

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Wednesday 7 May 2025

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

The Speaker read the prayer and acknowledgement of country.

Bills

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2025

Returned

The SPEAKER: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning the bill with an amendment. I order that consideration of the Legislative Council's amendment be set down as an order of the day for a later hour of the sitting.

[Notices of motions given.]

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS BILL 2025

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from 19 March 2025.

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (10:20): I am pleased to support the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. It is an interesting bill that the Government is putting forward, but is not a new concept. In many countries, and in many parts of Australia, arrangements are in place that are similar to those that will be enabled by the bill. The bill will give more certainty to businesses and communities that intend to undertake this sort of initiative. That is an important part of a process that this Government will put in place. As we have seen consistently from the Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and other Ministers in this place, this Government is committed to ensuring that our communities in all parts of New South Wales are able to offer lively and interesting activities for their citizens to get involved in—activities that encourage people to get outside and enjoy local businesses and the great climate that we have in many of our areas.

The bill is an important piece of legislation that will establish a dedicated legislative framework for the provision of community improvement districts [CIDs]. It will be the first of its kind in the State and, indeed, in Australia. The bill provides an unprecedented opportunity for local businesses, business landowners and communities to partner with the Government and councils to develop solutions that help shape future local trading environments and breathe new life into local neighbourhood spaces across the State. A CID is a model of urban governance that empowers a group of local businesses to elect to form an entity. This entity then develops a proposal to provide services, activities and projects within a defined geographic area. The proposal is voted on by relevant stakeholders and, if successful, a levy can be raised to fund the proposal.

Some examples of CID services, activities and projects could include non-physical interventions such as district branding, transaction data collection and joint strategic planning, as well as physical interventions such as events and programming, public art and beautification projects, improved public amenity, and security and safety measures. Clearly, a range of projects can be undertaken by community improvement districts. They provide a great opportunity for local businesses to take the lead in activating their local areas by working in partnership with business landowners, communities and councils to deliver improved place-based outcomes for the community while also enhancing the local trading environment and encouraging economic growth.

This sorts of districts have existed internationally for some time. They are now commonplace in North America, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. We also see similar initiatives in some other States. One example drawn to my attention was the Sydney Road Brunswick Association in Melbourne. I am familiar with it because my son lives nearby, and I have been to its festival. It offers a range of events and activities to promote the whole retail strip. From what I could see, it was very successful and brought together traders in the area. The event was arranged through the local council, which collected a special levy via council rates on over 500 businesses in the Sydney Road Brunswick retail strip. A business plan was developed to conduct promotional activities, including

the Sydney Road Festival, which is a very impressive event where the road is closed to allow for a range of activities along that strip. That is the sort of thing we have seen happen in other States.

The bill will enable us to undertake similar activities in New South Wales and do so in a way that will give more certainty about how to organise them, as well as how to conduct voting to see whether communities and businesses actually want to participate, and then to apply the levy that might come with it. It is a great opportunity for areas to undertake activities and obviously a number of areas are undertaking activities like this at the moment. One example that is the product of the business community working together in the Monaro electorate is the fabulous Lake Light Sculpture event on Lake Jindabyne. The event returned to the shores of Lake Jindabyne in 2025 after an absence of a few years. I congratulate the organisers, businesses and sponsors who were involved in putting the event back on. Over the years, that event has been a huge attraction for people to come to Jindabyne at Easter, which used to be a slow time in the mountains. However, because of this event and mountain biking, it is now a busy time.

The feedback I received about the event was that there was barely a car park to be found in Jindabyne. There was a huge number of visitors to the area so, in this case, the lack of car parking was a good outcome. It was a great experience for the community, and drew thousands of visitors to the area to see the wonderful sculptures on the shores of beautiful Lake Jindabyne. This event had great support from local businesses, and is an example of the sort of thing that perhaps the CID bill could help to facilitate in the future with more formal arrangements. I note that the Jindabyne Lake Light Sculpture event had been absent for several years due to the pandemic and the impacts of the lake being too full—unusual in Jindabyne—and flowing into the park and some of the areas where the sculpture event had previously taken place. It was great to see the return of this event, and I congratulate everyone involved. It was a great pleasure to be one of the small sponsors of the event as the local member.

Returning to the bill, we have a number of trials of community improvement districts activities in New South Wales, and we would like to see that experience shared around the State to enable other areas to also undertake this sort of activity. Improvement-like districts are currently difficult to establish in New South Wales. Where they have been set up—such as the business improvement associations in Newcastle or the CBD corporations in Penrith and St Marys—they are typically funded through special rates, sometimes known as town improvement levies, under the Local Government Act 1993. Alternatively, they might also be funded using New South Wales Government or local council grants, or by voluntary business membership fees. The bill offers an alternative to those approaches by developing a dedicated legislative framework that addresses the unique nature of the CIDs model, designed specifically for New South Wales.

The legislation responds to concerns that the current process is neither quick nor easy. It creates a framework that enables this to happen. As I mentioned earlier, CID proposals will be subject to a ballot to ensure there is majority support. A ballot will be held once a CID proposal has been fully developed. This is a critical requirement of the bill to ensure the transparency of the ballot. For a proposal to pass the ballot, at least 25 per cent of the business landowners and 25 per cent of the businesses within a CID boundary need to vote—acknowledging that the premise owners and business operators are not necessarily the same people. To pass the ballot, more than 50 per cent of business landowners and more than two-thirds of businesses need to vote in favour of the proposal. This will ensure that we have strong support for the proposals. The ballot can be administered by an independent third-party provider or the NSW Electoral Commissioner to provide trust and confidence in the process.

Approvals granted to CIDs after a successful ballot will expire after five years, or at such a time frame as set by the regulations. The CID levy that this might establish would then be administered by Transport for NSW as the CID authority to impose a levy on approved CIDs. There are mechanisms in the bill for hardship provisions, which are very important, but the fundamental premise of the bill is to try to set up a program that gives some certainty and allows some more of these projects to continue. A pilot program has been in place, and nine projects are currently being run under that. One that struck my interest was the Inner West Ale Trail, but there are many others. I am sure that they will be part of many successful future opportunities for local communities.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (10:30): I rise to lead for the Opposition in the debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. I state at the outset that the Opposition will be supporting this bill. We do have a number of concerns, and I want to foreshadow some amendments that will come in due course, but the overall thrust of the bill is something we are pleased to support. I want to acknowledge, importantly, the work of the Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, John Graham, and his office in briefing the Opposition on the legislation. I also want to acknowledge, importantly, the earlier work of our former colleague the Hon. Rob Stokes for his initiative and leadership in this space years ago. He is someone who continues to have an interest in it, as well.

From our point of view, yes, we support the bill, but there are still challenges with respect to it, both in terms of its policy and also the organisation within which it is proposed to sit. Let's deal with policy first. Reform

is never easy, and building more vibrant communities is a worthy cause and obviously a bipartisan aspiration. Legislating community improvement districts [CIDs] can provide an opportunity for local communities to build place-based partnerships between government, councils, businesses and business landowners to improve an area. As the Minister has outlined, the central aim of these partnerships is to enhance public spaces, stimulate local economies and support community building.

Through the activation of public spaces via the community improvement district framework, there could be many potential positive effects, including stimulating local economies and encouraging job creation. Additionally, it may enhance local neighbourhoods and hopefully attract visitation and facilitate vibrant community interactions. The Opposition notes that the advocates for the policy include Business NSW, Business Sydney and the Committee for Sydney. There is no doubt that new ideas to stimulate growth are welcome, and indeed, to stimulate a more active and engaged city. That is a positive initiative.

We understand businesses that are interested in the CID framework include ICC Sydney, Lendlease, Markham, Mirvac, Sydney Fish Markets, GPT Group, The Star, UTS, Accor, Business Sydney, Crown and Powerhouse, among others. We note there is a geographical spread of CID trials across the State, including in the regions and throughout our great city. Any reform to improve vibrancy must have a statewide focus, and the CID trials so far appear to be achieving that. We also note the framework for approval from local businesses and landowners, which includes a two-thirds majority for businesses within a prescribed zone and a majority of landowners. I want to pause and just note that I think a previous proposal for this in years gone by was at a 50 per cent threshold, and it is positive and welcome that it has now gone to two-thirds to demonstrate a more substantial majority.

We have been listening carefully and engaging carefully, and continue to, on the views, perspectives and, indeed, concerns that the small business community has in relation to this bill. While the Government promotes this bill as a tool for revitalisation, we must ensure that it does not, inadvertently or otherwise, penalise the very businesses it seeks to empower. Our position is clear: No small business should be worse off as a result of this legislation. That is something that we need to work through carefully. This bill enables groups of business owners and landowners to propose a CID within a defined geographic area, subject to a vote and approval from Transport for NSW and the relevant local council. Once established, a CID can levy charges on business landowners to fund additional services, events or precinct improvements. That levy is mandatory. If it gets through all the hoops and hurdles to get to that stage, that becomes a mandatory levy upon those businesses in that region, area, defined zone or otherwise. That is what we are very conscious of. We want to ensure that small business gets a fair go here and that, again, their views and concerns are truly heard and put into action.

These local small businesses are family-run shops, cafes, small service providers, health providers and so on that form, in so many instances across our State, the backbone of our local economies. We also are conscious it has been, in recent years, a very hard time for small business across New South Wales. We want to see CIDs succeed, but they must succeed with small business, bringing small business along on the journey, and achieving contributing net positive outcomes for small business. These cannot come at the expense of small business, and small business ought to be at no relative disadvantage when it comes to these matters.

While this model has shown promise internationally, particularly in New Zealand, which I understand now has 50 CIDs in Auckland alone, as well as in the United Kingdom, its success here hinges, in our view as the New South Wales Coalition, upon fairness, upon proper safeguards and upon genuine small business representation. I foreshadow that we will be moving several amendments that seek to strengthen this bill and that aim to protect and serve small businesses and improve accountability. They would protect small businesses from unfair levies or unintended burdens, including through a hardship provision; ensure transparency and proper oversight of CID operations; and strengthen the voice of small business in the ongoing management of these precincts.

I now want to turn, as I mentioned earlier, to the question of how and where this would be administered. This is not easy, either, and will more likely be dealt with in the other place, but we struggle, from our perspective on this side of the Chamber, to understand why this is being managed and is proposed to sit within the bounds of the responsibilities and resources of Transport for NSW, because what we are talking about here is essentially a matter of business, of enterprise and of community. In many instances, they may have absolutely nothing to do with transport. It is more, if you like, placemaking, enterprise, business, community. Sometimes the planning department might have an interest, as well. Transport for NSW will struggle to make that connection.

Let's be frank about it, as well. Transport for NSW is under significant pressure. In many respects it is at something of a low. We have one in five trains not running on time and a bus system many have no confidence in. Certainly, in my electorate, that is the case. The Sydney Metro Southwest is delayed yet again. The Government is unable to tell anyone when it will open, what it costs or what is actually causing the delay. For Sydney Metro

West, we do not know what the plan is or what the costs of the delay are. Parramatta Light Rail could not open on time—

Dr Marjorie O'Neill: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance. The member is well outside the confines of the bill, and I ask that you ask him to return to the leave of the bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): The member for Willoughby will continue but will be mindful.

Mr TIM JAMES: I hear the member opposite, but let's be really clear about this. This is proposed to sit with Transport for NSW. It would become the authority. It would need to provide staff and resource and leadership and so on and so forth. It is fair that we should look at the broader commitments, responsibilities and duties of Transport for NSW, some of which are frankly struggling to be met. Transport investment in New South Wales is scheduled to decrease by 34 per cent over the next four years. That being the case, is it right—

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order: My point of order is on relevance. It is well outside the leave of the bill to be attacking the good people of Transport for NSW. They are doing their best. This bill is not about the performance of Transport for NSW; it is about implementing community improvement districts so that we can get small businesses back on track.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): I do not uphold the point or order, but the member for Willoughby will take care to stay within the leave of the bill.

Mr TIM JAMES: Again, we just want to make the obvious point that if Transport is to take on more, which is precisely what this bill is proposing, then we ought to be certain that it is very capable of doing that—that it can meet the demands, resources, needs and otherwise of this proposition. Clearly, at the present time, there are some big challenges in the transport space. The concern is that Transport has much on its plate. We would not expect Transport to start managing hospitals or the health department. Again, this is a very simple point and a very reasonable point—struggling to make the connection between community improvement districts, which are centred on enterprise, place making, small business and community, and having this sit within Transport for NSW. We are struggling to make that connection. It is something—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Government members will come to order.

Mr TIM JAMES: It is an entirely reasonable point, and you should hear the views of the business community on it. That is something that we will be monitoring and conscious of and, indeed, watching closely. In closing, reform is never easy but, in our view, this is a reform that is worthy of pursuit. Again, we do have concerns, as I have outlined, in a few key areas, which we will come back to when it comes time for amendments. We do have concerns in relation to where this sits within government, as in Transport for NSW. We do intend to call out issues in relation to this as they may arise.

We acknowledge, of course, that improving local economic hubs and enterprise is a worthy endeavour, and reform is something that we should always seek to embrace when there is an opportunity. We believe there is such an opportunity here, but we do need to work to get it right—to optimise it to ensure that it has every prospect of success. Risks and opportunities both need to be managed. Again, we thank the Government for working with the Opposition on amendments. I commend the bill to the House, with amendments to come.

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (10:41): I contribute to debate in support of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. The bill provides for the establishment and operation of community improvement districts to provide for the recognition and functions of community improvement district entities and for other purposes. Essentially, the bill facilitates and makes it easier for businesses in local areas to come together, collaborate and coordinate activities for the benefit of the local community and all the businesses involved. The bill enables a community improvement district proponent to make a community improvement district proposal to Transport for NSW. The community improvement district is a proposal to impose a levy on certain business landowners within a community improvement district to fund specified services, activities or projects.

The New South Wales Government has funded round one of the Community Improvement District Pilot Program, which enabled successful local councils, incorporated associations and companies limited by guarantee within New South Wales to trial the viability of diverse governance models that strengthen local place economies. The successful applicants undertook trials that tested the viability of diverse governance models that strengthen local place economy, informing a consistent statewide approach to community improvement district policy. Nine projects are operating in round one, of which the Walsh Bay precinct community improvement district trial and Hickson Road bridges activation is a good example.

A \$400,000 grant was approved for Walsh Bay Precinct Association Incorporated. The Walsh Bay pilot aims to benefit a wide range of stakeholders, including local businesses, residents and visitors. The pilot will

include strategic planning, place vision development and public art installations on the Hickson Road bridges to draw out the distinctive character of the precinct. The grant builds upon earlier work to create a sustainable and activated arts and cultural precinct that supports and nurtures Sydney's homegrown culture and creativity. The reforms in the bill are not just legal adjustments; they are strategic moves designed to unlock the immense potential of Western Sydney.

In her second reading speech, the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport spoke about community improvement districts as locally led partnerships between businesses, councils, landowners and communities to improve public spaces, stimulate local economies and build vibrant, connected neighbourhoods. There is currently no dedicated legislative framework to support the development of community improvement districts. While different approaches have been tried in our State, they have had not had a standardised, streamlined, common framework. I commend the Minister and the New South Wales Government for introducing this bill.

Western Sydney is one of the fastest growing and most dynamic regions in Australia, home to a young, diverse and ambitious population. It is a hub of innovation, cultural richness and economic promise. Yet, for too long, Western Sydney has faced significant challenges such as historic underinvestment in local place making, fragmented economic development and a need for improved public amenity that reflects our population's aspirations. Western Sydney has not received its fair share of support to enhance local trading environments or encouragement to help people to get out into their local neighbourhoods and retail centres to enjoy local goods, services and activities on foot. The bill helps to change that. The community improvement district model will help us to unleash the full potential of Western Sydney.

Community improvement districts provide a mechanism to directly address issues by empowering local businesses and communities to shape the future of their own places. Under the community improvement district model, businesses in specific geographic areas such as a town centre, main street or health and education precinct can come together to develop proposals for services, activities and infrastructure improvements that enhance the local trading and community environment. If the proposal wins the support of those affected via a ballot, a levy is raised to fund the project. That means that Western Sydney's CBDs can take charge of their own renewal.

As the Minister noted, community improvement district initiatives could include district branding and joint strategic planning initiatives, or physical interventions such as events and programming, public art and beautification projects, improved public amenity, and security and safety measures. Those are all relevant to areas in Western Sydney looking to attract more foot traffic, support small businesses and build social cohesion. Importantly, the pilot program has already included a community improvement district in St Marys, showcasing Western Sydney's leadership in embracing the model. I know the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Western Sydney has seen the benefits firsthand and was delighted to see the plan to improve the town centre at St Marys. She said:

It is fantastic to see our local area set for revitalisation, particularly as work continues on the rail connection to Western Sydney Airport.

Our community of St Marys has so much on offer—I cannot wait to see the new installations, lighting and other enhancements this initiative will bring.

In my own area, I was able to back a support to Cumberland City Council to provide a big and better Nowruz festival in Merrylands. Nowruz, which has been celebrated for more than 3,000 years, marks the Persian and Afghan new year and the arrival of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Rooted in ancient Zoroastrian traditions, it symbolises renewal, growth and the triumph of light over darkness. It is observed in Australia by many, including Australians from Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, as a time for families and communities to come together, reflecting on the past and embracing new beginnings.

The New South Wales Government's support has meant that the festival transforms the Merrylands CBD and main street into a vibrant hub of cultural celebration, with more than 15,000 visitors. The free event features traditional music, dance performances and a variety of cultural displays, inviting people of all backgrounds to experience the rich heritage of Nowruz. Such festivals not only celebrate diversity but also strengthen community bonds, fostering understanding and unity among residents. Nowruz in Merrylands is a showcase event that celebrates multiculturalism, enhances social cohesion and supports local small businesses that participate, especially the Afghan and Persian businesses.

Such activations have been shown to increase visitation, dwell time and local spending. In one example from Newcastle, there was a 17 per cent increase in sales revenue following a community improvement district style of activation. Those are results that Western Sydney businesses and councils can replicate. There are also benefits for those who work in and around areas where there are community improvement districts, such as increased employee workforce satisfaction and reduced employee turnover at local businesses, resulting from a

stronger trading environment, business training and development opportunities, and additional business support. Vibrant places mean that there are business growth opportunities resulting in increased opportunities for local employment.

There is also a greater ability to collaborate and network with other local businesses when there is a governance entity that coordinates and advocates for a community improvement district. Community improvement districts mean that local businesses have access to a new model that helps them to come together, pool funds and coordinate activities to help grow the local economy. Perhaps most significantly, community improvement districts ensure that improvements are community driven rather than imposed from above. The legislation mandates community engagement and council support for community improvement district proposals, ensuring alignment with local needs and aspirations. The community improvement district authority, based within Transport for NSW, will provide capability building and oversight to ensure consistency and transparency.

In a region as diverse and complex as Western Sydney, flexibility is crucial. By giving local stakeholders the tools to shape and fund their own future, the community improvement district framework could become a cornerstone of Western Sydney's economic and civic renewal. It recognises that community pride, small business success and public realm improvements are not separate goals but mutually reinforcing ones. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (10:49): I speak briefly on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. It is a positive, proactive bill about bringing people together in a structured way so they can achieve things that they could not achieve alone but that will benefit everyone, and I am pleased to support it. Community improvement districts [CIDs] will allow businesses to directly fund services, activities and projects that seek to improve their local trading environment and public spaces. That could be through district branding, events, public art and beautification projects, improved public amenity, and security and safety measures. CIDs provide a vehicle for local businesses to work together to make their area better. But that does not just create another group or committee with no resources; it actually includes a mechanism to fund meaningful activities.

I recently received a briefing from Transport for NSW staff who had done some high-level analysis on Brookvale on the northern beaches. Their work indicates that a CID for Brookvale is potentially worth exploring, and I am excited about what that could look like and mean for the northern beaches. I can say to Transport for NSW that, in my time as mayor, I had businesses in Harbord-Freshwater approach me about doing something very similar to this, but we did not have the mechanism to do it and help them effectively as a council, so this could be and will be a positive.

I note that the bill before us is the result of extensive consultation, including on a draft bill in 2024. I am particularly glad to hear the positive feedback from Local Government NSW, which I know has thanked Minister Graham and the New South Wales Government for their approach to consultation throughout the development of the bill. As set out in the bill, consultation with councils will be key to the establishment of any community improvement district. CIDs do not override any council or planning approval powers and, critically, a CID can only be established if the relevant council or councils resolve to support it. That is so important for ensuring that a CID's activities align with a democratically elected council's strategic intent for an area. To be established, CIDs also require support of the local business community through a ballot. Those safeguards will ensure that CIDs will only be established where there is broad support from both the local business community and the council.

Proposed section 13 (2) of the bill prescribes that local councils will have a minimum of 30 days to provide confirmation to the authority of their decision on whether to support the CID. I will be moving one amendment to extend that to 60 days. Community improvement districts are an exciting innovation in urban governance, and I am looking forward to seeing how they make the unique places in our State ever better. I am looking forward to visiting Merrylands too, after hearing the previous member's speech. In my own area of the northern beaches, I know this will be well received. I congratulate the Government and thank it for moving the bill.

Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (10:52): I make a brief contribution in support of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. A community improvement district [CID] is a defined geographic area where property owners within the geographic area voluntarily agree to collect levies from that area to fund public improvements and services that benefit the area. CIDs are used to enhance infrastructure, security, beautification, marketing, and economic development in business districts or neighbourhoods. This legislation will establish a dedicated legislative framework for community improvement districts in New South Wales.

The bill represents a step forward in enhancing our public spaces, stimulating local economies and strengthening our communities. New South Wales is home to vibrant business communities that are deeply invested in the prosperity of their local areas. However, existing models of community and business improvement are fragmented, inconsistent and often unsustainable. This bill corrects that by providing a clear, structured approach that allows local businesses to voluntarily collaborate, pool resources, and direct investment towards

meaningful local initiatives. CIDs are a powerful tool in revitalising local economies and fostering safer, more attractive business environments.

The CID model recognises that no-one understands a community's needs better than the businesses and residents who work and live there. That is why the CID initiative is business-led and community-focused. Under this legislation, local businesses and business landowners can voluntarily come together to form a CID entity that will be responsible for planning and implementing services, activities and projects tailored to their district's needs. Those interventions could include non-physical projects, such as district branding, transaction data collection and joint strategic planning; and physical projects such as public art installations, beautification efforts, public safety measures, community events and improved public amenities. It is important to note that those activities will be complementary to government and council services, not a replacement of them.

The bill is not about outsourcing government responsibilities; it is about giving local businesses the tools and authority to drive improvements that benefit everyone. A key strength of the CID bill is its commitment to transparency and accountability. Each CID will be run by an incorporated association, the CID entity, ensuring governance structures are in place for responsible decision-making. Membership is free for eligible businesses and business landowners, fostering broad participation. A CID will only proceed if it secures a strong mandate through a democratic ballot process. To be successful, at least 25 per cent of eligible businesses must participate in the vote, with at least two-thirds of voting businesses and more than 50 per cent of voting business landowners in support. That ensures that CIDs are genuinely community-driven and reflect the will of local businesses.

One of the major benefits of the bill is its potential to unlock business potential. Local businesses understand their customer base and community needs better than anyone. With a structured CID framework, they can implement strategic improvements that attract more visitors, increase foot traffic and foster economic resilience. The CID bill is the product of extensive research and consultation. The New South Wales Government's Community Improvement District Pilot Program, launched in June 2024 with an investment of \$5.25 million, provided direct evidence of the strong appetite for such an initiative. New South Wales is not reinventing the wheel; it is learning from and adapting international best practices. Improvement districts have flourished in jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Germany, South Africa and Chile and across North America. Those regions have demonstrated that structured, business-led community improvement models yield significant economic and social benefits.

To ensure strong oversight and support, the CID legislative framework will be overseen by a single CID authority, prescribed to be Transport for NSW. The authority will play a dual role, facilitating education and capability-building for communities and ensuring compliance with reporting, accountability and governance requirements. It will also oversee the ballot process and manage the collection and distribution of CID levies. Importantly, local councils will still have a role to play. For a CID to proceed, it must secure support from the relevant local governments, ensuring that the initiative aligns with broader community planning objectives.

The Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025 provides local businesses with the autonomy, resources and structured framework they need to drive meaningful improvements in their communities. It ensures transparency, accountability and democratic participation. Most importantly, it delivers economic and social benefits that will reverberate across New South Wales. It is an opportunity to set a new standard for place-based economic development in New South Wales. It is an opportunity to support our local businesses, enrich our public spaces and strengthen the fabric of our communities. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (10:58): I speak on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025 and state from the outset that it is nothing more than an increased tax and burden on the small and medium businesses of New South Wales, proposed by the Minns Government. You will not find anybody who has ever run a small or medium business in the Minns Labor Government.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: Point of order—

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: If they did, they are probably here because their small or medium business failed, and they are now a member of Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Kellyville will resume his seat. The member for Maitland has a point of order.

Ms Jenny Aitchison: My point of order goes to relevance. That is an incorrect statement by the member for Kellyville. Many Government members have run very successful small businesses.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): The member for Kellyville—

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: As I said, anyone in the Labor Party who was running a thriving small or medium size business would not now be a member of Parliament.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner): Order! I had not completed my ruling. The member for Kellyville will not make personal reflections on other members.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS: I would hate to stick to the facts, but I will do my best to eschew some in debate. In the 2023-24 financial year, 4,643 small and medium size businesses entered insolvency. They went broke. This extraordinary amount is more than double the number under the previous Liberal-Nationals Government. The one thing that businesses in this country cannot survive is an increased burden, levy or tax. This will force them out. It will cease employment—

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.

Visitors

VISITORS

The SPEAKER: I welcome all of the special guests in the gallery to question time in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, Australia's first Parliament. I hope that you enjoy the experience. I extend a warm welcome to the parents of the member for Pittwater, Cathy and John Taylor. I welcome Jasmin Kelaita, a guest of the member for Fairfield. I acknowledge students from Shellharbour Anglican College, guests of the member for Shellharbour. I met a large group of students this morning. I welcome school leaders from Morisset High School and their teacher, Peter Hilliard, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. I welcome students and teachers from St Paul's Catholic College in Lake Macquarie who are attending the Secondary School Student Leadership Program. I also welcome students and staff from CareerSeekers, including its chairperson, Penny Graham, members of its board and staff members.

Members

REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS

Mr RON HOENIG: On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I advise the House that the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney will answer questions today in the absence of the Premier. The Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice will answer questions in the absence of the Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism.

Question Time

TUNNEL PROJECTS

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:07): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, representing the Premier. When appearing at the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Law and Justice hearing last Friday, Transport Deputy Secretary Camilla Drover said that there were no future tunnelling projects in the pipeline. Is she correct that there are no future tunnelling projects in the pipeline?

The SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will come to order. I am sure the Deputy Premier can handle the question. But members should understand that this may not be in the Deputy Premier's bailiwick, and she may not be able to answer immediately. The member for Dubbo will be removed from the Chamber if I hear any more from him on the matter.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:08): Of course I will take the question from the Leader of the Opposition on notice.

Mr James Wallace: Don't you know what is happening?

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

Ms PRUE CAR: The out-of-the-box tactic of the Opposition today is to try to ask something very specific that I might not know about—

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order—

Ms PRUE CAR: I am actually answering the question.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister will resume her seat while I hear the point of order. I will show little tolerance for this kind of behaviour today.

Mr Mark Speakman: My point of order has two parts. The first is that the Deputy Premier is being quarrelsome. She should not be trying to identify—

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. I need to hear the Leader of the Opposition's point of order.

Mr Mark Speakman: The Deputy Premier should answer the question rather than posing her own question about what is motivating the Opposition or what its tactics are. That is the first part of the point of order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House will resume his seat. Members will come to order.

Mr Mark Speakman: The second part of the point of order goes to direct relevance. The question is about tunnelling. I have a transcript here.

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. I do not uphold either parts of the point of order. The Deputy Premier was not being quarrelsome. Her answer is in order. The Deputy Premier has the call.

Ms PRUE CAR: We know there is nothing the Liberal Party hates more than a quarrelsome woman.

The SPEAKER: Government members will come to order and cease inciting the member for North Shore.

Mrs Tina Ayyad: Point of order—

Ms PRUE CAR: I will take the question on notice.

The SPEAKER: The Deputy Premier has concluded her answer.

Mrs Tina Ayyad: That is unparliamentary language. I find the comment extremely offensive.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

Mrs Tina Ayyad: I am sure that many other women in this Chamber also find it offensive.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Holsworthy. I will take the matter on notice. I have ruled in the past on member's behaviour when the Deputy Premier is answering questions. I did not consider the comment to be particularly offensive.

Ms Robyn Preston: You are not a woman.

The SPEAKER: Absolutely, I am not a woman. I said I will take it on notice. I have always tried to moderate any issues of gender bias in this House.

Mrs Tina Ayyad: Mr Speaker—

The SPEAKER: I am not going to enter into a debate with the member for Holsworthy on the matter. I have dealt with it. I have given my ruling and I have said that I will take—

Mrs Tina Ayyad: Can I have the opportunity to rephrase, Mr Speaker?

The SPEAKER: No.

Mrs Tina Ayyad: It is offensive to the women on this side of the Chamber.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I do not believe I have ever ruled in a way that has betrayed a particular gender bias. I am very aware that I do not have all the sensibilities that come to the debate, but I try to be balanced. I do not feel that some members on either side of the House show the same balance. Balance is derived from the Chair and members will show respect to the Chair.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Point of order: It is contrary to parliamentary practice and a complete breach of the standing orders to dissent from the Speaker's ruling in the way that just occurred, or to shout out and argue with the Speaker.

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

Mr Ron Hoenig: No previous Speaker, going back a century, would tolerate that behaviour.

The SPEAKER: The member for Miranda will come to order. The member for Hawkesbury will come to order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: They are repeating the same behaviour.

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

Mr Ron Hoenig: If members do not come to order and continue in this vein, Mr Speaker, you are required to uphold the dignity of the House and members will have to leave. They either accept your rulings or they are out.

The SPEAKER: The member for Coffs Harbour will come to order. The member for Dubbo will come to order.

Mr Ron Hoenig: Otherwise, the House becomes unmanageable. It is a requirement for members to show due deference and respect to the Speaker. I insist that they do so.

The SPEAKER: I thank the Leader of the House. The Leader of the Opposition knows that he can assist the Chair. Order! I direct the member for Dubbo to remove himself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A for three minutes.

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

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (11:14): My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, and Minister for Education and Early Learning.

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

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to grow Western Sydney by backing projects that create jobs, attract investment and unlock opportunities?

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Epping to remove herself from the Chamber under Standing Order 249A until the conclusion of the Deputy Premier's answer.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Epping left the Chamber at 11:14.]

Mr Greg Warren: Point of order: Standing Order 51 clearly dictates that when a question is being asked there must be silence. Anything contrary is disrespectful to the Chair and, indeed, the House. It has become very clear that certain members opposite—not all—want to be quarrelsome, disrupt question time and interfere while a question is being asked.

Mr Alister Henskens: To the point of order—

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Manly to remove himself from the Chamber until the conclusion of the Deputy Premier's answer. The member will not argue or he will be removed from the Chamber for the rest of the day.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Manly left the Chamber at 11:14.]

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The House is becoming disorderly. I appreciate members defending the honour of the Speaker. I took advice from the Leader of the House, but I will manage the situation. I have been doing it for more than two years. Opposition members, in particular, will heed the fact that my tolerance is running low.

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:16): I reiterate that the question was from the member for Leppington, because we could not hear him asking me about essential infrastructure projects in Western Sydney. The member for Leppington does not stop fighting for essential infrastructure projects in south-western Sydney, which is probably something that those opposite, including the member for Holsworthy, could learn from. The member for Leppington understands the complete failure of the Liberals to deliver critical infrastructure in south-western Sydney, like the new high school we are building in Leppington, like upgrades to Leppington and Austral public schools and like Fifteenth Avenue, which the community has been crying out for.

The SPEAKER: Order! I direct the member for Holsworthy to remove herself from the Chamber for the remainder of question time.

[Pursuant to standing order the member for Holsworthy left the Chamber at 11:17.]

Ms PRUE CAR: The truth really hurts. I am so proud—and I know the member for Leppington will be proud—that with a re-elected Albanese Government that project will finally get delivered. It is a \$1 billion investment and a critical link between Liverpool and the new airport.

The SPEAKER: All members will come to order. The Deputy Premier will be heard in silence.

Ms PRUE CAR: At the moment, it is heavily congested. I assure those people who sit on Fifteenth Avenue, who have built their new homes in south-western Sydney, and who cannot move on that road, that relief is coming thanks to the Albanese and Minns Labor governments. I am so proud of the work that our MPs and Federal Labor MPs have done. Shamefully, the Liberals have been attacking the investment in Fifteenth Avenue. How out of touch can they be with working families in south-western Sydney? After it was announced the Hon. Natalie Ward in the other place said, "The people using Fifteenth Avenue every day can't wait. They need construction to start as soon as possible." Wasn't she the Minister for Roads at one point? What was she doing all that time? We are committed to getting it done. I note that there was a pretty positive reaction to the Federal member in that area on Saturday, because residents know that two Labor governments are delivering this critical piece of infrastructure.

The same can be said for the north-west of Sydney, which many members in this place—including myself and the member for Riverstone—are proud to represent. The Rouse Hill hospital is finally being built, thanks to a \$700 million investment by the Minns Labor Government, and the Albanese Labor Government has contributed \$120 million towards full maternity services at that brand-new hospital. *[Extension of time]*

Let me talk about north-west Sydney for as long as is humanly possible. Quite frankly, Rouse Hill hospital should have been built by now. We all know the story: It was promised for three elections. Eleven years ago, the member for Kellyville was out there crossing his heart that it would be done, but is there a hospital there for the growing population? There is not, but it is coming. We are investing in north-west Sydney, with critical school infrastructure. We are delivering seven new schools and upgrades. We have fast-tracked schools in Box Hill, where no schools were built under those opposite. On Friday, we announced that the fast-tracked high school will be open for year 6 going into year 7. The New South Wales Government is committed to the people of Western Sydney when it comes to the essential infrastructure they deserve and when it comes to being able to move around their communities, catch public transport and enrol their kids in public schools.

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

Ms PRUE CAR: As part of my research, I went through some of the history of investment in local schools, particularly in the Hills district. I conclude my response to this excellent question with correspondence from 2021. I did not realise we had such an ally in the member for Kellyville. He called out the previous Government for delays to Castle Hill Public School. I refer to his letter in response to then Minister Mitchell. It states, "... there has been no action, not even a meeting with the P&C ... it has tainted the perceived legitimacy of the Government's promise. The non-committal response provided has given the impression that this school is considered of no importance." That is what the previous Government did to the Hills, as opposed to what this Government is doing in north-west Sydney.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order.

PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (11:21): My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Has her Government deliberately stalled negotiations with public sector unions to push out settlements beyond the June 2025 budget?

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (11:21): I thank the member for Miranda and shadow Minister for her new interest in industrial relations.

The SPEAKER: Members on both sides of the Chamber will come to order.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Let me give the House an example. In the electorate of Hughes, we have a very high number of public sector workers. Some of the greatest numbers of teachers live in the electorate of Hughes.

Ms Eleni Petinos: Point of order—

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: And we have a new Labor member.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will resume her seat while I hear the member's point of order.

Ms Eleni Petinos: My point of order relates to relevance. Perhaps the Minister is confused, but we are in the State Parliament. I am sure she would like to follow her predecessor to the Federal Parliament, but we are speaking about State seats today.

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Minister is making introductory comments.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I give a big cheer for David Moncrieff, the new member for Hughes. He is the first Labor member for Hughes in 30 years. The reason I mention Hughes is that the electorate of Miranda and Menai—represented by two members in this House—have a high number of public sector workers.

The SPEAKER: Order! Members will come to order.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: Labor won a number of booths in the Holsworthy electorate and some booths in Menai.

Mr Gurmesh Singh: Point of order—

The SPEAKER: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Minister will resume her seat. What is the point of order?

Mr Gurmesh Singh: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129. The Minister is well beyond introductory remarks now. Her staff have had more than enough time to give her a note. The Opposition expects an answer from the Minister.

The SPEAKER: The Minister will be relevant to the question.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I know the member for Miranda has an interest in industrial relations so I will tell her the three things that this Government has done. We removed the wages cap, we brought back the Industrial Relations Court and we have negotiated multi-year agreements with public sector workers, such as teachers.

Mr Mark Speakman: Point of order: My point of order relates to Standing Order 129, direct relevance. This Government's budget is in a shambles. The Government is deliberately pushing out negotiations. Will the Government come clean?

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I love these debates and questions about industrial relations because those opposite did nothing—absolutely nothing. Ask me more questions!

Ms Eleni Petinos: You didn't answer anything.

Ms SOPHIE COTSIS: I did—multi-year agreements for public servants.

The SPEAKER: If I had not been having trouble with my voice, I would have called the Leader of the Opposition to order earlier. I will do so now. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for the first time. He knows that is not the appropriate way to take a point of order. There is no point of order.

BAIL ELECTRONIC MONITORING

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (11:25): My question is addressed to the Attorney General. Will the Attorney General please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plan to increase community safety by banning privately funded electronic monitoring?

Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (11:25): I thank the member for Riverstone for his question. As I have said in this House on multiple occasions, there is no greater concern for the Minns Government than community safety. That is why today the Minns Labor Government will legislate to ban the availability of privately funded electronic monitoring for people on bail. In short, the Government is simply not satisfied with the performance of privately funded electronic monitoring arrangements. The risk is too high, and the system needs to change. Today I gave notice that I will introduce the Bail Amendment (Ban on Private Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2025 to ensure that electronic monitoring will no longer be available as a condition of bail.

