental in securing the funding to embark on this project. He spent hours filling out forms and writing letters for the shed to gain funding in grants and donations. Michael's unwavering dedication should be highly commended. He is an inspiration to the community.

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – RUSSELL VALE 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 Zali Fisher, Zoe Kelly, Alfie Sewell-Ackroyd, Lucas Strickland, Hunter Campbell, Stella Fitzgerald, Jack Parkinson and Hannah Quintal who have been named as the 2025 Figtree 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 – UNANDERRA 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 Memphis, Brodie, Dominic and Lorelee who have been named as the 2025 Unanderra 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.

ILLAWARRA HAWKS – NBL CHAMPIONS!

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—For the first time in 24 years the Dr John Raschke Trophy, the championship trophy of the National Basketball League [NBL], will reside where it belongs in the Illawarra. On Sunday afternoon, the Illawarra Hawks defeated Melbourne United in Game 5 of the NBL Championship Series at WIN Entertainment Centre in Wollongong to claim victory and take their place as rulers of the division. The team showed great determination and grit to win the hard-fought series in front of an adoring home crowd. On Sunday there were not only the 5600 fans packed into WIN Entertainment Centre cheering on the Hawks, but a whole region backing them in. It was great to see the benefit that the added foot traffic has brought to the City of Wollongong during this finals series and the pride that is felt throughout the entire region. Tonight, the region will come together to celebrate with the team in the Crown Street Mall with the proudest Lord Mayor in the country leading the way. I congratulate the team once again; you have made us all incredibly proud.

MARTHA LAMPREY

Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga)—I would like to pay tribute to the late Martha Lamprey of Gumly Gumly who is remembered as a community champion and a light in the lives of the many people who loved her. Born in 1932, Ms Lamprey moved to Gumly with her parents and 12 siblings in 1934 and devoted her long life to her family and community. She passed away in February at the age of 92 but she has left a legacy of lasting improvements to her village. Married to Trevor Lamprey for 70 years, she leaves five children, Marilyn Masters, Colleen George, Phillip Lamprey, Rhonda Thomson and Trevlyn Noble - and 60 grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren. Ms Lamprey was president of the Gumly Progress Association, a life member of the East Wagga Football Club and president of the Gumly Primary School P&C. Empathetic and kind, she was nonetheless a determined advocate for the betterment of Gumly. Recently, I was proud to congratulate her for receiving an award recognising her 37 years as a Crown Lands manager of Gumly Oval. Lamprey Avenue in Gumly was named in her honour – a fitting recognition for a beloved lady who did so much for so many.

CLARENCE ELECTORATE LOCAL WOMAN OF THE YEAR EMMA CRETHAR

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—My recognition and warm congratulations must go to Emma Crethar of Broadwater, who has been named the Clarence Electorate's Local Woman of the Year as part of International Women's Day celebrations. As a dedicated leader of the Broadwater Public School P&C Association, Emma has worked tirelessly to ensure the timely rebuild of Broadwater Public School after the devastation of the 2022 floods. Emma's leadership and determination was paramount in securing a fast-tracked, flood-resilient school in an effort for local children to return to learning in their own community. Well done to Emma and all of the P&C members who have together shown admirable strength, resilience and support to ensure a positive outcome for the kids of Broadwater. After hearing "be patient" and "trust the process" one too many times, Emma and the P&C took action to make sure the rebuild happened. The new Broadwater Public School is set to open to students on Day 1 of Term 2, 2025. Being named the Clarence Electorate's Local Woman of the Year is well deserved for Emma, and I congratulate all involved on their efforts in support of the schools rebuild.

NSW WOMEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS "ONE TO WATCH" FINALIST MILLIE TRUSTUM

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to recognise Richmond Valley teen Millie Trustum of Tatham, for being named as one of 10 finalists in the "Ones to Watch" category of the 2025 NSW Women of the Year Awards. The "Ones to Watch" category celebrates girls and young women aged 7 to 15 years who display courage, strength, kindness, and determination in supporting those around them. Millie has been

recognised for her outstanding efforts in raising awareness and funds for childhood cancer research, turning her own battle with T-cell lymphoblastic lymphoma into a mission of hope, advocacy, and change. Since 2020, Millie has raised over \$90,000 for The Kids' Cancer Project through fundraising events such as dress up days, cupcake sales, raffles, morning teas and bingo days. Millie also launched her 'Awareness Rainbow' initiative in 2022, which has gained national attention as a symbol that represents different childhood cancers. Millie has shown great determination to make a difference and has become an admirable advocate and role model for other young people. Congratulations Millie on such a remarkable achievement and best wishes for all of your future endeavours.

KEN MAUGHAN OAM BOATHOUSE

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—My recognition goes to Ken Maughan, who for over 40 years opened the doors of the boatshed at Grafton Rowing Club as the sun rose over the Clarence River. Mr Maughan has been an active member of the Grafton Rowing Club since the 1960's. He has always enjoyed helping rowers when they launched into the water and offering words of encouragement. As a former competitive rower and a well-respected coach, Mr Maughan has assisted many rowers to reach State and National levels within the sport. As a sign of appreciation and recognition of Mr Maughan's many hours of dedication, the Grafton Rowing Club have officially named the boatshed the "Ken Maughan OAM Boathouse" during a small ceremony. President of the Grafton Rowing Club Michael Collins said the ceremony was a wonderful way to acknowledge Mr Maughan for his countless contributions over the years. Congratulations and thank you Mr Maughan, on your remarkable dedication to the Grafton Rowing Club for over 40 years. What an outstanding achievement to have Grafton Rowing Club's boatshed named after you.

2025 LUDDENHAM SHOW

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate and commend the Luddenham Agricultural, Horticultural and Industrial Society, of which I'm pleased to be the Patron of, for a wonderful 2025 Luddenham Show that was held on the 1st and 2nd March 2025 at the Luddenham Showground. The annual Luddenham Show is the greatest country show in NSW and locals and visitors alike enjoy its setting in the beautiful historic town of Luddenham. This year's Show included great fun and entertainment such as the showcasing of animals, the exhibition of art, craft, produce and poultry, entertainment on stage, quality stalls and many other fun features. I thank all volunteers and participants who took part in making this year's Show another outstanding event.

DOGS NSW CANINE SPORTS SPECTACULAR

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate and commend DOGS NSW President Lyn Brand, her team at DOGS NSW and everyone who took part in DOGS NSW's inaugural Canines Sports Spectacular for an outstanding event held on 22 March 2025 in Luddenham. The day involved giving dog owners and their dogs a chance to explore and try out a variety of dog sports, including Agility, Dances With Dogs, Sprint Dog, Scent Work, and more. These sports were not only a wonderful opportunity for dog owners to keep their dog active and engaged, but they also strengthened the bond between owners and your furry friend in such a positive, rewarding way. I commend the volunteers who helped share their knowledge, guided participants through each sport and answered any questions that the attendees had. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I thank President Lyn Brand and all involved for hosting a wonderful event for our community and for our visitors alike.

ST CLAIR HIGH SCHOOL – WHITE CARD TRAINING

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate and commend the Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 students at St Clair High School who completed their White Card Training this week. The obtaining of the White Cards allows the students to enter a construction site. St Clair High School run the White Card Training once a term. I commend the staff at St Clair High School for their dedication to their student's education and future. I wish all students at St Clair High School the very best on their schooling journey and future.

MAITLAND TOUCH ASSOCIATION U14 GIRLS TEAM

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—I am incredibly proud to congratulate our Maitland U-14 girls touch football team on their outstanding performance at the State Championship final in Sydney. Securing a remarkable 2nd place finish in the state, these talented young athletes demonstrated exceptional skill, determination, and teamwork. Their achievement on the state stage is a true testament to their hard work and commitment, showcasing the very best of what our community can achieve. In addition, the team claimed the title of Northern Division champions with an impressive 8–3 victory over Ballina, remaining undefeated throughout a rigorous 10-game qualification and finals series in Dubbo. While this accomplishment is noteworthy, it is the state result that truly highlights their outstanding performance this season. A heartfelt thank you goes to everyone who travelled to support the team or tuned in from home—your

encouragement was clearly felt on the field. Congratulations to each of the girls for your superb effort and sportsmanship. You have made Maitland very proud, and I look forward to seeing you continue to excel on and off the field.

NEWCASTLE MULTIPLE BIRTH CLUB

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to the Newcastle Multiple Birth Club [NMBC] who proudly celebrated Multiple Birth Awareness Week 2025 by hosting a series of community events designed to support and empower families. NMBC organised engaging playgroups in both Newcastle and Maitland, offering free sessions that foster connection, share experiences, and build a network of caring families. These playgroups provide a welcoming space for parents and children to bond, exchange advice, and celebrate the unique journey of raising multiples. Beyond playgroups, NMBC offers regular expectancy sessions, support groups, and educational seminars that equip parents with practical tools and information. Through interactive workshops, members gain insights on early child development, effective parenting strategies, and accessing essential community resources. NMBC is also actively involved in advocating for better support systems for multiple birth families, aligning with the Australian Multiple Birth Association's vision. Their efforts include promoting initiatives such as 1000 Days of Support funding, equitable parental leave per baby, and enhanced in-home care services. The club's dedication to nurturing a strong, informed community has made a significant impact, ensuring every family feels supported and empowered on their parenting journey.