There are genuine concerns about the ability of the justice system to comprehensively oversee private electronic monitoring companies. There have been a number of instances in the past that have highlighted the shortcomings of these arrangements. I am sure the Leader of the Opposition will remember an estimates hearing in 2021 when Labor members raised that with him. Recently it was perfectly illustrated again, if I could put it that way, when private electronic monitoring company BailSafe, which monitored a number of offenders in the community on bail, simply collapsed and liquidated itself without notifying anyone in government, no-one in the police and no-one in the courts. We had offenders with electronic monitoring on bail conditions in the community, purportedly being monitored by BailSafe, who were not being monitored.

At the outset, I should say as well that this prohibition will not affect the electronic monitoring that is currently overseen by my colleague the Minister responsible for Corrective Services, which does an excellent job. The supervision by Corrective Services includes serious domestic violence offenders who are captured by recent amendments to the law as well as people who are on parole. Corrective Services will continue to manage mandatory electronic monitoring for those people. As I said, Corrective Services does an excellent job. Currently,

people can be subject to bail conditions where the offender or the accused pays for private electronic monitoring by a private provider. Those arrangements can and do cost individuals thousands of dollars a year, which raises implications for access to justice. The Department of Communities and Justice advises me that most offenders who utilise those arrangements have been charged with high-end offences. *[Extension of time]*

Those who have taken advantage of these private arrangements typically have been charged with high-end drug dealing and trafficking, firearms and proceeds of crime offences. Some might say that those offenders are more cashed up than others. When this legislation takes effect, the Government will put in place transitional arrangements to ensure that offenders who are currently subject to electronic monitoring arrangements are quickly dealt with by the court. The legislation will embody a three-month transition period, when private existing electronic monitoring conditions will continue to apply but during that period offenders with private electronic monitoring will be required to return to the court to have their bail conditions varied.

If a magistrate or judge finds that, without electronic monitoring, those people are an unacceptable risk, they will then be remanded in custody. The intention is to allow alleged offenders and prosecutors to re-list matters so that the level of risk can be reassessed, and bail conditions can be revoked or varied. That will ensure that people currently in privately funded electronic monitoring arrangements will continue to be monitored throughout the transition period. An accused person will be deemed to be in breach of bail if their private electronic monitoring condition has not been brought back before the court within the three-month period.

Community safety is at the heart of everything we do. We are always looking at ways to protect members of the public. Government members raised the alarm about those arrangements when we were in opposition. The government of the day responded by prescribing minimum standards for private electronic monitoring, but those went first to the integrity of the device and not, if I can put it this way, the robustness of the companies that run them. We have decided the risk to the community can no longer be justified, and I will seek the support of the House when the legislation comes before it later today or tomorrow.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SECTOR

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (11:30): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Education and Early Learning. Given the highly concerning recent reports of serious child protection issues in early childhood care settings in New South Wales, what is the Minister doing to ensure the safety of children in early childhood education?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:30): I thank the member for Ballina for her question. It is a very serious and important question, and I acknowledge that it comes from a place of genuine care. All members would agree that there is nothing more important than the interests and, particularly, the safety of our children, which is at the heart of my answer. It is heightened when we place them in the care of others. As Minister, I expect all providers of early childhood education and care to exercise the greatest of care for the children that we entrust them with as parents. When they do not, I expect the NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Regulatory Authority to take strong, decisive and swift action to protect children and ensure the high-quality education and care we expect from providers.

Any breaches in early childhood education and care services are beyond concerning, and it is important that we ensure high standards across the whole sector. That is why I have commissioned an independent review by former Deputy Ombudsman Chris Wheeler. I also welcome the New South Wales parliamentary inquiry. The Department of Education will cooperate fully to address any matters of concern or suggestions for improvement that arise. We also need to understand whether a higher number of breaches in New South Wales compared with other States is the result of an active regulator charged with monitoring more than 6,000 early childhood and care services, or whether it is symptomatic of another problem in the sector. While the majority of services are doing a good job in caring for our children, some fall short. We have seen awful examples in the recent call for papers under Standing Order 52.

The call for papers has shown that there are limits on the penalties the New South Wales regulator can issue. It has become clear to the Government that existing fines are not as useful to the regulator as breach notifications, which could be one reason for the increased number of breach notifications as opposed to fines. That is one of the matters Mr Wheeler is looking into. I have asked Mr Wheeler to make recommendations on any changes required in New South Wales, and to identify any opportunities for change to the national law and regulations. I will not be backward in coming forward when it comes to taking the findings to the national education Ministers' meeting at the earliest possible opportunity, particularly with the formation of the new Federal Government. I am very confident that what we learn in New South Wales can be applied and leveraged in the wider national interest because we are all attempting to regulate a national law. *[Extension of time]*

Soon after I became Minister as the Government came to power, I set very clear expectations for improvements to the vital work of the regulator. As a result of those changes, frontline staff are visiting more services more often. More of those visits are now unannounced, giving the regulator a clearer picture of how a centre is actually performing. Last financial year more than 8,500 visits were conducted. Of those, more than two-thirds were unannounced. I am not going to tell members that right now everything is as it should be, as I expect, or as the member for Ballina expects. There is a lot more we can do, and the Government is always committed to continuous improvement in child safety in New South Wales. We are truly cracking down on operators that are not doing the right thing.

The purpose of the Wheeler review is to ensure that the regulator is well positioned to achieve its core purpose of regulating, monitoring and supporting services, and to drive quality outcomes for children and communities to ensure the very best start in life for all children. I can advise the House that specific matters to be addressed in the review include examination of the trends and reasons behind them in relation to the level of compliance activity; the level of information made available to the public about the compliance performance of early childhood education and care services in New South Wales; and comparative analysis of those matters across Australian jurisdictions, including any other matters concerning regulatory efficacy. Mr Wheeler is due to report to me on 31 May. I look forward to receiving and carefully considering his report, especially the findings and recommendations. Naturally, I look forward to providing further updates to the House and the public on this vital issue in due course.

HEALTH SERVICES PRIVATISATION

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (11:35): My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister please update the House on the New South Wales Government's work to safeguard public services, like its acute hospitals, from privatisation?

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:36): I thank the Parliamentary Secretary and member for Bega, a man who has given a lifetime of service in delivering first-class health care to his communities. We are very lucky to have him as part of our Parliament. We have introduced and are currently in the process of working through what I think is one of the most important pieces of legislation this Parliament will debate, which is to ensure that public hospitals are not operated by private companies in future. The time for privatisation in public healthcare services is over. The experiment has failed. Essentially, we need to make sure that no Parliament sees fit to go through this reform process ever again. Government members were concerned from the very beginning. Had Minister Hazzard not intervened, five hospitals, including one in the Illawarra and in my own broader community in Shellharbour, would have been put under this type of regime.

Very clearly, public hospitals should be funded and operated by the public, for the public. The time has come to draw a line in the sand about that experiment. It has failed the people of New South Wales. A privatisation ideology in public health care must cease. I thank members across the political divide for their debate and engagement so far. More importantly, I acknowledge the Massa family, whom the State and country has gotten to know through the worst and most difficult circumstances. Despite suffering incomprehensible grief, pain and loss—I for one do not think there could be anything worse than losing a child—Danny, Elouise and their family have decided to advocate for improvements for the rest of us and our children. For that, I think this country owes them a great debt of thanks. A number of things apart from the legislation are now in place or being worked through at the Northern Beaches Hospital. [*Extension of time*]

We have the Clinical Excellence Commission doing a review into the emergency department and paediatric care. We have had a report from the Auditor-General. We have got the coroner involved. Importantly, we also had a discussion last week that included the Massa family and the Day family, the parents of Kyran Day, who tragically lost his life in 2013. I spoke to Kyran's dad, Grant, who was at the forum with his mum, Jane. I also spoke to Grant's former partner, Kyran's mother, Naomi, before the REACH protocol round table. Members who have been in hospitals might be aware of the protocol, but some will not be. It is essentially an escalation protocol that people can follow if they are concerned about a patient's condition.

We think we can do better. We think that we must do better. It was an incredible opportunity to speak with clinicians, administrators, parents, advocates and user groups around what we can do in this space. I asked everyone, including myself as the Minister, to think about one thing. I said, "As we embark on improving the REACH protocol in hospitals, let's not look at it as the Minister for Health, the CEO of a local health district or a clinician in a particular field; let's pretend that it is the worst day of our life, when the hospital's front doors open and we are bringing in our own child, whose condition is plummeting and deteriorating rapidly. What would we want to see? How would we want that information explained? How would we, in a state of great distress, react and seek that second opinion?" That is what I want the group to find out. That is how we will get reform in this place, and that is what we are determined to do.

CATHOLICCARE WILCANNIA-FORBES

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (11:41): My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Why has CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes, which covers 52 per cent of western New South Wales, been excluded from funding under the National Partnership Agreement for a second consecutive year, despite delivering frontline domestic violence services across western New South Wales?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:41): I thank the member for Dubbo for his question. I note the concerns raised by CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes. I have met with the organisation on a number of occasions and we have another meeting coming up. I am advised that the Department of Communities and Justice is working with the organisation regarding issues with the supports and services that it offers. The Government is deeply conscious of the disproportionately higher levels of domestic and family violence in regional, rural and remote communities and the barriers that women and children have in accessing services in those communities.

That is reflected in the work we have been doing since coming to government through the investment of an additional \$48 million to Staying Home Leaving Violence and expanding the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program. With the expansion of Staying Home Leaving Violence being rolled out right across New South Wales, \$48.1 million is being given to the Specialist Workers for Children and Young People program, with 31 services, covering 80 local government areas.

Mr Dugald Saunders: Point of order: With respect, I understand the Minister is trying to answer the question. Specifically, though, CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes delivers—

Mr Michael Daley: Then you have no point of order.

Mr Dugald Saunders: It is about relevance to the question, which asked why has it been excluded for a second year in a row. The Minister is meeting with the organisation—that is good—but why has it been excluded again?

The SPEAKER: The Minister was answering the question—and the member for Dubbo indicated that she was doing so. However, I ask the Minister to address the specifics of the question more directly.

Ms JODIE HARRISON: Certainly, Mr Speaker. I take no joy in saying this but, given the question, I think it is necessary to bring it to the attention of the House. On the claims made by CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes, I note that in the past couple of financial years it has underspent its domestic violence budget. The Department of Communities and Justice is working with it on its service delivery. While crying out for additional funding, CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes is not actually spending what it has to support the women and children in need in the regional area it is currently servicing. Other ways that the Government is increasing the support for domestic and family violence are through the expansion of the Men's Behaviour Change Program and Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service and through the primary prevention strategy. We look forward to working with all community organisations across New South Wales to improve services to domestic violence victims.

HOUSING DELIVERY AUTHORITY

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (11:44): My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the Housing Delivery Authority to unlock housing supply across New South Wales?

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:45): It is great to have an opportunity to update the House on the work of the Housing Delivery Authority [HDA]. I acknowledge the work of the member for Parramatta, which is a great, exciting, dynamic and growing community. In the first six months of the housing accord, up until December last year, there were more than 1,400 completions in that local government area. And why not Parramatta? It is a great place to live, work and raise a family, so I can understand why people are looking to move there. The Minns Government has made significant reforms to the planning system to speed up the delivery of more homes and more affordable homes, along with reforms to deliver more jobs and more renewable energy. As a government, we have been doing that not because of our housing targets under the National Housing Accord, but because on this side of the House we recognise that we cannot keep doing the same thing as those opposite did for years and years and expect our housing challenges to go away.

As we heard from the Premier yesterday, the Housing Delivery Authority is a key way that this Government is speeding up the delivery of more homes. Following the considerations and recommendations of the HDA, I have declared 86 projects across New South Wales as State significant housing developments. Those 86 projects, if approved, have the potential to deliver more than 34½ thousand new homes for the people of New South Wales.

Those projects will include affordable homes, as well as seniors living and build-to-rent units. There will be a diversity of housing choice, exactly what the students in the gallery are looking for so they are not forced to move interstate like the previous Government's housing policies would have consigned them to do.

The Housing Delivery Authority proposals include mixed-use proposals, where amenities will be co-located with homes, creating not only jobs during construction but ongoing jobs near to where people live. The projects will be assessed by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure instead of jumping through the hoops of the local council. They are big, complex programs, with the State Government leaning in on the assessment process. If approved, they will have to adhere to assessment and project delivery deadlines. The clue is in the name: the Housing Delivery Authority. Proponents must get their proposals to the Government within nine months of declaration, and we expect them to move quickly in doing that.

We are guaranteeing a 275-day end-to-end timeframe with only 90 days in government hands. The approvals will have a clause stating that if construction is not started within 12 months of receiving approval, then the approval lapses. The Government wants developers to get on with the job of building homes. An approval itself does not create a home, so the Government is clearing those hurdles so that developers can get on with the job. *[Extension of time]*

Proponents are responding to this reform. Already 29 of the declared projects have had their Secretary's environmental assessment requirements [SEARs] issued, the first step in the development application process. There is a growing appetite from the industry to start building again in New South Wales, and this Government is backing that one hundred per cent. Major developer Zurich recently wrote to the Premier and me, congratulating the Government on the creation of the Housing Delivery Authority. It said:

Zurich has multiple projects around the world, so we have significant experience in understanding how governments are managing planning.

It went on to say:

Your programme is refreshing as it streamlines the process and provides a merit assessed pathway where one has not been available under previous governments and through the local authority.

It concluded by saying:

We believe you may have a blueprint that other countries can follow.

And they should. Members opposite and everyone else should get on board and look at the way the New South Wales Government is doing its planning reforms, to make sure that we are getting on with the task.

Mr Alister Henskens: You haven't built anything.

Mr PAUL SCULLY: The member for Wahroonga has chirped in—the housing hater of New South Wales. We know what he is upset about. Some of his neighbours from Katoomba Avenue in Gordon were on 7.30 recently.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: They have all clubbed together because they are selling their houses, for two reasons.

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

Mr PAUL SCULLY: One, they do not like the neighbours and, two, they realise the benefits of our planning reforms in delivering more homes for New South Wales. We are getting on with the task on housing, in the face of opposition from members opposite. We are delivering more homes where there is enabling infrastructure that is well connected to transport. Members opposite do not like it. To all the kids from the leadership group up in the gallery, these are the faces of people who do not want you to have homes. Have a good, hard look at them. When you go to the ballot box in 2027, remember their faces.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. Members should reflect on the puppies they saw earlier, which was a very calming and relaxing experience.

APPREHENDED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ORDERS

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (11:50): My question is directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Under this Government, apprehended domestic violence order [ADVO] compliance checks fell from around 118,000 in calendar year 2022 to around 97,000 in calendar year 2024. Why is the Government scaling back ADVO compliance checks?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:51): I congratulate the member for North Shore on her appointment as the shadow Minister for Women. That question should be directed to the police Minister. It is not a matter that falls within my portfolio.

ROAD AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (11:51): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government is working with the newly elected Albanese Labor Government to deliver essential road and transport infrastructure that communities rely on?

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (11:52): I thank the member for The Entrance and give a shout-out to all the other coasties, including the member for Gosford, who is not here this week. We wish her a very speedy recovery. The reason I give a special shout-out to the coasties is the great result on the weekend. Our two favourite Federal Central Coast members were re-elected, because we are building the infrastructure that was never built under those opposite—more than half a billion dollars worth of investment. Wyong town centre, Gosford bypass, Central Coast Highway and Tumby Road, Wamberal to Bateau Bay, Avoca Drive to Kincumber—I could go on and on about all the projects. I could spend five minutes talking about just the Central Coast, but there is another part of the State—Western Sydney. It is really interesting to see what has been happening there. There was nothing for 12 long years under members opposite,.

The SPEAKER: The member for Manly has been directed to leave the Chamber once. He will be removed for the remainder of question time if he does not come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: To go directly to the question, if members opposite want to know how well we will work with the Federal Labor Government, I will answer in two words—very well. To answer in three words—better than them. They did nothing in 12 years. We have made \$5.2 billion worth of investment in Western Sydney. There will be three million people in greater Western Sydney by 2036—in just 11 years. In government, members opposite dribbled out a million here and a million there for planning and never actually delivered. I do not want to replicate the answer from the Deputy Premier where she went through the great work that the member for Leppington and the member for Werriwa are doing on Fifteenth Avenue.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I was on Fifteenth Avenue last week and saw all these blue signs for a guy called Sam—not the one members opposite are thinking of, but another Sam—trying to take credit for the billion dollars that the member for Leppington and his Federal colleague delivered for that road. Those opposite are the Ministers for imaginary infrastructure, and the Deputy Premier said it well. We had an imaginary school at Box Hill, imaginary hospitals at Rouse Hill and the imaginary Pitt Town bypass. We have just signed a \$100 million contract to get that delivered. Then Premier Perrottet promised it in 2017. It took decades to get that work done, while those opposite sat on their hands.

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

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: Of course, there are other parts of the State. I was travelling across the State over the Easter-Anzac Day period with the member for Barwon, the member for Orange and the member for Cootamundra, looking at regional New South Wales. There is so much work going on out there. [*Extension of time*]

I understand that Saturday was a really sad day for the Liberals, but they did have a little bit of relief. They managed to elect their guy for the electorate of Port Macquarie because The Nationals did not quite make that one. The Nationals also had a sad day on Saturday, with no Senators elected in New South Wales. Another big Nationals member who used to be in the other place did not get up, which is very sad—out of government, out of Parliament, out of public life. Goodbye, farewell, thank you for coming. Another former transport Minister from the opposite side of the Chamber was very free with the gratuitous advice but was a no-show on the South Coast.

The SPEAKER: The member for South Coast will come to order. The member for Penrith will come to order.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: And why is that? Look at the work that we are delivering for the South Coast, under the wonderful member for South Coast and the member for Bega. There is so much work going on around this State. If members want to see a great wash-up of the election, they cannot do better than the ABC. I do like a bit of a horror movie.

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order: The Minister is just having a chat. My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129, relevance. It is disrespectful.

The SPEAKER: The member for Vacluse will resume her seat. There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: The ABC said it best:

For the Coalition, Saturday night was like the one of those gory horror movies where half the headline cast gets decapitated before the first act is over.

Characters you've only just started to notice ... cheaply tossed into the woodchipper.

While others, bit players from the prequels ... summarily gobbled up the monster.

The SPEAKER: Members will come to order. The Minister's time has expired.

DROUGHT INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (11:57): My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, representing the Premier. The Department of Primary Industries is forecasting that persistent drought conditions across western and southern New South Wales are worsening and are expected to expand into the Central Tablelands, Hunter and Central regions by June. Why is there still no publicly available action plan, subsidy program or delivery timeline for critical drought resilience and water infrastructure projects in those at-risk communities?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (11:58): I thank the member for Cootamundra for her question. She is a very hardworking member, and I know that question comes from a place of concern for her community. It will be of great concern to the Ministers responsible for ensuring that the Government is ready to support any community that needs to be resilient to the impact of drought. We remain committed, of course. It is one of those things that are not necessarily political, and the Government remains committed to the support of communities that can be absolutely smashed by a drought. We will ensure that the Minister responsible is getting prepared and that we are in a position to support those communities.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (11:59): My question is addressed to the Minister for Women, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Today marks the National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day. Can the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's work to build a safer New South Wales for women and children?

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (11:59): I thank the member for South Coast for her question and for her ongoing advocacy for the safety of women and children in her local area and across the State from the time she was elected and prior to that as well. We have had many conversations on this particular issue. Today, as the member for South Coast indicated, candlelight vigils will be held across Australia marking National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day and the lives unjustly taken by this crime. I can say with certainty that members of this place join the national community in mourning those who have lost their lives to this violence. We stand with the families, communities and victim-survivors in their grief.

The data on domestic and family violence in our State is sobering. Just last year there were 39 domestic violence related murders across New South Wales and over 38,000 incidences of domestic violence related assault reported to police. These are more than just numbers; they are largely women and children who had their right to safety taken from them. They are valued members of their communities, women who were deeply loved, and women whose absence continues to be mourned: mothers, daughters, sisters and friends.

The stain of domestic violence is felt across every community in our State. The Government genuinely understands its responsibility to take ongoing meaningful action to build a safer New South Wales—and it has. We still have more to do, but we have already taken action to ensure that women and children have somewhere safe to go when they escape violence. We are building 49 Core and Cluster refuges across New South Wales, which will support more than 2,900 additional women and children each year. We have committed \$5.1 billion to social and affordable housing, and at least half of the new homes built will be prioritised for women and children fleeing family and domestic violence.

We have expanded the Staying Home Leaving Violence program across the State so that, regardless of their postcode, women and children can continue to live safely in their homes, with security upgrades, and remain connected to their communities. We have introduced the Rentstart Bond Loan scheme so that victim-survivors

can access a loan of up to 100 per cent of their rental bond to secure accommodation. We have also acted to strengthen our bail laws, to hold perpetrators to account. We have reversed the presumption of bail for serious domestic violence offences. We now require electronic monitoring of people charged with serious domestic violence who are on bail. [*Extension of time*]

We have expanded the categories of offences for which bail decisions can be stayed so that the person remains in custody. We have strengthened the penalties for intentional or persistent breaches of apprehended domestic violence orders. We have also introduced serious domestic abuse protection orders to protect victims and potential future victims. Most importantly, though, we are focusing on primary prevention. Stopping the violence before it starts is key to stopping the violence, full stop. We released our first dedicated primary prevention strategy last year, followed by an expression of interest for community grants. We are working with the community on local solutions to change the attitudes and behaviours that tolerate violence against women. This work will take place where we know change is possible, where people live, learn, work, play and socialise. I am looking forward to seeing the innovative programs that organisations come up with and I will update the House as they come to light.

Too many lives have been lost and too many families have been broken because of domestic and family violence. Today, on National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day, we recommit to taking meaningful action to support victim-survivors of domestic and family violence to heal from trauma and rebuild their lives, free from violence and abuse. We reaffirm our commitment to work with experts, stakeholders, community members and victim-survivors, and across party lines, to address domestic and family violence in New South Wales. We do this in memory of the victims of this awful crime and we do it so that no-one else has to experience this violence, because everyone deserves to feel safe in their homes and in their community.

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (12:05): My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. The NSW Police Force is heading in the right direction. Can the Minister update the House on the New South Wales police commissioner's decision to retire and her near four decades of service to the NSW Police Force?

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:05): I thank the member for Auburn for her question. The commissioner recently wrote to me indicating her intention to retire by the end of the year. She will mark 38 years of service in the NSW Police Force in the coming weeks. She has indicated that to give effect to her retirement plan she will resign as commissioner on 30 September. She has provided a lengthy notice period to enable the Government to conduct a thorough recruitment process for her successor.

Commissioner Webb has had an extremely distinguished career marked by exemplary service. I have nothing but heartfelt thanks for her incredible work, and admiration for her many significant achievements. She has been a force for change and reform focused on the safety and wellbeing of the New South Wales police. She will leave a significant legacy, including paid study for student police officers; a historic pay rise for every police officer in New South Wales; full-time equivalent work, allowing police officers for the first time to job share; and overseeing the attestation of the largest class in 11 years just last week.

The commissioner established the Domestic and Family Violence Registry and took on tackling regional crime head-on through Operation Regional Mongoose and Operation Soteria. She delivered critical infrastructure upgrades, including a new police station at Helensburgh and the health and wellbeing unit, and Be a Cop in Your Hometown to recruit more officers in regional communities. She established Strike Force Pearl and Operation Shelter to tackle antisemitic and hate crimes across the State and operationalised new wandering laws to keep more knives off our streets. In 2024 Commissioner Webb apologised for the force's handling of gay hate crimes over a period of 40 years in this State. She pioneered the launch of revolutionary technology, including BluLink, to improve community safety. [*Extension of time*]

She has driven the expansion of the Family Liaison Officer program to better support victims and families of victims of crime at events like the Bondi Junction incident and the Greta bus crash. When others would be happy to stick with the status quo, Karen Webb has strived for more. She is a true trailblazer. Former Premier Dominic Perrottet and I did not agree on some things but, when he was here, I certainly told him that the best decision he ever made was to appoint Karen Webb as the NSW Police Commissioner. On behalf of the New South Wales Government and the people of New South Wales I thank Karen Webb, our commissioner for police, for her extraordinary career of self-sacrifice and public service. I thank the House.

The SPEAKER: Before I call the member for Newtown, I note that the member may have been distracted from seeking the call before the previous question. Her question should have been number 13. I ask the member to seek leave.

FROM NOW PROGRAM

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:10): By leave: My question is directed to the Deputy Premier, representing the Premier. Located in the heart of Redfern, the Women & Girls' Emergency Centre [WAGEC] provides crucial housing and wraparound support, including the From Now program, a highly successful program for formerly incarcerated women and their children. Private donor funding for this program will end in June this year unless government funding is secured. Given this program crosses over ministerial responsibilities of corrections, women, housing, family and community services, Aboriginal affairs and youth, will the Deputy Premier commit to meeting with WAGEC and me to discuss the need for ongoing and stable funding for this vital program?

Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:10): I thank the member for Newtown for her question. I appreciate her continued advocacy in this space, particularly around social housing. Straight up I will say that I am happy to have a meeting with the Women & Girls' Emergency Centre and the member about the From Now program. This Government knows everyone in New South Wales deserves access to safe and secure shelter. We know we cannot do this alone. I believe both the Minister for Housing, and Minister for Homelessness and the Minister for Women are well aware of this program and are very supportive of its crucial work. As the member knows, it is an excellent program. It aims to assist mothers exiting prison to avoid sleeping rough by providing safe and secure housing.

Minister Jackson has visited the team from the Women & Girls' Emergency Centre as well as the managers of From Now, the program that the member spoke about. I am told that Minister Jackson is aware of the funding issues that the program faces and is actively working with this organisation and others to resolve the problem. I believe that the Ministers are meeting with Women & Girls' Emergency Centre next week to discuss this very issue. We are happy to have other meetings. The organisation is clearly doing crucial work. As members, we all know of organisations in the community doing this kind of work, often thanklessly, to ensure that people can survive.

Housing affordability and availability is a massive pressure for everyone in New South Wales, but particularly for women exiting prison. Our Government has demonstrated its commitment to social housing and homelessness services with its investment in this area. Half of the new homes we have committed to building will be built for victim-survivors of family and domestic violence. We are proudly pulling every lever possible to address the housing affordability and availability crisis facing New South Wales and are making sure that we look at every possible investment. We look forward to the Ministers meeting with this important group next week. Of course, any other meeting that is needed can be arranged with this important group doing great work in the community.

Committees

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE AND ETHICS

Deputy Chair

The SPEAKER: In accordance with Standing Order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 6 May 2025, Ms Lynda Voltz was elected Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

Mullumbimby Car Park

ePetition requesting the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to stop Byron Shire Council's car park project at 57 Station Street, Mullumbimby, and ask the council to consider alternative sites, presented by **Ms Tamara Smith**.

Business of the House

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (12:14): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended on Thursday 8 May 2025 to provide for the introduction of the Northern Beaches Hospital (Voluntary Contract Termination) Bill, notice of which was given earlier today, to have precedence in the time allocated for General Business notices of motions for bills.

I move this suspension motion today because the situation at Northern Beaches Hospital is a matter of urgency for the over 270,000 people of the northern beaches. It is also a matter of public interest to the entire State given the potential scale of public funds required for the buyback of our hospital. In yesterday's second reading debate on the Government's Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition) Bill 2025, we heard from all sides of the House that future public-private partnerships [PPPs] for acute hospital services should be avoided at all costs. The reality is that the PPP prohibition bill does nothing for the people of the northern beaches, who are now stuck with a hospital service that everyone agrees is suboptimal.

Under private equity ownership, the private operator, Healthscope, faces significant financial difficulties. Unable to meet rental obligations and under pressure from bankers, Brookfield Asset Management—the owner of Healthscope—is seeking an exit strategy. On 10 April, Healthscope publicly announced that it had asked the New South Wales Government to hand back the hospital under the provisions of the deed. On 15 April, the New South Wales Government announced a Northern Beaches Hospital taskforce to examine the future of the disastrous privatisation deal. Minister Park said this taskforce is a critical first step in untangling a complex transaction left by the previous Liberal Government. Those negotiations are live right now.

The Northern Beaches Hospital (Voluntary Contract Termination) Bill 2025 provides that no compensation is payable by the State to Healthscope on the voluntary termination of the contract by the State. In doing so, it seeks to remove the key barrier to the voluntary termination of the contract by the State. Given the overwhelming sentiment expressed in the Parliament yesterday that the Northern Beaches Hospital's PPP arrangement is not in the public's interest, it is crucial that Parliament seeks to remove barriers to fixing this mess and returning Northern Beaches Hospital to public ownership.

I leave members with a quote from the Northern Beaches Hospital Medical Staff Council's submission to the NSW Auditor-General. The submission was received just last week, and it contains some rather shocking information. I quote from the submission: "It is the opinion of the Medical Staff Council that the current resources provided by Healthscope make clinical practice at Northern Beaches Hospital unsafe to both patients and clinicians, compromises patient care, is unsustainable, and is a recipe for wholesale burnout." I seek the support of the House for the motion.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:17): The Government supports the proposed suspension of standing orders and wishes to place on the record that the tragic death of Joe Massa after receiving care at Northern Beaches Hospital is something we never want to see happen again. Anyone who visits a hospital, whether that is a public or private hospital, expects to receive the highest level of care. Our Government would never have entered into a public-private partnership arrangement. We will never let it happen again while we are in government. This is an incredibly important issue, and one that the Government has treated with the utmost urgency.

The project deed for Northern Beaches Hospital was entered into on 11 December 2014 and describes the obligations of Healthscope and the State. Healthscope is responsible for operating Northern Beaches Hospital as a licensed private hospital to meet the needs of the northern beaches community for both public and private patients. Healthscope has a fundamental obligation to deliver services of the highest standard of patient care and safety. The Government has acknowledged Healthscope's request to engage in discussions around the potential early handback following its correspondence with the Minister for Health on 9 April 2025 and the media statement on 10 April 2025. While discussions take place, Northern Beaches Hospital will continue to operate and provide health services to the community without interruption. The main priority for the Government is the ongoing delivery of safe, high-quality care to the northern beaches community. That is an ongoing focus. All obligations under the Northern Beaches Hospital project deed remain in place, and NSW Health will continue to ensure that Healthscope complies with all its obligations.

The Treasurer established a taskforce on 15 April 2025 to investigate the continuing future operation of the public-private partnership at Northern Beaches Hospital and provide advice to the New South Wales Government. The work of the Northern Beaches Hospital Taskforce will not have an impact on the current day-to-day management and operation of the Northern Beaches Hospital under the project deed. The Audit Office also tabled its report into the Northern Beaches Hospital in Parliament on 17 April 2025. The report included three recommendations: two for NSW Health and one for Healthscope. NSW Health supports the two recommendations detailed within the audit report and also supports the recommendation made for Healthscope.

NSW Health will work closely with Healthscope under the provisions of the Northern Beaches Hospital project deed to ensure that the improvements from that recommendation and other changes are sustained through ongoing reporting and monitoring processes. The Government accepts that the views of the community of the

member for Wakehurst, which he supports by way of the bill he gave notice of today, are a matter that the House should determine. It is a debate that members of the House should be able to participate in. Therefore, the Government supports the proposed suspension of standing orders.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:21): The Opposition was only given notice of this procedural motion during question time. It is a matter of significant public importance. The member for Wakehurst seeks to move the second reading of his private member's bill with precedence. We think that is appropriate in the circumstances. The Opposition supports the motion.

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

Motion agreed to.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (12:22): I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to extend the lapsing date of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Western Sydney Aerotropolis) Bill until 28 November 2025.

The member for Wollondilly has introduced and moved the second reading of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Western Sydney Aerotropolis) Bill, but the Government is awaiting the release of the ANEF—or Australian Noise Exposure Forecast—contours for the Western Sydney international airport's first runway, and confirmation of the timing and process for finalising flight paths for the proposed second runway from the Australian Government.

Whilst the environmental impact statement for the preliminary flight paths has provided important insights into the project's environmental considerations and broader impacts, access to ANEF contours is critical to the planning process. If those are not available, this Government will repeat the errors of other governments in airport development throughout Australia, where noise-affected communities are impacted by the operations of the airport as a result of poor planning. The extension of the lapsing date for the member for Wollondilly's private member's bill follows constructive discussions between the member and the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces over a period of time. The Government is following through on its good faith commitment to work through the issues involved in its discussions with the member for Wollondilly in relation to the progress of her bill.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (12:24): This is a procedural motion to prevent the lapsing of a private member's bill. As I have said on behalf of the Opposition on many occasions, we generally support the extension of the lapsing dates of private members' bills. Unfortunately, the Government has not supported us when we have sought to extend the lapsing date of Opposition bills. However, we will not play tit for tat on this or any other matter. Therefore, the Opposition supports the extension of the lapsing date of the bill so that the substance of the private member's bill can be advanced before this Parliament.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Bills

HELP TO BUY (COMMONWEALTH POWERS) BILL 2025

First Reading

Bill introduced on motion by Mr Paul Scully, read a first time and printed.

Second Reading Speech

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:26): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Help to Buy (Commonwealth Powers) Bill 2025. This bill provides for the adoption of specific provisions of the Commonwealth's Help to Buy Act 2024 via a targeted referral of legislative powers so that the Commonwealth's shared equity scheme, Help to Buy, can operate in New South Wales. This bill also includes consequential amendments to New South Wales legislation that governs housing assistance, transfer duty and land tax matters.

Over recent decades, access to home ownership for low- and middle-income households has steadily declined. The primary barriers to home ownership are the challenges associated with saving for a deposit and the rising costs of mortgage repayments. These financial pressures have made it significantly harder for many households to achieve home ownership, especially for those in lower income brackets. Additionally, the gap

between property prices and median incomes has widened substantially. This increase in property prices, coupled with slower income growth, has made it far more difficult for households to afford to buy a home, resulting in extended time frames required to save for both a deposit and related costs.

Reversing the direction of these home ownership and affordability trends is a key priority for the Government. The Government has a comprehensive plan to address housing affordability and home ownership in New South Wales and a track record of assisting New South Wales first home buyers and promoting housing supply. This includes the expansion of the First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme since 1 July 2023. Eligible first home buyers now receive a full exemption from stamp duty for purchases of homes for up to \$800,000—previously \$650,000—and a concessional rate of stamp duty for purchases of homes for up to \$1,000,000—previously \$800,000. Further, the 2024-25 budget includes a range of measures to support housing supply, including investing an additional \$555.5 million to speed up the planning system and construct more housing enabling infrastructure.

As a complement to these New South Wales initiatives, the Government has also been working with the Commonwealth Government to make Help to Buy available for New South Wales residents. Help to Buy addresses home ownership barriers and aims to assist an estimated 3,000 New South Wales households each year into home ownership over four years. Eligible New South Wales residents will benefit from a smaller required deposit, lower mortgage repayments and avoiding the cost of lenders mortgage insurance. Help to Buy will be funded by the Commonwealth and administered by Housing Australia.

The Commonwealth will contribute up to 30 per cent for an existing home, or up to 40 per cent for a new home, of the purchase price, in return for a proportionate interest in the property. Eligibility criteria apply, such as a means test; a maximum income of \$100,000 for singles or \$160,000 for couples or single parents; a requirement to not currently own property, with limited exceptions; and property price caps of \$1.3 million for Sydney and regional centres and \$800,000 for other areas in New South Wales. Homes must be owner occupied and used as the participant's principal place of residence. Help to Buy participants can still apply for other home ownership support programs, such as the New South Wales First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme, stamp duty exemption or concession and the First Home Owner (New Homes) Grant.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. To provide a robust constitutional basis for Help to Buy implementation in New South Wales, the bill refers legislative powers to the Commonwealth under the Commonwealth Constitution. The bill also includes exclusion provisions to ensure that current or potential New South Wales shared equity schemes or first home buyer assistance schemes are not affected; and consequential amendments to ensure that State taxes and grants, like stamp duty, land tax, and the First Home Owner Grant, remain unaffected by Help to Buy participation. The proposed Act commences on a day or days to be appointed by proclamation. Help to Buy is expected to commence later in 2025, contingent on the Commonwealth finalising key operational elements, including Housing Australia's lending panel contracts and completion of participant administrative systems.

The Government will continue to work closely with the Commonwealth to support timely and effective Help to Buy implementation to support New South Wales households. Help to Buy aims to make home ownership a reality for more people. The proposed adoption of Help to Buy will support low- to middle-income households in New South Wales, including those in regional and rural communities, to achieve home ownership, many of whom would not be able to access the property market without government support. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2025

Consideration in Detail

Consideration of the Legislative Council amendment.

Schedule of amendment referred to in message of 6 May 2025

No. 1 **OPP No. 1 [c2025-066G]**

Page 5, Schedule 1[25], line 34. Omit all words on the line. Insert instead—

Omit section 3.9(3A). Insert instead—

- (3A) If the Planning Secretary is satisfied a local strategic planning statement that has been prepared for an area is inconsistent with a strategic plan applying to that area, the Planning Secretary may direct the council to amend the statement.
- (3B) A council for an area that receives a direction from the Planning Secretary under subsection (3A) must amend the local strategic planning statement for that area within—

- (a) 28 days after the direction is received, or
- (b) the period otherwise determined by the Planning Secretary and specified in the direction.

Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:32): I move:

That the Legislative Council amendment be agreed to.