THE NAPPY COLLECTIVE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Thank you to the Nappy Collective on their vital campaign to ensure every baby has the essentials they need. I'm delighted that my electorate office serves as a collection point for new, unused nappies. This initiative addresses a pressing issue—research shows that nearly one in three families in our region struggle to afford enough nappies, with thousands of infants facing unnecessary hardship as a result. The Nappy Collective is working tirelessly to alleviate this burden by collecting and redistributing nappies to families in need. By transforming community generosity into tangible support, this campaign not only eases financial pressure on parents but also enhances the health and well-being of our youngest community members. I encourage everyone to join us in this effort. Your donation can make a significant difference in alleviating the daily challenges faced by families and ensuring that every child is given a good start. Together, we can build a more caring and connected community—one where every parent receives the support they deserve and every baby is nurtured with the dignity they deserve.

HUMAN APPEAL'S COMMUNITY IFTAR

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—The Islamic holy month of Ramadan is a time in which Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset. It is a month of spiritual reflection, empathy with those less fortunate and togetherness as family and friends. The community gather to break their fast at what is known as iftar. On Sunday 18 March, I joined our community at Human Appeal's Iftar, breaking my fast with hundreds of community members. Thank you to Bashar Al-Jamal, Director and CEO of Human Appeal, for welcoming me and many others at the iftar. The food was amazing, the sweets divine and the company even better. I have the pleasure of attending several iftars that celebrate our unity as a community as well as our shared humanity. Regardless of a person's religious background, the coming together of people, rekindling old friendships and making new ones whilst breaking bread, is something that we can all appreciate. We are better as a society when we are together and respect and value our differences. May the blessings of Ramadan bring peace, good health, and kindness to all. The thing that makes our community so amazing is nights like this. Ramadan Mubarak.

HARMONY DAY - RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I was delighted to attend the Riverwood Community Centre's annual Harmony Day celebrations, a fantastic event that showcased the strength of our diverse and inclusive community. Harmony Day is a time to reflect on the importance of respect, inclusivity, and belonging. It reminds us that our differences make us stronger and that everyone has a place in our society. At Riverwood Community Centre, this spirit was on full display, with community members coming together to celebrate the many cultures that enrich us. I had the privilege of speaking at the event and sharing in the celebrations, which highlighted the vital role of multiculturalism in shaping our community. The event was filled with music, performances, and conversations that reinforced the message that harmony and acceptance are key to a stronger, more unified society. A special thank you to the team at Riverwood Community Centre for their continued dedication to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. Their work is a testament to the values we

hold dear as a community - respect, unity, and diversity. I am thankful to everyone for creating a society where our community feels valued and empowered.

TONY BURKE, JASON CLARE, SOPHIE COTSIS AND JIHAD DIB COMMUNITY IFTAR

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On the 12th of March, I had the honour of co-hosting a wonderful community Iftar alongside my colleagues Tony Burke, Jason Clare, and Sophie Cotsis at The Emporium in Bankstown. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend in person, as I was in Lismore visiting communities affected by Cyclone Alfred. However, I received incredible feedback about the event, which was made possible by my dedicated staff, who attended and helped organise the Iftar. Ramadan is a time of faith, reflection, forgiveness, and unity, and this Iftar beautifully embodied these values. It brought together community leaders and members from diverse backgrounds, faiths, and cultures, all sharing in a blessed meal at sunset. The evening featured inspiring speeches from our community leaders, each of whom highlighted the strength and uniqueness of our diverse community and the significance of Ramadan. I was grateful for the opportunity to share a video message with the guests, expressing my gratitude and best wishes. This Community Iftar was a testament to the spirit of togetherness that defines our community, and along with my colleagues, I look forward to continuing this tradition.

CHARLESTOWN ELECTORATE PHARMACISTS

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—13 March was Thank Your Pharmacist Day, and I want to take this opportunity to thank the pharmacists and pharmacy workers who provide their services to the Charlestown electorate. For many people with health conditions, pharmacists can be the first port of call when seeking support. From supporting patients with medicine use all the way through to lifesaving interventions, pharmacists are stepping up to meet the growing demands of our healthcare system. I am pleased to see pharmacists in the Charlestown electorate and beyond engaging with Minns Labor Government-introduced and-supported programs to provide certain kinds of healthcare, from treating urinary tract infections to helping make oral contraceptive treatment more accessible. This is making all the difference in so many lives, and pharmacists across my electorate are expanding their services in order to help improve the health and wellbeing of Charlestown locals. Our pharmacists should be thanked every day, but it was my pleasure to drop by Williams Discount Chemist in Charlestown to say thank you personally.

APOLLO INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—The Apollo International Hotel in Charlestown has engaged with the "Back to Basics" program, facilitated by Envision Connection, a support coordination provider servicing the Greater Newcastle area. The Back to Basics program is dedicated to helping school leavers and young adults with disabilities develop essential life skills for greater independence as they enter the community and obtain skills for employment. The program isn't just about the skills learned. As we all know, the key to success and inclusion is empowerment and confidence, and based on the reports from the three participants—Sam, Kyana and Tara—their experiences at the Apollo International have certainly assisted with that. It is good to see a local business committed to creating opportunities that make a meaningful impact through supporting programs like Back to Basics. I am always happy to see community engagement and inclusion. I look forward to hearing more in the future about the Back to Basics program, and other initiatives from the Apollo International and Envision Connection to empower individuals and foster a more inclusive future.

HUNTER MEMORY WALK & JOG

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Dementia is the leading cause of death of Australian women and is just a few hundred deaths behind cardiovascular disease as the leading cause of death for all Australians. While many in the community have had direct experience with dementia, many are unaware that research indicates nearly half of all cases of dementia globally could be prevented or delayed by addressing risk factors. On Sunday 23 March, it was my honour to join a fundraising event at the Warners Bay Foreshore Reserve in support of the Memory Walk & Jog, an initiative of Dementia Australia. It raises much-needed funds so that they can provide support, education and resources to people living with dementia, their carers, families and loved ones. It was a great chance to get active for brain health, which research shows can help reduce the risk of dementia, and the event catered for people of all abilities. It was my pleasure to spend part of the morning on the shores of beautiful Lake Macquarie, enjoying the open air in along with so many locals who had gathered together in support such a good and important cause.

GLOBAL TABLE 2025

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—We would like to acknowledge the return and success of Global Table 2025. Global Table is a vibrant celebration of the multiculturalism bringing people together through dance, music, and food. This event celebrates the uniqueness of the diverse cultures that enrich our community with a day filled with activities that foster inclusion and connection. Free dance classes, food markets, and workshops for kids are just few of the many highlights that took place at the event on the 22nd of March. As a community, we embrace the learning and cultural exchange that Global Table continues to bring every year.

SUMMERAMA 2025

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—We would like to acknowledge the success of the Summerama 2025 event. Summerama is an annual program full of family-oriented activities made to increase the communities' awareness of our vast coastal and marine environments. The event highlighted local marine biodiversity, the threats to our local environment, and the need for conservation through activities such as drawing workshops, rockpool tours, and photography exhibitions. The 'Love the Coast' photography competition was a Summerama highlight, receiving over 100 entries from local talent. We congratulate all the 'Love the Coast' winners and commend all of those who helped organize this event.

THE SPOT FESTIVAL

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—We would like to acknowledge the return and success of the Spot Festival, a cherished community event that brings people together in vibrant celebration of culture, entertainment, and local spirit. As Randwick's largest free outdoor festival, The Spot festival has become a beloved annual tradition for our community, drawing residents and visitors to experience its lively atmosphere. Each year, this event showcases an exciting blend of cultural performances, live music, a variety of food vendors and market stalls, and free activities for kids. I thank everyone involved in organizing this event, and as a community, we warmly welcome the joy this festival brings to our community.

PETS IN THE PARK

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise Pets in the Park and their newest clinic in Byron Bay, which provides free and compassionate veterinary care to pets belonging to people experiencing homelessness. Pets in the Park has been operating since 2012 and now boasts clinics across the country. What began as a small group of veterinarians donating their time in public parks, offering medical support and veterinary knowledge, has evolved into the establishment of numerous volunteer-run clinics across the country – the latest being in Byron Shire. For people experiencing homelessness, their pets are more than just animals; they are companions, a source of hope and comfort, and a vital part of their emotional well-being. PITP create a safe space for pet owners to come, a space of dignity and care, where they provide several pet care services free of charge. I extend immense gratitude to PITP for their invaluable contributions to our community.

BANGALOW COMMUNITY PANTRY

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise the remarkable efforts of the Bangalow Community Pantry, a grassroots initiative providing vital support to those facing hardship. Led by Louise Anderson, David Noakes and supported by Rev. Rosie Wynter, the pantry has become a beacon of kindness in the Bangalow community. Originally conceived as part of a broader drop-in centre, the project gained momentum through the dedication of the Bangalow Men's Shed, Lions and CWA. In December 2024, a 24/7 outdoor pantry was established at the Men's Shed, ensuring discreet and autonomous access to essential food and toiletries. Local builders Pepe Munir and Shane Dettman, Bunnings Byron Bay and Parallel Power electricians contributed to the construction, with artist Ian Ritchie set to complete a mural. The initiative is supported by the H.I.Y.A. [Help in Your Area] 2479 program, providing grocery and fuel vouchers to help people reach work and appointments. The pantry operates on the simple principle: "Take as much as you need, give if you can." I commend all involved for their compassion and commitment to ensuring no one in Bangalow is left behind. Their work exemplifies the true spirit of community.

EASTLAKES U3A

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the 25th Anniversary of Eastlakes U3A. Eastlakes U3A has been the cornerstone of support for retired and semi-retired individuals, offering invaluable opportunities for low-cost education and fostering a sense of belonging through social interaction with the local community. This year marks a significant milestone as Eastlakes U3A celebrates 25 years of dedicated service. What began as a humble initiative has grown into a thriving organisation, now with over 900 members and running more than 100 classes each year. This is a true testament to their unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of so many in our area.

I had the pleasure of attending the 25th Anniversary Festival hosted by Eastlakes U3A, and it was a beautiful reflection of the vibrant spirit that they have cultivated. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the members for their extraordinary contribution to Swansea and its surrounding areas. Eastlakes U3A, you are a shining example of community strength, and I look forward to seeing your continued growth and success, as well as the lasting positive impact you will undoubtedly have for many years to come.

ELIZA JOHNSON

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Eliza Johnson 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. Eliza received a silver medal in the Open Taplin with Katy Rees and Kaleah Kingston. 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 Eliza 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.

EMI LEADBEATTER

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Emi Leadbeatter 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. Emi was awarded State Champion in the U17 2x1km Mixed Relay, placed 2nd in the U19 Mixed Beach Relay and U17 Beach Sprint, and received a bronze medal in the Open Beach Flags and U17 Mixed Beach Relay. 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 Emi 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.

NAUREEN SHAH

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)—Today the Sydney electorate celebrates Naureen Shah's positive impact on LGBTIQ+ people's lives. Between October 2023 and February 2025 Naureen worked at Australia's leading LGBTIQ+ advocacy organisation, Equality Australia where she played a transformative role as Operations Manager and Executive Officer to CEO Anna Brown OAM. She supported the delivery of major reforms including prohibitions on LGBTQ conversion practices and the LGBTIQ+ Equality Bill. She helped steward the organisation's patron, Her Excellency Sam Mostyn AC Governor-General of Australia, and led an impactful Sydney Mardi Gras presence and a big office move to Yirranma Place. Before working at Equality Australia, Naureen was Executive Assistant to Sydney WorldPride CEO, Kate Wickett, where she played a pivotal role in delivering this landmark festival, which reopened Sydney to the world and provided a platform for major LGBTQ local, state and federal reforms. As Member for Sydney, I had the privilege of working with Naureen and seeing her effectiveness and dedication firsthand. Together with Anna, Kate, and everyone who has worked with Naureen, I thank her for her courage, determination, drive, impeccable organisational and management skills, and her massive contribution to making NSW and Australia a safer place for LGBTIQ+ people.

RACHEL FITZHARDINGE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to congratulate Rachel Fitzhardinge, a talented local artist and photographer, who is currently hosting an exhibition at the Hurstville Museum and Gallery, on display from 22 March to 11 May. Rachel is a scientist by profession and has been involved with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation [CSIRO], the National Parks Association of New South Wales, and the Royal Society of NSW. As a member of the Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society, Rachel has a deep passion for the environment and actively participates in conservation efforts to ensure our natural surroundings remain protected for future generations. Her exhibition, 'Winged Creatures', will be held in the Dragon's Lair Gallery and features a stunning photographic series of local insect and bird species that call the St George region home. As a self-taught photographer, and a very talented one at that. Racek has been able to

capture not only the variety of species and animals in our local area, but also their unique behaviours and interactions. I wish Rachel every success with her exhibition and look forward to attending myself!

THE GREEK HERALD WINS MULTICULTURAL PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR AWARD

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to congratulate the team from the Greek Herald, who were recently awarded with the 'Multicultural Publication of the Year Award' at the 2025 Premier's Harmony Dinner. As Australia's largest and only Greek-language newspaper, this fantastic organisation is more than deserving of this prestigious award. Founded in 1926, they have been serving the Hellenic-Australian community for close to 100 years! The Greek Herald are committed to covering stories that the mainstream media often miss, which makes them a trusted source amongst Greek and Cypriot Australians. This is why multicultural media outlets are such an important tool in New South Wales, helping people stay connected to their own culture. I would like to congratulate the entire team at the Greek Herald, including Publisher Dimitra Skalkos and Digital Editor, Adriana Simos, who received the award on the night. I look forward to continuing to work alongside the Greek Herald, as we continue to fight for better outcomes for Greek Australians that call New South Wales home.

UTURN OPENS AT RIVERWOOD

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to recognise a brand-new business that has just opened up another store in Riverwood - Uturn! Uturn is an op shop that sells pre-loved clothing at affordable prices. The new Riverwood store is an extension of their existing outlet, located nearby on Bonds Road. Op shops like Uturn not only help families to save money, but also contribute to reducing textile waste and promoting environmentally friendly fashion choices. Pre-loved clothing that is sourced and sold by Uturn goes on to be re-worn and recycled, rather than just thrown out. In fact, since 1980, Uturn has helped to save over 200,000 tonnes of clothing from ending back up in landfills. What a remarkable achievement! With the current cost-of-living crisis, having access to quality, pre-loved clothing at reasonable prices is more important than ever. Uturn's presence in Riverwood will support the local community, whilst encouraging more people to recycle and shop sustainably. I once again congratulate Uturn on the opening of their new store and wish them every success over the coming years.

MANLY WARRINGAH SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION 2024/25 SEASON

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise Manly Warringah Softball Association season 2024/2025. For over 50 years, the Manly Warringah Softball Association has been a pillar of grassroots sports on the Northern Beaches. They bring together over 800 players, officials and volunteers. I recognise the leadership of President Doug Freeman, who also serves as the President of Softball NSW. I also recognise Vice President Janine Rolfe, Secretary Gai Cohen, Treasurer Doug Stracey, and committee members Kat Baldwin, Sue Brandenburg, Katie Collins, Jennie Hobbs, Jess Morley, Nikki Morley and Alli Wall. It is their hard work that keeps this competition thriving. Sport is more than just a game – it builds teamwork, resilience and lifelong friendships within our community. I thank the Manly Warringah Softball Association for their important contributions and congratulate them on another excellent softball season.

ROBIN CHAND: PRINCIPAL OF KILLARA HIGH SCHOOL 2021-2025

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise the leadership of Robin Chand, Principal of Killara High School from 2021 to 2025. Under his leadership, Killara High has achieved remarkable academic success, ranking extremely high as a public co-educational comprehensive high school. We are all proud of Killara High and proud of the efforts championed by Mr Chand. His leadership saw the establishment of the Killara Academy, a growth mindset program that involved 1000 students. It is an initiative that is unparalleled nationwide. Beyond academics, Mr Chand has strengthened Killara High's commitment to inclusivity and multiculturalism, promoting social cohesion in our local community. Killara High has continued to flourish under Mr Chand. I have no doubt he will leave a lasting legacy. I sincerely thank him for his service to our community and wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

PYMBLE PROBUS CLUB

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I am proud to acknowledge Pymble Probus Club as one of the shining examples of bringing people together. The Pymble Probus Club is a fantastic organisation that I am proud to support. The club enjoys a wide range of activities that enrich members lives, including theatre outings, walks, golf, bridge and cultural events. I recognise Management Committee President Jan Cooper, Vice President Chris Robins, Secretary Robin Fraser, Treasurer Geoff Tebbutt, Editor and Welfare John Brodie, Functions Michael Long, Outings Kevin Latham, Speakers Neville Harpham, and Special Events Georgina Adam for their contribution and commitment to making the club a welcoming, engaging place for all members. Their dedication plays a key role in ensuring that the Pymble Probus Club continues to thrive. I look forward to continuing to

support the Pymble Probus Club. The positive impact of organisations like this cannot be overstated. They improve the quality of life for so many, and I am honoured to represent them in the Parliament of NSW.

2025 COMMUNITY ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR - RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to acknowledge the Riverwood Community Centre [RCC] for being named the "2025 Community Organisation of the Year" at the Australia Day Awards. The RCC's various initiatives and programs have been essential to the surrounding Canterbury Bankstown and Riverwood community. Every year the centre assists 26 000 people through their aged care programs, youth engagement, children's services, and emergency relief, including the distribution of 7300 hampers. In its 50 years of operation the RCC has strived to empower vulnerable groups, support families, and foster community inclusivity. They have consistently supported not only the local community but youth and families as well, providing a beacon of hope whilst providing invaluable services to the St George community. The unwavering dedication of their staff and volunteers has significantly improved the lives of numerous members in my community by offering supportive assistance at some of life's most trying times. This award is well deserved and I would like to again congratulate and acknowledge RCC Chairperson Pauline Gallagher and her staff for providing such vital services to the surrounding area.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY VOLUNTEERS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to acknowledge and commend the many volunteers who took part in this year's Clean Up Australia Day events in our Georges River community. Held annually on the first Sunday in March, the 35th Clean Up Australia Day was incredibly successful with many groups and volunteers participating across twenty-six sites in the St George area, removing over 1.42 tonnes of litter. Clean Up Australia Day has become the largest community-based environmental event in the nation and I would like to thank these volunteers for their time, hard work and commitment to cleaning up our schools, waterways, parks and wetlands. Thank you on behalf of the entire community for helping to keep the Georges River area and its environment beautiful.