I am very pleased to note that the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment Bill 2025 passed the other place yesterday evening. This bill is another milestone for the Minns Labor Government's reforms to the planning system to deliver more homes for the people of New South Wales—particularly young people, families and key local workers to live in a place they call home and within the communities they choose. The changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act include streamlining decision-making and cutting through red tape to assess housing State significant development applications that have been recommended for the SSD pathway by the Housing Delivery Authority. It includes cutting through the red tape for additional housing SSD applications, such as infill affordable and build-to-rent housing.

The bill allows flexibility to reduce the minimum mandatory exhibition period for certain housing SSD projects through changes to the department's community participation plan. It supports consent authorities, such as councils, in making practical planning decisions, including modifications to development consents, clarifying several court decisions. This bill provides certainty on how submissions are counted and considered. The amendment makes it clear that only submissions received during a public exhibition period can be counted for particular purposes, such as identifying the consent authority and appeal rights, but late submissions can be considered in the assessment process.

The bill modernises the planning framework for affordable housing contribution requirements by enabling all types of environmental planning instruments to include requirements for affordable housing contributions and removing unnecessary tests to streamline the development assessment process. The bill also removes references to the Six Cities Region and district plans, which will enable a new regional strategic plan for Greater Sydney to be delivered and make the strategic planning framework consistent across New South Wales. In short, the changes will increase the efficiency of applications to be declared as SSD by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces by eliminating overlap in advisory functions with the Information and Privacy Commission and providing recommendations to the Minister faster. This is all part of the Minns Government's plans to build a better New South Wales with more homes and services, so young people and families and key local workers have a place to call home, as I mentioned earlier.

The Government has accepted an amendment proposed by the Opposition in the other place by the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC. The amendment proposes continuing oversight of local planning statements by the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and allows the secretary to review the local planning statements to determine if they are inconsistent with a strategic plan applying to a local government area. In those circumstances, the amendment will allow the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to direct the council to amend those local planning statements, safeguarding the alignment of local planning outcomes with State and regional strategic priorities.

The Government is committed to the strategic planning framework. I again thank, for the record, the shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and his adviser, William Olive, for their cooperation and productive discussions in the passage of the bill. I acknowledge the discussions and contributions from the member for Sydney and the member for Wakehurst and their respective advisers, Tammie Nardone and Ishbel Cullen. From the other place, I acknowledge the discussions and contributions during the debate from Ms Sue Higginson, MLC, and her adviser, Dan Reid; and the Hon. Mark Latham, MLC. While the Government supports the Opposition amendment, it did not accept the proposed amendments in the other place. I acknowledge those contributions as we continue to progress on other legislative reforms to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act in the future.

In conclusion, I again thank my departmental officials Kieran Haydon, James Hayward, Jen Bailey, Steve Saville, Vanessa Portelli, Aoife Wynter, Meagan Kanaley, Dan Cutler, Tom Loomes, Douglas Walther, David Gainsford and Monica Gibson for their collective work on the bill's preparation, the briefings they have provided and their advice during negotiations and discussions with Opposition and crossbench members. I commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS BILL 2025**Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (12:38): I continue my contribution to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. I state for the record once again my great concern that the legislation will inevitably place a burden on small and medium businesses. The purpose of the bill is to legislate a framework for community improvement districts—place-based partnerships led by local businesses to stimulate economic growth and foster community development at the cost of business. No cost is being incurred by the Government or by local government. For the record, State governments—and all governments, including local government—like nothing more than when they can impose a cost on business to pick up the pieces of what could firmly be described as being well within their remit. If an area is lacking in particular infrastructure, be that a footpath, street lighting, street furniture or whatever the case may be, that all falls under the remit of either State governments or local councils. It should not be put upon small and medium-sized businesses as a burden.

This particular proposal has had limited success. I would suggest that, under this legislation, the majority of businesses—I would say 99.9 per cent of businesses—across New South Wales would be unaware that this is going to be a levy. I would call it a tax. It will be compulsorily imposed on them, should 66 per cent of the businesses or 50 per cent of the landholders within a geographic area vote to implement this so-called levy. Those businesses will then have to pick up the cost. That cost will be imposed on them, I imagine—I am not quite sure whether it is contained within the bill—depending on the size of the particular business.

One could slice and dice this several different ways. One could look at it from the perspective of someone with one or a number of very good businesses operating in a geographic area, who works hard, who has made a major investment in their business and who is providing employment. I note for the record that small and medium-sized enterprises provide almost 50 per cent of the employment across New South Wales and, indeed, this country. It is not the public sector or large business but small and medium-sized enterprises that provide half of the employment in our country and, indeed, this State.

Businesses that are going well are all of a sudden going to have a massive new tax—or "levy"—placed upon them. It could be far and above what their neighbouring businesses have to chip in, and they have no right to refuse when 66 per cent of the shops or 50 per cent of the landowners in their geographic area vote to implement that tax/levy. It could also be looked upon in quite the opposite way by a business that is not going so well, and there are plenty of those across this great State at this point in time.

As I said in my opening remarks—I will clarify it a little bit more for the record—42 per cent of national insolvencies in the 2023-24 financial year were in New South Wales. That is 4,643 business insolvencies within one financial year in New South Wales, which is double the number of insolvencies under the Liberal-Nationals Government only a few years previous. New South Wales is the only State where business insolvencies are increasing post-pandemic. In light of those particular figures and the fact that six of the highest risk regions for business closures are in Western Sydney—an area I am very proud to represent an electorate within and where some districts are seeing up to 8 per cent of businesses closing—I certainly do not approve of or support a tax being imposed on businesses.

As I said before, for a small business that is struggling—and there are many—a tax/levy like the one the Community Improvement Districts Bill is now proposing may be the cost that tips that business over the edge. It will force them into insolvency. Importantly, it should never be forgotten that there are many more business closures than those reported as insolvencies. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has suggested that almost 1,000 businesses a day are closing across the country. In light of all of that, this bill seeks to impose an additional cost and additional burden on small and medium-sized enterprises. That is exactly what the bill seeks to do. I will have nothing to do with it. I will not support it in any way, shape or form.

Even with the amendments that the Opposition is proposing, I still do not support it, because I firmly believe that if we are going to impose something like this on small or medium-sized businesses, we should give them the right to opt in or out. If businesses feel strongly that they want to support this and contribute to the levy, they can go for it, do their best and join with the other businesses to make an improvement. But if they want to opt out, they should have that right. This is government trampling all over the rights of individuals, of hardworking mums and dads, who employ 50 per cent of the workforce across New South Wales and, indeed, the country.

For a comparable example of what increased costs do, look no further than the Minns Labor Government's \$12,000 infrastructure levy imposed on developers producing homes and the implementation of the new BASIX standard. I fully support improvements in sustainability but, at a time when we are struggling to produce homes, the Minns Government has seen fit to place tens of thousands of dollars of cost on the delivery of a home. And

what have we seen? The worst housing figures since 2011 have been delivered by the Minns Labor Government. I will not support legislation that provides for another tax on small and medium-sized businesses.

Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (12:45): I am pleased to speak in support of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025, especially speaking after the member for Kellyville, who is like an old, broken down 78 record. I do not know if they still produce those records, but maybe the member for Kellyville needs to modernise. I can understand the member for Kellyville being worried about his seat, because the mayor in his area, Michelle Byrne, is keeping a close eye on it and waiting for it to become vacant. The purpose of the bill is to create community improvement districts [CIDs] and build community partnerships led by local businesses. The central aim of those partnerships is to enhance public spaces, stimulate the local economy and support community buildings.

Whilst the member for Kellyville was talking about no money being allocated, I note that the New South Wales Government has allocated \$5.25 million to the establishment of a Community Improvement District Pilot Program and has been in consultation. This sort of thing has been in many places around the world. I note that even the Committee for Sydney and Business NSW—which does not sound like a socialist organisation—is asking for businesses to get involved and support this.

I note that from the pilot program Clarence Valley Council, Tweed Shire Council, Muswellbrook Shire Council and Penrith—and I note the member for Penrith is present in the Chamber—have put forward their projects. The Penrith project is also covered by the member for Blue Mountains, but Blue Mountains City Council is not on the current list. It is good to see some of the regional councils putting their hands up, as well as Randwick and Inner West Council. I also note that City of Sydney council probably took the lion's share, with three of these districts. I suppose we should have stewards' inquiry into that. Correspondence I received from the department said that my local council in Blacktown saw fit to just turn up to a webinar and not get involved, unfortunately.

The member for Kellyville said he is worried this will impose some kind of tax on the community or the businesses in an area. Obviously it goes through various different stages. The Government has already put \$5 million towards this project. Local councils and the State Government put a lot of money into supporting local festivals. May is the festival month for Blacktown, and streets are often shut down. There are a whole range of different festivals to suit everyone, including Streets Alive and Parade Day, Blacktown City Medieval Fayre, music festivals and comedy festivals. I am a bit surprised that Blacktown City Council has not put forward a submission to be a part of this when a lot of smaller businesses and communities want to be a part of it. I have been going around and hearing feedback from small businesses.

In my constant discussions with the council, I have tried to work out how to revitalise Blacktown CBD. When I was the mayor of Blacktown City Council, I used to refer to Blacktown as the people's democratic republic because its \$24.8 billion economy is larger than 72 other nations of the world. We need to look at how we can enhance it. I note that the economic growth of Blacktown over the past 12 months was 4.6 per cent. Blacktown is growing, and it needs assistance to ensure that it continues to grow. The member for Kellyville was quite happy to talk about the distress of small businesses. I am happy to say that there are 33,800 small businesses in the Blacktown area, which is a growth of 2,500 businesses. The number of food and accommodation businesses has grown by 130 to a total of 1,300. The 292 arts, crafts and entertainment small businesses have had six new businesses register.

It is important to work together to turn the local Blacktown CBD around and address some of the safety issues that have been raised, particularly those relating to late night safety. I have spoken to the owners of some of the wonderful multicultural food businesses we have on offer in Blacktown. I usually have my morning coffee with Tony and the staff at Oregano and Oil, which has absolutely wonderful food. Le Viet Bistro was recently opened by a young Vietnamese Australian couple, Andrew and Kelly. It does pub food and Vietnamese food, and I try to eat there at least once a week. There is Filipino food at Manila Food, which is operated by Grace and others. There are also all of the classic pizza and kebab shops. Rene's Pizza Place Blacktown, which is run by Steve and Jeff, is an institution that has been in Blacktown for around 40 years. Ken and Sarah from Main Street Kebabs feed me at least once a week with their quarter chicken and chips. Even though I am on a diet, they still give me a handful of chips.

Ramy just opened up a new restaurant, Tropicana Shisha Bar. We also have Ethiopian restaurants, and Jasdeep's Indian food is everywhere. My regular coffee joint is Laneway Tobacconist at 24 Main Street, where George sells more coffee than he does cigarettes. All of those businesses have come together to talk about how to revitalise the Blacktown CBD. There are too many mobile food vans popping up and taking business away from our CBD. This CID proposal is a good way for business owners to take control of their destiny. They can work with councils and the State Government to deliver events. CIDs would help a business to identify what makes it different from other businesses and make people want to attend it. I can see the advantage of this.

CIDs will also improve security and safety. Ali, from Prime and Pure Jewellery, told me that a lot of businesses have security cameras. A CID could coordinate business, council and police cameras and put them onto one system, which police could access. We need businesses to get involved and become leaders. The member for Kellyville said that this bill is a tax, but businesses are already spending money. They want entertainment in the Blacktown CBD. They are already supporting different types of events, and should have a say in how they are run. It is great that the State Government funded and ran a successful youth festival, but businesses had no time to react when it shut down the street with minimal notice. None of the businesses complained even though Saturday is a really important trading day. They just said, "Oh well, I'll lose a day's trade."

Blacktown businesses, including the ones that I have mentioned, would be able to work together under this proposal. They could work with the State Government and local council to work out the best time to have the youth festival and to attract visitors. Too many people have had complaints about crime in the Blacktown CBD. Through the CID, businesses could actually create a solution to help make the Blacktown CBD safer. I hope that one day the Blacktown City Council will have the imagination to coordinate with our local businesses and put in a bid. The City of Sydney can take the lead during the first stage.

Mr Alex Greenwich: Three.

Mr STEPHEN BALI: It would be great if you gave one back to us. The nine locations that have been identified will present a benchmark for any council to be able to have at least one CID in its area. I welcome this legislation. It will make a positive difference. It is not just a cost impost. It will help us work together to deliver great communities.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:56): I welcome the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. It will provide opportunities for businesses to come together and deliver place making which promotes, improves and celebrates the area. The Community Improvement District entities that are already operating in the electorate of Sydney include the Haymarket Community Improvement District, YCK Laneways and New Sydney Waterfront Company. The Haymarket entity ran Neon Playground 2.0, which was a vibrant three-week festival of art, lights, music and food. It activated Chinatown and drew visitors to celebrate its culture. YCK Laneways is an alliance of small bar operators promoting the hospitality offerings in and around York Street, Clarence Street and King Street. It is encouraging people to visit multiple venues and is activating adjacent laneways.

The New Sydney Waterfront Company is a partnership between large businesses surrounding the harbour in the inner city, including Crown Resorts, The Star, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney Fish Market, Lendlease, the New South Wales Government and the City of Sydney. This entity is working to create a new precinct-based plan. It has developed an environmental, social and government strategy to attract visitors and investment in both the long-term and short-term. These entities have been established without legislation because their funding has come from either government and council grants or contributions from active members. This bill will allow entities to raise funds for initiatives by levying all landowners within a precinct, whether they are active or not.

This new approach will allow the business community to come together and use its knowledge to not only develop a vision to improve business viability but also to fund it without the need to source government and council grants. The bill requires Community Improvement District entities to consult with businesses and residents across the district when developing plans. This will ensure that there is widespread community support. I note that the member for Pittwater will be presenting amendments concerning this. If commercial landowners are required to fund projects and pass these levies on to business tenants, it is vital that landowners and businesses feel confident that their contributions and investment will provide benefits and a growth in customer base. Residents should also benefit from changes and not experience adverse impacts.

The support for plans will make events and changes to the public domain more successful. Consultation must be an ongoing process and not a box-ticking exercise at the beginning of a project to ensure community buy-in. The law must set minimum protocols to ensure that consultation is inclusive and meaningful, that community and business concerns are addressed and that input is incorporated. I understand that the member for Pittwater will move amendments which aim to ensure that entities prepare publicly available consultation reports. I strongly support those amendments. The Government must also set out consultation rules in the regulations and require evidence that entities have ensured that all businesses and residents have been given an opportunity to participate.

The bill empowers the authority—Transport for NSW—to compel councils to provide information to help levy landowners. The City of Sydney has raised privacy concerns, as the powers are broad and lack protection for councils against sharing private information and for businesses against their personal information being shared with an entity. I thank the Minister and his team for working with me and the city to address those concerns. I foreshadow that at later stage I will move amendments to ensure that the regulations set out the information that

can be requested of councils and that specifically exclude any obligation on councils to provide private or personal information.

The laws need to give more guidance on what happens after an entity ceases to exist, once it has delivered a permanent asset such as an artwork to a public domain. The monorail provided an example of the complexity that asset relics can create when responsibility for their maintenance is never made clear. Monorail stations still dot the city, believe it or not, and it is not clear who should or can remove them. Similarly, it is unclear whether the assets created under this bill will become the property of council and therefore its responsibility to maintain. It is important that community improvement district entities do not work at cross-purposes with council visions and policies. Some councils, like the City of Sydney, have very clear policies and guidelines about the design, function and standards for public domain infrastructure, including furniture and paving, to provide aesthetic cohesion.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): It being 1.00 p.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for the committees take-note debate. I set down resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour.

Committees

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SELECT COMMITTEE ON REMOTE, RURAL AND REGIONAL HEALTH

Reports

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (13:01): As Chair: I take note of *Report 2—The implementation of recommendations relating to the delivery of specific health services and specialist care in remote, rural and regional NSW*. The Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health was established to examine and report on the implementation of recommendations made by the Legislative Council's Portfolio Committee No. 2—also known as PC 2—in its landmark 2022 report. The PC 2 report made 44 critical recommendations for regional health reform, which this committee is monitoring over the course of three inquiries. This the second report of the committee, which examines the progress that has been made and the challenges that have persisted in the delivery of specific health services and specialist care.

The report makes 32 recommendations to government across a range of services, including maternity services and paediatrics, cancer care, aged care, palliative care, patient transport and the delivery of health care for Aboriginal communities in remote, rural and regional New South Wales. During the inquiry, the committee was deeply troubled to hear that access to some specialist services has declined over the past two years, with services such as maternity care and mental health care now reaching a crisis point. We are also concerned that the intent of many PC 2 recommendations remains unfulfilled, despite NSW Health reporting that those recommendations have been implemented. There continues to be a significant divide between the progress being reported by NSW Health and the experiences of key stakeholders in the regional health system.

We were also disappointed by the recent Government response to this committee's first report, tabled in August last year, which examined the implementation of PC 2 recommendations relating to workforce issues, workplace culture and funding. Based on the Government response, our view is that NSW Health is still not approaching some areas of regional health reform with the necessary sense of urgency. As discussed in the second report, workforce shortages and other workforce challenges continue to hinder the delivery of specialist services in remote, rural and regional New South Wales. The committee was particularly concerned to hear about the closure of birthing and obstetric services in rural and regional hospitals. To address that, we make a number of urgent recommendations, including that NSW Health develop a statewide plan to maintain and re-establish maternity services with appropriate staffing levels. We also call for measures to address shortfalls within the obstetric and midwifery workforces, and networked models of care to address the gaps in rural and regional paediatric services.

We were also concerned about the lack of progress in establishing a palliative care taskforce and a statewide platform for data collection, as recommended by PC 2. We call for targeted funding to address inequities in palliative care, the urgent publication of palliative care datasets to inform service planning and improvements to the delivery of culturally safe end-of-life care. In relation to aged care, we heard that the population of older people living in remote, rural and regional areas is increasing, but aged-care services are not keeping up with that demand. We note that aged-care reforms are currently underway and it is a Federal issue, but we recommend that the New South Wales Government work with the Australian Government to ensure that local councils in remote, rural and regional areas are appropriately supported during the implementation of those aged-care reforms.

The committee was also interested to hear what progress there had been in the delivery of regional mental health and drug and alcohol services, following a number of other inquiries into those issues. Concerningly, we heard that mental health services are being impacted by significant and escalating workforce shortages. We particularly note that psychiatry shortages reached a crisis point earlier this year. We recommend that NSW Health prioritise the implementation of a comprehensive, long-term workforce strategy for mental health services across remote, rural and regional New South Wales.

During the inquiry, the committee was disappointed to hear that genuine collaboration between local health districts and Aboriginal community controlled health organisations is still not occurring in many parts of remote, rural and regional New South Wales. The PC 2 report was clear on the importance of reform in that area, and the committee made recommendations in its first report to support the Aboriginal health workforce. However, we heard that there are still systemic barriers to the growth of that workforce. We urge rural and regional local health districts to use genuine principles of co-design to map Aboriginal health services' unmet needs.

The committee heard that a lack of access to timely and affordable patient transport continues to impact communities in remote, rural and regional New South Wales. Specifically, stakeholders reported a continued reliance on paramedics for non-emergency patient transport, and we were concerned to hear about restrictions on specialist paramedics that are effectively deskilling the rural and regional paramedic workforce. We acknowledge that NSW Health has made modest progress in implementing some of the PC 2 recommendations. For example, there have been improvements in out-of-pocket costs for cancer patients, some staffing increases in palliative care and significant improvements to the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme. However, the rate of progress must increase to meaningfully improve access to health care for rural and regional communities. We hope that the implementation of the recommendations in this report will go some way towards bringing that about.

Finally, we cannot understate the role of primary care in enabling access to specialist services, particularly in rural and regional areas. The committee will explore that further in its third and final inquiry, which will examine areas of health reform that require collaboration between the State and Federal governments, as well as consultation with communities. The committee is finalising that report almost as we speak. I extend my gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this important inquiry by generously sharing their insights, experiences and time, particularly the regional health staff and communities that we met as part of our visits. I also thank my fellow committee members, two of whom are in the Chamber—the member for Blue Mountains and the member for South Coast, whose work has been absolutely tireless. I thank them very much for their collegiality and support. I also note that the Parliamentary Secretary for Health is in the Chamber. The work of the committee has been very important and is making substantial and helpful contributions to improve regional and rural health. I look forward to the Government's response.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (13:07): I welcome the opportunity to participate in this take-note debate on the report entitled *Report 2—The implementation of recommendations relating to the delivery of specific health services and specialist care in remote, rural and regional NSW*. Firstly, I thank the chair—the member for Wagga Wagga—my fellow committee members, the committee staff and all the stakeholders who participated in the inquiry and gave their views. As the member for Wagga Wagga has touched on, a breadth of subjects was inquired into. I will focus my attention on two aspects: maternity and obstetrics care, and paediatric care. They are very important for families in regional communities. Concerningly, the report states that obstetricians and maternity care specialists in rural, regional and remote New South Wales "have not observed any 'real or meaningful improvement' in regional maternity services since the PC 2 report". We should all be concerned by that. That is not to take away from the efforts by NSW Health, which I acknowledge. But the fact that those on the ground are not seeing improvements should be of concern. We need to examine the reasons behind that.

The report speaks about how birthing services in New South Wales "continue to close or are on the verge of closure". As for smaller services and what that means, the report states that larger rural hospitals, such as in Orange and Wagga Wagga, are understaffed and also are feeling the impact of the closure of the smaller services. The report states:

A decline in rural maternity services is detrimental for women, their families and the broader health system in RRR [rural, regional and remote] NSW.

That states starkly the committee's findings in that regard. I will dwell on one very important aspect, which is continuity of maternity care services. One aspect that could improve is recognition of the importance of private midwives being able to access the public health system. The report states that practising privately midwives can provide continuity of care. However, the committee heard that:

... a majority of Australian hospitals do not permit visiting rights for PPMs, even though care provided by midwives with these rights can have more positive clinical outcomes than alternative options.

Positive clinical outcomes and giving choice to the individual are aspects of the healthcare system that should be corrected by examining the ability of private midwives to practise in a public setting to help both the individual and the health system. In terms of paediatric care, it is most concerning to note that, particularly in relation to early intervention, families and children are being pushed back further. The report states:

When children fall through service gaps, they may start their schooling with developmental delays. For children facing behavioural challenges, these challenges can worsen without treatment.

As the chair stated in his foreword:

... the Committee was deeply troubled to hear that access to many specialist services has declined over the past two years, with many rural and regional health services in crisis.

The committee is concerned that many recommendations remain unfulfilled. I acknowledge the efforts being made in that regard by NSW Health and the Government, but much more needs to be done. At this point in time, unfortunately we see so much more that needs to be done.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (13:11): My contribution to discussion of the report of the Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health entitled *The implementation of recommendations relating to the delivery of specific health services and specialist care in remote, rural and regional NSW* will be brief. I thank the members of the committee who are present in the Chamber: the member for South Coast, the member for Albury and committee chair the member for Wagga Wagga. I also acknowledge the incredible lifelong work of the member for Bega in caring for regional and rural communities. It has been an absolute honour to participate in the work of this committee. Some of the unspoken work that parliamentarians often undertake is travelling around the State to speak to communities and health workers on the ground. We hear directly their suggestions for improvements. We see for ourselves what some of the problems are as well as what works well. It is an absolute honour to undertake that type of work.

Most members know that the media cycle around our work often ignores the really important committee work we do. But sitting down with a nurse or a family in a regional, rural or remote area and hearing directly from them about their experiences helps committee members make findings and recommendations that are heard by Ministers and by governments. There is certainly a lot to fix after what I believe, personally and professionally, to have been some years of neglect. But I acknowledge the comment by the member for Albury that NSW Health seems to be listening and making some changes. As a member who represents an electorate on the peri-urban fringe of a regional area that has regional services, which are sometimes lacking compared with services in metropolitan areas, I sometimes see a disparity between metropolitan areas and my Blue Mountains electorate. In conclusion, I thank the member for Wagga Wagga for leading such a great team. It is good to work together across the political spectrum to express our care for the community and improve services for the people in this State whom we represent.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Report noted.

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON NET ZERO FUTURE

Reports

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The question is that the House take note of the report entitled *2024 Annual Report of the Net Zero Commission*.

Debate called on and adjourned.

LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

Reports

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): The question is that the House take note of the report.

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (13:16): As Chair: It is with great pleasure that I address the House again as Chair of the Legislation Review Committee. Yesterday the committee tabled its twenty-eighth *Legislation Review Digest* of the Fifty-Eighth Parliament. In the digest the committee examined 10 bills. It also reviewed 25 regulations and statutory instruments, six of which it reported on with comment. The additional 19 regulations examined and found not to reach the reporting threshold under the Legislation Review Act are found in part 3 of the digest. As members are aware, the committee has the role of reviewing bills introduced and all statutory instruments tabled in Parliament. The committee's scrutiny of legislation informs members of both Houses and the community about the potential impacts of legislation on personal rights and liberties, and any potential inappropriate exercise of government or legislative power.

I now draw members' attention to the key issues raised in the digest. Starting with Government bills, the committee reported on the Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition) Bill 2025, which aims to amend the Health Services Act 1997 to prohibit the Government, local health districts and statutory health corporations from signing contracts with private entities to build acute hospitals or provide acute hospital services to public patients. In its report, the committee found that the bill could affect the contract rights of certain classes of persons by limiting the types of contracts they can enter into. However, the committee noted that the changes would apply only to future contracts, not those already in place. In the circumstances, the committee made no further comment.

The Committee also reported on a private member's bill, the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Youth Crime) Bill 2025. The bill proposes changes to the Bail Act 2013 and the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Act 1999 by imposing additional requirements for granting bail to young people. Under the bill, a bail authority could grant bail to a young person aged 14 to 17 years only if it has a "high degree of confidence" that the accused will not commit a serious indictable offence while on bail. The bill would also impose curfews and electronic monitoring to help enforce the curfews, as well as other bail conditions. In addition, bail authorities would need to consider additional factors before making or varying bail conditions for young people who are subject to these conditions.

The committee's report notes that the bill would expand the grounds for refusing bail to a young person. While the committee recognised that the intent of the bill is to address community safety concerns and youth reoffending, it raises concerns that the bill may impact a fundamental principle in our criminal justice system—the right to the presumption of innocence. In addition to this, the bill also may affect rights under international law, such as the right to liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention under Article 9 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and the rights of young people under Article 27 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*, which states that the detention of a child should be used only as a last resort. The committee was also concerned that the "high degree of confidence" test is a discretionary standard left to the bail authority which may be applied using a lower threshold than is used in criminal proceedings. For those reasons, the committee referred the bill to Parliament for further consideration.

Finally, the committee reported on the Surveillance Devices Amendment (Body-Worn Video) Regulation 2024. The regulation amends the Surveillance Devices Regulation 2022 to allow SafeWork inspectors to use body-worn cameras while carrying out their duties under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. It creates an exemption from the general ban on using surveillance devices under the Surveillance Devices Act 2007. The committee noted that the change may affect individuals' privacy rights, as it allows for increased surveillance.

While the committee recognised that there may be public interest considerations in allowing SafeWork inspectors to collect evidence and protect individuals from violence or antisocial behaviour, it noted that there are no provisions in the regulation or the parent Act limiting how recordings may be stored or used. For those reasons, the committee referred the matter to Parliament for its consideration. In conclusion, I encourage all members to read the digest, which is available on the committee's webpage. I thank my fellow committee members for their contributions to the digest. I particularly thank the hardworking secretariat staff, who do a tremendous job, for their ongoing support. I commend the digest to the House.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (13:20): I update the House on the ongoing work of the Legislation Review Committee. I acknowledge the ongoing contribution of the committee chair and thank her for her work and her leadership of that committee. I echo her comments about the secretariat's very extensive work, which truly allows the committee to perform its functions. There were 10 bills under review in this period. Six bills were identified as having issues that are set out in section 8A or 9 of the Legislative Review Act. Firstly, the Civil Liability Amendment (Organisational Child Abuse Liability) Bill 2025 was found to have issues around the freedom of contract and retrospectivity. The committee had no further comment about either of those issues.

Secondly, the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Youth Crime) Bill 2025 was found to have issues regarding the right to the presumption of innocence, liberty and freedom from arbitrary detention, and the requirement for granting bail. For those reasons, the committee referred the requirement for granting bail to the Parliament for its consideration. Thirdly, the Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition) Bill 2025 was found to have issues regarding the freedom of contract, specifically in relation to government regulation of private business contracts, and regarding the Henry VIII clause. The committee had no further comment on either of those issues. Fourthly, the Health Services Amendment (Splitting of the Murrumbidgee Local Health District) Bill 2025 was found to have issues with ministerial orders, on which the committee had no further comment.

Fifthly, the Return of Proceeds of Crime (Gambling Businesses) Bill 2025 was found to have issues regarding the wide regulation-making powers with retrospective effect. The committee referred that item to the Parliament. Sixthly, the Road Transport Legislation Amendment (Post-Crash Drug and Alcohol Testing) Bill 2025 was found to have issues in regard to the right to physical integrity and personal liberty, as well as commencement by proclamation. The committee had no further comment on those two issues. The four bills for review that did

not have issues were the Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment Bill 2025, the Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2025, the Justices of the Peace Amendment Bill 2025 and the Protection of the Environment Operations Amendment (e-Waste) Bill 2025. I encourage all members to read the report.

Report noted.

The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Bills

BAIL AMENDMENT (BAN ON PRIVATE ELECTRONIC MONITORING) BILL 2025

First Reading

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

Second Reading Speech

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

That this bill be now read a second time.

Concerns have been expressed in the New South Wales community about the quality and reliability of some privately arranged and funded electronic monitoring providers, which monitor accused people under bail conditions. Currently the Bail Act allows for the imposition of private electronic monitoring as a bail condition if it is considered reasonably necessary to address a particular bail concern and it meets the minimum standards prescribed in the Bail Regulation 2021.

Private electronic monitoring is independently organised and funded by the accused person applying for bail. We know that there are legitimate concerns about the effectiveness of private electronic monitoring and the services that some providers deliver. We have seen examples of the failure of private electronic monitoring in recent months. For example, a private company called BailSafe Australia, which provided monitoring services in New South Wales and Victoria, ceased operation without notice to the courts or the accused persons being monitored. That meant that accused persons subject to electronic monitoring bail conditions were left unmonitored in the community.

While providers are required to meet minimum standards for electronic monitoring, which were introduced by the former Attorney General in June 2022, the reported incidents in recent months indicate that those minimum standards have been insufficient to ensure that all private electronic monitoring is sufficiently suitable or reliable to ensure the safety of our community. Community safety is this Government's paramount concern, so with this bill we are taking decisive action to ban privately funded and arranged electronic monitoring from being imposed as a condition when a person is granted bail.

Firstly, this bill will remove the option for bail authorities to impose a pre-release bail requirement that a person is subject to private electronic monitoring. Secondly, it will amend section 28B of the Bail Act 2013 and insert a new section 30A to make clear that electronic monitoring bail conditions may only be imposed for certain domestic violence show-cause offences, as set out in that section, and otherwise may not be imposed. Electronic monitoring for certain serious domestic violence offences is managed by Corrective Services NSW. Thirdly, the bill will create transitional provisions that allow accused persons currently on bail under private electronic monitoring arrangements to have those conditions continue to apply for up to three months from commencement of the Act. During that transition period, accused persons and prosecuting authorities will be able to apply for a revocation or variation of bail. Finally, the bill will make it clear that an accused person will be deemed to be in breach of bail if the private electronic monitoring condition has not been varied by the end of the transition period. That will encourage timely listing of matters and empower prosecuting authorities to take action in matters that were not finalised during the transition period.

Importantly, the bill only prohibits private electronic monitoring. It does not make any changes to electronic monitoring provided by Corrective Services, as that does not involve the same risks as private electronic monitoring. Corrective Services monitoring is undertaken with high-quality systems and supports and does not carry the risk that regrettably manifested when an electronic monitoring provider ceased operations without further notice. Further, accused persons on bail subject to Corrective Services electronic monitoring for serious domestic violence offence charges under section 28B of the Bail Act are subject to additional requirements to comply with directions by Corrective Services under the Bail Regulation. In addition, offenders subject to electronic monitoring under sentencing or parole orders are also case-managed and supervised by community corrections officers.

I turn now to the specifics of the bill. Section 2 of the bill will commence on the day of assent. From that date bail authorities will no longer be able to make bail decisions that impose a private electronic monitoring

condition. Items [1] to [3] of schedule 1 amend section 28B of the Bail Act to clarify that bail conditions requiring electronic monitoring may only be imposed for certain domestic violence show-cause offences as set out in that section and that the electronic monitoring must be conducted by Corrective Services NSW only. Schedule 1 [4] and [5] amend section 29 of the Bail Act to remove the provision enabling a bail authority to impose a pre-release requirement that the accused person be subject to electronic monitoring.

Schedule 1 [6] repeals section 30A of the Bail Act, which required electronic monitoring to meet certain minimum standards. The minimum standards set out in Bail Regulation 2021 are also repealed by schedule 2 to the bill. Item [6] inserts a new section 30A, which makes it clear that electronic monitoring can only be imposed under section 28B. The amendments to section 29 and section 30A remove any possibility for bail conditions requiring electronic monitoring by a private provider to be imposed. I reiterate that that will not have an impact on mandatory electronic monitoring for serious domestic violence offences, as those conditions are dealt with fully and exclusively in section 28B of the Bail Act and part 4, division 4 of the Bail Regulation.

Item [7] deals with savings and transitional provisions. Firstly, it clarifies that the amendments made by the bill extend to all offences committed, alleged to have been committed or charged before the commencement date. Secondly, it creates transitional provisions for accused persons who are already subject to private electronic monitoring bail conditions at the time of the commencement of this bill. The intention of the provisions is to enable both accused persons and prosecuting agencies to relist the matters before the court to have the bail conditions varied or a detention application determined expeditiously.

A transition period of three months after the commencement is established by clause 5. Clause 2 notes that during the transition period, private electronic monitoring conditions in place immediately before the commencement date continue to apply as if the amendments had not commenced. This will ensure that relevant accused persons continue to be actively monitored until the courts have an opportunity to assess the risks posed and amend the bail conditions accordingly.

Clause 3 specifies that at the end of the transition period, an accused person whose bail has not been varied to remove the private electronic monitoring condition is taken to have failed to comply with the bail condition and must be dealt with under section 77 of the Bail Act, other than subsections (1) (a) and (1) (b). This will ensure that the person is brought before the court at that time. Clause 4 clarifies that the fact that an accused person will no longer be able to rely on compliance with a private electronic monitoring condition at the end of the transition period constitutes a change in circumstances for the purpose of section 74.

It is one of the Government's key priorities to support the safety and wellbeing of the New South Wales community and to ensure that the criminal justice system remains fair and just. Accused persons who are granted bail subject to a private electronic monitoring condition cannot be allowed to be left unmonitored in the community due to a private operator failing. That risk is simply unacceptable. We are taking this action to address the continuing concerns about the quality and reliability of private electronic monitoring services by banning their use on bail once and for all. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS BILL 2025

Second Reading Debate

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (14:41): I resume my contribution to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. It is important that community improvement district entities do not work at cross-purposes with council visions and policies. Some councils, like the City of Sydney, have very clear policies and guidelines about the design, function and standards for public domain infrastructure, including furniture and paving, to provide aesthetic cohesion and ensure consistent maintenance and cleaning of assets across the local government area.

While council approval is needed for community improvement district plans, the extent of that approval is not clear, such as for early in-principle support versus support for detailed plans, or both. I hope those concerns can be addressed through regulations prior to finalisation of the bill. I call on the Government to consult extensively with councils and businesses during the regulation-making process. Retail, hospitality and business energy across the inner city has been growing. I look forward to businesses having a new way to build on that momentum and continue making Sydney a great place to live, work and visit.

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (14:43): I speak in support of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. The bill establishes a dedicated legislative framework for the provision of community improvement districts, or CIDs, in New South Wales, the first of its kind in our State and, indeed, in Australia. The bill provides

an unprecedented opportunity for local businesses, business landowners and communities to partner with government and councils to develop local solutions that help shape future local trading environments and breathe new life into local neighbourhood spaces across the State. Note the emphasis on the word "local".

The bill is designed to be not a cost but an investment. It puts local businesses in the driver's seat. They will be the masters of their own destiny. To put it simply, a CID is a model of local urban governance that empowers a group of local businesses to elect to form an entity, which then develops a proposal to provide services, activities and projects within a defined geographic area. The proposal is voted on by relevant stakeholders and, if successful, a levy is raised to fund the proposal.

I have quite a bit of experience with a very similar model that was developed by Penrith City Council some 30 years ago—or at least 25 years ago. It was certainly in existence and operated extremely successfully for the full 20 years that I was on Penrith council. It was formed as a result of a failed measure by the council to close off our high street and put in a mall. Unfortunately it was to the detriment of local businesses. It seemed that all the economic viability of the city centre was being sucked up by the major shopping centres in the area. The local businesses were closing at a rate of knots, which was not ideal for the people of Penrith and certainly not ideal for those small businesses that had been contributing and providing employment to our local area over many decades.

The council decided to reopen the street and established an entity that has morphed into the Penrith CBD Corporation. It is listed with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission. Board members include representatives from local businesses, youth and council. It has worked extremely well. Local businesses have been levied for nearly 30 years for the Penrith CBD Corporation. There is also a St Marys Town Centre Corporation. However, St Marys, which is almost Penrith's sister city, has not had the same level of success that Penrith has had. The Penrith success is largely down to what I would call the dream team of Gai Hawthorn and her staff, who have been driving those businesses and that entity in Penrith.

Some examples of the services and projects that the Penrith CBD Corporation undertakes include festivals, street parades and tree lighting. The corporation also makes non-physical interventions such as district branding and data collection. It helps local business startups and is very good at connecting people who want to move into the Penrith CBD with the owners of those premises, who do not always live in the immediate area. It is like a brains trust for businesses in the centre of Penrith to tap into for all sorts of things that they need to start up and to operate. It helps with strategic planning and all those wonderful soft services that are critical for businesses to thrive.

Another benefit is streamlining. The establishment of community improvement districts provides an incredible opportunity for local businesses—in partnership with landowners, communities and local councils—to take a lead in place activation. They give us a sense of pride in our city. CIDs provide a way for businesses and business landowners to formally partner and to tap into government resources that may be available. They improve place-based outcomes for the community and enhance the local trading environment. They encourage economic growth. They provide lots of local jobs, and who does not want to work close to where they live?

New South Wales needs to start sharing in the many benefits that CIDs have to offer. As I said, Penrith has been a leader in the area for decades. I congratulate the council on its visionary forward-thinking in putting this model into operation so long ago. I cannot overstate what a success it has been for our community.

CIDs can also increase the enjoyment of improved places. They can give information on what grants are available and provide vibrancy for community. They increase social cohesion and connections, as has happened in Penrith, and create a unique place identity. There are many more people using and enjoying our streets and public spaces and, indeed, some of the very vibrant functions that are held in Penrith as a result of the work done by Penrith CBD Corporation. CIDs also create an opportunity for healthier environments, with reduced carbon emissions and lower temperatures resulting from urban greening activities.

Penrith has a new central park, which opened not long ago. Penrith CBD Corporation have brightened up the area with a green space for people who work in the area to go and enjoy. The corporation also runs activities there. Local businesses have benefited from Penrith CBD Corporation. I look forward to seeing them hit their straps. The St Marys Town Centre was the recipient of one of the recent pilot grants that was on offer. It has also provided marketing and public space improvement and is supporting capacity-building and collaboration with residents, businesses and community organisations. While St Marys is in the Deputy Premier's electorate, my electorate considers St Marys a sister city, because we share the one council. I look forward to what will be happening in St Marys. I can only extol the virtues that CIDs will bring to all areas of our State, not just to Penrith. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (14:52): I make a short contribution to the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. I come to this Chamber as someone who has been a business owner since 2008. That is some

17 years as a small business owner. It is at the heart of what I do and what I seek to bring to this place. In my own journey, there has been nothing more stressful than being a small business owner riding the bumps of the global financial crisis and COVID. Guiding our teams and businesses through periods such as those can be extremely challenging.

I acknowledge that the Opposition is not opposed to this bill, but I do want to present a perspective as a small business owner, probably one of the few in this place. Small business owners want vibrant communities. We want vibrant business communities. We know that having a vibrant business community helps to drive the wider community. Many of our businesses make that contribution. For instance, we will be part of our local business chamber. I give a shout-out to Albury Business Connect, our local business chamber, and to Glen, Taneesha, Chloe, the chair Desiree, and the board. They do remarkable work in terms of driving our business ecosystem, driving our business community and making sure that we have a vibrant community as a result of that. We will be involved in business chambers and, in that sense, we will help make contributions to projects that help to support that vibrancy.

In many different ways we will work to support our local community, whether by sponsoring the local football club or, like my business did last week, helping to sponsor one of the major functions that our community holds to raise awareness around domestic violence. These are the sorts of things that our business community does. I recognise the importance of what the Government is presenting here to help drive vibrancy in that regard. I thank the member for Willoughby and acknowledge the words of the member for Kellyville, because small business is a tough place. It is the most stressful thing that I have done. Part of the challenge is trying to make ends meet with the costs that keep coming through your door, trying to make sure that you can support your team at the end of the day and be able to take something home to support your family.

As I prepared a few words for today, I looked at what the Small Business Commissioner and Business NSW had to say in terms of the conditions that we face. In its report of February this year, talking about the January 2025 Momentum Survey, the Small Business Commissioner spoke of the challenging trading conditions that businesses are facing, anticipating a difficult 2025. Businesses reported rising input costs, compliance burdens, staff shortages, insurance costs, weaker customer demand, government fees and charges, and an uncertain economic outlook as factors weighing on confidence. We have to be very careful to make sure that we do not erode business confidence. The Small Business Commissioner spoke of how business performance deteriorated in January, with profitability declining. Only 10 per cent of businesses expect their profitability to increase. Business NSW, in its 2024 media release headed "Our State hit hardest by broken businesses", spoke of how New South Wales is the worst State in the country when it comes to business insolvencies. The media release stated:

According to Business NSW data captured in the past month, 38% of businesses say taxes and government charges are the biggest barriers to business expansion. This should ring alarm bells for both state and federal governments.

I recognise the CID project's aim of supporting vibrancy. As a business owner, I recognise the importance of continuing to foster, encourage and empower our business community to help drive our communities forward so that our communities are great places of physical, mental and social wellbeing. That is the heart of what I do as a business owner. But—and this is the point I want to make—I emphasise the words of the member for Willoughby when he said, "No small business should be worse off." As we move forward in this place and see this reform come through, whilst acknowledging that we will support the bill, at the end of the day I will be keeping a keen eye on the outcomes associated with this. I would like to think that we are going to see positive outcomes, because that is what we seek from this reform. I will be keeping a close eye on and reaching out to the local business community to make sure that they are not adversely impacted by this because in tough times for small businesses and family-owned businesses, the last thing we in this place want to do is make conditions even tougher.

Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (14:58): I speak in support of the bill. Before going into my speech proper, I acknowledge that Fairfield has business owners who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. It is critical to ensure, and my commitment is to ensure, that they have the support they need. In addition to that, with the progression of digitisation of many of the things that we do, and particularly of processes, digital literacy and accessibility are critical, alongside supporting businesses and financial literacy to ensure that they are financially fit for purpose. This is all linked within the bill.

I speak in support of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025, herein referred to as the CID bill, which seeks to connect local businesses within a certain geographical area with the central aim of improving public spaces, stimulating local economies and supporting community building. That is particularly important in Fairfield as we have suburbs such as Villawood, Carramar, Yennora, Fairfield, Fairfield Heights, and many others. Those CBDs are critical, and uplifting them is important to achieve the needed economic and social outcomes. The bill seeks to do that by establishing a dedicated legislative framework for the provision of community

improvement districts in New South Wales. This will enable local businesses to voluntarily come together to fund services, activities and projects to improve their local trade environment and public spaces.

Examples of activities that a CID could undertake include both physical and non-physical interventions. Non-physical interventions include district branding and joint strategic planning; physical interventions include organising events, public art projects and improved public amenity or safety measures. While some CID-like entities currently operate in New South Wales, they have been difficult to establish and lack a clear statutory framework for operation. They are typically funded under the Local Government Act 1993, New South Wales Government or local government grants, or by voluntary business membership fees. This does not provide the funding stability needed for CIDs to flourish. The bill provides for free membership for businesses and business landowners in the CID entity. Working with members, the CID entity can develop projects and provide services and activities in consultation with the local community and councils.

Proposals are supported by the district voters of the CID when more than two-thirds of businesses, and more than half the business landowners, cast their ballot in favour. Confirmation of support from any relevant local council will also be required. Any levies passed on to certain business landowners must be calculated in accordance with the Community Improvement Districts Regulation 2025. With Transport for NSW as the CID authority, the legislative framework will be appropriately overseen. The Government has direct evidence of the healthy appetite for CIDs in New South Wales, following the establishment of its \$5.25 million CID Pilot Program in June 2024, which received a high calibre of submissions under round one. By passing the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025, we are ensuring that the right conditions are set for New South Wales communities to form CIDs with confidence and success. This bill will provide a transparent and accountable framework for measuring progress. It will also help to foster a stronger sense of community and improve the State as a whole. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (15:01): I speak in support of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. This bill is an important and innovative step towards revitalising our town centres, our high streets and local communities. It does have some risks, which many members have spoken about today. I am working with the Opposition and the Independents on amendments to improve the legislation and put some guardrails around those risks. Overall, the bill creates a practical, community-driven model that empowers businesses, landowners and residents to collectively invest in and improve their shared spaces and, ultimately, bring economic benefits to businesses within those districts. It is a framework that is much needed and, as members have mentioned today, a lot of communities, including mine, have chambers of commerce that sometimes struggle to get initiatives up. This legislation will provide a framework and an opportunity to make things happen.

My electorate has significant issues, particularly with vacant shopfronts. This bill provides an opportunity for focus and structure. It will deliver local initiatives through a mechanism that includes an association of businesses and landlords forming for the purpose of putting together a proposal. It will be positive to have that communication and engagement between landlords and business owners, with landlords involved in community discussions that impact businesses. A proposal with a detailed budget will be developed for a defined area to provide services, activities or projects. The association will consult with local council, residents, businesses and landlords in the area before submitting the proposal to the authority, Transport for NSW. Importantly, the proposal will be put to a vote.

The proposed amendments were made after the initial consultation. They deal with changes to those thresholds in order to give business a louder voice and are very welcome. If the thresholds are met, the project will go to council for approval; and landholders in the district will be subject to a levy to bring that project to fruition. A number of successful CID pilot programs are already in place, including the Clarence Valley project to enhance public spaces through murals; a project called Neon Playground 2.0 Sydney, which is Sydney's largest Asian-Australian cultural festival; and the Inner West Ale Trail that has led to an explosion of local breweries. We have heard about initiatives in Penrith as well. The Government has carried out significant stakeholder consultation to listen to those concerns.

I have also consulted extensively with businesses and chambers of commerce in my community, and with Business NSW, Local Government NSW, the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia and Mainstreet Australia. Those stakeholders have indicated their support but also possible risks, particularly for businesses doing it tough that may have to meet an extra payment to enable a CID project. I mention also that I have been a small business owner. I had a shop on a high street, so I know what death by a thousand cuts feels like. Business costs were front of mind for me when I considered this legislation. I also know the importance of having a vibrant shopping strip and bringing people into the area, holding local events, and having innovative projects that ultimately mean that every business is better off regardless of having to make some financial contribution. I note that the investment from landlords might be passed on to tenants, but involving landlords in the levy is critically important.

I have also spoken to business stakeholders in communities where those pilot programs are in place, like in Murwillumbah. Key provisions, such as part 5B of the bill, outline how proposals must be transparently developed, advertised and scrutinised before a ballot can occur. This model is not new; it is adapted from the business improvement districts [BIDs] framework that has been successfully implemented in the United Kingdom and Canada. In the UK, where they have been operating since 2004, over 330 BIDs are now operating across the country. They include towns and cities of all sizes, even small ones like Halifax. BIDs in the UK have funded projects such as enhancing cleaning and maintenance of streets, all the way through to branding campaigns for high streets and shopping precincts. Importantly, the UK experience shows that BIDs help reinvigorate areas by unlocking private sector investment and provide for sustained coordination. The CID model in New South Wales will closely follow that proven approach and be adapted for our local needs.

I thought closely about my local community as I considered whether this legislation could practically be applied to our villages in Pittwater. In Newport, Narrabeen and on the edges of Avalon, we see shop after shop with vacancy signs. Stubborn landlords who are unwilling to engage, have onerous contract terms, or simply will not reduce rent are having a domino effect on the number of shops in the area and reduced foot traffic. I am supportive of initiatives like this that have to pass a very high threshold and have the support of business to be able to put together and implement some innovative projects. To that effect, if a levy is applied and the shop is vacant, it will become quasi empty-shop levy by virtue of the fact that the landlord will not be able to pass that levy on to a tenant. It might be minimal, and financial incentives do not seem to overcome the hurdle of leasing vacant premises, but at least it brings attention to the fact that we want these areas to be vibrant shopping hubs and not spaces left vacant.

I also recognise that this bill carries forward the legacy of the former member for Pittwater, and former planning Minister, Rob Stokes, who was a champion for community-driven urban renewal. I have spoken to him in the past couple of weeks because I wanted to learn his thoughts on whether the CID program could be used in areas of Pittwater. He knows too well some of the issues our area is facing. He confirmed that he thinks this structure is definitely of benefit and will support the community. He made the point—which I have expressed to the Government—that there should be an opportunity for funding and grants at the initial stage. Chambers of commerce are often volunteer-run and do not have enough time to create projects and implement them. Some sort of seed funding, grant funding or dollar-for-dollar matched funding would give those programs a kickstart. That would give business in the area real confidence that we can get the CIDs off the ground, particularly in the early stages. We are pushing for grants to be made available to businesses to make those innovative projects happen.

I honour the vision of the bill. I have been to the United Kingdom and seen some CIDs in action—or at least been in districts where they have been implemented. I think something needs to change, and I am supportive of a framework to drive those initiatives. However, as I mentioned, I will support some of the foreshadowed amendments to put in guardrails and to consider businesses that are struggling to ensure that they get value from the CID proposal. A CID in Pittwater could go a long way to activating vacant shopfronts. There are opportunities with artists, pop-ups and start-ups coming to the area for a short time. It could fund local events to bring people back to our high streets. On a number of occasions, high streets have been closed for market days. A CID could bring branding and advertising to promote Pittwater as a destination for high street shopping.

I am supportive of the bill, and I am very pleased that the former member for Pittwater did a lot of the groundwork behind it. As the current member for Pittwater, I am proud to continue that legacy. I support and commend the bill to the House.

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (15:11): I contribute to debate in support of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. This is not just a legislative framework; it is an invitation to reimagine how our streets, our town centres, our laneways and our public spaces can be revitalised by local people, for local people. The model put forward in the bill is rooted in partnership. It brings together local businesses, landowners, councils and communities—not in competition, but in collaboration. It recognises something those of us in local communities know all too well: The people who live and work in a place are the ones who know it best.

Community improvement districts, or CIDs, are about unlocking the full potential of our local places. They offer a model of urban governance that is community-focused, collaborative and, crucially, locally led. Through this bill, for the first time in New South Wales and Australia, we are giving businesses, landowners, councils and community members the tools they need to create vibrant, healthy and inclusive places. This is not just good urban policy; it is smart economic policy, and it is a powerful expression of democratic renewal, placing more power in the hands of communities themselves.

In my electorate of Strathfield, which is one of the most diverse in the country, there is an appetite for exactly this type of locally driven change. Whether it is community festivals in Burwood Park, revitalisation efforts in Campsie or the ambitions of our Wellbeing Strathfield initiative, people want a say in the future of their

neighbourhoods. They want streets that feel safe and alive. They want spaces that reflect their stories and their aspirations, and they want to be part of the solution. This bill speaks to that desire.

The benefits of CIDs are wideranging. For local communities, they mean better public spaces: public art, lighting, seating greening. They create places where families feel welcome, older residents feel safe and young people want to gather. They support a sense of pride in place. For businesses, CIDs provide a way to pool resources, coordinate efforts and build a stronger trading environment. In places where CIDs have been trialled, we have seen increased foot traffic, higher sales and more local jobs. Perhaps more importantly, we have seen stronger networks—people working together across sectors to achieve shared outcomes. For councils, this model offers a way to deliver place-based outcomes that build upon, rather than duplicate, existing services, always with local control and alignment to strategic planning. With proper consultation and clear accountability, councils remain at the heart of the process.

This is a carefully designed model. The requirement for a democratic ballot, where two-thirds of businesses and a majority of landowners must support a proposal, ensures that a CID can only succeed if it genuinely reflects community support. The role of Transport for NSW, as the CID authority, is to add clarity and consistency in governance. The levy system, with hardship protections, ensures transparency and fairness in how CIDs are funded. The diversity of the pilot projects already underway, from the Haymarket cultural precinct to the Inner West Ale Trail and the Murwillumbah arts district, shows that this model is flexible, inclusive and adaptable across metropolitan and regional contexts.

But the opportunity for CIDs goes beyond aesthetics or commerce. In Strathfield, where more than 60 per cent of residents were born overseas, we know that great places help build great communities. When we invest in place making, we invest in belonging, wellbeing and social cohesion. We create spaces that reflect our multicultural identity, elevate First Nations heritage and bring people together. That is exactly what the bill supports. It is values-led policy, empowering communities to create healthier, safer, more connected neighbourhoods. In a time when people are doing it tough with rising costs and social disconnection, we need a policy that builds community from the ground up. The Community Improvement Districts Bill seeks to do that.

When I look at the community I represent—when I speak with small business owners in Campsie, Homebush, Homebush West, Croydon Park, Burwood, Belfield, Strathfield and right across my electorate—I see people who want to be part of something bigger than themselves. They are people who want their streets not just to be busy, but to be beautiful. They are people who want local jobs, local pride and local voice. I commend the Minister and her team for their consultative, responsive and thoughtful approach to this legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (15:16): On behalf of the Greens I oppose the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. The bill allows for the establishment of community improvement districts, or CIDs. In her second reading speech, the Minister described CIDs as follows:

This model empowers a group of local businesses to elect to form an entity. This entity will then develop a proposal to provide services, activities and projects within a defined geographic area. The proposal is voted on by relevant stakeholders and, if successful, a levy is raised to fund the proposal.

The model provides that if half the landowners and two-thirds of the businesses in a designated area agree—with a voter turnout of just 25 per cent—then a levy can be imposed on all the businesses in the area. The CIDs are said to be designed to deliver place making, streetscaping, local event economy and landscaping for the improvement of the local area. They are reminiscent of the "business improvement districts" that have been widely used in the United States of America and the United Kingdom, despite a controversial history. They are viewed by community advocates as handing control of decisions that should rest with communities, in partnership with local and State governments, over to businesses and business interests.

The bill establishes a CID authority under Transport for NSW, to which proposals by CIDs are to be sent. Let us be honest with ourselves. Despite the feel-good name of the community improvement districts, this bill does not empower communities; it empowers businesses. It does not democratise decision-making; it centralises it in the hands of property owners and large commercial interests. There was an example of that in an earlier iteration of this policy in Pyrmont, where the Star casino was guiding a similar type of district. The bill does not build vibrant, creative or inclusive places; it risks creating exclusive enclaves managed by unelected private groups with minimal public oversight or accountability.

The Greens are strong supporters of genuine place making, creating thriving local economies and supporting local businesses, and empowering communities to shape the places in which they live and work. But this bill does none of those things in any meaningful sense. Instead, it hands control of public space and neighbourhood planning over to the loudest, wealthiest and most organised business voices at the expense of smaller businesses, local residents and democratically elected councils. As other members have said in their

contributions, there is a big issue with vacant commercial properties. Those issues also exist in the Balmain electorate. It is a critical issue across the city. Those empty commercial properties would be an important place to start charging a levy. Getting those places activated again would be an important start to the activation of our high streets. Unfortunately, the rebrand of business improvement districts, or BIDs, as community improvement districts, or CIDs, has been done to give the impression that this is something new, collaborative and community led. But changing the name does not change the structure. The core model remains unchanged: It is a mechanism that allows business groups to raise levies and make decisions about public spaces, events and infrastructure, all without genuine community involvement or accountability.

Let us be clear about the so-called democratic process—something The Greens are most concerned about. This bill allows a levy to be imposed if just 50 per cent of landowners and two-thirds of businesses in an area agree, with only 25 per cent voter turnout. In our minds, that is not democratic. That is a fast-track for powerful business interests to potentially impose levies and dictate terms to an entire precinct, even if the majority of small businesses, residents and community voices oppose it. What is more concerning is that residents—people who live in those areas, walk the streets, raise families and participate in their local communities—will have no say at all under this bill. They cannot vote. They cannot object. They are invisible in this framework. In effect, the bill privileges property ownership and commercial power over the broader public interest.

It is not just The Greens who are raising concerns. In its submission, Local Government NSW made it clear that there are serious flaws in the governance structure and the approval process, and there is a lack of transparency. It recommended that councils should be engaged at the start of the process and not be just given a veto power at the end. It raised legitimate concerns about duplication, conflict with strategic planning documents and the lack of coordination with existing council works. As far as I am aware, those concerns have not been addressed. The Greens City of Sydney Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore, who has years of experience in local place making, grants administration and small business support, has plainly stated that she would not support a bill of this type because we have seen what happens in practice. The big players can dominate, as I was talking about with The Star casino. The CIDs currently being trialled are not the same as what this bill proposes. Those trials were often council led, with clear community outcomes and oversight. In contrast, the bill gives too much power to business groups that are not elected, not representative and not accountable.

Let us also look at international examples. The Government has pointed to similar models in the United Kingdom and New Zealand, but one key difference has been ignored: the community voice. In Christchurch, for example, CIDs must involve community boards and work collaboratively with councils and local residents. They are not just business led; they are genuinely co-governed. This bill does not attempt to meet that standard. What is also striking is the lack of public engagement with this legislation. Only 25 submissions were received during the consultation phase, and none of them are publicly available. For a bill that proposes such sweeping changes to how our public spaces are managed and how levies are imposed, that lack of transparency is deeply concerning. It raises questions about whose voices were heard and whose were ignored. It suggests that the Government has failed to put in the work to convince local communities of the merits of the bill or to generate any enthusiasm about the proposed scheme.

We have also seen who is supporting the bill. The Property Council, one of the strongest proponents, thinks the model is still too regulated. It wants even fewer checks and balances. The Greens' concerns are that this is not about empowering small local businesses but about giving big business a bigger say with less oversight. In fact, as I was saying, some of the current CIDs, like the New Sydney Waterfront Company, are comprised of large corporations like Crown Resorts and The Star casino. Is this who we want deciding how our public spaces are used? And let us talk about equity, because I think it is a really important consideration. The very businesses that the bill claims to support—local cafes, family-run shops, creative startups—are often the ones least able to participate in time-intensive CID planning processes. They are the ones who can least afford to pay additional levies, yet they will be the ones carrying the cost if larger corporations seek to reap their own benefits. Worse still, those levies could drive up rents in high street areas, pushing out the very same small businesses that give our communities their diversity and character.

The Greens do not believe we need a new piece of legislation or a new bureaucracy within Transport for NSW to support local business or enliven our streets. Councils already have the tools and the partnerships to do that—and many of them are doing it well. Through business chamber grants, main street revitalisation programs, local festivals and public art, we are already seeing creative, community-driven place making happening every day. So we have to ask: What problem is this bill actually solving? There is no evidence of a widespread demand for this model. There is no clear problem statement, and the fact that the overseeing authority will sit within a fairly bloated agency in Transport for NSW makes it look more like a bureaucratic power grab than a genuine community-building initiative.

The Greens support vibrant local economies, strong communities and inclusive planning, but we cannot support a bill that sidelines councils, excludes residents and hands over public space to private business groups. If the Government is serious about creating vibrant, safe and inclusive places, it should start by listening to the people who live and work in them, not just the ones who own them. While I appreciate the intent of the bill, it does not bring us closer to a vibrant, community-led future. It takes us backwards towards a model that prioritises profit over people and private control over the public good. For those reasons, The Greens oppose the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025.

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (15:24): I contribute to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. In doing so, I note that the bill is about community, business and government coming together in the name of cohesion, safety and vibrancy. That is my interpretation, and I think it is the intention of the Minister and the Government. The bill establishes a dedicated legislative framework for the provision of community improvement districts [CIDs] in New South Wales—the first of its kind in our State and, indeed, in Australia. The bill provides an unprecedented opportunity for local businesses, business landowners and communities to partner with government and councils to develop solutions that help shape future local trading environments and, more importantly, breathe new life and vibrancy into local neighbourhood spaces across the State.

What are CIDs? As the Minister has said, a CID is a model of urban governance that empowers a group of local businesses to elect to form an entity. I note the contribution from the member for Balmain, which also included the Minister's statement. That entity is made up of a group of people with the aim of boosting business, bringing community together, having a governance model that works, and providing services, activities and projects within a defined geographic area. The proposal is voted on by relevant stakeholders and, if successful, a levy is raised to fund the proposal. Some of the physical interventions that other members have spoken of include events and programming, public art and beautification projects, improved public amenity, and security and safety measures, which is something that many locals speak to me about, particularly in the village of Springwood, where my office is located.

One example of a general benefit is that CIDs provide a way for businesses and business landowners to formally partner with councils, government and the community to deliver improved, place-based outcomes as well as enhance the local trading environment and encourage economic growth. Again, as an example, the village of Springwood in the Blue Mountains has a couple of events every year where businesses move some of their trade out onto the street. It is usually in the warmer months. We have musicians playing in the grounds of the local church. People need to have places where they can sit down, greet their neighbours, have a chat and see what is on display, whether it is a piece of artwork or some sort of trading entity.

Another community benefit is extra lighting or signage that encourages activation and vibrancy. When we have more people using and enjoying streets and public places, it encourages more interaction. That is what people tell us, as members of Parliament and as their representatives, that they need. Especially when many small businesses are struggling or the weather is bad, they need to see those spaces developed to encourage people to come together. When businesses work together with community, everyone benefits. With the CID model, local businesses will be able to pool funds and coordinate activities more than just a couple of times a year.

One of the benefits of the bill to councils generally is that they will have a high level of control about what is being proposed by a CID in their local areas, and will be able to ensure a CID's proposal aligns with their own policies, strategies and plans. One of the reasons that the Minister has outlined for the necessity of standalone legislation is so that communities across this State can embrace the possibility, whether they are part of a pilot project or not, and have the opportunity to elect to improve their local areas. The resounding success of the CID pilot program demonstrates that they can, and will, work.

I turn to the Springwood district again and acknowledge that the State Government, in the second round, will be providing \$400,000 to the Blue Mountains City Council to help revitalise the Springwood main street. It is about supporting those local businesses who tell us they are doing it tough, and boosting the local economy while making the town centre of Springwood a more vibrant place. I congratulate Blue Mountains City Council on its success with the grant.

The trial partnership approach between council, business and community representatives will look at non-physical and physical place-based interventions. An example of an intervention that will improve Macquarie Road in Springwood is the Telstra Park upgrade, which will provide accessible seating and landscaping, and move the bus shelter to allow new interactive play elements and an enhanced green space. Those at home who are watching, glued to their screens at the moment, will know that this particular little park is in desperate need of some love, and the upgrade will be very well received by the community. Another exciting proposal is a trial parklet, or pop-up outdoor dining and seating space, outside Macquarie Road's Townhouse Plaza, near the roundabout.

This trial parklet, which is proposed to be a pop-up shared space, will be probably one of the most visible parts of the proposal. It will be similar to what happened in Darby Street in Newcastle in recent years, where sandstone blocks, umbrellas and tables gave residents and visitors extra space to sit and enjoy the outdoors together. This project is about supporting local business and boosting the local economy, and it will absolutely create a more vibrant and pretty streetscape and inject new life into the street.

A survey of businesses, youth and community will provide insights into the trialled enhancements, activations and support programs designed to improve amenity and access to green space and to social and entertainment opportunities for a range of demographics. I again congratulate the Blue Mountains City Council, which is always making applications for a range of grants to improve the Blue Mountains local government area. I congratulate the council on the success of this grant in the second stage of the pilot program. I look forward to seeing it come to fruition over the next 12 months. In the long term, the project aims to support the local economy and social cohesion and activation that I spoke of in the beginning. Particularly for an area that has a number of older people, accessibility and access to green spaces along the main shopping strip are important. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (15:34): I make a contribution to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. I see a number of opportunities in regional areas for this sort of framework to be put in for local businesses. For those little towns that surround the main town, where we have a small number of shops that look to be able to get together, I believe the bill provides a framework that allows them to come together and have assurances of some stability. I do not think it is something that will work everywhere; for many places, the idea of additional fees and levies is something that they would not consider.

However, the bill has a number of protections. The councils themselves can veto any community improvement district [CID] proposal or initiative. The requirement to have two-thirds of businesses approve any concept is another level of protection, along with making sure that 50 per cent of landowners also give approval. A number of approvals will need to be undertaken before any project can get up and about. Smaller communities—those satellite communities, where we have a main street with a number of shops—are looking at ways to reinvigorate their business. That can be done through small festivals or markets. Some of those measures are not high-expense items; they just need highly motivated individuals to undertake them. Of course, making sure that everyone in a community is supportive of those measures is an important part of the process. The CIDs can only be successful if we make sure that not only the businesses involved but also the community itself are approving them. That is where I see the roles of councillors and the council itself having input and the ability to veto a proposal if it is not supported. Having the ability in these areas of local decision-making can produce a lot of local benefits. It can really activate those places.

Denman, a small town out near the Muswellbrook local government area, often feels it does not get its fair share of the deal, but there is a strong small business community there. The main street is absolutely beautiful. It has been done up under the Resources for Regions program, because it is a mining town. It is a great place to live. The business community there has put on a number of little festivals that bring so many people to town. Most recently, the Diesel, Rust and Dust Truck and Machinery Show was fantastic. It brought truckies from all over New South Wales to admire each other's trucks. It was a great festival, and it brought a lot of people to the main town. Paying for traffic control and some of the other incidentals is quite a task. They came to me and mentioned it. It is difficult at the council level, because the council is saying, "Well, we said no to these guys over there, so we can't say yes to you." We got the problem sorted, the festival went ahead and it was all a great success. Those little communities want a structure, I believe, which forms something like a co-op for them to be able to do what they are doing.

I am a big believer in the potential of co-ops in regional New South Wales. They provide stronger community and a stronger regional community in many ways, and so I am very supportive of these type of ideas where businesses can get together. However, there are some concerns with the bill in terms of how it is actually delivered, the structure around it, and making sure that we are looking after all participants. My colleague will move a number of amendments, which I hope the Government considers. They will make the bill stronger and create a more successful model.

One of my concerns is the duplication of the role of councils. There is a high risk that this bill will allow councils to force little communities, like Denman for example, to raise a CID to enforce expenditure when the council should be doing that in the first place. Although I hope that councils will not partake in this, it is something that we do have to be aware of. Making sure that we have an accurate list of businesses in a particular area is another major difficulty. A whole bunch of challenges are presented by businesses in small towns that have a variety of different owners. For example, we may be dealing with a business manager instead of a business owner. More work needs to be done to make sure we get that right.

The bill will be more successful if we involve business chambers, which are hugely important in our areas. They would pull the ideas of the business community together and provide it with a single voice. I would like to see a greater role for business chambers involving their input across the board in the community improvement district model. They are a very strong tool in our communities, and it is a shame to leave them out. There is an opportunity to have them inside the tent to help make sure that some of the issues that we are trying to avoid do not become a major concern. My biggest concern with the bill is that the democratic process only requires 66 per cent approval for a community improvement district to get up, meaning that a number of businesses that do not want to be a part of it will still be affected.

We must have an option for businesses that may not see the same economic benefit as the other 66 per cent. This could be a hardship clause if a small business has financial problems or a clause that allows us to support businesses to submit an appeal to Transport for NSW, which can determine whether the financial benefit of the scheme will benefit that particular small business. A small legal business, for example, would not benefit from a festival no matter how many people are walking through the town. I am absolutely sure that legal businesses in regional New South Wales would contribute money anyway because they normally sponsor all of the clubs and festivals. I use this example because most legal businesses are not likely to be in hardship—although many lawyers may disagree—but they would also not get a great benefit from festivals.

We have to give these types of businesses an option where they are not paying for something that will bring them no economic benefit. That is what it is all about. We are bringing a group of businesses together so they can put money into a structure like this and ensure they are all getting an economic benefit. In summary, I am concerned that we will burden small business if we do not create measures to allow them to appeal and to have their voices heard across the board. We should not be putting a greater burden on small business at a time when they are already struggling. However, I do believe a structure like this can support a community that is looking to invigorate its streets. We need to support and progress structures like this so that small communities can determine their own economic initiatives and small businesses can thrive.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): I totally agree with the member for Upper Hunter about Denman. Many of the good people who come from the areas of Denman, Sandy Hollow and Giants Creek have surnames beginning with "H".

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (15:44): I am proud to support of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. It is a transformative piece of legislation that puts power back in the hands of local communities and businesses and helps them shape the vibrant welcoming places that we all want to live in, work in and visit. I note the comments from the member for Upper Hunter, but this piece of legislation is not just about invigorating places with festivals. It is also about making sure that central hubs, cities and areas are vibrant and safe to walk around. The member gave the example of a law firm, which would benefit if it was safer and easier for people to go to.

This is the first legislative framework of its kind in either New South Wales or Australia, but it is not new. It has been tested, and we know that it works. It creates a clear and dedicated path for community improvement districts [CIDs] to be established. It allows local businesses, landowners, councils and community members to come together to collaborate, coordinate and fund initiatives that enhance neighbourhoods. We do not need to look very far to see the potential. My electorate of Coogee has the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct, which is one of the shining lights of the CID Pilot Program. The precinct is a centre of excellence for health and research collaboration with UNSW and other health precincts. It also a 24-hour hub for local businesses, workers, students and patients and their families. They all deserve a precinct which is vibrant, safe and thriving.

Through the CID process, Randwick is developing grassroots initiatives tailored to its unique needs. Changes include improving street lighting and active public spaces and creating green corridors that make the precinct more walkable, liveable, inviting and safe. This is exactly the kind of partnership we need. Local people are identifying local challenges and driving local solutions. The Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct staged a free creative festival that connected the health campus and main university campus of UNSW with the wider area. People may be unaware that the Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct is a 24-hour economy that is also being funded by the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and Transport for NSW. Everyone who works, studies and plays there should feel safe. We must ensure that it is a vibrant precinct.

I take a moment to address members who seek to oppose this legislation, and I ask them to reflect on why it is important. There are three reasons why this CID legislation is so important: it is a mechanism that has helped businesses to organise, work together and advocate for common interests; CIDs give businesses the confidence to work together knowing that the goals of others are also aligned; and, finally, this sort of model would be very difficult to organise without this legislation. There are no guidelines on how they should be established or administered, or for how the patchwork of regulations and bureaucratic hurdles can be overcome.

Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct is part of the CID Pilot Program, and it is my hope that areas like Bondi Junction mall can also create a CID. Members who have not been to Bondi Junction mall recently should note that there are a huge number of shop vacancies. One of our challenges is to get buy-in from different landowners who are unwilling to engage and invigorate the area. We have a very active chamber of commerce; we have an active council. We have an active community that are coming together and want to see the mall area invigorated. The stoppage is actually from landholders who do not see the benefit of even filling their shopfronts. The bill creates a framework.

Despite all the benefits that we see in Randwick and across the State, which many members of this House have spoken to, it should not surprise anyone that the party of protest, not progress, opposes the bill. The Greens, once again, will stand in the way of progress and this framework. The member for Newtown is in the Chamber. It is interesting because we can take the Inner West Ale Trail as an example. That pilot program has brought together 17 independent breweries, spanning six suburbs—Marrickville, Newtown, St Peters, Camperdown, Enmore and Rozelle—creating a destination for locals and visitors alike. It is a phenomenal success story, driving foot traffic, supporting jobs and—to be honest—bringing a lot of fun to the inner west.

I ask what The Greens have against local businesses thriving in the very communities they claim to represent. What do they have against people coming together to enjoy themselves while supporting those businesses. Or—dare I say—is it just that they do not like beer? By opposing the bill, The Greens are effectively opposing the Inner West Ale Trail itself. They are standing against small brewers, local jobs and the vibrant community spirit that those businesses foster. I am probably the number one champion of the eastern suburbs. No-one champions the eastern suburbs as much as I do.

Mr Anthony Roberts: What about Daley?

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: There is a boundary. It stops at Alison Road.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery): Members will direct their comments through the Chair.

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL: The inner west is Australia's undisputed craft beer capital. Yet The Greens seem absolutely determined to roll down the shutters and pour it down the drain. That is very typical of The Greens—the party of protest, not progress. They are given an opportunity to support small businesses and vibrancy, but they stand in the way. They talk a big game on vibrancy, but too often those calls fall flat. I call on The Greens, rather than simply opposing the bill, to engage with the Government, like the crossbench and the Opposition. I say enough of the grandstanding; it is time for The Greens to stop playing politics and start backing local businesses and local communities. I challenge them to front up and explain to the Inner West Ale Trail, the Newtown business chamber and the small business owners in their electorates why they oppose a model that is proven to work not just here but around the world.

But I digress. The bill is about much more than beer. It is about safe, connected streets. It is about public art that sparks joy. It is about lighting that makes people feel safe walking home at night. It is about green spaces that cool our neighbourhoods. It is about giving local businesses a voice, a structure and the means to make a real difference. We have seen the evidence through the CID pilots, from Randwick to the inner west and from Walsh Bay to the Clarence Valley. These are grassroots solutions created for locals, by locals. The success speaks for itself. This is good legislation. It is practical, it is democratic and it delivers real outcomes for our community. I am incredibly proud to support it, and I urge every member of this House—especially those opposite—to do the same.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (15:52): I contribute to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025 and acknowledge the contribution made by my Greens colleague the member for Balmain. As she said, The Greens are not supportive of the bill. The member for Coogee may be interested to know that there is a bit more to the story about the Inner West Ale Trail. In fact, I was very pleased to be there at the launch of the Inner West Ale Trail—what is now known as the Original Inner West Ale Trail. It was a map painted by a local inner west artist on the side of a building at the top of Enmore Road, with proud support from local craft breweries. Believe it or not, we did not require the State Government to try to claim ownership over something called a business improvement district—or a community improvement district—in order to support our local businesses coming together to form the craft brewery capital of Australia. Members will be interested to know—and I read from the website of the Original Inner West Ale Trail—that in actual fact:

The Inner West Ale Trail was conceived, illustrated and produced—
by someone, and the name is there—

as a personal creative project.

It was a self-initiated project by a local artist that then secured New South Wales Government grant funding to bring the concept to life, collaborating with a range of other artists and local breweries. Over the past five years, that individual has continued to develop and manage the project with care, passion and connection to our local communities, securing additional funding to ensure its continued success as a community resource. The website goes on to state:

Unfortunately, this project is currently on hold as I navigate a challenging situation to advocate for my intellectual property and creative concept and the time and effort dedicated to this project.