GLEN INNES FOOD HUB

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Glen Innes Food Hub for providing care and support to members of community, offering a food pantry to anyone in need. The food hub is a non-for-profit organisation, assisting 100 – 140 families each week with food and other basic necessities. The hub partners with Food Bank, as well as sourcing fresh fruit and vegetables from local growers. I congratulate Pastor Kevin Robinson of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and the team of volunteers driving this initiative. Special thanks to the many volunteers working tirelessly behind the scenes, purchasing, organising and supplying goods. With volunteers stepping-up their efforts in greater times of need, such as during bushfires and at special times such as Christmas, where hampers are given out to individuals and families alike. I commend all involved on their hard work and commitment to the charity and importantly, for giving people a hand up and letting them know that someone cares. On behalf of the Northern Tablelands Electorate – thank you.

SYLVIA BRODERICK

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Sylvia Broderick on her long-standing service to the Moree community. Sylvia is a business owner, volunteer and one of Moree Plains' finest ambassadors, enjoying nothing more than sharing her hometown with others. I congratulate Sylvia on her many accomplishments, among these celebrating an impressive 49 years as owner of Sylvia's Fabrics; the recipient of the Customer Service Award in 2019 and 2022; honoured as Citizen of the Year at the Moree Australia Day awards and Zonta Moree Business Woman of the Year, both in 2023. Such accolades follow years of generously giving her time to not-for-profit charities, church groups, community-focused committees, and events, clocking up 40+ years with the Evening View Club and Moree Catholic Women's League; 30+ years Line Dancing Club and 20+ years for the Community Visitors Scheme. Sylvia is also recognised for her support to many local initiatives, St Philomena's Spring Fair, Moree on a Plate, Community Choir, RSL Nashos and Church Choir to name a few. I commend Sylvia for her hard work and selfless dedication to giving back our community. Regional towns such as ours, cannot function without the wonderful support and commitment given by volunteers such as Sylvia.

GUYRA'S GOT TALENT

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Emma Vidler and members of the Guyra community for staging Guyra's Got Talent show recently. This initiative had a three-pronged purpose: to shine a light on cancer awareness, raise money for cancer research and to send the message, that the battle can be better fought when the community bands together. I congratulate Emma and all involved in this event, which comprised performances from very talented individuals and groups. There was a capacity crowd of 200 in

attendance, who dug deep to raise an incredible \$18,000 for the cause. Thanks to those who contributed to the evening, including: Jack's Jukebox, Steve Mephram, Justin Matthews, UNE Print Room, Jenny and Mark Atkin, Leanne Burey and Ben Vidler, along with the Guyra Bowling Club for providing the venue. Special thanks to volunteers, family and friends for their support, CT Electric and Guyra Café for ticket sales, performers, along with those who generously donated goods to auction and raffle. I commend Emma and all involved on their hard work, selflessly giving of their time to ensure the event was a winner. Funds raised are a valuable legacy gifted to others and we thank you from the Northern Tablelands electorate.

LIONS CLUB OF LUGARNO

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to take a moment to recognise and thank the Lions Club of Lugarno for their commitment to serving our local community. The Lugarno Lions contributed a one-thousand-dollar donation to St George Community Transport, which goes towards replacement batteries for the defibrillators on their buses and at the Mortdale office. St George Community Transport provides a crucial bus service for the elderly, people with disability, and vulnerable members of the community. On top of this, the Lugarno Lions launched a breakfast club at Hannans Road Public School in Riverwood, with members bringing breakfast for students on a Wednesday. Members of the club also provide food items for parents to take home, helping families in need. I commend the Lions Club of Lugarno, and I encourage the members to continue their positive contributions to Georges River and the wider community.

NARROMINE BUSINESS COLLECTIVE

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge the Narromine Business Collective for their inaugural event held on International Women's Day, 8 March 2025. The Collective is a new initiative established in response to the towns lack of a Chamber of Commerce, recognising the need for a dedicated support system tailored to the local business community. Their mission is to collaborate, learn, and connect to strengthen the Narromine Shire. The group currently consists of several local business owners, led by Co-Presidents, Sarah Aitchison, and Felicity Roberts. All members generously volunteer their time, driven by a strong passion to see the collective and the community thrive. Their inaugural event, "Gather", held at Soul Food Depot and Gallery, was a sellout and a roaring success! It provided an incredible opportunity for the women in attendance to be inspired, empowered, and meaningfully connect with one another. The panel discussions, expertly hosted by MC Pippa Moore, established an engaging platform for the inspirational guest speakers, Alex Nation, Marty Boyle, Georgie Robertson, and Jane Robertson to share their stories and connect with the audience through thoughtful discussion. I congratulate the committee and look forward to seeing what they continue to achieve!

NARROMINE CHARITY SHOW 'N' SHINE AND SWAP MEET

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to congratulate the Narromine Car Club on the success of their 2025 Charity Show 'n' Shine and Swap Meet. Held at the Narromine Golf Club on Sunday 16 March 2025, with twelve categories being awarded, there was an impressive line-up of classic cars, bikes, and other vehicles on show. Some of the winners judged on the day included Best Ford, Best Holden, Best Motorcycle, Best Tractor, Best Unfinished Project and even Most Likely to be Pulled over by the Police! The car club, under the leadership of President Kim Edmunds, ensured there was something for everyone – not just the car enthusiasts. With a diverse range of attractions, including market stalls, food vans, the Royal Flying Doctor demonstration aircraft, Pooka the Clown, and a friendship farm for the kids, it offered a fun filled day for the whole family. The local community will reap the rewards of the committee's hard work and dedication. Not only did attendees enjoy a fantastic family day out but proceeds from the event will also be directed toward supporting local charities, making a meaningful impact beyond the day itself. Congratulations and thank you for all your efforts!

PADDY CUSACK

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like acknowledge Paddy Cusack who has been awarded this seasons Dubbo and District Junior Cricket Association's Fraser Family Spirit of Cricket Award. This prestigious award is presented annually in honour of the late Sam Fraser, a talented junior cricketer who played for South Dubbo and at the representative level before his tragic passing in 2016. Paddy, a talented young cricketer, plays senior cricket with Narromine Bombers and Junior cricket with South Dubbo under 16's. When not playing, Paddy is volunteering. Whilst he plays junior cricket for South Dubbo due to the Narromine club not fielding a team in his age division in the 2024/25 season, he remains a familiar face at Narromine Junior Bombers training, assisting with their sessions twice a week. His passion and love for the sport shine through in everything he does. He is never afraid to take on any task to assist younger, up-and-coming sports people, no matter what they are doing. His fantastic ability to recognise when help is needed and step in without hesitation, whether asked or not, makes him a well-respected and valued presence on and off the field. Congratulations Paddy!

ROADS OLD AND NEW

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—It was a privilege to host on 20 March 2025 a screening of the award-winning film, "Roads Old & New" in the Parliament House theatre. "Roads Old & New" is a compelling short film that spans five decades, exploring the nuanced experiences of those who've navigated migration, identity, and belonging. As we witnessed, the film poignantly juxtaposes the journeys of early settlers and recent arrivals, highlighting both the shared threads and the distinct aspects of their stories. Through intimate interviews and evocative visuals, it captured the resilience, community, and enduring spirit of those who have chosen to make Australia their home. The film's warm colour palette, chiaroscuro lighting, and culturally resonant sound design created an immersive and impactful experience, drawing us into the heart of each storyteller's journey. I extend my gratitude to Rajiv Chaudhri, President of the Community Foundation of North Western Sydney, for his dedication in bringing this important film to parliament. The screening served to spark meaningful dialogue and foster a deeper appreciation for the invaluable contributions of South Asian Australians. The impact of the film and the discussions that followed will, I hope, continue to resonate with us all.

IMESA ANNUAL IFTAR 2025

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—On 8 March 2025, I had the honour of attending the Indian Minority Education Society of Australia Inc. [IMESA] Annual Iftar Fundraising Event. IMESA is a registered not-for-profit organisation with ACNC accreditation and DGR endorsement for its charitable activities in India. The organisation is dedicated to improving educational opportunities for disadvantaged Muslim communities and other marginalised groups in India. Muslims in India, one of the most socio-economically disadvantaged communities, often face low educational attainment and struggle with basic needs. IMESA is working across multiple states in India, running a variety of projects aimed at lifting up these communities. These initiatives include the School Admission Campaign, School Retention Campaign, Evening Tutoring Classes, and Financial Incentives to support struggling families. The organisation's project, Taleemi Jamaat, is made up of a dedicated group of volunteers. These volunteers include retired educators, young professionals, senior students, and social workers, all committed to making a tangible difference in the lives of those in need. IMESA's efforts are an essential step toward fostering educational equality and empowering marginalised communities.