While this has been a challenging process, I remain committed to championing the value of creative work, supporting the creative arts and the individuals who bring these projects to life.

Members may be interested that the current Inner West Ale Trail was the one that was supported. It took the concept—a creative community project initiated by a local artist—and turned it into a different project. It is now getting grants from the State Government and being held up as the champion by the Minister in the other place, as if these community improvement district grants and this model had created the Inner West Ale Trail. I am sorry, but the Young Henrys Brewery was there well before John Graham started talking about the Inner West Ale Trail.

In fact, if members cast their minds back—and this is going back a few Greens leaders—in 2013 then Greens leader Christine Milne was named craft beer industry association number one beer enthusiast along with Rob Oakeshott. That was because, at the time, both Labor and the Liberals partnered to impose taxes on the craft brewery associations so that the big players in the brewery industry would get tax exemptions but small craft breweries would not. Christine Milne was leader of the Australian Greens at the time. She came with me to Young Henrys. Bob Brown has been there as well. Indeed, Adam Bandt has been there. They have all been to those inner west breweries.

We know that it does not take the Labor Party in government, claiming ownership over community initiatives, to build and improve vibrancy. In fact, the biggest risk to vibrancy in the inner west over the past decade was when the Labor Opposition lined up with the Barry O'Farrell Liberal Government to support the Kings Cross and CBD lockdown. They should not talk to me about who supports vibrancy or who wants a nice, vibrant inner city community. It is not because we see bureaucrats naming ridiculous projects and attempting to undermine local democracy. On paper, the bill is intended to enhance our public spaces and stimulate community development by establishing a framework for local businesses to come together and have a say over place making and economic development policies. That sounds innocuous enough. But, in reality, it seeks to establish a new model of urban governance that would parallel the existing democratically elected structure we already have in place, which is called local government.

The bill is a way of cutting people out of decisions about their local communities and, instead, allowing businesses to have a separate say. It uses weasel words such as "community" improvement districts when it is well known that they are established globally as business improvement districts. It is, in effect, a gift to businesses that comes at the expense of genuinely public, accessible spaces. The name is an absolute misnomer because the bill is not about community improvement so much as business improvement. It is not about making our spaces better for the people who actually use them; it is about making them optimal environments where people can visit, spend their money and give their personal data to businesses. It is about profit, not people.

Indeed, the predecessors to the community improvement districts—an initiative of the former Liberal State Government—were literally called business improvement districts, as similar schemes in the United Kingdom, Canada, Ireland and Singapore are known. Like the schemes of those overseas jurisdictions, the bill hands powers to a consortium of local businesses to carefully curate the character and experience of an area by controlling things like branding, programming, security and aspects of design like lighting and street furniture—for example, street furniture with barriers in the middle so the homeless cannot sleep on it at night. It would give businesses formal power to devise and enact an agenda to turn the spaces in which we go out to dine and drink, shop, and see our community and art into highly sanitised and exclusive playgrounds for consumers, not communities.

Notably, the first of four objects of the Act in clause 4 of the bill is "to stimulate economic growth and community development". The order of those two things is not an accident. Part 2 of the bill confers a range of administrative functions upon Transport for NSW relating to community improvement districts, including the ability to conduct CID proposal ballots; determine CID proposals after a ballot has taken place; and impose, collect and distribute CID levies and enter into contracts and other arrangements with CID entities, among other administrative functions. Meanwhile, part 3 of the bill sets out the detail around how CIDs can be proposed and established via ballot, and the engagement that must be undertaken with local councils and the community. It almost sounds like they will be running the community.

It is worth noting that, contrary to the Minister's extremely questionable choice in her second reading speech to frame the bill as "self-determination" for businesses and business landowners, clause 12 (4) of the bill

considers a ballot established by a CID to be valid if as little as 25 per cent of the businesses in the area vote. In proposing to establish a CID, businesses are empowered by clause 8 of the bill to also put forward a proposal on the structure of levies that would be imposed by Transport for NSW, including how the levy is to be calculated, which class of business may be exempt from the levy and whether there are to be levy-free threshold amounts. As few as one in four businesses in an area could be involved in a decision that will impact all businesses in the area, including whether they will have to pay a levy that they never agreed to in the first place. This is an alarmingly anti-democratic proposition and one that has rightly drawn the ire of businesses in other jurisdictions where it has been implemented.

Last April in Somerset in the United Kingdom [UK] business owners flat out refused to pay their business improvement district levies, citing a lack of transparency by BID members about how levy funds were being spent and how decisions were being made. Speaking to *The Guardian* in the UK, one shop owner said that the BID had "divided the traders", with another wryly saying:

Councils love Bids because then they don't have to spend on things like hanging baskets, festivals and street cleaning.

In another April 2024 article on the failure of BIDs, the same masthead spoke to community campaigners and business owners who described the bid as a "tax" and giving away money to somebody they do not know so they can do with it whatever they please. But we do not need to look overseas to see the potential for BIDs to unravel in a spectacularly scandalous fashion. We need only look as far as the Sydney Western Harbour Business Improvement District, which was established in 2021 and was one of the earliest test cases for this form of public-private urban governance. About this time last year that BID came under intense scrutiny after the City of Sydney—off the back of a motion by Greens Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore—wrote and expressed concerns about the BID's links to The Star casino, which had long been enmeshed in scandals relating to money laundering and other illegal activities.

The City of Sydney had provided \$90,000 in grants to the BID, including \$40,000 for a "knowledge exchange grant" in 2021 and a further \$50,000 in 2023 to develop an "Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) vision" for the waterfront. Interestingly, the city mentioned neither of those things when singing the praises of the BID. Instead, it praised the BID for being able to tell council how many people were visiting the precinct, what they were doing, what restaurants they were going to, whether they were locals and whether they were coming via business events. These comments are incredibly revealing about the true nature of the BIDs—or, as we are now calling them, the CIDs—which is not about improving spaces for communities so much as optimising these platforms to maximise business engagement and revenue. [*Extension of time*]

The connective space between shops and restaurants becomes another area in which to bombard us with branding and harvest data—street furniture covered in advertising, slick way-finding signage that makes an area feel like a meticulously designed movie set; being watched to see what shops we go into and for how long; being watched to see what wine we order and what cultural institutions we linger in. That information is collected and fed back to businesses so they can make themselves more appealing to us. And if we are not interested in consuming, we do not even need to bother entering a community improvement district because it will have the power to contract private security and enforce safety measures, which is to say that it will get to decide who can come in and who has to stay out.

Looking abroad shows us what happens when businesses are given free rein to decide. In downtown Manila it is not uncommon to see armed private security personnel roaming spotless outdoor strip malls, and people do not bat an eyelash at this in some parts of Santiago, the capital of Chile. No doubt these are extreme examples, but they sit as a reasonable proposition on a spectrum that starts with seeing private security in leisure precincts that are nominally accessible to the public. I acknowledge that the results of shifting place-making responsibilities away from elected bodies like local councils to businesses are not always completely disastrous. Sometimes they work. Sometimes they are just a non-event. Sometimes they cut across great work that the community has done by its own volition—and done well.

I return to the example of the Inner West Ale Trail. I remind members who refer to the Inner West Ale Trail in this place that that initiative existed before any trial or community improvement district project was even mentioned. It was created as a local initiative, supported by the local council. I attended the launch with the local mayor and local businesspeople. We all know that lots of community chambers, business organisations, initiatives and residents' groups exist to revitalise and create vibrant local communities. The successes of King Street in Newtown, Enmore Road, parts of Redfern and other areas are not the result of some marketer or some person with the correct information and data finding the right details to create a vibrant city. They were created as a result of the diversity of the communities who live there. We do not want a pretend or neon-lit pretence of a community area. We want the actual area.

Think about big shopping centres. There is one in Bangkok where they have created street stalls, faux rivers and faux food stalls that pretend people are buying street food on the streets of Bangkok. But they are inside a massive shopping mall. We do not want that for the people of Sydney, and we do not want that for the people of the inner west. We do not want that for people in any of our communities. We must recognise that businesses contribute so much to our local communities and to making the spaces in which we work, live and play. We know that we do not want empty shopfronts. We do not want our local businesses going broke. There is so much more that local councils can be supported to do that does not involve creating those kinds of models that allow the Minister to attend yet another opening, another advisory council meeting or another place where he champions his enthusiasm for community as he walks in, poses for some photos, cuts a ribbon and walks out.

The reality is that we need recognition and support of our existing local democracy. I am proud to represent a vibrant area like the electorate of Newtown that is home to some of the great breweries of the inner west, but I also know that it is not for the State Government to claim credit for any of those breweries. They are the result of the incredible community innovation, local vibrancy and care that created them. I do not support the bill and The Greens do not support the bill. But we absolutely back in craft brewers.

Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (16:07): I am delighted to contribute briefly to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. I acknowledge my friend and Minister in the other place the Hon. John Graham—who is otherwise known as "Rockin' Johnny" Graham because of all his innovative ideas for investing in our night-time economy and elsewhere. I also acknowledge the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport, who is in the House representing Minister Graham and who will see this legislation come to fruition. I am not the only one who is delighted to see this legislation. Many businesses, Local Government NSW, the local government sector and local councils—particularly local councils that are included in the first round of the pilots—are also pleased. I will deal with them shortly, as well as with the second round of pilots.

At the end of the day, this bill is yet another example of the Minns Labor Government supporting local communities through a streamlined process that will cut bureaucracy and red tape in so many ways. I acknowledge a couple of comments by the member for Newtown in her impassioned contribution. Many community organisations are doing their own thing, and it is indeed fantastic to see communities come together to support and invest in each other's vibrancy. I am advised that the Newtown-Enmore business community has started something with King Street, Enmore Road and Erskineville Road, bringing their communities together to celebrate everything they are. That is wonderful. Every member would welcome and enjoy watching communities come together and organise themselves to celebrate their vibrancy and what makes them unique. My own community of Campbelltown celebrates numerous festivals.

The bill represents the New South Wales Government getting onboard with those initiatives and streamlining the process. The Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025 establishes a dedicated legislative framework for the provisions of the community improvement districts [CIDs] in New South Wales, and it is the first of its kind in the State and Australia. I again credit the Hon. John Graham and all other Ministers and members who have played a pivotal role in establishing this legislation to ensure that streamlining is in place. To confirm and put simply for the record what community improvement districts are, a CID is a model of urban governance. The model empowers a group of local businesses to elect to form an entity. The entity then develops a proposal to provide services, activities and projects within a defined geographic area. The proposal is voted on by relevant stakeholders and, if successful, a levy is raised to fund that proposal.

Some examples of the services, activities and projects that a CID could undertake include non-physical interventions such as district branding, transaction data collection and joint strategic planning, as well as physical interventions such as events and programming, public art and beautification projects, improved public amenity, and security and safety measures. I suggest that all of those things are welcomed in almost any community. I again refer to Local Government NSW's support of the bill, and why not? Any level of government would support having a more streamlined process to support communities to celebrate all that they are. We know that, when communities display and celebrate all that they are, it drives their local economy and makes sure they put the pride of that community on display for everyone to see. We also know that, when that happens, we see greater investment in those communities and people from other communities coming in to celebrate those communities.

Other benefits of streamlining the establishment of the community improvement districts include providing an incredible opportunity for local businesses, in partnership with business landowners, communities and councils, to take the lead in place activation. CIDs provide a way for businesses and business landowners to formally partner with councils, government and the community to deliver improved place-based outcomes for the community, as well as enhancing the local trading environment and encouraging economic growth, as I referred to earlier in my contribution. New South Wales needs to start sharing in the many benefits CIDs have to offer. Internationally, improvement districts have existed for over 50 years and are now commonplace in North America and the United Kingdom, and even our friends in New Zealand—

Mr Anthony Roberts: Friends?

Mr GREG WARREN: Yes, I agree with my friend the member for Lane Cove: That is debatable at times. Community improvement districts can increase the enjoyment of improved places and new amenities including street art, public seating and all those other investments that are important to enhancing those communities. When I say "enhance", we know that many communities already have wonderful attributes, assets and stories to tell. The bill provides a more streamlined process to allow those communities to tell those stories. The pilot includes the Clarence Valley, Haymarket in Chinatown, the Inner West Ale Trail—which the member for Newtown referred to—Murwillumbah, Muswellbrook, Randwick Health and Innovation Precinct, St Marys under the Penrith City Council, Walsh Bay and YCK Laneways, which is also in the City of Sydney.

I am advised that those councils have welcomed this good initiative with open arms. That is a positive outcome. The pilots will help those communities invest in their local businesses, put themselves on show and work collaboratively to ensure their communities get the investment they deserve. Government members know that the best outcomes are achieved by working together. We also know that, when governments support local businesses and other levels of government, good outcomes are achieved. I believe that is a great outcome, and I urge all members to support the legislation. I thank the House.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (16:15): I contribute to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. I foreshadow that I will move amendments on behalf of some of my colleagues. The first amendment will insert new section 12 (4) (c) into part 3, division 2, which will read, "any business or landowner that is not in favour of the CID proposal in the CID proposal ballot shall not be required to be levied in accordance with section 21 (9) (d)." The second amendment will insert new section 21 (9) (d) into part 4, division 1, which will read, "land that is occupied by a business or a landowner that was not in favour of the CID proposal in the CID proposal ballot."

Let me make absolutely clear that community improvement districts are not community driven; they are revenue driven. The bill is not about partnerships or empowering local voices; it is about the Labor Government walking away from its responsibilities and shifting the burden onto the very people who can least afford it: our small- and medium-sized businesses. Small businesses are not an ATM for government policy failures; they are the beating heart of our main streets, town centres and local economies. They already carry the weight of rising costs, labour shortages, regulatory red tape and inflationary pressure. Now, under this legislation, they are expected to pay for the jobs that government—particularly State government—should.

When I served as the planning Minister—not once but twice—I worked alongside councils, businesses and communities to create a strong department of planning and a dedicated department of regional New South Wales. We did not expect local cafe owners, florists or bookstores to fund murals, bin upgrades or street festivals. We built funding programs to invest in those improvements because that is what good government does. Good government leads, delivers, and takes responsibility. The bill is not about improving communities or bringing people together; it is about Labor covering up its own mismanagement. It gutted the once-great Department of Planning. It abolished the Department of Regional NSW. It gutted the budget through backroom deals with unions.

Now, when the time comes to invest in our streets, CBDs and neighbourhood centres, it does not have the money. Its solution is to pass the bill on to main street businesses and call it "community engagement". Major property developers from the big end of town, like Mirvac or Lendlease, might have the capacity to contribute, with large-scale developments that can absorb those great costs. But that is not the reality for the small restaurant in Gunnedah, the hairdresser in Orange or the corner bakery in Lane Cove. They are already struggling just to pay wages. What is worse is that it is not voluntary: If a business is within a designated improvement district, it pays whether it voted for that CID or not. To me, and to many on this side of the House, that is not empowerment; that is conscription. No new money is coming from the State. There will be no additional resources or long-term funding commitments; there will just be a mechanism to hospital-pass responsibility on to Jan and Darren from the corner store. If any member considering supporting this bill wants to see a mural painted in their town square or a weekend street festival brought to life, then they should do their job. They should lobby the Minister and the Government and work with their council to secure proper funding. That is what good local members actually do, not invent a new tax then pat themselves on the back.

The Liberal and National parties built a system that worked, with strategic investments made by departments that understood planning, infrastructure and regional development. That system delivered real results across the city and in the bush. It did not require squeezing small business owners for every last cent. Let me say it plainly: this Parliament should oppose the bill. I understand the Opposition will attempt to amend it—and I pay tribute to the shadow Minister, Tim James, the member for Willoughby, for the great work that he is doing—but we cannot stand by and allow Labor to disguise a tax grab as community building. We believe in vibrant local economies, empowered councils and strong public investment. We believe that the State Government should carry

its share of that load. Together, let us all invest in communities the right way. Let's respect our local businesses and let's reject this cost-shifting con for what it really is.

Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (16:21): I contribute to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. Many members have referred to local business districts and local areas where the community gathers to shop or obtain services in their local community that are run down. They have referred to local shopfronts that are empty. They have referred to complaints they have received from their community and from businesses in their community about those empty shopfronts and generally run-down business districts. In my electorate there is a certain level of complaint about empty shopfronts in The Entrance town centre and people are asking how that can be addressed as part of a revitalisation of our area. This bill provides an opportunity to do something about it. I am not saying that it is the only way, but it provides an opportunity to businesses located within a particular area to do something about that area, with a view to improving business conditions and community amenity more generally.

The bill aims to provide for the establishment and operation of community improvement districts [CIDs] and to provide for the recognition and functions of community improvement district entities to stimulate economic growth and community development, and for other purposes. First, I will address what a community improvement district is. A CID is a model of urban governance that empowers a group of local businesses to elect to form an entity. That entity then develops a proposal to provide services, activities and projects within a defined geographic area. The proposal is voted on by relevant stakeholders and, if successful, a levy is raised to fund the proposal. The proposals that could be funded by the CID model are community festivals or street signage and branding for a particular location within a township.

Other models of downtown renewal have been attempted and tried throughout the State and throughout the country. In the Newcastle area there was a program called Renew Newcastle that operated successfully for many years. That was a State Government-funded initiative that provided incentives to local landowners to encourage them to allow their empty shopfronts to be tenanted on a no-risk basis to encourage business renewal and township revitalisation in that area. In my electorate, The Entrance town centre already operates a levy on all landowners within the town centre, which is collected, governed and voted on by council. The local businesses get no say in how that levy is formulated or applied. That model has operated in The Entrance town centre for many years to fund street cleaning, street furniture and a series of events put on under the auspices of our local council and The Entrance Town Centre Management.

The CID proposal is another way that development and business improvement can be encouraged in a particular area. It can either work alongside existing programs or in place of programs not currently operating in a particular area. Fundamentally, the power of the bill is that it provides an initiative that can be taken up by businesses in an area. There is value in the proposals in the bill for businesses in an area where there are landowners that are not engaged in the development of their local area. The lazy landlord is a feature of many of our suburbs; it is certainly a feature of The Entrance town centre. There are people who are land banking—in some places, large parcels of land or shopfronts—where, for whatever reason, it suits them financially to have an empty shopfront with a high-asking rent on their asset list or asset books, rather than having that shopfront used at perhaps a lower and more reasonable rent to provide vibrancy to a local area.

There are mechanisms within this bill, under part 4 regarding the funding of the levy, to allow businesses to ensure that everybody who has land within a community improvement district is required to contribute to the improvement and vibrancy in that area. That is the strength of the bill. It goes some way to address those things, and it is an opportunity that is worth exploring in my electorate and in other places across the State. I am in favour of the bill. It will provide an opportunity to businesses within an area that want to do something to improve the vitality and revitalise tired business districts to do so. I commend the bill to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (16:27): In reply: I thank the honourable members for their contributions to debate on the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. In particular I thank the members for the electorates of Monaro, Willoughby, Granville, Wakehurst, Mount Druitt, Kellyville, Blacktown, Sydney, Penrith, Albury, Fairfield, Strathfield, Balmain, Blue Mountains, Upper Hunter, Coogee, Newtown, Campbelltown, Lane Cove and The Entrance. I will speak to some of the issues that have been raised. It would be quite difficult to respond to all of them because there has been such a buffet of different approaches from the Opposition.

The member for Monaro spoke about his experience attending the Brunswick Festival in Melbourne, which has been delivered by a community improvement district-like entity. Over 500 businesses came together to form the Sydney Road Brunswick Association. Those businesses have generated around \$400,000 through a local business land levy to deliver events, activations and place-making initiatives that have collectively benefited the entire retail strip, as well as fostering a strong sense of togetherness and community pride. There is no reason that we cannot have community improvement districts flourishing in a similar way right across the great State of

New South Wales. This bill will enable that to be materialised by establishing a dedicated legislative framework to drive genuine place-based partnerships between government, councils, businesses, business landowners and the wider community.

The member for Granville outlined the unique challenges that some businesses in Western Sydney have endured when trying to improve local amenities. Drawing on the early success of the CID pilot in St Marys, the member for Granville welcomed the opportunities that the bill may afford businesses in other parts of Western Sydney, including her own electorate. Specifically, under CID policy, businesses can take the reins to solve challenges that may be unique to their local communities. Similarly, the member for Willoughby made an important contribution to debate on the bill. I congratulate him on the uptake of conversations and consultation to move the threshold from 50 per cent approval to two-thirds support for the statewide approach.

There was an extraordinary attack on Transport for NSW. Transport for NSW actually facilitated some place-based activations, and I note the one mentioned by the member for Upper Hunter in his contribution. There is some great work being done there. In road safety forums last year, while some communities complained about speed zone reviews reducing the speed limit in their local town centres, some said they saw business benefits from doing so. There was a dual outcome. The member for Willoughby talked about the success of the trials but not about the people in Transport who make them work. That is a bit disappointing but he is a new member, so there is potential room for improvement.

While expressing the belief that CID policy is reform worth pursuing, the member for Willoughby queried why the CID legislative framework will be overseen by a single authority, which is prescribed to be Transport for NSW. Clause 7 prescribes to the authority wideranging functions that Transport is equipped to effectively carry out. The authority will be responsible for ensuring compliance and consistency of CIDs by imposing, collecting and distributing the CID levies, as well as managing a dedicated levy fund. The authority will also be responsible for supporting the implementation of CIDs by providing training, education and capability building. Drawing on Transport's leadership in precinct and place activation, the authority will support CID entities to achieve some of the core objectives of CID policy—that is, to enhance the environment of local neighbourhoods, attract visitation, improve liveability outcomes and facilitate vibrant community life.

Precinct and place activation is directly shaped by roads, streets, adjoining lands, transport networks and the movement of people and things. Given those interdependencies, Transport is very well placed to serve as the authority as it has the expertise to holistically support CID entities. Section 3D of the Transport Administration Act 1988 prescribes that one of the objectives of Transport is to improve the activation of public spaces. That is within the remit of Transport. Moreover, international evidence is that transport agencies and transport issues are central to almost every improvement district. In London, for example, Transport for London works closely with municipalities on the rollout and operation of improvement districts.

I note the concerns of the member for Balmain regarding the role of the community in the CIDs. We agree it is critical that the community has a clear role in community improvement districts. That is why the legislation has explicit requirements for CIDs to engage with their local community in developing a CID proposal. Proposed section 9 not only requires that a consultation report be produced but also, following a foreshadowed amendment, that the report must be made publicly available and must be assessed by the authority when deciding whether to accept a CID proposal. A CID proposal may not be accepted unless there is clear evidence of high-quality consultation and community support.

The member for Newtown expressed concern that councils might be cut out of the CID model. The Government disputes that entirely. Under the CIDs legislation, it is very clear that councils will have a clearly defined role in deciding whether a CID should proceed in their council area. If the council does not support it then there is no appeal right, unlike in other jurisdictions. That is the end. Of course, we hope that councils and CID proponents will be able to agree on a suitable approach for their community but, if they cannot, the council has a veto. We will also require CID entities to agree to a service level agreement with their local council before they proceed. That will set out rules of operation for the CID entity with the council, including when council approval for activities will be required.

The careful work undertaken by the Government to clearly define the role of councils has been reflected in the feedback from Local Government NSW on the revised legislation. In a letter to the Minister for Transport on 23 April 2025, the President of Local Government NSW described Transport's approach to consultation on the bill as being outstanding. The president said, "It is clear that interested stakeholders, including local governments, have been genuinely listened to". That feedback is appreciated and valued, and the Government will continue to work with Local Government NSW and other stakeholders on this important reform. With respect to the concern about excluding the community from public spaces, the foreshadowed amendment from the member for Pittwater will clarify that proposals that seek to undertake activities that would have those effects are not acceptable. The Government thanks her for that amendment.

Finally, I note the concerns about turnout raised by the member for Newtown and the member for Balmain. The proposed legislation requires the same turnout as the Auckland Council policy for improvement districts. As the member for Willoughby noted, around 50 improvement districts operate successfully in Auckland. Unlike in Auckland, however, the New South Wales legislation will prescribe the higher threshold of two-thirds majority support from businesses voters, which provides even further protections for small business. I acknowledge the important amendments to the bill foreshadowed during the debate. An amendment will be moved to add a new section after proposed section 7 requiring the establishment of a business advisory panel, which will advise the authority on matters of policy relating to community improvement districts. Membership of the panel will include the NSW Small Business Commissioner and a nominee of the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia Ltd.

In relation to the making of CID proposals, proposed section 8 (4) sets out a range of activities that a CID can undertake. Amendments have been foreshadowed to section 8 (4) to solidify the benefits that CIDs can deliver for their communities. Additional activities in the bill will include those that help to attract new businesses and fill vacancies, support businesses and residents to achieve net zero outcomes, and support the participation in circular economy and community wealth building activities. Community consultation is a critical element of the CID policy. Proposed section 9 (3) requires CID entities to prepare a report about the outcomes of their consultation and provide it to the authority. An amendment has been foreshadowed to section 9 to require the authority to make the report publicly available in a bid to bolster transparency and public trust. A further amendment has been foreshadowed in relation to consultation to insert a new part 3 into schedule 3, which contains the CID regulation. The new part 3 will pertain to the publication of the report and provide that the consultation report must be published on the authority's website within 30 days of the proposal being accepted.

While it is anticipated that instances when a CID proposal is rejected will be few, it is important for the authority to have the ability to reject a proposal in reasonable circumstances. Proposed section 10 outlines that the reasons that the authority may reject a proposal on reasonable grounds will be prescribed in the regulation. An amendment has been foreshadowed so that the legislation will contain key reasons that the authority may reject a proposal, including if, in the opinion of the authority, the CID proposal may unreasonably exclude members of the public from spaces or areas where the public otherwise has a right of access; if the authority believes there has been inadequate consultation on the CID proposal; if there is no reasonable prospect that each local council whose area is within the boundaries of CID will support the proposal; or if, in the opinion of the authority, there is not a reasonable prospect of the CID proposal achieving the required support in a CID ballot.

Those amendments make clear the importance of accessibility of public space, genuine consultation and the need for community support—including council support—for a CID proposal. An important feature of the CID bill is that after the ballot confirms support from CID businesses and business landowners, the local council must also confirm support for the CID proposal. The CID proposal cannot be approved until the authority has confirmed that the council, or councils, in the local government areas where the CID will be located, support the CID proposal. Section 13 (2) of the bill prescribes that local councils will have a minimum of 30 days to provide confirmation to the authority of their decision to support the CID. While this is only a minimum time frame, we note that it may be difficult for councils to provide their approval in 30 days, especially where the CID proposal needs to be considered by the full council. Conversely, it is important to acknowledge that CID proponents and communities may want to excitedly move forward swiftly with their proposals following a successful ballot. It is proposed that the bill be amended to change the minimum time required for councils to respond to a CID proposal from 30 to 60 days. This amendment is seen as striking a balance between allowing CID proposals to move forward expeditiously and providing councils with the time that they need.

An amendment is foreshadowed to clause 34 to clarify that a local council is not required to give the authority information or a document in circumstances prescribed by the regulations. In a similar vein, proposed schedule 3 reflects that information is not required to be given to the authority where the information, or the information contained in the document, is personal information within the meaning of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998. That amendment strikes a healthy balance between ensuring the authority has access to the information needed to ensure this policy is a success while recognising the importance of protecting personal information held by councils.

The proposed amendment to clause 35 of the bill clarifies that the power to require information and documents does not limit a privilege that a person or body has under another Act or another law. In other words, through the amendment, privileges such as legal professional privilege and the privilege against self-incrimination that persons and bodies already have under Acts and other laws, will not be overridden by this bill. Finally, a new section of the bill is sought to be added after clause 42 requiring the Minister for Small Business to lodge a report to Parliament annually about how the legislation is operating in relation to the small business sector. Small businesses will play a key role in the success of improvement districts in New South Wales. Annual reporting to Parliament will help to provide further oversight of this important issue.

Turning to the report of the Legislative Review Committee on this bill, I note the committee queried the general regulation-making power in the bill under clause 42. The Government considers that this clause, which would allow regulations to address issues that are deemed necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying out or giving effect to the legislation, is appropriate. The bill sets out a clear approach for how CIDs are to be established, operated and administered in New South Wales while retaining the flexibility to adjust the detail of this process over time. Initially, the legislative framework will only apply in the local government areas that currently host a round one CID pilot project. This initial phase of implementation will allow the Government to fine-tune the regulatory framework as we gather on-the-ground insights and learnings about how CIDs will work in practice.

Schedule 3 to the bill contains a regulation outlining the methods for levy calculation. This provides direct parliamentary oversight of the regulation. The scope of the Government's power to make other future regulations is not unfettered. A regulation cannot extend the scope or general operation of the parent Act but is strictly ancillary. Under section 41 of the Interpretation Act 1987, regulations are also subject to disallowance by either House of Parliament, providing for a level of parliamentary scrutiny. The bill proposes that the regulations may contain provisions of a savings or transitional nature consequent on the commencement of a provision of the Act or a provision amending the Act. This will help support existing groups and arrangements access the new governance tools and mechanisms available under the bill.

Clauses 1 (4) and 1 (5) of schedule 1 to the bill provide that in some circumstances savings or transitional provisions can take effect before commencement. These provisions are modelled on the NSW Parliamentary Counsel's Office standard provisions. Regardless, provisions of a savings or transitional nature could not purport to prejudicially affect the rights of a person existing before publication or impose liabilities on a person for conduct occurring prior to publication. With respect to delegation powers, it is appropriate that the authority, like other government agencies, be provided with the power to delegate its functions. The proposed powers are equivalent to those that Transport for NSW already has under section 31 of the Transport Administration Act 1988. The bill reinforces that, in relation to functions of the authority, the definition of "authorised person" will need to be prescribed by regulation. Such regulations will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny. The fundamental goal of those partnerships is to enhance public spaces by stimulating local economies and supporting community building.

I thank the countless stakeholders that have engaged with the New South Wales Government on the development of CIDs policy, whether via the consultation process to the exposure draft legislation or the targeted stakeholder consultation. I also thank the local members who have spoken today. In particular, I acknowledge the contributions of local government to this policy, led by Local Government NSW and the Country Mayors Association of NSW. Councils that have provided particularly detailed input into the development of this policy include: Bega Valley Shire Council; Blacktown City Council, Burwood Council, Cessnock City Council, City of Newcastle Council, City of Sydney Council, Goulburn Mulwaree Council, Hornsby Shire Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Nambucca Valley Council, Northern Beaches Council, City of Parramatta Council, Port Stephens Council, Shellharbour City Council, Shoalhaven City Council, The Hills Shire Council, Tweed Shire Council, Wagga Wagga City Council. That is a very diverse group of councils from across our State. It is great to see them all engaging with the Minns Labor Government to improve the life of small businesses in towns and cities across New South Wales.

I reiterate the support from this side of the House for small business. Contrary to what the member for Kellyville said in his response, it is important to note that there are many small business operators on both sides of the House—but particularly the Labor side. We do not want to see policies for small businesses being politicised. The feedback from the consultations has been instrumental. It has informed the bill for the better. I thank Transport for NSW for working with Minister Graham to deliver the legislative framework for the CID policy that is fit for purpose in New South Wales. The bill is yet another example of this Government developing innovative policy and improving business and community outcomes.

I thank Minister Graham for bringing this bill forward. Being a money-related bill, it had to come through this House first, but it is the work of the Minister and his office, particularly Tori Holliday and Angud Chawla, and also Ed Stein and Helen Bartrum from Transport for NSW. I also thank them. Contrary to the views expressed by the member for Willoughby, and I understand he has not met everyone in Transport for NSW, they are passionate advocates for small business and for communities. I am a very optimistic person and I believe in the power of good government. Having Transport, which is so integrally involved in all of those place-making activities, being able to lead this work and work hand in glove with our local communities and local councils is a great outcome. This will encourage a more positive, beneficial relationship for everyone concerned well into the future. I absolutely commend the bill to the House.

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

Motion agreed to.

Consideration in detail requested by Mr Tim James, Ms Jacqui Scruby, Mr Michael Regan, Mr Alex Greenwich and Mr Anthony Roberts.

Consideration in Detail

The SPEAKER: By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 to 42 and schedules 1 to 4 be agreed to.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (16:49): By leave: I move Opposition amendments Nos 1, 2, 5 and 6 on sheet c2025-087F in globo:

No. 1 Small Business Advisory Panel

Page 3. Insert after line 23—

7A Small Business Advisory Panel

- (1) The Authority must establish a Small Business Advisory Panel.
- (2) The membership of the panel must be determined by the Authority, but must include the following persons—
 - (a) the Small Business Commissioner,
 - (b) at least one member nominated by the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia Ltd.
- (3) The function of the panel is to advise the Authority on matters concerning small businesses' relationship with CIDs.
- (4) The procedure of the panel is to be determined by the Authority or, subject to the determination by the Authority, by the panel itself.

No. 2 Waivers and reductions— serious hardship

Page 11, proposed Part 4. Insert after line 37—

Division 2A Waiver or reduction of levy

25A Authority may waive or reduce levy

- (1) The Authority may waive or reduce the levy payable by a landowner if the landowner has demonstrated to the Authority that payment of the levy would result in serious hardship.
- (2) If the Authority decides to waive or reduce the levy payable by a person, the Authority must give notice of that decision to the relevant CID entity.
- (3) The Authority must give effect to that decision by—
 - (a) waiving or reducing the levy payable, as the case requires, and
 - (b) writing off the amount that is waived or the amount of the reduction.
- (4) Accrued interest on the levy may be waived or reduced under this section in the same way as the levy.
- (5) Accordingly, a reference in this section to the levy includes a reference to accrued interest on the levy.

No. 5 Power to require information and documents

Page 15, clause 35. Insert after 35—

- (2A) This section does not limit a privilege a person or body has under another Act or another law.

No. 6 Report to Parliament

Page 17. Insert after line 17—

43 Report to Parliament

- (1) The Small Business Minister must, at least once every 12 months, report to Parliament on the following matters—
 - (a) how CIDs have operated in relation to small business,
 - (b) whether CID entities have adequately engaged with and supported small business,
 - (c) the examples and evidence provided by CID entities of the engagement and support.
- (2) The Authority must, on request, give the Small Business Minister information in its possession to assist the Small Business Minister in complying with this section.
- (3) In this section—

Small Business Minister means the minister administering the *Small Business Commissioner Act 2013*.

I will keep my remarks brief as these amendments have already been touched on, in part, by the Minister. I am pleased that the Coalition is moving these amendments to reflect the views, voices and concerns of the small business community in particular. As I mentioned before, they are important perspectives. We want them to have a significant effect upon this bill. Amendment No. 1 goes to the establishment of a small business advisory group. We propose the formal establishment of a small business advisory group on CIDs to advise Transport for NSW on the ongoing development implementation and operation of CIDs. Too often, legislation that appears balanced on paper may lead to unintended outcomes on the ground. By creating a standing advisory body made up of small business representatives, the Government can ensure the CID model stays aligned with real-world business needs. This is a low-cost, high-value safeguard, and a simple way to bring small business into the policy process in an ongoing and structured way. As we have outlined, at a minimum, it should include representatives from both the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia and the NSW Small Business Commissioner.

Amendment No. 2 pertains to waivers or levy reductions. We propose the insertion of a clause allowing a business that is the subject of the levy to apply to the Secretary of Transport for NSW for an exemption in order to address serious hardship. Many businesses are doing it tough and, no doubt, some will continue to do so. We want to ensure an understanding, sympathetic and sensitive approach when a business has particular challenges, difficulties or circumstances, and that there is a pathway by which that business can seek an exemption. Whether that is in part or in full will be a matter for the Secretary of Transport for NSW, but we do want to ensure that hardship is recognised and finds its way into this bill. It is an important mechanism from our point of view.

I will come back to Coalition amendments Nos 3 and 4, and turn now to amendment No. 5, pertaining to the power to require information and documents. This amendment grants the authority broad powers to demand information from CID entities and individuals. I think it is uncontroversial that this amendment explicitly preserves common-law and statutory rights including legal and professional privilege. These are important protections and there is no reason why they should be sidelined in the context of this legislation.

Amendment No. 6 pertains to a report to Parliament. We propose this report be delivered by the Minister for Small Business with that important small business lens and perspective, and that a report be provided every 12 months. It will obviously relate to the performance of the CIDs, including how CIDs are engaging with small business and what services and improvements were delivered, as well as evidence of the net benefit to the business community. This is not about red tape; it is simply about transparency and accountability. If the model works, then let that be reported to this Parliament. If there are issues, then this Parliament ought to know about those and be in a position to respond. The amendments do not seek to undermine the bill. They strengthen it. They reflect the lived realities of small business owners and ensure that the CID framework will be more fair, inclusive and adaptable. We hope the amendments will have support. I commend them to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (16:53): The Government supports Opposition amendments Nos 1, 2, 5 and 6. Amendment No. 1 adds to the safeguards already in place in the legislation for small business. These safeguards include requiring over two-thirds of the businesses voting to support the CID proposal and for each business, regardless of size, to have one vote. The proposed amendment reflects the Government's intention that the panel is a consultative body working with stakeholders to maximise the benefit of improvement district policy for businesses and the local community. The panel will not investigate individual CID proposals but will rather focus on the broader rollout of CID policy.

The office of the NSW Small Business Commissioner has been a valuable contributor to the development of policy to date. Many of the inclusions in the bill before the House already reflect feedback from that office and its stakeholders. The amendment provides an ongoing role, recognised in regulation and legislation, for the NSW Small Business Commissioner and the Council of Small Business Organisations Australia in this important area of policy. Amendment No. 2, regarding waivers, reductions and serious hardship, is yet another safeguard in the bill that provides protections in the case of hardship. Amendment No. 5—the power to require information and documents—reflects the Government's intention that privileges, such as legal professional privilege and the privilege against self-incrimination, and those that persons and bodies already have under other Acts and laws, will not be overridden by the CIDs legislation.