ELAINE NORLING

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Elaine Norling for her outstanding community advocacy. Elaine's dedication to protecting our environment, improving accessibility for seniors, and fighting for social justice is truly inspiring. Recently nominated for an NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award by Jocelyn Maughan OAM, Elaine's commitment to making the Central Coast a better place is well recognised and well deserved. From tirelessly advocating for a railing at the Terrigal Haven boat ramp to leading the charge for an all-accessible ocean pool, Elaine has shown remarkable determination to ensure that everyone, regardless of mobility, can enjoy our beautiful coastline. Her passion for advocacy started at just eight years old and has continued through decades of activism—marching for peace, championing women's rights, and enriching lives as an art teacher and therapist. Elaine has been a cornerstone of Copacabana, leading community efforts, preserving local history, and standing up for our environment. Elaine, on behalf of the community, thank you for your unwavering dedication. Your tireless work embodies the spirit of the Central Coast, and we are incredibly grateful for all that you do.

RAY MOORE

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—It is an absolute privilege to acknowledge and celebrate the incredible dedication of Ray Moore from Terrigal Surf Club. Ray was recently nominated for an NSW Seniors Local Achievement Award by club President Richard Green—a well-deserved recognition. Seniors play a vital role in our community as volunteers, carers, and role models, helping to create a diverse, inspiring, and active region. Programs like these highlight their invaluable contributions, challenge ageism, and empower seniors to continue making a difference. Ray has been instrumental in leading the way for the 2025 Terrigal Ocean Swim. Following a highly successful 2024 event, the committee has seen changes, and Ray has stepped up to ensure its continued success. His outstanding communication, patience, and practical approach have been deeply appreciated by the Board and will undoubtedly contribute to a fantastic 2025 Ocean Swim and Daffodil Dip. On behalf of the community, I extend our deepest gratitude to Ray for his dedication and leadership. To all our volunteers, thank you for your ongoing service. Your contributions exemplify the community spirit that makes the Central Coast such a wonderful place to live.

HOLI FESTIVAL OF COLOURS

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)—I recently had the pleasure to experience a wonderful a fantastic community event, the Holi Festival of Colours at the Gosford Waterfront. This vibrant celebration, organised by

the Hindu Temple in Central Coast, was a wonderful opportunity for people of all backgrounds to come together in the true spirit of unity, joy, and renewal. Holi, a cherished Hindu festival, marks the arrival of spring, the triumph of good over evil, and the beauty of new beginnings. The day was filled with colour, music, dance, and traditional food, creating an atmosphere of pure joy and togetherness. Watching our community embrace this tradition—throwing colourful powder (gulal), dancing to lively beats, and sharing laughter—was truly inspiring. This annual event plays a vital role in raising awareness about Hindu culture in Australia and strengthening the bonds within our diverse community. Importantly, it also supports the fundraising efforts for the Hindu Temple in the Central Coast, helping to establish a cultural and spiritual space for future generations. Thank you to the Hindu Temple Central Coast for inviting me and everyone who attended, participated, and supported this incredible event. I look forward next year's celebration!

RABI NIMROD SIMONO SCHOLARSHIP

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Sunday 2nd March, our proud Assyrian-Australian community celebrated the 38th Rabi Nimrod Simono Scholarship Presentation, with a special event at Eden Venues, Edensor Park. Assyrian-Australians are an essential part of our diverse Western Sydney community, particularly in our local Electorate of Prospect. More than 75 percent of Australia's 60,000 Assyrians live in Western Sydney, making an incredible contribution to our modern Australia through their shared values, faith and harmony. Rabi Nimrod Simono, a distinguished Assyrian scholar from Iran and one of the giants of Assyrian literature in the twentieth century, came to Australia in 1985. Each year, a cohort of HSC Graduates have been awarded the prestigious scholarship to provide financial assistance as they embark on their tertiary studies. The scholarship provides encouragement for these young academics to prosper and achieve excellence in their chosen fields of study, while also developing community involvement and a sense of belonging to the Assyrian community for these young recipients. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to Dr Ben Daoud, President, Assyrian Australian Association, Vanessa Wishalim, Chairperson, Rabi Nimrod Simono Scholarship Committee, and to all our amazing Assyrian-Australian community on another wonderful celebration of Assyrian academic excellence and cultural inheritance.

GIDGET FOUNDATION

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 7th February 2025, I was pleased to meet representatives from the Gidget Foundation at my Electorate Office. Established in 2001, Gidget Foundation is the leading national not-for-profit service provider that supports emotional wellbeing of expectant and new parents during the perinatal period - conception to one year post birth. Perinatal depression and anxiety affects one in five new mums, and one in ten new dads. Around 100,000 Australian parents are impacted each year, with nearly 50% of new parents experiencing adjustment disorders. Gidget Foundation offers critical care, through early intervention and treatment programs. Beginning as a small group of friends trying to make a difference, whilst navigating their own grief, Gidget Foundation has become an expansive organisation, changing the conversation around perinatal mental health. Gidget Foundation's steeped care model includes Gidget House, which offers bulk-billed individual psychological consultations. A team of over 170 clinicians deliver specialist perinatal mental health treatment across 32 Gidget House locations. Thank you to Arabella Gibson, CEO, and Zoe Callister-Hakewill, Advocacy and Public Policy Manager for the important care you provide our community. I look forward to working further with you both, to extend these supports to new parents in the Prospect Electorate.

FAIRFIELD POLICE AREA COMMAND

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 12 March 2025, I was pleased to honour our serving police officers at the NSW Police Force Fairfield Police Area Command Medals and Awards Ceremony. As one of four Police Area Commands that serve our Prospect Electorate community, Fairfield PAC covers our local suburbs of Fairfield, Fairfield West, Prairiewood, Smithfield and Wetherill Park. Among the many award recipients were Sergeant Davies, Lead Senior Constable Easson and Senior Constable Russell who all received the National Service Medal and National Medal. I also congratulate Sergeant McLean, NSW Police Medal – 35 Year Clasp, while Detective Senior Constable Bow, Senior Constable Chandra and Senior Constable Khan received the NSW Police Medal – 15 Year Clasp. Congratulations to Former Leading Senior Constable Meechan who received both the National Emergency Medal and the NSW Service Medal. I extend sincere congratulations to each award recipient, and thank all our brave officers and personnel in blue, for their courage and service. Thank you to Superintendent Craig Middleton AFM Commander Fairfield PAC and Assistant Commissioner Brett McFadden APM, Commander South West Metropolitan Region Commander, as well as all NSW Police Force sworn and unsworn officers who keep our vibrant Western Sydney community safe.

RALLY AT THE SYDNEY FISH MARKET

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I acknowledge the community advocacy of three groups, the Friends of Ultimo, Hands off Glebe and Pyrmont Action who came together recently to hold a rally at the Sydney

Fish Market, which is slated to be demolished and replaced with private housing when the new site opens. These groups have championed the need for public land to be used for public benefit. I was pleased to join their efforts and speak to those attending the rally about their vision for the site to become a place of community, supported with all the essential services that a growing suburb needs. Our community is at its best when we come together in pursuit of a common goal for all. I thank the organisers of the rally, Patricia and JP of the Friends of Ultimo, Denis from Hands off Glebe and Elizabeth from Pyrmont Action, who give so much of their time to the cause of making our community a better place to live. I thank all the attendees and speakers who made this event such a success.

STOP CRUISE SHIP POLLUTION

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I would like to acknowledge the staunch community advocacy of the members of Stop Cruise Ship Pollution, whose hard work has helped bring to the attention of this place the significant environmental and health issues associated with cruise ship pollution. It was so important that members of Stop Cruise Ship Pollution were able to join the parliamentary gallery to watch the recent debate about Shore Power in White Bay, a goal that they have fought for many years to realise. Though we didn't get the resolution we wanted on the day, I know that the members of Stop Cruise Ship Pollution will continue in their efforts for the good of our community, and I will support them all the way. I thank Kate Horrobin, Chrissie Tucker, Kevin Crawshaw and Loretta Picone for taking the time to watch the parliamentary debate. I also thank David Gamble, Les Johnston, Cornelius and Leisja van der Weyden, Mark Collier and Keith Stallard for their valued contributions to Stop Cruise Ship Pollution. You are all wonderful examples of the strength of our community.

NEWROZ CELEBRATION

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I would like to bring to the attention of the house the Newroz celebration hosted on behalf of the Kurdish Community in the Parliament of New South Wales. In Kurdish culture, Newroz is a celebration of the arrival of the new year. It is a time for gathering with family, enjoying music and games and sharing food with one another. I was very honoured to be able to host the Federation of the Democratic Kurdish Society Australia to mark this important event with them, an opportunity which I enjoyed immensely. I would like to thank Baran Sogut of the Federation of the Democratic Kurdish Society Australia for his role in the event as well as Councillor Ismet Tastan, and extend those thanks to all the volunteers of the Federation whose participation made this event so special. Thanks also to each of the attendees including Members of the NSW Parliament, Inner West Councillors and members of Sydney's Kurdish community. I wish all who celebrate a very happy Newroz and hope to be able to join you in celebration again.

CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT LEADERS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I congratulate the 2025 student leadership team of Castle Hill High School. These exceptional young leaders will play a vital role in guiding and inspiring their peers throughout the year. I extend my best wishes to School Captains Elyssa Tedesco and William Go, Sports Captains Eden Capvilla and Kensyn Hardey, CAPA Captains Hendrix Douglas and Kiara Sandford and to the entire school leadership team. I commend the dedication, leadership, and commitment to their school community. I also acknowledge that Elyssa and William visited Parliament last week as part of the Secondary Student Leadership Program. This unique opportunity allowed them to engage with community leaders, gain insights into parliamentary processes, and develop their leadership skills further. Their participation reflects their enthusiasm and commitment to serving their school and community, which was a pleasure to engage with. Castle Hill High School continues to nurture outstanding young leaders, and I commend Principal Georgina Fleming, the staff, and the entire school community for their ongoing dedication to their students. I have no doubt that these students will make a lasting impact, and I look forward to seeing all they achieve in 2025.

PRIYANKA ABAYAKOON, SPEAK YOUR TRUTH WITH PRI - ALIVE 90.5

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I acknowledge Priyanka Abayakoon who is the host of the 'Speak your truth with Pri' broadcast on local community radio, Alive 90.5. About eighteen months ago Pri arrived at Alive 90.5 to speak on one of the shows. Very soon thereafter Pri was co-hosting, and soon thereafter Pri was 'given her wings' to host her own lifestyle show. The show gives local heroes an opportunity to chat about various topics of mental and physical health, environment, life topics and stories of migrant success. Pri has received the Award for Best Lifestyle Show for the last two years. Local radio is the heartbeat of our community, giving a voice to the people, stories, and issues that matter most. It connects listeners with local news, events, and conversations that might otherwise go unheard. The programs broadcast by the Alive 90.5 team, whether broadcast from the station premises or outdoor broadcast locations, fosters a sense of community belonging which binds our community together. I recognise and commend Pri and all the Alive 90.5 presenters for service to our community through community radio programs. Thank you Alive 90.5.

BAULKHAM HILLS LIONS CLUB, ST GABRIELS SCHOOL CASTLE HILL

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I commend the Baulkham Hills Lions Club for organising the donation of plants to St Gabriel's School, Castle Hill. The Macquarie Shopping Centre, for Christmas 2024, unveiled a one of kind indoor secret garden with native plants and lots of activities for children. The secret garden, which included plants and trees was delivered by Chas Clarkson in collaboration with Outhouse Design, Outside Space and Alpine Nurseries. After Christmas, Macquarie Shopping Centre generously donated plants and trees, valued at approximately \$80,000, with most being donated to St. Gabriel's School Castle Hill. I recognise the Baulkham Hills Lions Club, in particular Trent Richmond and Sue Coppsin for arranging the generous donation to St Gabriel's School. On 27 December 2024 with Mayor Michelle Byrne, Deputy Mayor Frank De Masi and Councillors Mitchell Blue, Samuel Uno, Jacob Jackson, and Allan Haselden and many others, we loaded the plants and trees onto a truck for delivery. A morning tea was held at St. Gabriel's on 26 February 2025 to thank those involved. I recognise and acknowledge Macquarie Centre and to everyone involved for giving up time to ensure St. Gabriel's School has a wonderful sensory garden.

ISABEL SMITH

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Isabel Smith has made her community proud by representing Bathurst at the Zone 6 Young Woman Ambassador Finals and being selected as a finalist for The Land Sydney Royal AgShows NSW Young Woman Competition. Isabel is a Silviculture Supervisor for the Forestry Corporation of NSW in Bathurst, overseeing the aerial herbicide operations across the district. Committed to the future of forestry, firefighting, and sustainable land management, Isabel is passionate about empowering the next generation of rural leaders, particularly young women in agriculture. As a volunteer mentor for the 2025 & 2026 Rotary Youth Leadership Awards, she champions peer-led initiatives that build confidence and skills among emerging professionals in regional communities. Isabel is a devoted supporter of local agricultural shows, seeing them as vital gatherings that celebrate the innovation, resilience, and the accomplishments of rural communities. Since being named 2024 Royal Bathurst Show Young Woman Ambassador, Isabel has excelled at representing her community with pride and has become a role model for young girls across NSW. I congratulate Isabel on this fantastic achievement and wish her all the best in the final stage of the competition in April.

PETER NUGENT

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—Mr Peter Nugent has been involved in harness racing since 1975 and has always had a vision for how he could help take the industry to new heights. A former school principal Peter has continued to focus on his passion of horse breeding and ownership as well as serving on many harness racing club committees across the state. Peter was elected to the Harness Racing NSW Board on 2016, he served two successful terms before stepping down in February of this year. Some of Peter's successes during his time on the board include establishing a rehoming company to ensure retired pacers and trotters are well cared for, boosting memberships, overseeing an increase in prizemoney and improved integrity of the entire industry. The harness racing community owes a lot to the long-serving, dedicated individuals like Peter who have given up a lot of personal time with family and friends to attend races, meetings and have continuously worked hard to forge a future for harness racing. I thank Peter for his services to the industry.

OBERON AND DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB

Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)—This statement is to acknowledge the efforts and achievements of the Oberon and District Garden Club in organising and hosting the Autumn Colour Garden Showcase. This community event allowed visitors and locals into rarely opened gardens in the Oberon region. Not only was this a great tourism opportunity for Oberon and surrounds but also gave locals a chance to celebrate the beautiful countryside they live in and the hard work and dedication of fellow gardeners in the area. The Gardens on display included: 1 Bellenden; Casper's Cloud; Meant To Be; Plateau Garden; St Clements; Beyond Avalon; Foley's; Swatchfield. The high country puts on a spectacular colour show this time of year and this event was the perfect showcase of sprawling country estates and in town beauties. Congratulations to all members of the garden club, the organising committee and the garden owners who opened up their homes.

CHATSWOOD RANGERS OPEN DAY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I recognise the Chatswood Rangers for their dedication to fostering community spirit and active participation in sport. Their recent Open Day on 15 February was a fantastic event, bringing together players, families and supporters to celebrate the club and welcome new members. The Chatswood Rangers have a long-standing history of providing opportunities for people of all ages to engage in football, netball, and basketball. The Open Day was a great chance for the community to connect, learn more about the club, and encourage more people to get involved in local sport. A special thanks to the volunteers, coaches, and committee members who worked tirelessly to make the event a success. Their commitment to

supporting grassroots sport ensures that Chatswood Rangers continues to thrive and provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for players of all skill levels. I congratulate the club on another successful event and look forward to seeing their continued growth in the local community.

LITTLE KICKERS – WILLOUGHBY UNITING CHURCH

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I recognise Little Kickers at Willoughby Uniting Church for their outstanding contribution to early childhood sports development. This specialised program provides young children, from 18 months to 8 years old, with an engaging and supportive introduction to soccer. Through structured, age-appropriate classes, Coaches Jenna, Dom, and Charlie foster not only fundamental soccer skills but also teamwork, confidence, and a lifelong love for physical activity. Their dedication ensures that children develop coordination and sportsmanship in a fun and inclusive environment. Programs like Little Kickers play a vital role in promoting active lifestyles from an early age, and it is fantastic to see local initiatives creating opportunities for young children to build their skills and confidence. I commend Little Kickers Willoughby for their commitment to grassroots sport and thank the coaches and organisers for their efforts in supporting young players in our community.

ANTHONY PARISSIS AND SOPHIE ZHU

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—I acknowledge Anthony Parissis from St Pius X College and Sophie Zhu from North Sydney Girls High School for their contribution during work experience in the Willoughby Electorate Office. Their enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment to learning have been greatly appreciated. Internships provide young people with invaluable experience in understanding the workings of government and public service. Anthony and Sophie demonstrated strong initiative and a keen interest in engaging with the local community and policy matters. Their willingness to contribute to research, communications, and day-to-day tasks has been impressive. I thank Anthony and Sophie for their hard work and dedication. It is always encouraging to see young people take an active interest in public service, and I wish them both every success in their future endeavours.

BATYR

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield)—I would like to acknowledge the vital work of batyr, a youth-focused mental health organisation that is making a profound impact on the lives of young Australians. With mental health challenges on the rise, particularly among young people, batyr provides a crucial service—creating a safe space where young people can speak openly about their experiences and seek support without stigma. The organisation's unique "lived experience" approach is at the heart of its success. By training and empowering young people to share their personal journeys with mental health, batyr fosters connection, understanding and early intervention. This peer-led model is breaking down barriers, encouraging help-seeking and ensuring that no young person feels alone in their struggles. At a time when mental health issues among young Australians are more pressing than ever, organisations like batyr remind us of the power of storytelling, community and support. Their work is changing lives, and they deserve our deepest recognition and gratitude.

WARREN HANDLEY

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—I'd like to recognise the incredible dedication of Warren Handley, who celebrated his 50th anniversary as volunteer with Newcastle Legacy earlier this month. Newcastle Legacy provides invaluable support to the families of seriously injured or deceased veterans, assisting around 48,000 widow(er)s, children, and dependants with a disability. Following his service in the Vietnam War, Warren joined Newcastle Legacy to support families going through similar situations. Since then, Warren has worked tirelessly alongside staff as a 'Legatee' volunteer for the last five decades and has become a beloved friend to many in the community. Whether it's supporting Department of Veterans' Affairs claims or navigating superannuation and education costs, Warren has made a real impact to many families. Warren's dedication to helping others shows true Novocastrian spirit, and I thank him for his commitment to our community.