Amendment No. 6 recognises the value of oversight of small business protections and builds on existing safeguards to small businesses already contained in the legislation. The amendment would also build on existing parliamentary oversight and reporting requirements already in place for all legislation and statutory instruments. A 12-month reporting cycle strikes the right balance to ensure Parliament has access to up-to-date information on this important matter while also ensuring that it does not present an excessive burden for the authority, the CID entities or their business members. Presumably, that will provide much of the necessary information that will go into those reports. The amendment would operate until the review of the Act after three years, as required by

clause 41 of the bill. This is appropriate as it allows early insights into this important aspect of this policy priority prior to the statutory review occurring.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendments Nos 1, 2, 5 and 6 on sheet c2025-087F be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (16:57): By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2025-093B in globo:

No. 1 Empty retail premises levy surcharge

Page 4, clause 8. Insert after line 12—

Note— A levy may be calculated to include a surcharge amount for retail premises that have been unoccupied for more than 12 months—see section 21(2A).

No. 2 Empty retail premises levy surcharge

Page 10, clause 21. Insert after line 10—

(2A) A levy may include a surcharge amount for retail premises that have been unoccupied for more than 12 months

These amendments enable an empty-shop levy. They propose an opportunity for an additional surcharge on landlords who leave commercial properties, particularly shopfronts, vacant for more than 12 months without good reason. Obviously, as is contained within the CID bill, that will be subject to a CID proposal, voting and the need to meet the threshold test. We need to spark conversation around empty shops and an empty-shop levy. We are seeing shopfront after shopfront with vacancy leases not only in my Pittwater community but also across New South Wales. Other members' communities are suffering from empty shopfronts. In Pittwater, areas such as Avalon, Narrabeen and Newport are contracting. This is a real problem. We have seen closed shutters and "for lease" signs that stay on shops month after month, year after year. These vacancies do more than spoil the aesthetic of the village; they hurt other business owners who are doing it tough because they undermine the foot traffic and vibrancy that make local economies thrive. They create a sense of decline that erodes community spirits.

In 2019 there was a lot of discussion in both Victoria and New South Wales, involving different business groups and the business commissioner, about empty shopfront levies. My hope is that my amendment, even if is not supported today, sparks discussion about what we can do to support existing business owners to engage with landlords in order to rent properties and create vibrancy in our high streets. From speaking to business owners in my electorate, I know that they have tried to engage with landlords. While some landlords have legitimate reasons, there are other reasons around land banking and tax arrangements that make it unlikely for them to engage. A business that had been a real institution in my area recently closed its shopfront doors and now only exists online.

Implementing the empty shop levy through a CID is not a blunt instrument, but it will be part of a CID proposal that will go to a vote, meet the thresholds and be appropriately applied when shopfronts are not leased and therefore impact the vibrancy of the town. That is a first step. It is a conversation starter. It will not solve the problem overnight. I recognise that some landlords are not incentivised by rent money. However, we need to start the conversation. We need to end the trend of zombie shops and empty shopfronts. We need to make sure that landlords engage productively with business tenants. We need to make our villages vibrant.

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

Public Interest Debate

WENTWORTH PARK

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:01): I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that the area surrounding Wentworth Park is one of the most densely populated parts of Australia, where the shortage of green space that is available and accessible to the local community is keenly felt.
- (2) Acknowledges the redevelopment of the old Sydney Fish Market site into another high-density housing precinct will exacerbate this shortfall.
- (3) Notes community feedback overwhelmingly supports an end to greyhound racing at Wentworth Park, where five greyhounds were killed and more than 390 injured on the track in 2024.
- (4) Calls on the Government to accept the wishes of the community, end greyhound racing at Wentworth Park and return the park to community use when the current lease expires in 2027.

The future of Wentworth Park is of great interest to people of the Balmain electorate and more broadly across New South Wales. As members know, access to green space, particularly in the inner city, is incredibly hard to come by. The Balmain electorate contains two of the country's most densely populated suburbs. Pyrmont has 14,000 people per square kilometre and Ultimo has 18,000 people per square kilometre. For densely populated suburbs like those, and surrounding suburbs like Glebe, access to green space must be a priority. That will only become more important as the old Sydney Fish Markets is redeveloped into high-density housing, which will further exacerbate the shortage of green space.

The City of Sydney council recognised the need for more green space, as did the former Liberal Government when it promised to return Wentworth Park to the community when the current greyhound racing lease expires in 2027. The Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy also included clear plans to return Wentworth Park to the community to help address the shortfall in open and accessible green space. My community has been incredibly disappointed to hear that the current Government is considering walking away from those longstanding plans and is instead considering extending the lease for greyhound racing at Wentworth Park. That information first came to light in February last year when Minister Kamper admitted the Government was reconsidering the future of the site, including the continuity of some form of racing. That would be an absolute betrayal of the local community. The Government needs to recognise that and commit to returning Wentworth Park to the community when the lease expires in 2027.

Beyond the need for more accessible and open green space in my community, we know without a shadow of a doubt that the cruel greyhound racing industry has lost its social licence to operate. As far back as 2016, a special commission of inquiry found that the greyhound racing industry had "lost the integrity-based trust of the community and other stakeholders." In support of that finding, the report cites the industry's responsibility for tens of thousands of unnecessary greyhound deaths; the use of barbaric live baiting practices; extensive examples of injuries, both minor and catastrophic, on track; and the failure to provide for the welfare of greyhounds in an industry that treats sentient animals as commercial commodities. We are just shy of 10 years since that report was handed down, but it is painfully clear that not enough has changed. The industry came within a hair's-breadth of being shut down for good. In response, there have been some attempts at reform, but greyhounds continue to be killed and injured on tracks around the country. When gambling profits and animal welfare go head-to-head, we know who loses out. You bet; they die.

Wentworth Park is a particularly notorious track. More than 390 greyhounds were injured last year alone, and five tragically lost their lives. For community members who have learnt about greyhound deaths and catastrophic injuries on this track over the years, there is a sense of sadness and rising frustration at the inaction of the State Government. My community has made it abundantly clear that they do not support this cruelty and they want it to end. That sentiment is echoed more broadly across New South Wales. Surveys commissioned in 2023 revealed that a strong majority of respondents want greyhound racing banned. More still want an end to taxpayer-funded subsidies for that cruel sector.

The Government has propped up the cruel operations at Wentworth Park by pouring over \$30 million of public money into track upgrades. That is not an appropriate use of public money. If the Government has money to spend on Wentworth Park, it should be spending it on commencing the formal closure of the racing track and revitalising the parkland in line with the wishes of the community and the commitment of the former Government to end dog racing at the site in 2027. The clock is ticking. It is in the interest of our community to provide certainty. It is also in the interest of the industry to allow it time to plan for the future once the Wentworth Park track closes, because the closure of the track at Wentworth Park should be one of many.

We need the Government to bring back the ban on greyhound racing and work on a just transition for the workers reliant on the sector. Attempts to reform the sector have been unsuccessful, and we cannot allow the cruelty to continue. How many more innocent dogs will face catastrophic injuries or an unnecessary death before this Government will act? There are now only five nations in the world that still have greyhound racing. One of those—New Zealand—has called time. The conservative Government of New Zealand has recognised that the number of deaths and injuries to dogs are unacceptably high, despite attempts at reform and improvements, and the industry must not continue beyond 2026. The New South Wales Government should show some courage and follow suit.

We have a better plan for the future of Wentworth Park, and I call on the New South Wales Labor Government to see it through. With more development on the horizon for my community, the Government needs to prioritise the delivery of open and accessible green space. The opportunity to reclaim Wentworth Park for the community is too good to lose. I urge the Government not to squander this opportunity. I ask it to prioritise the needs of the local community over those of the cruel greyhound racing industry. That is a sector that is beyond reform. The Government needs to call time on racing at Wentworth Park. It is in the best interest of both our community and the innocent dogs who do not deserve to suffer for gambling profits.

We need to end greyhound racing and return Wentworth Park to the community. I urge members to support the petition. I thank the people in the gallery for their support. People from many groups have worked incredibly hard to end greyhound racing and have advocated for many years on this incredibly important issue. Members of my community—locals from Ultimo—also want an end to that cruel practice and for an incredibly important community asset to be handed back to the community. I thank them for their advocacy and for being present for this debate.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): Before I call the member for Heffron, I acknowledge guests of the member for Balmain who are in the public gallery: Saul Deane, Madeline Burton, Kylie Field, Hazel Stephens and Andrew Niven. I thank them for being here for this important public interest debate.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (17:09): I begin my contribution to the public interest debate by moving an amendment. I move:

That the motion be amended by omitting paragraphs (2) to (4) and inserting instead:

- (2) Recognises that much of Wentworth Park precinct is already recreational open space.
- (3) Supports more homes and quality developments in a vibrant part of Sydney that allow for more open space.
- (4) Recognises the need for green space amenities and services to match housing developments.
- (5) Recognises the need to provide quality outcomes for community, support the greyhound industry and assist the industry to make long-term plans.

In regard to the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex, as it is called, the Government's position is that the current greyhound racing licence expires in 2027, and the Minns Government has been clear that it requires greater utilisation and community activation of the complex. Having greyhound racing one or two nights a week is not enough. No decision on the future of the site has been made at this time, and the Government will provide clarity on the decision-making process in due course. Any questions about or involvement with the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy would be welcomed by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Answers to questions about greyhound racing or the Inquiry into Greyhound Racing NSW should be sought from the Minister for Gaming and Racing.

Wentworth Park is the New South Wales greyhound racing industry's metropolitan greyhound racetrack, hosting meetings twice weekly throughout the year. It is located on Crown land and managed by the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Land Manager. The Government understands that Greyhound Racing NSW has developed a proposal to remain at Wentworth Park under a new long-term lease from 2027 but has made no decision on the future of the site at this time. As I said earlier, the Government will provide clarity on the decision-making process in due course. I repeat, the Government has been very clear that it requires greater utilisation and community activation of that site and complex, and one or two nights a week is not enough for community activation.

Greyhound Racing NSW does not currently hold a tenure for the site. The licence exists with the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association [GBOTA]. If there are concerns about greyhound racing, members would know that there is an inquiry into greyhound racing. That inquiry is due to report to the Minister and the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission in accordance with section 89 of the Greyhound Racing Act 2017 by 31 July 2025. The terms of reference for the inquiry relate to animal welfare, procurement, recruitment, conflicts of interest, reporting, racecourse and track safety, and Greyhound Racing NSW's response to complaints, culture and conduct. Waiting for that inquiry report, due at the end of July, is a responsible way for the Government to proceed.

The Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission controls, supervises and regulates greyhound racing and is required to develop policies and standards to protect animal welfare and the integrity of greyhound racing. It is responsible for investigating animal welfare and integrity concerns relating to greyhound racing in New South Wales. Greyhound Racing NSW is responsible for establishing minimum standards for tracks and facilities in New South Wales. It is GBOTA's responsibility, as the tenure holder, to comply with the Greyhound Racing NSW safety standards for racecourses. Greyhound Racing NSW and GBOTA inform the reserve administrator about any work related to greyhound welfare and track upgrades before starting. The reserve administrator provides endorsement based upon review of the documentation—

Mr Jordan Lane: Point of order: I draw attention to the clock and note that the Leader of the House has gone over time.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The member's time has expired.

Mr RON HOENIG: I seek an extension of time.

Leave granted.

Mr RON HOENIG: Greyhound Racing NSW has advised it has implemented a range of measures at Wentworth Park to provide for track safety, and more is planned.

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (17:15): I appreciate the opportunity to speak in this debate and support the Government's amendments on behalf of the Opposition. I acknowledge and thank the member for Balmain for bringing to the attention of this House the very clear importance of open space in communities. I am grateful to see that the Government seems to be starting to adopt some of that rhetoric as well, and I hope that will be followed by action. Like me, the member for Balmain lives in a growth community. Ryde is one of the fastest growing communities in the State, as is Balmain and many other electorates.

We are seeing deliberate decisions made by this Government to accelerate growth. Of course, that is a good thing. It is part of the way we address matters like housing affordability. However, it is not about housing alone; it is about building community, and the only way to do that is by making deliberate decisions to invest in green open space and supporting infrastructure so communities become not just big but also sustainable. That is something I have experienced since day dot, when I came into this place: Decisions made by this Government have exacerbated the problem but done little to address it.

A great example of that is the decision around TG Millner Field, an important piece of green open space in my electorate that Labor promised to save but put under threat as soon as they came to office. That is why I wanted to speak to this motion. People elect governments with an expectation that they will make good decisions and keep their promises, but my experience has been that, as soon as members are on the Government side of the Chamber, their promises are broken. That is not how confidence is built, and it is certainly not how to take the community on the journey to address Sydney's existing big structural problems like housing affordability.

The Opposition supports the Government amendments. I am pleased to see the start of some rhetoric to address these problems. But ultimately the power rests with the Government to make decisions that will improve communities like mine in Ryde, like that of the member for Balmain and like those of many other members who I am sure will want to speak on this important motion. I leave it to the Government to articulate in more detail how it will do that, but I am pleased to see that we are moving in the right direction. That is a consequence of the advocacy of members in this place, and I would like to associate myself with that amendment.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:17): I support the motion brought by the member for Balmain and recognise her commitment to her local community in ensuring that we are not part of a horrifically cruel greyhound racing industry and in recognising that the need for community-controlled spaces is paramount to stopping commercial and gambling interests taking over our local inner-city communities. Before I continue, I will move an amendment to the Government amendment. I move:

That the amendment of the member for Heffron be amended by omitting paragraph (5) and inserting instead:

- (5) Notes the New South Wales Government spent \$30 million on track upgrades to support cruel greyhound racing instead of using that public money to build public housing.

According to my rough calculation based on the Government's costings, we could have seen the delivery of 49 to 50 new public housing dwellings in the electorate of Balmain. Instead, they spent that money on racetrack upgrades for the cruel greyhound racing industry. This State Labor Government does not have equal priorities when it comes to what it will spend money on. We are currently trying to get individual community funding and support for so many critical services in our community. We are trying to stop the cruelty and despicable behaviour of the greyhound industry, which causes so much harm to beautiful greyhounds.

Decisions have been made to hand over millions of dollars to things that will cause further harm to our community instead of helping it. That not only harms the greyhounds, which are forced into a horrific and cruel form of gambling and racing, but also members of the community who are engaging in gambling during a cost-of-living crisis and who are desperate to get out of the financial stress they are in. This State Labor Government endlessly talk up its ability to deliver. The Government's amendment to this motion says that it:

- (3) Supports more homes and quality developments in a vibrant part of Sydney that allow for more open space.

The reality is that supply alone does not solve these problems. The supply of genuinely affordable housing will solve the housing crisis, but not just the supply of housing. This State Labor Government, which was elected on a platform to end the privatisation agenda, is actually on a mission to privatise public land and hand it over to private developers to develop more private housing that will be unaffordable for people in our city. People in our community know that this will not solve the problem.

I recently had a conversation with somebody from the inner city who was very concerned that the State Labor Government seems to be more interested in talking up the gifts it is giving to developers to cut red tape rather than talking about its own role as the landlord of some of the most dilapidated public housing in the country. The Government is the worst landlord in the State. While the Government is simultaneously privatising our public

land and handing it over to private developers for profit, it is also failing to spend money on maintaining its own public housing properties. The State Labor Government is doing everything it can to distract from the reality that it is doing a lot of the same things as the former Liberal Government.

The former Liberal Government loved the greyhound racing industry—for a while they did, and then they did not, and then they did and then they did not! Labor is now back on track and backing in the greyhounds. In her contribution to the debate on community improvement districts earlier today, the member for Pittwater said that the proposal was actually the idea of the former planning Minister. In a world where centrist governments rule, it is very hard to tell the difference between the policies of the State Labor Government and the former Liberal Government on supporting greyhound racing and privatising public land. I support this motion, and I urge members to support The Greens amendment to the Government amendment to the motion.

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (17:22): I make a brief contribution to the debate on the member for Balmain's motion. I start off by acknowledging that the member for Balmain and I share a seat boundary. In the time since we were both elected two years ago, I have seen her passion for her community firsthand. I know that she has her ear to the ground and listens to her constituents. When she comes into this place, she represents and fights for the views of her constituents. We both represent seats in the inner west. There are more developments coming as the population continues to grow, and I know how important access to green space is to the people we represent.

The lesson this Government must learn is that housing and the delivery of infrastructure go hand in hand. It is not only about the bricks and mortar; it is about building communities. When new homes are built, there must be services there for new residents, including public transport, hospitals, parks, green spaces, schools and social and affordable housing. This is the essential infrastructure that is needed to support a growing community. The lack of green spaces in the inner west is a pressing issue that will continue to be a high priority for our communities as the population grows. I represent the suburb of Rhodes, which is one of the most densely populated places in New South Wales and has more development coming.

Residents who live in Rhodes tell me how important green spaces are to them. Those residents feel as if the council and the Government are playing catch-up, and that the services which should be there for this growing community are not there. They were promised a new wharf and ferry service, but that has now been removed from this Government's budget papers. They are also facing more buildings. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure is currently assessing several applications in the Rhodes area without any talk of the promised Rhodes East primary school or any plan to deliver better roads, safer crossings and more open space for the community. It is just wrong. If COVID taught us anything, it is that parks and green open spaces are vital, not only for our physical and mental wellbeing but also for building community. Parks and green spaces build character in our community. I know so many people who have made lifelong friends from taking their pets down to the dog park. Why should people who are living in new apartments not have that same opportunity?

Mr Edmond Atalla: And their cats.

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA: I note the interjection from the member for Mount Druitt—also cats. I grew up across the road from a park in Concord. I have fond memories of kicking a ball around with neighbours and playing in the playground for hours with my sisters. With more families living in apartments, the clock is ticking and communities across New South Wales need more open spaces because development is coming. It is about foresight. There are members here, like me and the member for Balmain, who are empowered by their communities to come into this place and work collaboratively and productively with the Government to get the very best outcome for our communities. Why not work together to do that instead of putting up walls and roadblocks? I cannot stress how important it is that we get planning right in this State. That means making sure that developments come with infrastructure like parks, green spaces, hospitals, schools, roads, social and affordable housing and public transport. Those services bring amenities that will foster sustainable and thriving communities in the years to come. I thank the member for Balmain for bringing this motion before the House and for members allowing me to contribute to this debate.

Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:26): I speak in contribution to this debate. Wentworth Park is an important part of the greyhound raising industry. You could even say it is the cultural cornerstone and lifeblood of this vital industry. Many people in my area are very passionate about the sport. I accept that there are not many members in this place involved in the industry and that there are many members who hate the industry. I understand that, but I also ask members to remember that people are passionate about this industry and sport. There are a community of people out there who really love working with racing dogs. It is their absolute passion, and I ask members to respect that passion. Trying to get rid of all racing from Wentworth Park is not helpful or respectful.

I understand that there is a lot of pressure around big, open historic sites. Wentworth Park has been there for 100 years, and I am sure there was a lot more open space at the time it was first built. It now looks like a jewel in the crown. I am sure that there are many people who want to put social or commercial housing on it, but we have to protect some of these spaces. I totally understand the need for housing, but sometimes we must push back against the pressure being placed on these historic sites. I will now talk more generally about the industry at Wentworth Park, which is looking to make better use of the site as a shared community asset. It is working on a plan to transform the entire site so that 92 per cent of it can be dedicated to public recreation. It has been working with the community to make sure the site can be incorporated into the local community.

It is important that we keep our eyes open to see what this industry means to the wider community, and understand the importance that particular facility has for those across New South Wales who are involved. We understand there are many alternative uses for the site, but moving racing elsewhere ignores all the practical realities. Wentworth Park's central location drives its accessibility and economic impact. Relocation would burden many regional families with more travel costs and lead to diminishing attendance. It would erode the sport's viability. Many from my region enjoy coming to the centre of Sydney to spend time at Wentworth Park. The community support in my part of New South Wales is absolutely clear. They want that facility to continue.

They have voiced their support for the industry in general, and they are voicing their support for an industry that is changing. We are seeing improvements all the time in the greyhound racing industry. We are always aspiring to ensure it is the safest possible industry in the world. There is always room for change and improvement. We will continue along this path, but people are passionate about this industry. We have to remember that we are in this place to represent all of New South Wales, not just the opinions of those in the neighbouring suburbs. A large part of New South Wales wants racing to continue at Wentworth Park. There is an opportunity for a shared community asset, open to all people in that area, but racing can also continue there.

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (17:31): In reply: I thank members who have spoken on this public interest debate: the member for Heffron, the member for Ryde, the member for Drummoyne, the member for Newtown and the member for Upper Hunter. I was incredibly disappointed that the member for Heffron watered down the intention of the motion by suggesting that we should support the greyhound racing industry. I appreciate that the Government has yet to make a decision around Wentworth Park. I urge it to follow through with the commitment of the former Government and to make sure that this important asset is handed back to the community, and that greyhound racing is finished on this site.

I touch on the commitment to deliver a Government decision after the inquiry reports in July, noting that there is no obligation for it to be tabled in Parliament—meaning we are unlikely to see it for several months, if at all. Keeping in mind that the terms of reference of that inquiry are predicated on keeping the greyhound racing industry going, I am very concerned that even after the release of that report there will be ongoing support for this industry. I thank the member for Ryde and the member for Drummoyne for their thoughtful contributions about open space. The struggle to maintain access to open space is similar for us, and I appreciate their perspectives.

It was disappointing to listen to the contribution from the member for Upper Hunter, and I was hopeful that the Opposition members would talk more about their previous commitment to hand this asset back to the community in 2027, when the lease is due to expire. It was a very important commitment. The member for Upper Hunter spoke about the turnout at the Wentworth Park track, but it is clear that it is very under-attended. It is mainly used for gambling; there is very little interest in it. It is such a waste of important public space. Despite the fact that some people are passionate about greyhound racing, even if it is as safe as it possibly can be, that is not safe enough. Far too many greyhound deaths and injuries are continuing to occur. We need to have the courage to end this industry, like New Zealand has.

This public interest debate has been an opportunity to remind people in this place of the importance of prioritising the needs of our local communities, and that the gambling and racing industries have particularly loud voices. We are painfully aware of the considerable influence they wield in New South Wales, and they were able to pressure the former Government to overturn the ban on greyhound racing almost a decade ago, despite the overwhelming public support for the ban. I urge members to consider the greyhound racing industry, the social licence that has well and truly been lost and the needs of our local community to have not just 25 per cent of an important public space like Wentworth Park handed over when the lease expires in 2027, but the entirety handed back to the community.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The member for Balmain has moved a motion, to which the member for Heffron has moved an amendment, to which the member for Newtown has moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the member for Newtown to the amendment of the member for Heffron be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being fewer than five members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Ayes, 4

Ms J. Leong
Ms K. Shetty
Ms T. Smith
Ms J. Scruby

Amendment of the member for Newtown to the amendment of the member for Heffron negatived.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Alex Greenwich): The question now is that the amendment of the member for Heffron be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being fewer than five members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Noes, 4

Ms J. Leong
Ms J. Scruby
Ms K. Shetty
Ms T. Smith

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.*Members***INAUGURAL SPEECHES**

The SPEAKER: I extend a warm welcome to guests of the member for Port Macquarie. Welcome to all of those who have joined us today, not including those on Macquarie Street whom we did not allow in. Once again, I make a special mention of the Hon. Leslie Williams, the former member for Port Macquarie—and I declare an interest as she is a very close friend. Leslie, it is lovely to acknowledge your presence in the gallery for this important event—which, by the way, you caused. I acknowledge the immediate family of the member for Port Macquarie, including his wife, Kate, who is in the other seat of honour. I acknowledge his children, Flynn, Jim and Neive, who were here just yesterday. I also acknowledge the member's mother, Patricia Dwyer, and sisters Rachel Harrison, Kellie McGinlay and Kate Greinke. I also welcome the extended family and friends of the member for Port Macquarie.

Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie) (17:46): Mr Speaker, members, family, friends and the people of the Port Macquarie electorate, I respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land we meet on, the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and pay respects to the Birpai peoples of the Port Macquarie electorate. I pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We are privileged to live amongst the world's oldest continuing living culture, a source of enduring pride and wisdom. It is with deep humility and immense pride that I deliver my inaugural speech in this House. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.

It is an honour to be allowed to serve the people of the Port Macquarie electorate—a beautiful part of New South Wales that I am lucky to have called home for more than three decades. I am also keenly aware of the responsibility this office holds. The electorate is vast, from Lord Howe Island in the east, to Harrington, Coopernook, Moorland and Johns River in the south, to the farming hinterland of Hannam Vale and Kendall in the west, through to the coastal areas of Laurieton, Bonny Hills and Lake Cathie, to the larger northern centre of Port Macquarie. It is a strong, vibrant and growing community—a region of remarkable natural beauty, resilient people and boundless potential. It is also a community of contrasts, where new developments meet historic natural landscapes, where tradition blends with innovation and where regional values underpin a vision for future prosperity.

I am grateful to my colleagues, volunteers and every member of the community who placed their trust in me to bring their voice to this House. I especially acknowledge Leslie Williams, the former member for Port Macquarie, who is in the gallery today and who served our community with passion, integrity and tireless dedication for over 14 years. Leslie's record as a local member, Minister, and shadow Minister across various portfolios speaks for itself. With the assistance of her late husband, Don, for many years she has been a true champion, leading by example, devoted to service, and always putting the community first. If I had a dollar for every time someone said to me, "You've got big shoes to fill," I might have afforded myself a good pair of heels—and perhaps some runners, too—to try and keep up with Leslie's sense of style and pace.

Leslie was the founding head of my campaign team. Todd Lynch stepped up into the role minutes after stepping off a long-haul flight and led the campaign alongside Justin Levido, Jeff Gillespie, my wonderful wife, Kate, and Chris Stone and his dedicated Liberal Headquarter team. I owe them, our branch president Terry McDermott, members, and the entire campaign team a deep debt of gratitude. Their tireless efforts, experience and spirit were instrumental to our success. I extend my immense gratitude to our Liberal leader, Mark Speakman, who walked with me countless times on the campaign trail and went above and beyond, including by joining me on a few Sunday morning five-kilometre park runs. Actually, the real story is that he asked me to go on my first park run, and my legs are still recovering. I probably really do need to invest in those good runners, don't I, Leslie!

Mark, I am indebted to you for your support and guidance. Thank you to our deputy leader, Natalie Ward, Aileen MacDonald, and my many Liberal Party colleagues, including David Begg and Chris Rath, for their valuable support and encouragement throughout the campaign. I am also grateful to the many volunteers and staffers who generously gave up their weekends driving to and from Port Macquarie to assist in the campaign. Your dedication and commitment are second to none. We met people on their doorsteps, heard their stories and gained a better understanding of their hopes, aspirations and challenges. Over the past few months you have taught me that campaigning is not just a political exercise but a human one.

Fortunately, after 32 years of living in the Port Macquarie electorate and many years of involvement in business, sport and volunteering, I was able to call upon many friends to assist at pre-poll and on election day across the 27 polling booths. Their support was overwhelming and heartwarming. It showed me how deeply personal politics is, and how every vote is not just a number but a story, a belief and a hope. A special thanks to my mum, Pat Dwyer; my mothers-in-law—I am blessed to have two—Lea McKinnon and Isla Atchison; my father-in-law, Don McKinnon; and my cousin, Peter Jenkins, who spent hours working on the booths and enjoyed a few good-natured, cheeky verbal spars along the way. While I might be the new kid on the block, I am blessed with an excellent team in the Port Macquarie electorate office, with Terry Sara, Elaine Schofield, Lyn McWhirter, and Chris Bawn. They work tirelessly for our community. Together they have over 55 years of experience with the New South Wales Parliament, so rest assured that the people of the Port Macquarie electorate are in safe hands.

My journey here has not been a straight path. In 1993, after completing a Bachelor of Business and many part-time jobs, I began work at the Laurieton United Services Club. Initially I just hoped to save enough to travel the world. With a degree in hand and the world at my feet, I thought I had all the answers. Fortunately, Margot Bryant, who I believe is in the gallery today, had other ideas. Margot, who had worked internationally with PricewaterhouseCoopers and served 16 years as the club's finance manager, taught me lessons in life and how to run a business through administration that have stood me in good stead ever since.

After saving enough, I travelled to Japan to work as a ski instructor for a season, but I returned home and, many thanks to Margot's guidance, by 26 I was appointed finance manager. By 30, I was proud to be appointed the general manager, a role I would hold for the next 24 years. I have had the privilege of working with over 100 different community groups and organisations, from Legacy to the Camden Haven Redbacks Soccer Club. Through this, I deeply understood that strong communities are the foundation of a strong society. My community involvement extended beyond work. I have been a lifesaver since 2006; a Nippers manager; a junior cricket and soccer coach; a life member, player and coach for the Camden Haven Hockey Club; Chair of the Slice of Haven Food and Wine Festival since 2008; Treasurer of the ClubsNSW Southern Subregion; Past President and Vice-President of the Great Lakes Club Managers' Association; and a proud patron of Community@3 and Legacy, among other organisations.

Leading an award-winning business with two venues that turned over \$15 million annually, employing 80 staff and maintaining a golf course, bowling greens and a services club while navigating the regulatory requirements and protecting vital community assets was no small feat. I could not have asked for a better board of directors and team over the years. I am so grateful for them. Their belief and support were among the first and strongest I received when deciding to stand for public office. I thank them. The challenges we faced—whether fires, floods, or storms—revealed the true character of our community and the importance of clubs in it.

During the 2019 bushfires and the 2021 floods, the Laurieton United Services Club became an emergency evacuation centre, sheltering over 400 people—and 65 pets, from birds to dogs to lizards, and we even had a cow visit—for four nights. For those who can recall those dates, that was indeed during the COVID pandemic. In those moments I saw firsthand the extraordinary outcomes possible when locals, community groups, volunteers and government work together selflessly for others. That spirit is something I will seek to harness for all of the Port Macquarie electorate.

With that foundation, let's turn to the road ahead: the challenges we face and the work to be done. Our region has experienced extraordinary growth: a 16 per cent population increase over the past decade and a further 27 per cent anticipated to 2046, when it will have over 115,000 people in Port Macquarie city alone.

Port Macquarie is certainly rapidly evolving into a regional city. Growth brings opportunity but it also brings challenges to our roads, water and sewerage infrastructure, environment, housing, hospitals, emergency services and, of course, first responders. We must meet these demands head-on, with innovative solutions and forward-thinking leadership. I believe we have the talent, creativity and resilience within our community to not only meet these challenges but to thrive in spite of them. This means investing in the future, planning for population growth and ensuring we protect what makes our region unique: its environment, its people and its spirit.

Feedback from our constituents has identified the top issues in our electorate, including affordability and access to health care, the Wrights Road debacle, the need for an overpass linking the Pacific Highway to Harrington and Coopernook, more police on the beat, improvements to education, Houston Mitchell Drive intersection with the M1, social housing and broader regional planning. In the first seven weeks, I have tackled these issues head-on. I have met with the MidCoast Council General Manager to discuss roads in Coopernook, Moorland and Crowdy Head, and with the Port Macquarie Hastings Council Mayor and Acting CEO to discuss extensive infrastructure matters hampering our growth potential within the local government area.

I have held discussions with the Mid North Coast Police District Commander, Inspector Shane Cribb, to discuss law and order issues; the Chief Executive of the Mid North Coast Local Health District, Jill Wong, to talk about the upgrade to Port Macquarie Base Hospital; and the Director of Educational Leadership in the Hastings region, Andrew Kuchling, to discuss issues affecting students and teachers in our area. I have also met with many shadow Ministers. Tomorrow I will meet with the Minister for Roads to encourage urgent work to alleviate traffic congestion on the Oxley Highway. Next week I am meeting with the environment Minister for a briefing on issues affecting Lord Howe Island and local parks. I have also reached out to the Minister for Health and the Minister for Housing for meetings to advocate for key regional projects and community priorities.

Local representatives play a crucial role in advocating for their communities, shaping legislation, and ensuring local voices are heard. It is a responsibility I take seriously, because effective local representation does not just influence State policy; it transforms lives on the ground. Our stories, our challenges and our aspirations must be reflected in the decisions made here. That is what drives me every day.

As a long-term supporter and patron of Community at 3, an incorporated homelessness charity, I am committed to community housing. No-one in our region should be without a safe place to call home. With the extreme shortage of housing across the nation, it hurts me to speak to people in the electorate about their housing concerns and how they are currently living in tents or their cars, or couch surfing. That is untenable. I will work to ensure the community housing development on the corner of Gordon and Grant streets in Port Macquarie comes to fruition to help reduce the more than 10-year waiting list for social housing. As an active volunteer surf lifesaver, I see the desperate need for improvements to facilities in which the five surf clubs in our electorate operate. Those clubs sincerely need upgrades to keep pursuing their simple mission: saving lives, creating great Australians and building better communities.

Working with local clubs to improve those facilities is one of my early priorities. Our volunteer emergency services and community organisations need our support, and I intend to be a tireless advocate on their behalf. Sustainability is essential. During my time at the Laurieton United Services Club, we lifted our Ecotourism Australia sustainability score from 60 per cent to 89 per cent in just 18 months. I understand the importance of continuous environmental improvement and am committed to preserving the natural beauty that makes our region so special. Sustainability also extends to many aspects of life and building solid regional communities, such as how we manage growth, plan infrastructure and empower local innovation. We know that meeting the challenges ahead will require strong collaboration across local, State, and Federal governments. I am committed to being a fierce advocate to ensure the Port Macquarie electorate remains a wonderful place to work, nurture innovation, live and raise a family.

I have long been drawn to the values of the Liberal Party: the inalienable rights and freedoms of all people; a government that nurtures and encourages its citizens; parliamentary democracy; a just and humane society; equal opportunity and tolerance; the encouragement and facilitation of wealth creation; the preservation of Australia's natural beauty and environment for future generations; and belief in individual freedom and free enterprise. But I also recognise that every member of this Parliament, regardless of party, shares a fundamental commitment to making New South Wales a better place. If we stay true to that ideal, we can achieve great things together. My family is my world and they have been my rock throughout this journey. My wife, Kate, has deep roots in our region through her work, community engagement and volunteering, and was my number one booth captain. Our wonderful children, Flynn, Jim and Neive—who have grown up in Port Macquarie and been involved in school activities, sport and community service—spent many hours handing out flyers at the booths, encouraging people to vote for Dad. Thank you—you are amazing and a constant source of inspiration.

My family history, like everyone's, has shaped me. My paternal grandparents left the Dwyer family home in south-east Queensland in the mid-1940s for a housing commission home in Sydney's west, which had access to a choice of education for their future. My mother's parents raised three daughters, also in Sydney's west. They relied on public transport to access work, school and family. It is still bewildering to my children that they never owned a car or held a driver's licence. Both sets of grandparents were involved in their church groups and children's schools, coached junior sports and were always front and centre in community and family life. My parents—my mother, Pat, and my late father, Greg—continued the tradition of family dedication through their involvement with our schools, coaching of sporting teams and commitment to providing a stable foundation for their children and grandchildren. Growing up with my sisters and brother, Rachel, James, Kellie and Kate, was wonderful and, at times, challenging for all parties. We were raised with the values of service, perseverance and gratitude, which I continue to see in them today.

Losing my brother, James, when he was just 16 years old taught our family that life is not a dress rehearsal. Every moment matters. As poet Maya Angelou said, "Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away." From all those experiences, I learned that the true measures of success are not titles or accolades but what you give and what you help others become. Whether it is seeing young nippers grow into lifesavers or junior staff become leaders, those moments—among many others—have inspired me to do better, be better and always give more than I receive. That is why I stand here today: to contribute, to give back and to help the Port Macquarie electorate and New South Wales achieve even greater things. The NSW Liberals stand not just for one community, but for all who believe that regional voices matter, that public service is a noble calling and that real change begins with listening.

I know the journey ahead will not always be smooth. There will be storms. There will be differences and setbacks. But our destination—a stronger, fairer and more vibrant future—remains unchanged. Together, with humility and determination, I believe the NSW Liberals can shape a future that honours our past, addresses the present and builds a legacy for future generations. I am excited to be part of that future for our State. I am grateful to my family, friends, Liberal Party colleagues, countless volunteers and every member of my community who placed their trust in me. I will not take their trust or belief in me for granted. I promise to listen. I promise to work hard. I promise to be a strong voice for our community. And, above all, I promise to serve.

Members and officers of the House stood and applauded.

The SPEAKER: I do not think the erstwhile member for Port Macquarie should be leaving the public gallery. I think she should suffer for her sins and stay for the rest of the consideration in detail stage of the Community Improvement Districts Bill 2025. We finally have an audience for late-night amendments to a bill. I hope she stays to enjoy it.

Bills

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS BILL 2025

Consideration in Detail

Consideration resumed from an earlier hour.

The SPEAKER: We are dealing with amendments Nos 1 and 2 of the member for Pittwater on sheet c2025-093B.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (18:11): The Government is opposing the amendments. The reason for that is while we recognise the necessity to address important issues, we know the impact that empty shopfronts can have for local areas. An excess of vacant shops in trading areas can reduce the attractiveness, vitality, appeal and productivity of local town centres. Vacant shops can make areas feel unloved and reduce footfall necessary for remaining businesses to survive. Community improvement districts could support effective action in a range of ways to reduce the number of vacant shopfronts.