7NEWS YOUNG ACHIEVER AWARDS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)—I'd like to acknowledge local entrepreneurs Liv Lorenz, Myla Tucker, Matilda Constable-Webb and Nash Henshaw for their selection as finalists for the prestigious 7NEWS Young Achiever 2025 Awards in NSW and the Act. At only 15 years of age, Liv and Myla are Australia's youngest entrepreneurs, and have empowered hundreds of tweens to make sustainable fashion choices through their not-for-profit organisation, Cinnamon Cove. Matilda has played a huge role in ensuring vulnerable Novocastrians have stronger policy protections and resources. In addition to contributing to the Modern Slavery Act review, Matilda has authored a children's book to support young readers in setting boundaries and recognising abuse. Finally, Nash has been a key player in shaping the Hunter as a premier shopping destination. At 16, Nash founded his own business, The Nash & Dash Markets, and made history at 17 as Australia's youngest executive. These four Novocastrians

have displayed true Novocastrian spirit through their leadership and dedication to helping others. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition.

JENNIE DUDGEON

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge and thank Jennie Dudgeon for her contribution to the City of Canada Bay Business Breakfast as a Member of the Panel Discussion held on 20 March 2025. The Business Breakfast and Panel Discussion, hosted by the local Chambers of Commerce in partnership with the City of Canada Bay Council was an opportunity for local businesses to come together and provide insights and experiences on the current business environment. Jennie is a Director, Franchisee and Operations Manager of Vision Personal Training in Drummoyne, Five Dock and Leichhardt. Under her leadership, these Vision branches value and support their clients along their fitness journey offering a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. Jennie shared her story and her motivations for starting her business. She was first a client of Vision, before deciding to take a leap of faith and become a franchisee. Jennie became a working single mum who has raised a lovely family while mentoring her staff, helping people lead healthy lives and growing her business. On behalf of the local business community, I sincerely thank Jennie for her engaging insights and wish her all the best in the future.

PITTWATER TIGERS' KICKABILITY PROGRAM

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—In 2024, the Pittwater Tigers Junior AFL Club initiated the first Kickability Program on the Northern Beaches. Kickability is an all ability modified AFL program that supports people living with a disability to join in on the fun. The Tigers have also advocated successfully for no upper player age limit, which has allowed those over eighteen to participate. The program's success is credited to the Pittwater Tigers junior players and their coaches, who assist the Kickability players in garnering confidence and learning new skills. The program is also supported by AFL Kids Coaches, and four disability sports specialists. It is now the largest Kickability program in NSW. Volunteers that assisted the program in 2024 were recognised by winning an AFL NSW and ACT Volunteer of the Year Award. The Tigers should be immensely proud of the program they have developed. The main Pittwater Tigers Junior AFL Club volunteers assisting to deliver the program are: Chris Davison, Skye Rose, Craig Nicholas, Jessica Robertson, Jemima Davison, Kurtley Rose, Archer Gertler, Fred Tickle, Miles Nicholas, Juliette Nicholas, Ashton Crosby; Tom O'Leary from AFL Kids, Pam Platt, Jamoia Bennett, Sabine Blakeman, Michelle Sym, Scott Lockhart.

SHARE THE SPARK

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—I'd like to highlight the contributions that Share the Spark have provided to our youth community in Pittwater and across the Northern Beaches. Share the Spark are a non-profit organisation dedicated to youth intervention, stress alleviation, vocational development, and suicide prevention. Share the Spark was founded over 8 years ago and provides vocational skills through face-to-face mentoring as well as a safe space for youth in the community. This mentoring program helps to strengthen links across our community, reduce the stigma associated with some professions, and improve the mental health of our children. Share the Spark believe in the passion of our community's children and have provided countless hours of support. Investing the time and energy into our children allows them to fully engage with life again or reignite their 'spark' as the organisation put it. I commend Share the Spark on their commitment to encouraging our children in Pittwater and would like to thank them for their on-going work.

CONSTANCE ALOE

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge Constance Aloe for her contribution to the City of Canada Bay Business Breakfast as a Member of the Panel Discussion held on 20 March 2025. The Business Breakfast and Panel Discussion, hosted by our local Chambers of Commerce in partnership Council was an opportunity for local businesses to come together to discuss and share experiences about business. Constance is the Founder and Director of Distinctive People, her own Human Resources Consultancy in North Strathfield. With more than 20 years of experience leading human resources management, Constance is a leader and innovator in the industry providing specialised and holistic HR advice and leadership coaching for business. Hearing Constance's contributions to the discussion, it was so evident that she is dedicated and passionate about her work, and about transforming the way HR is perceived by business owners and managers. She shared authentic insights and genuine tips for businesses and small business owners. She was inspiring when she shared her own experience in business, encouraging everyone in the room to have confidence in themselves and to "have only a Plan A". I sincerely thank Constance for her time and wish her all the best in the future.

JOHN MILHAM

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—John Milham built a successful corporate career while raising a family with his wife, Glenn and their three children. In 2007, his life changed dramatically when he tragically lost

his wife Glenn to cancer. John showed incredible resilience during this time and as part of his recovery journey he chose to leave the corporate world to focus on giving back to others. John is a passionate advocate for men's mental health and suicide prevention. Drawing on his personal experience, he supports numerous organisations, including Kintsugi Heroes Proveda, Parents Beyond Breakup, Mentoring Men and Standby Support After Suicide. Closer to Pittwater, John supports local groups including Northern Beaches Cares and the Northern Beaches Men's Wellbeing Collective. John's work focuses on providing strategic and operational guidance for suicide prevention initiatives, addressing men's mental distress, and reshaping the role of masculinity to promote emotional well-being. I sincerely thank John for his continued and invaluable contributions to our community. His efforts are making a significant difference in the lives of those at risk, and we are all the better for it.

TEKIYAH FISHTANK

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)—I would like to congratulate Tekiyah from Rose Bay Secondary School for being a finalist in the 2025 Fishtank Competition. Fuelled by a love for music and for the environment, TideTone guitars is an innovative solution – turning ocean plastic waste into musical instruments. Tekiyah says at current rates, plastic is expected to outweigh all the fish in the sea by 2050. There is an estimated 75 to 199 million tons of plastic waste currently in our oceans, with a further 33 billion pounds of plastic entering the marine environment every single year. Tekiyah's idea involved taking ocean plastics, compressing and turning them into full functional electric guitars. I congratulate Tekiyah on his imagination, ingenuity, and passion to solve one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time.

QUEENSLIFF BOARDRIDERS CLUB CLEANS UP AT REGIONAL TITLES

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Queenscliff Boardriders Club for their outstanding performance at the Surfing New South Wales Regional Titles held at Curl Curl beach in my electorate of Manly. The weekend was a true testament to the talent of the club, with 21 surfers competing, five reaching the finals, and seven securing spots in the State Titles. A special mention goes to QBC's two champions, Valentina Hudson, who claimed the U12 Girls title, and Gracie Bishop, who was crowned U16 Girls champion. I also congratulate runners-up, Hunter Sutcliffe, in the U16 Boys category, and Eloise Taylor, in the U18 Girls category. Additionally, Jessie Silver's impressive 4th place finish in the U16 Girls category deserves a shout out, and I acknowledge Benson Wineera, Benny Marshall, and Luke Silver, who have all earned a place in the State team. Congratulations again to the club and all involved on such a fantastic result.

CORNSTARS FRITTER CO

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, if there's one thing Manly locals take seriously, it's finding a new go-to food spot. And when it comes to corn fritters, there's only one name you need to know: Cornstars Fritter Co. These fritter fanatics have just opened their brand-new café in Brookvale, right in the heart of the Manly Electorate, and they are well and truly putting the humble corn fritter on the map. Founded by Tamar - better known as The Kernel - Cornstars first won over market-goers back in 2012 at the Frenchs Forest Organic Food Markets. Now, after more than 20 years in the food industry and a continued commitment to using only the freshest, locally sourced ingredients, it is safe to say that Tamar, Sara, and the team have truly perfected the art of the fritter. As they embark on this exciting new chapter with their café now up and running, I wish them every success. So whether you're stocking up on their take-home packs or grabbing a hot serve straight from the source, I encourage everyone in this Place to visit Cornstars in Brookvale and experience that rarest of gems - the perfect fritter.

SAMANTHA BATES

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Newcastle born cricketer, 32-year-old Samantha ("Sam") Lee Bates has for fifteen years, across four states, travelled extensively in search of a Women's National Cricket League [WNCL] title. In 2024/25, she has one at last. She took the winning wicket in the NSW (215) win over Queensland (194) after a close contest at Allan Border Field on Sunday 2 March. Sam finished with 2- 41 from 9.5 overs and made 8 runs in an important partnership batting at No.11. Sam's walkout song at the start of her Sydney Thunder club games is "Sitting on top of the World" by Delta Goodrem. Sam bowls left-arm orthodox spin, though she started out as a fast bowler. She toured Dubai in 2015 with the Shooting Stars and, later in the year, claimed the WBBL's first ever wicket – that of Alyssa Healy. A graduate of the Australian Paramedical College [APC], Sam has played stints with Tasmania and the ACT. Sam describes herself as awkward, lanky and unorganised and she lives by the quote: "It's hard to beat a person who never gives up". Congratulations, Sam. Well done. Never give up!

WALLSEND DISTRICT CRICKET CLUB CENTENARY

Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)—Wallsend District Cricket Club, one of the oldest sporting clubs in Newcastle, celebrated its centenary in March 2025 at a Wallsend Diggers event. At an event at Wallsend Diggers,

a Legends panel included Barry Barrett, a fiery opening bowler from 1960s, Steve Storey, Greg Geise and current 1st Grade Captain Jacob Montgomery. Gordon Geise is the oldest surviving member of the club, joining in 1959. A club "Team of the Century" was unveiled and a panel of legends from various eras shared their fondest Tigers memories. It was a time for reflection on their history and what the club represents to our Wallsend community and the broader Newcastle competition. Club President Peter Hanna, a member for 43 years, stressed the importance of history and tradition. Wallsend has won several club championships - particularly in its 1990s halcyon days - finals and minor premierships. The club strongly supports women's cricket and boasts representative players Jenny Wallace, Leah Poulton and Sarah Andrews. Wallsend has had a progressive cricket academy, an early club to use now-popular whiteboard sessions, psychology, strength and conditioning training. Happy 100th Tigers!

THE STEGGLES SHOP BERESFIELD

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—On Friday 17 January, responding to a suggestion by the Beresfield Tavern Bistro to do something to help people impacted by the violent storms, The Steggles Shop Beresfield generously donated 200 eggs that would go towards providing comforting breakfasts for around 260 people who were without power, food and phone service. The Steggles Shop chipped in 200 eggs, Tarro Quality Meats provided 17 kilograms of bacon and 60 eggs and the Beresfield Tavern Bistro team would provide the setting and prepare the breakfasts. All of these local businesses were on-board immediately with this idea because the people in need were generally loyal, local customers of all three businesses. These small but significant acts of kindness and generosity generally go unnoticed by the public, so it's important to make a fuss. Thank you to The Steggles Shop Beresfield for all that you do to help our community. It is much appreciated.

EPHING FUTURE LEADERS - THE KING'S SCHOOL

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I proudly acknowledge the future leaders within the Epping electorate, particularly James Napoli and Austin Leung from the King's School, who have been elected as School Captains for 2025 – the highest student accolades at their school. Being a School Captain requires responsibility. As representatives of The King's School, both James and Austin through their words and actions are asked to reflect the values of their school - Responsibility, Honesty, Humility, Integrity, Compassion, Excellence and Gratitude. James and Austin now represent an institution that is rich in heritage making it one of Australia's leading independent schools. I commend The King's School Captains James Napoli and Austin Leung for their commitment to their school community and wish them success in their academic pursuits. I also commend The King's School and Headmaster Tony George for facilitating such opportunities.

HSC ACHIEVERS - CUMBERLAND HIGH SCHOOL

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I proudly recognise Cumberland High School and Principal Luke Fulwood from my electorate in Epping for their outstanding performance in the 2024 NSW Higher School Certificate [HSC]. Cumberland High School has significantly improved its HSC results, with student performance increasing by 13% since 2017. Last year, more than 80% of students achieved Band 4, 5, or 6, up from just 58% in previous years. These outstanding results were rightfully highlighted against other schools across the State and were duly recognised. Mr Fulwood has credited his teachers who were key contributors in lifting students from the middle bands into bands 5 and 6, maintaining a syllabus-oriented focus and affording extra standalone lessons for students. Cumberland High School has earned its recognition for being among the top 2 and top 3 band HSC most improved schools in 2024. I commend Cumberland High School for their stellar improvements in the 2024 Higher School Certificate. I also commend Principal Luke Fulwood for his efforts in contributing to this great outcome.

ROWERS OF THE RIVERVIEW 2ND VIII

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I wish to pay tribute and congratulate the Rowers of the Riverview 2nd VIII, consisting of Jack Haire, William Erwin, Jack Ward, Alexander Forlico, Willem Van Rijswijk, Samuel O'Brien, Hamish Walker, Thomas McClintock, and Ryan McNulty. They produced their finest performance this season with a personal best time and a thrill of a Race at the Head of the River.

ROWERS OF THE RIVERVIEW 1ST IV

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I wish to pay tribute and congratulate the Rowers of the Riverview 1st IV, consisting of Max Burke, Xavier Donohue, Hugo Brown, Thomas Tancred, and James Stack. These young men should be proud of the work they did all season, it was on full display with their commendable performance at the Head of the River.

ROWERS OF THE RIVERVIEW 2ND IV

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I wish to pay tribute and congratulate the Rowers of the Riverview 2nd IV, winners of the AAGPS Allan Callaway Trophy, consisting of Brandon Sullivan, Joshua Delany, Banjo Metcalfe, Angus Nicol and coxed by Nicholas Culbert. A well-deserved victory after a thoroughly impressive season.

CARMEL RUGGERI

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge Carmel Ruggeri for her contribution to the City of Canada Bay Business Breakfast as a Member of the Panel Discussion held on 20 March 2025. The Business Breakfast and Panel Discussion, hosted by our local Chambers of Commerce in partnership Council was an opportunity for local businesses to come together to discuss and share experiences about business. Carmel Ruggeri has had an extremely successful career in hospitality and has opened and ran many successful restaurants and businesses over the years. Most recently in 2023, she successfully opened La Casa at Club Five Dock RSL, hosting functions, catering and a rooftop bar upstairs. This month, she has launched Dock & Co, a reinvigorated dining experience downstairs at the Club. I am sure it will be supported and loved by the community. Carmel is also the Founder and Director of Sicilian Food Tours, an Sicilian tourism business. Carmel puts her heart and soul into everything she does. She is authentic and genuine and well respected by our community. I sincerely thank Carmel for her contribution to our community and wish her all the best in the future.

TURBANS 4 AUSTRALIA SERVICE IN CYCLONE ALFRED

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Turbans 4 Australia have done it again. In the wake of Cyclone Alfred, Turbans 4 Australia headed North from their base in Clyde in the Parramatta Electorate to provide food for those impacted by the severe weather as well as to the volunteers. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Turbans 4 Australia for their tireless efforts in providing 1700 free meals to the residents of the Redlands Coast islands. Their service has been nothing short of extraordinary. In times of crisis, it is the generosity of organisations like Turbans 4 Australia that truly make a difference. They prepared nourishing lentils and freshly cooked rice meals that provided brought comfort and warmth to those who needed it most. Their partnership with local authorities, including meeting with Quandamooka Elders to ensure that meals reached those in need, highlights the deep sense of respect and care they have for the people they serve. On behalf of the Parramatta Electorate, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to founder Amar Singh and his incredible team for their exceptional contribution to the recovery efforts.

LUNAR NEW YEAR AT NAN TIEN BUDDHIST TEMPLE

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—I celebrated this Lunar New Year with the members of the Nan Tien Buddhist Temple. The beginning of the Year of the Snake was marked with a wonderful celebration of cultural diversity and community harmony and acknowledgement of this year's theme "Keep going; the future is bright" inviting us to embrace hope and a brighter future together. The celebration was brought-to life with traditional performances, including a Lion Dance which included participation by the Buddha's Light International Association Scout Group. It was great to see these Scouts engaging with their creativity to help create such a vibrant atmosphere. A personal highlight of the celebration was the honour of banging the gong and lighting the Buddha, symbolic acts of peace and prosperity for the year ahead. The Temple's commitment to preserving cultural traditions and simultaneously embracing diversity strengthens and enriches our city in countless ways. I would also like to thank Venerable Master Hsing Yun, Daniel Wu, President of the Buddha's Light International Association Sydney and Florence Yuen for hosting me at this beautiful event and allowing me the opportunity to be part of such an uplifting celebration.

PARRAMATTA WOMEN'S GRADE CRICKET CLUB

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—Congratulations Parramatta Women's Grade Cricket Club on their incredible season. In the 2024/25 McDonald's Women's Premier Cricket Club Championships, Sydney claimed the Ann Mitchell Shield however, despite the intense competition, Parramatta finished in a strong position of 4th place overall with 730 points, a testament to the club's consistently strong performance throughout the season. This achievement was due to the hard work and dedication of all the teams with success across the Grades. Parramatta Women's second grade team saw them reach the final against UTS North Sydney, however they were defeated by nine-wickets. Parramatta proudly claimed their maiden third grade title with a 30 run win over St George-Sutherland. Congratulations to all the players - Zali Lavender, Nicole Knox, Jorja Mizzi, Chaitra Madala, Nikitha Jagadeesh, Isabella Pace, Varshaa Elango, Vrusti Valani, Alicia Welsh, Georgie Telfer, Isabella Tesoriero and Niharika Gupta as well as coach Ben Tesoriero. I recognise the efforts of everyone involved in the Club especially the countless volunteer hours of coaches, Secretary Deb Pooley and President Scott Reibelt. This

season has been an incredible one for the club, and you should all be immensely proud of what you've achieved.
Go Parramatta !