I will not go through all of those other than to say that while the proposed amendments seek to address an important issue, the Government does not support them in their current form. The Government thanks the member for Pittwater for raising them; however the Government will support other amendments that the member will move. The proposed approach would change significantly the operation of the CIDs legislation. Having only a small number of landlords with vacant tenancies paying the levy or paying a major higher levy would have a range of impacts including disincentivising new tenants from taking up tenancies due to the additional levy that might apply to formerly vacant premises.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:13): I wish to indicate on behalf of the Coalition that we do not support the amendments. We understand the principled place from which they come but we are not convinced of

the merits of that pathway in its present form. It is difficult to police and we are concerned about unintended consequences. We do not support the amendments.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (18:13): I support the amendments of the member for Pittwater. I acknowledge that both the Government and the Opposition will not support them. I appreciate their contributions. However, it is an important conversation starter for this Parliament. The community improvement districts could potentially work in a really creative way to address a concern that is impacting high streets right across New South Wales, particularly in Sydney. I thank the member for Pittwater for moving these important discussion-starter amendments. I support them.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:14): I put on record my enthusiastic support for the outstanding contribution the member for Pittwater has made. However, I also put on record my opposition to the bill. I think it will take away local decision-making, which should rest with the local councils. Sadly on this occasion, I oppose not just the amendments but a bill that is just socialism by stealth.

The SPEAKER: The question is that amendments Nos 1 and 2 of the member for Pittwater on sheet c2025-093B be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes7
Noes74
Majority.....67

AYES

Greenwich, A (teller)
Leong, J
McGirr, J

Regan, M
Scruby, J (teller)

Shetty, K
Smith, T

NOES

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

Finn, J
Griffin, J
Hagarty, N
Harris, D
Henskens, A
Hodges, M
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Hornery, S
James, T
Kaliyanda, C
Kemp, M
Kirby, W
Lane, J
Layzell, D
Li, J
McDermott, H
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
Moylan, B
O'Neill, M
Park, R
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G

Quinnell, S
Roberts, A
Saffin, J
Scully, P
Singh, G
Sloane, K
Speakman, M
Stuart, M
Thompson, T
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Tudehope, M
Vo, T
Voltz, L
Wallace, J
Ward, G
Warren, G
Washington, K
Watson, A
Whan, S
Wilkinson, K
Williams, R
Williamson, R (teller)
Wilson, F

Amendments negatived.

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (18:26): By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet c2025-085C in globo:

No. 1 Making of CID proposals

Page 4, clause 8(4). Insert after line 33—

- (d1) activities to help attract new businesses into the CID, including activities to fill vacant business premises,
- (d2) services, activities and projects to support businesses and residents of the CID in achieving net zero outcomes and participating in circular economy activities and projects,
- (d3) community wealth building activities,

No. 2 Community consultation reports

Page 5, clause 9(3), lines 11–13. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (3) The CID proponent must prepare a report on the outcome of the consultation and give the report to the Authority at the time the CID proponent makes the CID proposal to the Authority.
- (3A) The Authority must make the report publicly available in the way prescribed by the regulations.

No. 3 Community consultation reports

Page 5, clause 10(2), lines 21 and 22. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (2) Despite subsection (1), the Authority may reject a CID proposal—
 - (a) if, in the Authority's opinion, the CID proposal may unreasonably exclude members of the public from spaces or areas where the public otherwise have a right of access, or
 - (b) if, having considered the report referred to in section 9(3), the Authority believes—
 - (i) there has been inadequate consultation on the CID proposal, or
 - (ii) there is no reasonable prospect that each local council whose area is within the boundaries of the CID will support the CID proposal, as referred to in section 13, or
 - (c) if, in the Authority's opinion, there is not a reasonable prospect of the CID proposal achieving the required support in a CID proposal ballot,

Example— The Authority believes there is insufficient evidence provided of community or council support for the CID proposal.
 - (d) in circumstances prescribed by the regulations.

No. 4 Community consultation reports

Page 21, Schedule 3. Insert after line 22—

Part 3 Community consultation reports

4 Publication of community consultation reports

For the Act, section 9(3A), the report must be published on the Authority's website within 30 days of the CID proposal being accepted under the Act, section 10(1).

The minor changes in amendment No. 1 make explicit the types of community improvement district [CID] proposals that can be put forward. The first type is to help attract new businesses into the CID, including activities to fill vacant business premises. As members know, that is a focus of mine because of the empty shopfronts in my area and across New South Wales, which damage foot traffic and communities. The second type is for services and activities to support businesses and residents in the CID to achieve net zero outcomes and participate in circular economy activities and projects. Those have been successful in other areas on the northern beaches, but the amendment includes that as an explicit CID proposal. The third type is for community wealth building activities.

The other amendments relate to transparency and consultation reports, making sure that the community is consulted and that the authority makes the report publicly available in the way prescribed by the regulations. That goes to ensuring transparency and accountability in community consultation reports. The amendments also allow the authority to reject a CID proposal under certain circumstances. Finally, the amendments require the publication of community consultation reports, ensuring that they are published on the authority's website within 30 days of the CID proposal being accepted under the Act.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (18:28): It is a pleasure to say to the member for Pittwater that the Government supports her amendments. I thank her for her input and will leave it at that, in the interests of time.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:28): I am pleased to confirm the support of the Coalition for these amendments moved by the member for Pittwater. We consider them to be reasonable and workable, and we are pleased to support them.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:29): I congratulate the member for Pittwater on cleaning up, once again, a government mess that the crossbench has had to sort out.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:29): I indicate that The Greens support the amendment moved by the member for Pittwater. I also indicate our support for the previous amendments made by the member for Pittwater. In the context of what we are doing here, it is absolutely critical that we are improving what is a really concerning bill. We have expressed our concerns in this Chamber. I appreciate the work that is being done. I hope that there will be a process of further inquiry into this bill in the upper House. I encourage all lower House members, particularly those on the crossbench, to engage in that process so that we can try to make sure that what is delivered is a much better outcome than we are seeing now.

The SPEAKER: The question is that the amendments Nos 1 to 4 on sheet 2025-085C be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (18:30): By leave: I move amendments Nos 1 and 2 on my amendment sheet in globo:

No. 1 CID proposal ballot

Page 6, Part 3 Division 2, Clause 12(4) c Insert after line 27—

Any business or landowner that is not in favour of the CID proposal in the CID proposal ballot shall not be required to be levied in accordance with section 21 (9) d.

No. 2 Authority may impose levies

Page 10, Part 4 Division 1, Clause 21(9) d. Insert after line 33—

Land that is occupied by a business or a landowner that was not in favour of the CID proposal in the CID proposal ballot.

I have a number of issues with this bill. It is a bill that was served up to me in the last Government. It was rejected. Why was it rejected? It was a tax on small business. At that time the Treasury was able to fund works, painting roads, assisting local communities and councils. This is cost-shifting at its very worst. This is moving a tax to small business. I have hairdressers—and, quite frankly, we would all have this experience—whose customers, instead of having their hair done every six weeks, now have it done every three months. People are going into coffee shops in my electorate and apologising to the shop owner, saying, "I used to buy a coffee off you every day. Now it's a treat on a Friday." The list goes on and on and on.

There is no need for this. It is because there is no money. The Minister for Planning is doing a great job under difficult circumstances, having both the department and funding gutted. Works that we used to do when we had capital, we had money, are no longer there. I have experienced the ability to engage local government and local business. This is a move to put a new tax on small business in our communities. It might be good for Mirvac and Meriton, but it is not good for small business. I know we are talking about hardship provisions. If I was a small coffee shop owner, I am not sure I would want to open my books to someone from the Transport department and plead my way out of something that I do not need or want. That is why the provisions are here and people should be able to opt out.

This is, in fact, conscription. It is not cooperation. People are being prescribed to be part of something that they do not want. It is a new tax. As a traditional, conservative Liberal, it is a tax that we do not need and we do not want. We rejected it in the last Government. Let me give some free and frank advice to those on the other side of the House: This is a new tax. If you have any small businesses left in your local areas, that have not closed down—and I note that a lot of people have talked tonight about closed shops in their high street—all this is going to do is shut down more businesses.

The day we can rely upon a government agency to deliver a painted road or a new footpath as we run it through the various levels of government, that is the day we should just give up. We will see small projects that councils manage blow out. Quite frankly, I do not see, as a conservative party or anyone in this Parliament, why we would be putting layers upon layers of bureaucracy into delivering what has been delivered in the past by councils through State Government. I implore you, for the sake of small business in our small towns—even in Lane Cove where people in small businesses are doing it tough—please accept this amendment to enable people to opt out and not have to open their books to some bureaucrat down the road in Macquarie Street and plead forgiveness or plead that they cannot pay. It is just not acceptable and we should not allow it to happen.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (18:36): It has been a very interesting debate for me to hear the amendments coming through and the positions of the Liberal Party. For those who were not in the House, the amendments are that any business or landholder not in favour of the CID proposal in the CID proposal ballot shall not be required to be levied in accordance with section 21 (9) (d). The other is land that is occupied by a business or landowner again not in favour. The concern

is that the member for Lane Cove is not the shadow Minister for Small Business—that is the member for Willoughby. He has every right to put forward his proposals, but what we are seeing in the Liberal Party tonight is actually what will happen to our shops: division and people working against each other to achieve aims.

We have supported a safeguard requiring two-thirds of businesses to vote to support it. We are trying to get democracy, but if that is fundamentally something that the member does not understand or agree with, that is okay. The reality is that, in a democracy or in this proposal, we are trying to get a benefit for the whole business community. The other way you would see it is, if hardworking small business people are putting their hands in their pocket to get a benefit for the whole community, they should all get the benefit and they should also all contribute. As outlined in a number of the discussions tonight, the amendments would undermine the democratic nature of the CIDs legislation. Therefore, we cannot support them.

Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (18:37): The first amendment proposed by my learned colleague, the member for Lane Cove, is very simple. It allows a third of the voting businesses that do not agree with the levy not to be charged a levy. If two-thirds of the businesses in a geographic area agree to the levy being imposed, to the third who disagree the amendment allows them to opt out and not have to pay the levy. That may be for a wide variety of reasons. On behalf of the small business people in this State and this country, I make the point about the burden that will be imposed on businesses through this additional cost, whatever that cost may be. We are yet to know under this bill what apportionment of cost is going to be. That will be decided by Transport for NSW. I have to say it scares me a little that it is not going to be decided by the businesses but by the bureaucracy managing this particular levy, Transport for NSW.

On behalf of those businesses, I make the point that the number of insolvencies in the last financial year in New South Wales amounted to over 4,500. That is just the number of insolvencies—those that went bankrupt, those that went into liquidation. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that up to a thousand businesses close per day across this country. That is how drastic it is. Imposing a cost on a small business may be the difference between that small business staying in business and providing employment or not. Again, 50 per cent of the employment in this State and this country is provided by small and medium businesses.

These very simple amendments do not take away from the bill. I have listened intently to the whole debate. They simply allow the one-third of people who do not agree with the levy to opt out of paying the levy. That provision safeguards businesses that may be in the position of saying, "I just cannot absorb an additional cost." If members think that only the consumers of this country are facing the cost of living at this point in time, I can tell them that our businesses are struggling as well. They are suffering. As a small business owner and as a son of small business people and as a person who believes in the rights of all private people to undertake private investment, I just say to the House: Why not let that one-third of people opt out? It does not stop the levy going ahead for those who support it. It just allows people to opt out. That may just preserve their livelihoods and those of their family.

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (18:41): I grew up in a small business family. My first job was helping my dad stack his shelves in the general store in Gerringong. I am sure that, as members move around their electorates, the one thing they hear from any group in their community is that the cost of living is hurting everybody. Businesses are not knocking down my door and saying, "What I need to be successful is a new tax." Not a single one has come to me and said, "In order to improve life and vitality, I need another levy or another impost on my business." The reality is that this is just the compulsory student unionism of local communities. It is an example of ideology playing out. I say to my friends in the Liberal Party: You had a pretty bad election result on the weekend, and one of the factors that went into it was your commitment to higher taxes.

Standing here as an Independent member on this occasion, I say to the members of the Liberal Party tonight: You need to think very carefully about imposing additional taxes on business. When Sir Robert Menzies formed the Liberal Party, one of the things that he was committed to was small business. The Liberal Party often does not talk enough about backing in small business. Without these amendments, the bill is just more socialism by stealth. It is the Government saying, "We are going to look into your books. We're going to tell you how to run local communities. Rather than the chamber of commerce and the democratically elected council getting together and saying, 'We'll consult the community and impose a levy', the Government is going to do it for you." I did not come to Parliament to vote for more government control. I did not come here to levy more taxes on small business.

I say to my ideological friends on this side of the Chamber: Be very careful about how you vote on this, because this Government is trying to woo you into voting for legislation that will simply mean that more faceless bureaucrats will have control over hard-earned taxpayer money. The Government has not sought to justify that. Whilst there is no doubt that amendments to the bill have been moved by crossbench members to improve transparency, the reality is that the bill is about taxing small business to pay for better community outcomes rather than allowing businesses the opportunity to do that. If there are issues in CBDs with empty shops, perhaps those communities should be talking more about planning reform, density or changing the life and vitality of those

communities. The bill is dangerous. It will have more impost on small business. I will back these amendments because, even though I do not back the bill, at least they make it fairer.

Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (18:44): I find it somewhat bizarre that the amendments moved by the member for Lane Cove seem to have come out of left field. It is not the position taken by the shadow Minister. I have to say the shadow Minister has been pretty informed in his contribution to this House. It is not the position, as I understand, that has been signed off by the Coalition party room. Is the House considering freewheeling amendments from the member for Lane Cove? Are they genuinely the position of the Coalition?

Mr Anthony Roberts: Point of order: Mr Speaker, I ask you to direct my honourable and learned colleague the member for Heffron, whom I have known for 30-plus years now, to return to the leave of the amendments.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The substantive debate should be about not the process behind the amendments but the amendments themselves. It is an interesting observation, but that is all. The member for Heffron will return to the substance of the amendments.

Mr RON HOENIG: I welcome the point of order taken by the member for Lane Cove. In the 30 years I have known him, he has always been a stickler for unity, a stickler for camaraderie and a stickler for supporting his party.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Point of order: Again, Mr Speaker, I ask you to direct the member for Heffron to return to the crux of the debate, which is the amendments.

The SPEAKER: I uphold the point of order. The member for Heffron will address the substantive matter of the amendments.

Mr RON HOENIG: It is a substantive matter when the Government is trying to work out the mode of reasoning of the Opposition and the mode of reasoning of the member for Lane Cove, and how they interrelate to each other.

Mr Anthony Roberts: Point of order: Mr Speaker, I ask you once again to bring the member for Heffron back to the leave of the amendments.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Lane Cove for bringing that to my attention.

Mr Anthony Roberts: They are about lower taxes.

The SPEAKER: The member for Lane Cove will resume his seat. I uphold the point of order. The member for Heffron will speak to the substance of the amendments rather than the process of their construction.

Mr RON HOENIG: I have spoken about the successful operation of community improvement districts in government models in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States, and there has been an informed contribution to debate on this bill by the Opposition. How can I address the substantive matter of the amendments without mentioning that a senior member of the Opposition, the member for Lane Cove, who is not the shadow Minister, has moved amendments that cut across the whole premise of the bill and its worthwhile amendments?

Mr Alister Henskens: Point of order: Mr Speaker, you made a clear ruling that the Leader of the House is to return to the substance of the amendments and not make inflammatory speeches. He is flouting your ruling. He ought to return to the substance of the amendments and deal with that rather than introduce extraneous, superficial material, which is just sophistry that he engages in time and again. It is about time he showed respect to the Speaker.

The SPEAKER: I thank the member for Wairoa. I have heard enough. All members should show respect to the Speaker. But I thought the member for Heffron had improved and I was going to say well done. He started to return to the substance of the amendments.

Mr Alister Henskens: Mr Speaker, with respect, he was talking about New Zealand and Canada. He was going on a tour of the world rather than dealing with the amendments and their wording. That was the problem. He should be brought back to Sydney and Macquarie Street.

The SPEAKER: The member for Wairoa will resume his seat. I am in good humour but that is starting to be tested.

Mr RON HOENIG: The member for Lane Cove is not alone. He has his factional colleague the member for Wairoa on his side.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:49): I will be brief. I wish to make clear that these amendments are not supported by the Coalition, the substance of which will be dealt with in amendment No. 3 to be moved by the Coalition, as is known.

Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (18:50): Given that the shadow spokesperson for the Coalition indicated that the Coalition will not be supporting one of its own member's amendments, I feel it is important to put on the record why The Greens will be supporting these amendments, otherwise it would be an odd vote in the history of votes. While there may be very different reasons why The Greens are supporting them, I think there is a fundamental principle in why we oppose this bill in full. It is trying to undermine the existing processes and roles of local government and indeed of the State Government in supporting local businesses and local infrastructure. This idea that we would create a different voting model that not all community members, but only businesses, can participate in—and then require those businesses to pay levies to this separate, undemocratic process, to then have imposed on them things that no-one who lives in the area has any say over, because only the businesses can join—is fundamentally concerning.

I note that the Minister speaking to these amendments pointed out that democracy is ensuring that everyone has a say. The last time I looked, businesses do not and should not get a vote in our democracy. Citizens are what make up our democracy. For that reason, we have concerns. If the Labor Party's position is actually that all people should get a vote in relation to the community improvement districts, I look forward to soon bringing a bill that will ensure that tenants in strata complexes also get a vote on their strata committees. I look forward to seeing changes to other provisions that do not allow renters or other people living in communities to have a say. If the Labor Party's position is now that everyone gets a say in these democracies, I look forward to seeing how that works. For now, The Greens support these amendments, but we do not support this bill overall, because it undermines local government.

The SPEAKER: The question is that amendments Nos 1 and 2 on Roberts - sheet No. 1 be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes8
Noes73
Majority.....65

AYES

Butler, R (teller)
Leong, J
Roberts, A (teller)

Scruby, J
Shetty, K
Smith, T

Ward, G
Williams, R

NOES

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

Greenwich, A
Griffin, J
Hagarty, N (teller)
Harris, D
Henskens, A
Hodges, M
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Hornery, S
James, T
Kaliyanda, C
Kirby, W
Lane, J
Layzell, D
Li, J
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K
Mehan, D
Moylan, B
O'Neill, M
Park, R
Petinos, E

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

Dwyer, R
Finn, J

Preston, R

NOES

Wilson, F

Amendments negatived.

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (19:02): I move my amendment No. 1 on sheet c2025-084:

No. 1 Local council support

Page 6, clause 13 (2), line 43. Omit "30 days". Insert instead "60 days".

Section 13 (2) of the Community Improvement Districts [CID] Bill 2025 prescribes that local councils will have a minimum of 30 days to provide confirmation to the authority of their decision on whether to support the CID. While this is only the minimum time frame, and the authority is able to provide councils with longer to respond, feedback from Local Government NSW and other stakeholders on the bill is that it may be difficult for councils to provide their approval in 30 days, and that may create an unrealistic expectation. Local Government NSW noted that, particularly if the CID proposal is considered by a full council, it is likely that more than 30 days will be required by council to turn around its response.

CID proponents and communities will understandably want to move forward with their CID proposals quickly following a successful ballot. However, it is important also that councils have adequate time to complete their processes. Amending the minimum approval time from 30 days to 60 days strikes a balance between allowing CID proposals to move forward expeditiously, and providing councils with the time they need for their processes.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (19:04): I made the mistake of keeping my remarks short in my last contribution because I thought we had unity around doing that. I will continue to be brief. I give a big thanks to the member for Wakehurst for reading the bill, listening to the contributions, understanding the bill and giving us plenty of time to consider his amendment. The Government is very pleased to support the amendment and work of the member. We appreciate him. We also appreciate the member for Pittwater for her considered response, as well as some but not all of the response from the member for Willoughby.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:05): I simply wish to confirm the support of the Opposition for this amendment. We have no concern with that further 30 days in the circumstances.

The SPEAKER: The question is that amendment No. 1 of the member for Wakehurst on sheet c2025-084 of be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:05): I move Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2025-087F:

No. 3 Waivers and reductions—proportionate benefit

Page 11, proposed Part 4. Insert after line 37—

Division 2B Waiver or reduction of levy

25B Authority may waive or reduce levy

- (1) The Authority may waive or reduce the levy payable by a landowner if the landowner has demonstrated to the Authority that the landowner would not receive a proportionate benefit by payment of the levy.

Example— An IT business with all its clients in another country may not benefit to a proportionate degree from CID services, projects or activities when compared with a neighbouring retail business.

- (2) If the Authority decides to waive or reduce the levy payable by a person, the Authority must give notice of that decision to the relevant CID entity.
- (3) The Authority must give effect to that decision by—
 - (a) waiving or reducing the levy payable, as the case requires, and
 - (b) writing off the amount that is waived or the amount of the reduction.
- (4) Accrued interest on the levy may be waived or reduced under this section in the same way as the levy.
- (5) Accordingly, a reference in this section to the levy includes a reference to accrued interest on the levy.

This is an essential element, in our view. This is an important Coalition amendment to this piece of legislation. It goes to a subject that has already been touched on here, which is the impact of the levy upon businesses. Specifically what we are speaking of are those businesses for whom there may not be a proportionate benefit relative to the levy. In our view, this mechanism—that is, this amendment—is essential. Not all businesses in a CID area will benefit equally from its activities, and some may be financially vulnerable. Where a business can demonstrate that the levy does not show proportionate benefit, there must be, in our view—and, importantly, this is the view of the small business community—a pathway to relief. Without it, we risk turning a place activation tool into a financial burden for our smallest and most exposed operators.

I have some examples. The first example would be of an accountant, or it could be in IT or other such business which is on a street—a retail strip, for example—which does not rely on foot traffic. If the CID has a retail or streetscape focus, there is not going to be a proportionate return for that accountant or that IT business in the circumstances. It will not accrue and it is very hard, in those circumstances, to justify the levy. Therefore there should be such an exemption as we are providing in this amendment. What about the circumstance in which the CID may, for example, be focused upon the night-time economy? But if a business in that area only goes about daytime business, they are not going to be supporting that initiative. They are not going to be receiving a benefit from that initiative and, in our view, they should not be having to pay for that initiative.

Finally, there is even an example provided in the amendment, where an IT business might have clients in another country that may not benefit—to a proportionate degree, obviously—from the CID's services, projects or activities when compared to a neighbouring retail business. This could occur in any number of sectors. There are countless examples where this issue would arise, and it is a well-placed concern. Again, it is a deep and true concern of the small business community, and that is why we are calling for this amendment to provide such a waiver—one which is measured and reasonable, and which, indeed, has a proper process to go through the authority. But this is an essential mechanism. I commend the amendment to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (19:08): The Government does not support the amendment. I listened carefully to the examples from the member for Willoughby. I get the idea that some businesses do not have a walk-in business and do not rely on foot traffic. It does raise awareness about it, and that goes to the reason we do not support the amendment. As it is drafted, the amendment is unclear about what is meant by "proportionate benefit", at what point it would be assessed, whether the benefit for business is considered and what type of benefits are assessed. It could also present significant uncertainty to local businesses trying to do the right thing by working together as a CID.

The Government believes that the concerns behind the amendment are addressed by other aspects of the CIDs process. In particular, the extensive consultation and proposal preparation stage will ensure that proposals are appropriately scaled and respond to the needs of local businesses and property owners. Where a CID proposal is not attractive to businesses and property owners, it is unlikely to succeed at the CID ballot. The New South Wales Government is not aware of any other jurisdiction where a clause of this nature has been included in district improvement legislation or policy. Drawing on the experience of other jurisdictions and their success in this area, we do not think that this amendment should be included in the legislation.

I correct a view that has been put forward about a tax. The bill will provide a mechanism for businesses to come together to pool resources in a way that is well set up. In other parts of the State, councils have tried to provide something similar by levying fees across a whole precinct. Businesses in those initiatives had limited say about what is done with those rates. The bill provides a better way. It gives businesses more say about the types of activities proposed, and whether they even want to participate in the process. We have conducted many processes and points of consultation to try to get to the nub of this, including our contributions in the House this evening. I see what the Opposition is trying to do, but this amendment will not achieve the outcome it wants.

Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:11): I listened carefully to the Minister. With respect to her, I found that response to be very disappointing. The fact of the matter is that 34 per cent of businesses in an area may vote against a proposal and still be levied and bound by it. That is a significant proportion. One-third of the people eligible to vote could be against it. There is a concept within the law of "fraud on the minority". Effectively, this process permits a fraud on the minority and an oppressive tax to be levied on the minority. The amendment is very carefully directed towards the inequity that could occur in that situation. As the member for Willoughby said, this is the exact opposite of what some people call the "free rider effect". It is the absolute opposite of the free rider effect in that the people who get no benefit from a proposal could be required to pay for it. A substantial number of people may not support a CID proposal but may have to pay for it even though they get zero benefit.

The use of the word "proportionate" takes into account that benefits can sometimes be a complex idea. There may be a fractional benefit or a 1 per cent benefit to a business that does not really justify payment of 100 per cent of the levy. It is carefully worded to ensure that an equitable position can be taken with regard to

business owners who get either no benefit or a very small benefit relative to the levy. I encourage Government members to reconsider their position. We have record failures of business at the moment. Every small business owner I visit in my electorate tells me how hard they are doing it and how line ball the viability of their business is. It is really important to ensure that if a business is not going to get a benefit out of one of these proposals, they should not be required to pay for it. A substantial number of businesses may get no benefit but, collectively, still not be able to stop a proposal under the legislation as it is currently drafted.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 3 on sheet c2025-087F be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes35
Noes44
Majority.....9

AYES

| | | |
|--------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Anderson, K | Kemp, M | Smith, T |
| Ayyad, T | Lane, J | Speakman, M |
| Clancy, J | Layzell, D | Taylor, M |
| Cooke, S | Leong, J | Thompson, T |
| Coure, M | Petinos, E | Toole, P |
| Crouch, A (teller) | Preston, R | Tuckerman, W |
| Di Pasqua, S | Provest, G | Tudehope, M |
| Donato, P | Roberts, A | Wallace, J |
| Dwyer, R | Scrubby, J | Ward, G |
| Griffin, J | Shetty, K | Williamson, R (teller) |
| Henskens, A | Singh, G | Wilson, F |
| James, T | Sloane, K | |

NOES

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

PAIRS

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Cross, M | Tesch, L |
| Davies, T | Kamper, S |
| Hodges, M | Saliba, D |
| Moylan, B | Haylen, J |
| Saunders, D | Minns, C |
| Williams, R | Harrison, J |

Amendment negatived.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:20): I move Opposition amendment No. 4 on sheet c2025-087F:

No. 4 **Government land**

Page 14, clause 31. Insert after line 6—

- (1A) Despite subsection (1), this Act does apply to government land if the government land is leased on a commercial basis to a person or body that is not the State or the Commonwealth or an agency of the State or the Commonwealth.

Amendment No. 4 goes to another fundamental question pertaining to this law—that is, how shall government land be treated? Presently, there is proposed to be in this draft bill a wholesale exemption for government land. That, in our view, is not justifiable nor reasonable in the circumstances. We propose narrowing the section 31 exemption for government-owned land. At present, all government land would be exempt. It is a blanket exemption, even when that land is used commercially. Even when on full commercial terms, the Government just gets to jump out of this because apparently it should. This, in our view, is not right. It is not reasonable. It is not equitable. Why should a private cafe pay the CID levy when a cafe that might be down the street on government land, competing for the same customers, would pay nothing?

We propose that government land used obviously for public purposes, like emergency services or schools, of course should be exempt. But government land used commercially ought not be exempt. Fairness, surely, is a core principle of any levy system. This should be a level playing field. This is indeed grounded in the simple notion of competitive neutrality. It is not just a matter of principle. This is real, in circumstances. There are many parts of this city and State where there are significant government land holdings—for example, in The Rocks here in Sydney.

I have raised this with the Government and, with all due respect, the Government says, "But the Government can opt in to the community improvement district." But why would the Government choose to do so? Is the Government really going to be stepping forward and saying, "We want to be levied. We're the Government. Please, have us pay." Of course, it is not likely to do that. Forgive my cynicism. The reality is if it is truly a matter of community—and these are called community improvement districts—the Government should do its fair share, bear its burden and be a part of that community. It is on that basis that we move this important amendment. I commend the amendment to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (19:23): It will not surprise the member for Willoughby to learn that the Government does not support the amendment. Including government land by default would represent a significant change in policy for community improvement districts in New South Wales, and that would require further consultation. The proposed drafting presents potential constitutional issues in relation to the applicability of the legislation to Commonwealth land. Those issues would need to be considered carefully.

The proposed drafting does not define what a lease "on a commercial basis" means. It is unclear how the authority or the CID proponent would be able to easily identify that at a district scale. It is not clear why the remaining exemption does not also apply to land leased to councils or to State/Commonwealth entities that are not agencies—for example, State owned corporations, such as Sydney Water. The legislation already provides several ways that government landowners can choose to be involved in CIDs. The legislation also enables regulations to be made declaring certain land not to be government land.

It is anticipated that a number of stakeholders, including councils such as the City of Sydney, would not support this amendment, if made. It is our expectation that government agencies will, in good faith, work with their local business communities on a proposal for a CID and will carefully discuss with their tenants whether to opt in and formally participate. The legislation includes a three-year review provision in section 41. The Government anticipates that section, and the policy approach of government land being opt-in, will be key matters considered in the review. For those reasons, the Government opposes the amendment.

The SPEAKER: The question is that Opposition amendment No. 4 on sheet c2025-087F be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes34
Noes45
Majority.....11

AYES

Anderson, K
Ayyad, T
Cooke, S
Coure, M
Crouch, A (teller)
Di Pasqua, S
Dwyer, R

Lane, J
Layzell, D
Leong, J
Moylan, B
Petinos, E
Preston, R
Provest, G

Sloane, K
Smith, T
Speakman, M
Taylor, M
Toole, P
Tuckerman, W
Tudehope, M

AYES

Griffin, J
Henskens, A
Hodges, M
James, T
Kemp, M

Roberts, A
Scruby, J
Shetty, K
Singh, G

Wallace, J
Ward, G
Williamson, R (teller)
Wilson, F

NOES

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

Donato, P
Doyle, T
Finn, J
Greenwich, A
Hagarty, N (teller)
Harris, D
Hoenig, R
Holland, M
Hornery, S
Kaliyanda, C
Kirby, W
Li, J
McDermott, H
McGirr, J
McKeown, K

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

PAIRS

Clancy, J
Cross, M
Davies, T
Saunders, D
Thompson, T
Williams, R

Kamper, S
Tesch, L
Harrison, J
Minns, C
Saliba, D
Haylen, J

Amendment negatived.

Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (19:32): By leave: I move my amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2025-092D in globo:

No. 1 Power to require information and documents from local councils

Page 15, clause 34. Insert after line 15—

- (1A) A local council is not required to give the Authority information or a document in circumstances prescribed by the regulations.

No. 2 Power to require information and documents from local councils

Page 21, Schedule 3. Insert after line 22—

Part 3 Production of information and documents**4 Production of information and documents**

For the Act, section 34(1A), information, or information in a document, is not required to be given to the Authority where the information, or the information in the document, is personal information within the meaning of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*.

The Community Improvement Districts Bill creates a framework for businesses to come together to celebrate their neighbourhood and attract new patrons and customers. It does not create socialism, and it does not end democracy. The framework requires engagement with businesses through comprehensive and ongoing consultation and through levies to fund projects that support growth. The authority may need information held by councils about businesses to set and issue levies. I understand that this information will be used to determine how businesses pay rates to help calculate levies and that it will exclude private and personal information.

But the authority's power to get and use information from councils is broad, and the City of Sydney rightly argues that councils need protections against providing private information that would otherwise be unlawful and

that businesses need protections to ensure their personal and private information is not shared with entities. My amendments require the regulations to limit the type of information the authority can request of councils and make it clear that councils are not required to give the authority information that would breach privacy laws. I thank the Minister's office for working with me and the City of Sydney on these amendments, and I commend them to the House.

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (19:34): I congratulate the member for Sydney on his amendments, which the Government supports. I congratulate him even more on what I will now call the Greenwich clause: This does not promote or create socialism, nor does it destroy democracy. That is well commended, and the Government agrees to the amendments.

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:34): I will be very brief. The Opposition is pleased to support the amendments of the member for Sydney. They are reasonable, and we are glad to back them in.

The SPEAKER: The question is that amendments Nos 1 and 2 on sheet c2025-092D of the member for Sydney be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

The SPEAKER: The question is that clauses 1 to 42 and schedules 1 to 4 as amended be agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 42 and schedules 1 to 4 as amended agreed to.

Third Reading

Ms JENNY AITCHISON: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

The SPEAKER: The question is that this bill be now read a third time. A division has been called for. There being only five members against the question, the question is resolved in the affirmative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

Noes, 5

Mrs J. Hannan
Ms J. Leong
Ms K. Shetty
Ms T. Smith
Mr G. Ward

Motion agreed to.

Community Recognition Statements

EDMONDSON PARK MALAYALEE CLUB

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (19:42): I had a great time at the Edmondson Park Malayalee Club [EDMA] 2024 awards night on 29 March. It was a wonderful evening celebrating the outstanding achievements of the local Malayalee community across art, academia and sports. It was more than just an awards event. It highlighted EDMA's ongoing impact in creating a strong, connected network of Malayalees in surrounding suburbs, from Liverpool right through to Campbelltown. I have known this club for a number of years. It plays a vital role in building community ties by offering support and fostering belonging among local families. A key feature of the night was recognition of the youth who took part in the popular EDMAs Got Talent event, which is an inspiring platform that gives young people the chance to showcase their skills and gain well-deserved recognition. Also in attendance was the wonderful Federal member for Werriwa, Anne Stanley, who was re-elected on Saturday.

CELLO HAIRDRESSERS

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (19:43): I acknowledge Cello Hairdressers, which celebrated 30 years of business in April this year. What a remarkable milestone! From humble beginnings, Cello Hairdressers has become a beloved institution of the Wareemba community. It has delivered exceptional service with a personal touch for over 30 years. I congratulate and recognise the hard work and commitment of husband and wife team Rick and Rosalie Adoncello, and the Cello Hairdressers stylists and staff. In its 30 years, Cello Hairdressers has seen trends come and go, but it is not just about the hairstyles. It is about the relationships they have built, the confidence they have boosted and the smiles they have created. On behalf of our community,

I wish Rick, Rosa, the Adoncello family and the Cello Hairdressers staff all the very best as they celebrate this significant anniversary. I congratulate Cello Hairdressers.

EILEEN SCRIVEN

Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (19:44): I congratulate Eileen Scriven from Milton on an incredible success at the 2025 Sydney Royal Easter Show, where she secured five first-place titles in the Cake Decorating and Sugar Art category. This is an outstanding achievement that showcases Eileen's remarkable talent and dedication to the craft. Eileen's excellence did not stop there. She was also awarded the highly regarded Dorothy Evans Perpetual Trophy in recognition not only of an exceptional exhibit but also of her many years of service to the art of cake decorating. This prestigious award is a testament to the impact Eileen has made in her field over time. To top it all off, Eileen was named the Most Successful Exhibitor in the Cake Decorating and Sugar Art class. This honour reflects both the quality and consistency of Eileen's work. Eileen's passion, precision and artistry continue to inspire the community. I congratulate Eileen. Her hard work and passion shine through in everything she creates.

NELLIE DOUEIHI

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (19:45): I congratulate local resident Nellie Doueihy, who is the 2025 Local Woman of the Year for the Oatley electorate. It was my absolute privilege to present this award to Nellie alongside Saint Declan's parish priest, Father Josh Wicker, in front of a congregation made up of family, friends, parishioners and volunteers. Over the past few years, Nellie has overseen the Saint Declan's ministry to the sick and elderly. This ministry has grown significantly under her leadership, and now has a team of over 130 volunteers providing support to more than 300 seniors. She has also developed a range of initiatives to assist vulnerable members of the community, including the Tech Savvy Seniors program, which connects high school students with seniors to improve their digital literacy. Alongside the program, she has overseen nursing home outreach, fall prevention programs, funeral support services and tele-support calls. I once again extend my congratulations to Nellie Doueihy. She is certainly a deserving recipient of this award, and I look forward to seeing all that she achieves over the coming years.

SUSAN TEMPLEMAN

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:46): I acknowledge my colleague and friend Susan Templeman on her record historic fourth victory for Labor in the electorate of Macquarie on Saturday 3 May 2025. Susan has worked solidly not only during the campaign period but also since she was first preselected to contest the 2010 Federal election. Her persistence paid off when she was elected as the member for Macquarie at the 2016 election. She demonstrated her dedication to fight for the Hawkesbury and the Blue Mountains day in, day out. There are so many issues Susan cares about, particularly the natural environment and protection of the World Heritage national park that we are fortunate to live in. Susan is a strong, passionate, caring and smart woman. She brings with her Labor's values of fairness, equality and opportunity alongside an awe-inspiring dedication to represent her community every single day. I also thank her for supporting me. I give my heart-filled congratulations to this wonder woman extraordinaire.

GUMBAYNGGIRR GIINGANA FREEDOM SCHOOL

Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (19:47): Coffs Harbour is celebrating a strong community partnership which is helping one of our schools continue its remarkable growth and helping its students to thrive. The relationship between Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School and BCU Bank has delivered a funding boost to support construction of new classrooms. This has provided the opportunity for children to attend year 7 and year 8 at the high school for the first time. The BCU Bank and freedom school partnership aims to support First Nations students to complete year 12. The Gumbaynggirr Giingana Freedom School is the first and only Aboriginal language bilingual school in New South Wales. The school opened three years ago for students from kindergarten to year 2. It started with 14 pupils, and today it boasts 81 students. While the school currently caters for kindergarten to year 8, there are plans to expand to year 12 in the near future. I congratulate the Chief Executive Officer of the Bularri Muurlay Nyanggan Aboriginal Corporation, Clark Webb, and the Executive General Manager Customer Experience of BCU Bank, Mark Smyth, and their respective teams on this crucial collaboration.

PORT STEPHENS VIEW CLUBS OF AUSTRALIA

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:48): Sitting amidst the beauty of Port Stephens are local groups that quietly go about their work lending a hand, giving generously and supporting those who need it most. The VIEW Clubs of Australia in Port Stephens are a shining example of those who give a lot, including the members of the Myall River, Nelson Bay, Raymond Terrace and Tilligerry VIEW clubs. VIEW stands for Voice, Interests and

Education of Women. It brings women together not only for friendship and connection but also to drive lasting change by supporting the education of young Australians through the Smith Family. The VIEW Clubs of Australia is a powerful network that empowers women to grow, lead and give back, all while championing a cause that really matters. Through their partnership with the Smith Family, VIEW Clubs of Australia helps to provide long-term educational support to children and young people doing it tough. Last weekend I had the privilege of attending the VIEW Clubs of Australia sixty-fifth anniversary gala. Tonight this Parliament recognises the VIEW Clubs of Australia and all of its past and current members for 65 years of making a difference.

JOOLS FARRELL

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (19:49): I recognise the dedication of Jools Farrell, who bravely protects our local and global marine life while placing herself in harm's way. Jools is currently en route to Dublin with the Captain Paul Watson Foundation, where she and the crew will be ready to depart if the Icelandic whale fleet decide to whale off the coast this summer. During that campaign, the crew will put themselves between the harpoon of a boat and whales to prevent the killings of those gentle giants. These campaigns require months of dedication, both onshore and at sea, where Jools acts as a medic and quartermaster. Jools is motivated by her passion for marine life. Her inspiration is Paul Watson, who has worked tirelessly to protect marine life across the world. Jools has been on several campaigns, including to Antarctica, which requires months of perseverance. I thank Jools for her outstanding commitment to protecting the marine animals we hold so dear in Pittwater and extend my deepest gratitude for her work.

RYDALMERE COMMUNITY HUB

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (19:50): Community hubs are an incredible resource and support service for our residents. The Parramatta electorate is fortunate to have community hubs at Rydalmere and Parramatta West public schools. I will share a powerful story that illustrates the impact of the Rydalmere Public School hub, shared by hub leader Seetha Srinivasan, who said:

Last year, we had a new migrant come through to the hub, looking for a volunteering opportunity.

Our hub took on Mayssa.

We discovered that she was hard working, took initiative, was good hearted, intelligent and positive. We supported Mayssa in connecting with all our programs, especially English and our engagement programs. This year, the hub provided a learn to swim program for adults which Mayssa participated in.

We quickly learned she was a natural in water and instantly became an extra support person for the swim instructor to support other adults in the pool. Mayssa has since applied for a job as an instructor and received support from the hub with her resume and interview preparation.

It is a wonderful example of the positive impact that community hubs make to people's lives.

JEFFREY PURCELL, JP

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:51): I acknowledge and thank Hawkesbury resident Jeffrey Purcell, who today was recognised for his 50 years of service as a justice of the peace [JP]. Mr Purcell became a justice of the peace in 1974, proudly offering his services to the community and the people of New South Wales. Jeffrey has always been conscious of the importance of providing that service and has upheld the values of honesty and integrity of a justice of the peace. Speaking with him today, Jeffrey shared the immediate connection he had with the Hawkesbury community after settling into the area. He witnessed the caring, generous and honest nature of residents and was very happy to continue offering his JP services to his local community. This is a stellar achievement for Mr Purcell, and I was delighted to join him today, as 29 other members of Parliament and I recognised and thanked those citizens who celebrated this milestone. Hawkesbury is very grateful to Jeffrey Purcell for his dedication of time and his commitment to the role.

FOODLAB SYDNEY

Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (19:52): I recognise the remarkable work of FoodLab Sydney, a social enterprise that is transforming lives in the Strathfield electorate. FoodLab empowers people to build food businesses from the ground up—especially women, migrants and low-income residents—by offering hands-on training in cooking, food safety and business planning. It is a pathway from kitchen table recipes to thriving catering services, market stalls and food manufacturing. Its kitchen garden, brimming with herbs and ingredients from around the world that you cannot find commercially in Australia, is a living symbol of our community's incredible diversity and resilience. I thank founder Jamie Loveday, the team at FoodLab and the many local entrepreneurs they support for growing more than just great food. They are growing opportunity, they are growing confidence and they are growing community in the electorate of Strathfield.

MANNING VALLEY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION MASTERS CREW

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (19:53): I recognise the Manning Valley Hockey Association Masters Crew—Larry Mercer, Peter Cubbin, Darrell Parvin and Kevin Haigh—for their role in keeping the Taree Hockey Centre running smoothly. Every Wednesday that group of long-time hockey men donate their time to maintain and improve the facilities at Taree Hockey Centre, from landscaping and sweeping synthetic pitches to repairing infrastructure and assisting with bigger projects. They do not ask for thanks or recognition. They simply show up, get the job done and come back the next week. Their longstanding involvement in the association as players, coaches, mentors and committee members speaks volumes about their passion for the sport and its people. Thanks to this wonderful crew, the Taree Hockey Centre has been well maintained for decades. I thank them on behalf of our community and the Manning Valley Hockey Association

AUBURN ELECTORATE SOCIAL HOUSING

Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:54): I congratulate the Labor Federal Government and Anglicare on their vital investment to deliver much-needed housing in the Auburn electorate through the Housing Australia Future Fund. Its first-round funding will see the Anglican Church transform a former church site in Regents Park into 74 much-needed homes. The project will specifically target support for older single women over 55 and families in crisis. Women over 55 are disproportionately represented, accounting for 48 per cent of applicants for social housing in New South Wales. Over 11,000 households in the Cumberland City Council area are under rental stress. I congratulate our local Anglican communities, whose good works also include language classes for refugees and food hubs and who are now able to provide good homes for those most in need in our local community, particularly older women.

FASHION BY LIFELINE

Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (19:55): Tonight I acknowledge the outstanding work of Lifeline Northern Beaches, an organisation that has been supporting our local community with compassion and dedication for more than 50 years. I highlight a fantastic recent initiative: Lifeline's collaboration with Forest High School to launch the very first Fashion by Lifeline store. I had the pleasure of attending the store's official opening, and I can confidently say it is an inspiring example of what community partnerships can achieve. Forest High School is now the first school in the entire country to provide students with hands-on retail experience while also raising funds for Lifeline's life-saving services. The store is open every lunchtime, giving students the chance to develop practical skills, teamwork and confidence in a supportive, real-world environment. It is amazing to see such meaningful learning in action, where education, wellbeing and community impact come together. I offer huge congratulations to Lifeline Northern Beaches, the Forest High School team and all the students involved. They have set an amazing example, as usual.

ALEX AND MARGARET CORONAKES

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (19:56): I warmly wish Alex Coronakes and his wife, Margaret, all the very best for their retirement after 40 years of owning and operating the iconic Tropicana Fruit Shop in Lismore's Keen Street. Alex and I go back a long way to when we used to work together at the Lismore and District Workers Club. We remain good friends, and I love dropping in to his store to buy fruit and other treats and to have a chat. Alex is a keen observer of life, making him a good barometer of Lismore city and district. Alex posted on Facebook that, after much thought and consideration, the time has come for them to close the doors of Tropicana Fruit Shop as they step into the next chapter of their lives—retirement. Alex wrote, "To the Lismore community, thank you for embracing us and making this such a special place to do business ... Maybe we might jump on a plane and plan a big family trip to Greece!" Keen Street just will not be the same without the Coronakeses.

SALON PURPOSE

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (19:57): I acknowledge and celebrate the outstanding contribution of Salon Purpose in Manly, a business leading with heart, purpose and community impact. To date, it has contributed to over 3,000 people gaining access to clean water, 399 nights of safe housing and 190 days of healing for domestic violence survivors. It has also supported women in Asia with startup loans and provided vital birthing kits to mothers in Uganda. As a proud partner with Sustainable Salons, it is also reducing its environmental impact with every appointment by donating \$3 towards sustainability initiatives. I thank Nicki and the team at Salon Purpose. Their generosity is transforming lives locally and globally.

INTERNATIONAL FIREFIGHTERS DAY

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:58): St Florian's Day, known as International Firefighters Day, is on 4 May, and I attended the Fire and Rescue NSW 2025 awards ceremony at the City of

Sydney fire station as the Parliamentary Secretary for Emergency Services. The awards recognised firefighters and units who have gone above and beyond their normal duties. Among those recognised were senior firefighter Geoffrey Daniel Kanagaratnam, leading firefighter Daniel Austin and senior firefighter Britt McLean for their heroic efforts during a tragic fatal house fire in Hinchinbrook in 2022. Their actions led to the rescue of three people from the second storey of the burning home. Though those rescued sadly did not survive, the firefighters went to extraordinary lengths to assist people in need, including Daniel Kanagaratnam fracturing his back when entering the house. In fact, all crews involved in responding to the awful incident—including those from Busby, Horningsea Park, Bonnyrigg Heights, Liverpool and Cabramatta—were commended for their actions. It is a reminder that they are ready to step up to do whatever is required, whenever it is required. I congratulate and thank all the firefighters and units who were recognised for their continued service.

HAYDEN PHILLIS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda) (19:59): I recognise incredible musician Hayden Phillis of Como on the release of his debut album *Too Young*. By way of background, Hayden is a former school captain of Jannali High School and embarked on his music career at the age of 12. Using his father's guitar, he busked outside shops from Como to Cronulla, before going on to play at local breweries and festivals at the age of 15. In fact, it was while performing at an open mic night in Robertson that he met country music great Kasey Chambers and was invited to record his first album at her recording studio. Hayden is an exceptionally talented singer and songwriter. Describing *Too Young* as a mix of country music, American and folk, Hayden focuses on many of the issues facing young people today, including childhood illness, youth homelessness, drug use, and questions around faith and identity, as well as friendship circles, life and relationships. I congratulate Hayden on his debut album and hope to see him on stage in the future in Tamworth collecting a Golden Guitar.

PHINEAS ZABOJ

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (19:59): I acknowledge a local young man with an interest in the safety of members of his local community. Phineas ZaboJ sent me a letter earlier this year expressing his concern about the use of e-bikes around the shops at Engadine. He was concerned that other riders were being unsafe and could cause harm to themselves and others in the community. He told me specifically about his grandmother, who enjoys going for walks outside but has become fearful of her favourite activity after a near miss with an e-bike. I met with Phineas and was impressed that such a young man could be so kind and compassionate when thinking about others in the community. I have since passed on Phineas's recommendations to the Minister for Transport. Phineas is an example of the importance and necessity of young voices in politics who wish to make real and positive change for their community.

JILL CHAPMAN

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (20:00): Jill Chapman's history with the agricultural show movement started with the Hay Show Society. She devoted much energy to the success of the show, especially during her years as president. Jill is the sort of person who gets involved at all levels, and her community roles have been many and varied. Jill became involved with the south-western group of AgShows NSW, group 9, as the Hay Show delegate. She fully immersed herself in the group 9 world of shows—all 21 of them. Jill was elected to the position of group 9 president in 2016. In 2018 she was elected group 9 delegate to Agricultural Societies Council of New South Wales, making her only the second woman elected to that position in the organisation's history, until she became the president of AgShows NSW in 2023. In 2025 Jill was awarded life membership of group 9 in recognition of her exceptional leadership, devotion and passion. Jill's dedication to and advancing of the agricultural show movement must be commended.

PENRITH COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (20:01): I appreciate the tremendous efforts of our Penrith community in supporting this year's winter appeal. As the temperature begins to drop this winter, I am calling on the generous spirit of our Penrith community as the Penrith Community Kitchen Winter Appeal returns for another year. Many individuals and families face the cold without the essentials we so often take for granted. This winter I encourage local businesses and residents to donate new items for comfort packs to support our homeless and underprivileged. We are in urgent need of jackets, blankets, beanies, socks, gloves and scarves. These simple items make a world of difference. I extend my sincere thanks to the team at Penrith Community Kitchen for their tireless work providing community dinners, the Food for Local Kids program and care packs. Penrith salutes their ongoing dedication and compassion and thanks the many generous donors across our community. Together we can ensure that no-one in Penrith is left out in the cold this winter. Once again, this year there will be a collection box in my office.

NORTHERN SUBURBS RUGBY FOOTBALL CLUB

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:02): Northern Suburbs Rugby Football Club celebrated its 125th anniversary with a home game at North Sydney Oval, marking a proud milestone for one of our most iconic sporting institutions on the North Shore. Founded in 1900 through the merger of two local clubs, Norths has built a lasting legacy in Australian rugby, producing 42 Wallabies and winning seven Shute Shield premierships. From the early days as the Pirates to their most recent premiership in 2016, the Shoremen have remained a powerful force both on and off the field. Norths is more than just a rugby club; it honours generations of players, volunteers, supporters and families who have built a proud and inclusive sporting community. Heritage jerseys worn by players at their anniversary celebration paid tribute to the club's longstanding history, and the continued community support at North Sydney Oval shows how deeply Norths is woven into the fabric of our area. I congratulate everyone involved with Norths Rugby, including chairman Brad Leahy and head coach Zak Beer. Their passion, resilience and commitment continue to inspire in our community and provide opportunities for future generations to thrive in sport.

TRIBUTE TO POPE FRANCIS

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (20:03): I rise today to recognise the loss of the spiritual leader of the Catholic constituents of the Bega electorate, His Holiness Pope Francis. From St Bernards at Batehaven to the Church of Our Lady of the Princes Highway, Kiah, which was destroyed in the 2019 bushfires, 17 per cent of the Bega electorate identify as Catholic. The Holy Father was a force for good within the Catholic faith and across all beliefs. He will be remembered as the People's Pope who, with compassion and humility, exhorted us to peace, justice and inclusion of the excluded and disadvantaged. We here should take his guidance when His Late Holiness said, "Every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government must ask themselves two questions: Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path? If you don't ask those questions, your governance will not be good."

BOWRAL HIGH SCHOOL

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (20:04): I am proud to speak tonight in recognition of the work of a group of driven and conscientious Bowral High School students who have taken on the challenge of how to create awareness of PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, the group of forever chemicals that are an environmental and human health problem. The students participated in the NSW Department of Education's Game Changer Challenge, which asks students to address a real-world "wicked problem" to make life better for all without harming the planet. Bowral High School students qualified for the grand final with their innovative idea of an app that will educate people about the ongoing risks of PFAS. They had a four-fold approach to this challenge with an app, an organisation, a campaign and a petition. These motivated students are collaborating with a technology company to create an app, working towards a barcode scanner that will allow users to identify if a product contains PFAS, which has been known to be in products such as Teflon and waterproof garments, fostering consumer awareness and choice. I congratulate the Bowral High School PFAS team. They are making a real difference.

BANKSTOWN WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:05): I acknowledge and thank the incredible staff at the Bankstown Women's Health Centre for their tireless work in improving and transforming the lives of women and children in our community. This independent, non-profit organisation has been running for over 50 years by women, for women. It is fitting to recognise this organisation today, on National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day. More than a health service, Bankstown Women's Health Centre provides domestic violence support and awareness in my community. During the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence in November, they host a remembrance vigil, bringing the community together to reflect on and honour those lives lost to domestic violence. The Bankstown Women's Health Centre provides critical medical and wellbeing services for free or at low cost. The staff empower women and provide life-changing support to help women leave domestic violence relationships safely. I thank Mariam Mourad and all the dedicated staff at Bankstown Women's Health Centre for their unwavering commitment, compassion and advocacy for women in our community.

CLARENCE CANEGROWERS ASSOCIATION

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (20:06): Tonight, in the Parliament of New South Wales, I acknowledge and celebrate the centenary of the Clarence Canegrowers Association, which recently held the triumphant return of the Maclean Cane Harvest Festival—the first time the festival has been held in Maclean since 1998. It was rejuvenated thanks to the vision and leadership of the president, Allira Robison, who was fittingly crowned the 2025 Cane Harvest Queen by her fellow committee members. Her passion was shared by her father, Ross Farlow, who is the chairman of the Clarence Canegrowers Association, which has sparked the revival of this

historic event together with the president, vice-president Rebecca Alford, secretary Tracy Causley, treasurer Tim Small and a dedicated group of over 20 volunteers. I congratulate everyone on bringing this iconic, magic event back to life as we celebrate our rich agricultural history.

QUEANBEYAN PRAMATHON

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (20:07): Saturday is the Queanbeyan Pramathon held to raise money for First Steps Pregnancy Support, which is a Queanbeyan service started by Dr Sarah Jensen with the aim of providing relational, practical and medical support for pregnant women in need and facilitating their engagement with local services. This fantastic local service has been driven by the desire to make sure that people in difficult circumstances do not miss out on the sort of care that they need during pregnancy. I will be participating in the pramathon with my daughter, Maddi, and my five-month-old granddaughter, Lizzie. I actually have an official pram to push with my daughter, if she will let me. I am very much looking forward to being part of this really important fundraising event for Queanbeyan. I urge people to get on board.

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW EMERGENCY SERVICES ACADEMY

Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:08): I recently had the absolute privilege to attend Orchard Hills with the crew from Fire and Rescue NSW Station 450 Saratoga for their emergency services academy training day. It was a fantastic opportunity to see firsthand the incredible facilities where our firefighters train and to watch them in action as they undertook live fire exercises designed to keep our communities safe. The highlight? Taking part in a live fire training callout myself! While I am used to fighting the occasional political fire in Parliament, this was my first experience confronting real flames—and it is something that I will never forget. Fire and Rescue NSW and RFS station crews from Copacabana, Narara, Mangrove Mountain, Killingworth, and Saratoga worked together in mock service station fire scenarios, gaining vital hands-on experience in fire suppression and incident command. Huge thanks to Fire and Rescue NSW for organising the day, and to Trent Marr from Saratoga Station 450 for the kind invitation and for getting me properly kitted out in personal protective equipment [PPE]. The day was an invaluable insight into the skill, teamwork and dedication of our emergency services.

ALLEGRO ENERGY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (20:09): Congratulations to Hunter clean-tech startup, Allegro Energy, on securing a United States patent for its cutting-edge microemulsion electrolyte technology, positioning it as a global leader in long duration energy storage. This water-based non-flammable platform avoids scarce materials and features fully recyclable components, delivering enhanced electrochemical stability and affordability. Origin Energy will pilot a 100 kilowatt-800 kilowatt module of this homegrown battery at Eraring Power Station, demonstrating its scalability and support for a cleaner grid. I was thrilled to visit Allegro Energy's Thornton facility and see firsthand the innovative work led by CEO Dr Thomas Nann following Allegro Energy's \$2.1 million clean technology grant from the New South Wales Government to develop low-cost, long-duration batteries. I am proud this innovative work is happening right on my doorstep, with the key components also manufactured in Australia. I commend Allegro Energy for exemplifying Maitland's spirit of innovation and reinforcing our nation's clean energy future.

BELLEVUE HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (20:10): I extend my warmest congratulations to Bellevue Hill Public School on the remarkable occasion of its 100th birthday. In the late 1800s the community fought hard and was persistently overcoming setbacks to eventually establish this school—a legacy that we are grateful for all these years later. Since its founding in 1925, Bellevue Hill Public has been a cornerstone of our community—dedicated to educating generations of young locals. Its motto, "Truth and Honour", reflects its longstanding commitment to integrity and excellence in education. On 25 May Bellevue Hill Public School will hold a celebration for its 100 years of learning, leading, and legacy. I look forward to joining them. I thank all the current and previous Bellevue Hill Public School staff and families for their dedication to our wonderful young people. Happy birthday Bellevue Hill—and many more returns!

Private Members' Statements

ANZAC DAY

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (20:12): On 25 April this year, our community came together with reverence and unity to mark 110 years since the Gallipoli landings. From Maitland Park and Morpeth to East Maitland and beyond in Beresfield, our Anzac Day services were a moving tribute to all who have served and continue to serve our nation. At dawn in East Maitland, I stood alongside hundreds of locals at the William Street cenotaph. As the light broke, we paused

together to remember the sacrifices made. The East Maitland march stepped off from George Street with veterans, school students, first responders and community groups walking proudly. Among them was a particularly moving presence for the first time—the Australian Khalsa Association and the Sikh Sangat Charitable Association Newcastle, whose members marched in memory of the often-overlooked Sikh Australians who served in the First World War.

Their presence was more than symbolic—it was historical. At least 12 Sikhs are now confirmed to have served in the Australian Imperial Force during World War I, despite significant barriers under the recruitment practices of the time. Those trailblazers, including men like Private Sam Singh who died in action in 1917, fought not only for their adopted homeland, but also for the values we celebrate and commemorate on Anzac Day—courage, mateship and sacrifice. To see these descendants march proudly alongside other veterans was deeply powerful and a long-overdue recognition of a shared legacy. I particularly thank the Australian Khalsa Association and the Sikh Sangat Charitable Association Newcastle for their leadership and commitment to ensuring this history is remembered. I also thank them for their hot curries served to many of the attendees at the marches. I also thank East Maitland RSL Sub-Branch President Tony Mulquiney and secretary Judy Gargosky for coordinating such a thoughtful and inclusive service, and for their ongoing support of all who wear uniforms, past and present. I also acknowledge and thank master of ceremonies Sergeant David Hockey of No. 3 Squadron RAAF Base Williamtown and the catafalque party from Singleton School of Infantry, commanded by Sergeant Eric Vincent.

I also pay a special tribute to the guest speaker at the event, who was an incredible speaker. He spoke with such passion, not just about his own person history in Maitland and his forefathers who had been lost in war, but also about those who have been profoundly impacted and lost in most recent conflicts past the year 2000. It was very moving and, I think, brought a whole different perspective to people who had often thought of Anzac Day as centred only on the events at Gallipoli. It really brought it home to everyone that this is still a challenge for our veterans and those who still serve our nation.

At Maitland Park, over 3,000 people gathered before dawn in front of our beautifully restored Anzac cenotaph. I wish to acknowledge Maitland RSL Sub-Branch President Fred Goode, OAM, along with vice-president and master of ceremonies Nigel Cox; secretary Kristy Cox, JP; treasurer Henry Meskauskas, OAM; and all the volunteers who worked so hard to deliver such a magnificent and significant commemoration there. The Maitland cenotaph was a beautiful backdrop to the event. The new lighting, campaign crosses and the accessibility improvements ensure that our community's history is both preserved and more accessible for everyone in our community.

In Morpeth, the Morpeth Anzac Day Committee and residents joined together for a poignant march and service. Despite intermittent showers, a strong crowd gathered to honour the fallen. I thank the committee and the Morpeth Museum for the Remembering Animals in War contingent, and all the volunteers for their meaningful contributions, particularly for inclusion of the donkeys. It was really great to see them out again. The local Lions Club, emergency services personnel and Rotary East Maitland also played a vital role right across our services, as did the Māori singers from Newcastle. They came to Maitland and sang the New Zealand national anthem so beautifully.

I extend special appreciation to the families who stood quietly in the crowd, holding hands or wreaths, reminding us that remembrance lives not just in the ceremony, but in people's hearts. As we continue to honour the Anzac spirit, it is vital that we recognise and remember all who have contributed to our shared history, ensuring that their stories are told and that their sacrifices are honoured and never forgotten. Lest we forget.

REGIONAL PARAMEDICS

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:16): Our paramedics are highly skilled professionals—the backbone of our emergency response system, delivering critical care to patients in often challenging and time-sensitive situations. Their unwavering service, professionalism and ability to respond under pressure keep our communities safe. Regional communities rely heavily on the expertise of NSW Ambulance paramedics, yet we see stark disparities between metropolitan and regional services.

One of the most pressing concerns is the limited availability of Extended Care Paramedics [ECPs] and Intensive Care Paramedics [ICPs] outside metropolitan areas. Those advanced models of care have been proven to improve patient outcomes, reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and ease the pressure on emergency departments. The benefits of the ECP model are clear. A regional pilot program is currently underway where Extended Care Paramedics work alongside nurse practitioners, registered nurses and allied health professionals in a multidisciplinary urgent care team, responding to non-life-threatening cases in patients' homes. This approach prevents avoidable hospital presentations and keeps paramedics available for true emergencies.

ECPs can manage wound care, catheter changes, dispense certain medications and provide advanced clinical assessments for elderly or mobility-impaired patients who struggle to access GP appointments. The introduction of ECPs in communities like Corowa, Holbrook and Tumbarumba would improve patient care and alleviate pressures on hospitals. A practical example from our own region demonstrates the need. Recently, a patient presented at a small regional hospital with a dislocated shoulder. Under normal circumstances this would have meant a painful, hour-long transport to a larger hospital. Fortunately, one of the responding paramedics was a trained ECP on secondment, who, under clinical guidance, was able to safely reduce the dislocation onsite. This not only spared the patient significant pain and stress, but also kept local ambulance crews available for other emergencies and saved hospital resources.

Currently, there are no NSW Ambulance-funded ECP positions outside the greater Sydney region—a limitation that is actively holding back regional health care. Worse still, paramedics who have undertaken ECP training are forced to relinquish their specialist position if they wish to transfer back to a regional or rural station, reducing those paramedics to general duties. It is a policy that not only disadvantages patients but also actively disincentivises senior paramedics from working in regional New South Wales.

The situation for intensive care paramedics is equally concerning. Albury station is the only Category A station in our electorate that is enabled to have an ICP. Yet, of the 12 required ICPs, currently only nine are available, with two on long-term work cover and one in a clinical training role. When ICP-trained paramedics are sent to smaller regional stations, they too must relinquish their title and scope of practice, despite our communities' desperate need for those life-saving skills. Finding 23 of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly inquiry into regional health services found:

NSW Ambulance is restricting Intensive Care Paramedics to large stations and limiting training for Extended Care Paramedics outside of metropolitan areas, which is disincentivising senior paramedics from working in remote, rural and regional NSW and effectively de-skilling the paramedic workforce.

It recommended urgent reforms to lift those restrictions and enable regional expansion of those specialist roles. It is not because our paramedics are not willing; it is quite the opposite. A local paramedic told me recently:

I love working as a paramedic in a regional community. What I find most rewarding is also what makes this work so important: the opportunity to serve people I know and care about. However, one of the most significant challenges we face is the lack of access to specialist paramedic resources such as Extended Care Paramedics. It's incredibly frustrating to know that expanded scopes of practice exist within metropolitan areas but remain out of reach for regional communities like ours. Aspects like this contribute to the decreased life expectancy of our regional, rural and remote communities. I want to keep learning, keep growing and keep serving my community right here, where I belong. But, right now, continuing to develop my skills often means leaving the very place I'm committed to. My goal is to provide the highest standard of clinical care to my patients, and I believe regional communities deserve access to the same advanced care opportunities as metropolitan areas.

The reality is we are asking those highly skilled professionals to choose between career progression and staying in the communities they love. It is a false choice. There exists a capable, passionate pool of paramedics eager to upskill and serve their communities at a higher clinical level. Our paramedics are ready. The New South Wales Government needs to deliver the resources, support and career pathways they deserve.

EAST HILLS ELECTORATE

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:21): Two years ago I stood in this Chamber as the newly elected representative for East Hills. I was humbled, determined and committed to delivering the change our community had waited too long for. Today I not only reflect on what we have achieved together but also reaffirm my enduring commitment to the people of East Hills. In looking after our most valuable asset, our children, the Minns Labor Government is focusing on education, and we have made unprecedented progress. After years of neglect, Condell Park High School is receiving a \$7 million upgrade. Sir Joseph Banks High School is also benefitting from \$7.4 million in upgrades. Many other the schools across my electorate are benefitting from repairs to their buildings and sporting facilities.

Across our electorates, 1,069 teachers have received long-overdue pay rises, and 194 previously temporary teachers and support staff have been made permanent. That means more stability for our students and greater respect for our educators. But keeping our children safe has gone beyond classrooms. We have funded 19 school crossing supervisors and invested over \$165,000 in P&C projects. That is real support that families feel every day. In health, we have broken through the delays and delivered on our promise. Finally, after nearly a decade of promises by the former Liberal Government, my Government is delivering the new Bankstown hospital, and plans are well underway. Importantly, we have also ensured that the current hospital site will remain as a health facility, preserving services where they are still most needed. We have invested in the places where people live and work.

At the grassroots level, we are backing local sport where it counts. The Milperra Colts junior rugby league club recently received funding for mobile shelters at Killara Reserve. It is simple infrastructure that makes a big difference for players and families who spend their weekends on the sidelines—rain or shine. Over \$400,000 in

grants has gone to support local community sport. Additionally, \$100,000 has gone into revitalising Condell Park shops. As part of the Milperra Drain masterplan, we also delivered flood-reduction works worth \$6.5 million. We are also investing in better transport and safer roads. A dedicated school bus now runs from Padstow to Menai High School, which is a win for local families. A further \$50 million has been committed to upgrades along Henry Lawson Drive to improve safety and ease congestion. Beyond the major upgrades to Henry Lawson Drive, we have worked closely with council to improve safety on local streets by upgrading crossings, fixing footpaths and enhancing accessibility for all through better cycleways and safer routes for pedestrians.

Cost-of-living support has been critical. From energy bill relief to toll rebates to first home buyer assistance, our Government is easing pressure on household budgets and ensuring that working families get the support they deserve. Some of the most important work we have done does not make headlines. Every day my office advocates for some of the most vulnerable members of our community, helping with housing, health access and navigating complex systems. Improving the day-to-day life of people in my community is the most personal and rewarding part of my job.

After more than a decade of Liberal neglect, our community is finally being heard. Where they stalled, we have delivered. Where they delayed, we have acted with purpose. There will be no more piecemeal plans and empty promises. This Government is building with integrity, ambition and a clear vision for the future. Each of those outcomes is the result of listening to the community and working alongside local residents, parents, small business owners, educators and health professionals. None of that happened by chance, and none of it happened alone. It is what change looks like, and it is only the beginning. I thank the people of East Hills for their trust, and I look forward to continuing that work together.

TWEED ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (20:25): Every year I continue to be grateful and appreciative that my role as a member of Parliament affords me the opportunity to participate in Anzac Day services around my electorate. In many ways Anzac Day, which was born from the bloodshed on the beaches of Gallipoli 110 years ago on 25 April 1915, was also the birth of mateship. It is important that we continue to recognise, remember and respect the sacrifice that so many men, women and their families have made for our nation. It was uplifting to join so many people from throughout the Tweed across several Anzac Day commemorations to pay tribute to our service men and women, past and present, despite the very wet and rainy weather conditions in the Tweed that day.

In the tiny village of Tumbulgum, I gathered with a large contingent of locals just before first light at 4.28 a.m. to honour our service men and women in a moving service. The people of Tumbulgum once again demonstrated that a strong sense of community is alive and well in that resilient and remarkable Tweed village. I then joined the Tweed Heads and Coolangatta RSL Sub-Branch dawn service. Even though we were drenched by the rain, it was very moving to see so many people unite to remember the sacrifice made by the brave Anzac men and women in Gallipoli, and the sacrifices and commitments made by all our courageous service men and women to this day. I then travelled to Pottsville Beach to attend the Pottsville District RSL Sub-Branch service. Watching proud Tweed residents walk in the Pottsville Beach Anzac Day march filled me with great admiration and respect for our service people.

It is especially heartening to see younger generations join with our returned service men and women and their families in tribute. I concluded my Anzac Day commemorations in Kingscliff at Rowan Robinson Park, named after Sapper Rowan Robinson from Kingscliff, who was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2011. I also acknowledge Private Nathan Bewes from Murwillumbah, who was killed by a roadside explosive device in Afghanistan in 2010. The sacrifices continue. Seeing families laying wreaths in honour of their lost ones that day and is extraordinarily moving.

In another moving ceremony organised by the Kingscliff RSL Sub-Branch, we remembered those lost to us, and paid tribute to those who continue to serve. Importantly, we must not overlook the impact the horrors of war can have on our returned service men and women. While they may return safely to their loved ones, we cannot underestimate the importance of mental health support for our veterans. I believe we can do more as a community and as governments. We may never be able to truly repay the debt of gratitude for the sacrifices made by our armed forces personnel, but I believe providing more adequate mental health support is one way we can honour and acknowledge their service. Also at Kingscliff, I was pleased that Brian Vickery, a returned Vietnam veteran, was honoured with life membership of the RSL. Brian served with Lieutenant General Peter Cosgrove in Vietnam, who went on to be our twenty-sixth Governor-General.

Let us reflect on the courage, sacrifice and camaraderie of those who have served our country. I thank all those who have served our country and continue to serve our country. It is a real debt of gratitude. It is very moving to stand look into the eyes of people who have lost so much to gain our freedom, our democracy and

continued lifestyle. As I have said a number of times about mental health, they come back with the scars of war and continue to do so. I think we can do far more. The Federal Government has just announced a veterans' hub in Tweed, which I am totally supportive of, to give ongoing support to those veterans, both men and women. But I still have a large number of young men and women in Tweed who continue to sign up and serve. I am extraordinarily proud. Once again, I am 100 per cent for the Tweed.

BLUE MOUNTAINS ELECTORATE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (20:30): Before I speak on the same issue as the member for Tweed, I acknowledge him and his heartfelt tribute to those who have been involved in organising and participating in Anzac Day services and to those who have served. I speak today with a heart full of gratitude and deep respect for the men and women who have served and continue to serve our nation. On 25 April, Anzac Day, we all gather in our communities to remember and honour those who made sacrifices for the freedoms that we cherish in this beautiful country. Whilst not celebrating war, it is absolutely crucial that we pay tribute to the courage, the camaraderie and the commitment of others who went before us so that we are able to live in peace and security. I listened to the contribution of the member for Tweed with great interest, because I also want to acknowledge those who have pulled together the services and the community that came together on this day. I thank all of those who served and who continue to serve. Their dedication and bravery ensure that we can live in a free and prosperous country, and we are forever in their debt.

I take this opportunity to thank the Blue Mountains RSL sub-branches of Blackheath/Mt Victoria, Katoomba, Springwood and Blaxland/Glenbrook, and the Lawson Combined Services Club. Their tireless work ensures that Anzac Day services and marches continue to be a really important part of our community's life. I also thank the Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Wentworth Falls, the Blue Mountains Peace Collective, the Woodford Rural Fire Brigade—especially local Ian Robinson, who runs the sunset service every year—for their efforts in keeping the Anzac spirit alive in the Blue Mountains area. I also acknowledge the very last service run by the Blue Mountains Ex-Servicewomen's Association, the sunset service in Springwood, which was led by my friend Faye Wheatley, a very good woman. I give my heartfelt thanks to all community groups who worked hard to ensure that everyone in the mountains could attend services and marches to remember the men and women who served our country.

I am particularly grateful to those who represented me at services that I could not attend in person, because there are quite a number of them. I thank Mayor Mark Greenhill, Deputy Mayor Suzie van Opdorp, Councillor Dr Margaret Buckham, Councillor Darren Rodrigo, my dear friends Susan Elford and Annette Bennett, and Bruce and Michelle McKenzie for their presence and participation in laying wreaths on my behalf. I acknowledge the many students and schools across the Blue Mountains that took part in Anzac Day marches. Everyone comments on how incredible it is that the number of people attending these marches and services is growing every year. To see little people part of that and learning about our history is heartening. Our next generation is honouring the sacrifices of our forebears and ensuring that the Anzac spirit lives on. Seeing two of my former kindergarten students Kai and Harry of Springwood High School, who are now school leaders, led the Springwood 11.00 a.m. service almost reduced me to tears. Young Taylah of Saint Columba's Catholic College, who was a work experience student, read the prayer.

Once again, I had the pleasure of participating in the celebrations of people coming together and honouring service men and women, including the tradition of playing two-up at the Lawson hotel. Whilst the game was lighthearted—I am absolutely terrible at two-up—it was a reminder of the strength of our community, united by respect, gratitude and cohesion. I take a moment to acknowledge the Blue Mountains Pipe Band, who moved through the hotel to keep everyone entertained and bring a tear to the eye. Anzac Day is a solemn occasion, a time to reflect on the courage and sacrifice of those who have given so much. Their legacy lives on not just in those ceremonies that we mark on Anzac Day but in the way we live our lives and appreciate the freedoms they fought to protect. At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them. Lest we forget.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (20:35): Today, National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day, I take the opportunity to speak up for those who have lost their lives to domestic and family violence. I also acknowledge those suffering from domestic violence, particularly those in my electorate. I have constituents that have been let down by the system, some of whom I have met with recently. I call on the New South Wales Government to do more, because we all must do more. This remembrance day serves as a stark reminder of the pervasive and devastating impact of such violence in our communities.

In 2024 Australia witnessed the tragic loss of 78 women to gender-based violence, averaging one woman every four days. Alarming, 14 women have already been killed this year and one such tragedy was the very recent murder of 19-year-old Audrey Griffin from Terrigal. Audrey, a vibrant young woman with aspirations to

join the navy, was found dead in Erina Creek. Her accused killer, Adrian Torrens, had a documented history of domestic violence including multiple breaches of apprehended violence orders. Despite those red flags, our system failed to prevent the tragedy. That cannot continue.

I know that my electorate of Pittwater is not immune to the crisis. I have met with people recently, and I am meeting with someone on Friday as well, who are being let down by the system. Recent statistics reveal that there has been a 20.9 per cent increase in domestic violence-related assaults over the last two years in our area, the second highest rate in Sydney. Local support services such as the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter, Women and Children First and the Women's Resilience Centre report being overwhelmed, often operating at full capacity. In particular, Women and Children First and Northern Beaches Women's Shelter report at times having to turn away victims due to resourcing constraints.

We know about the prevalence of coercive control and that, despite a New South Wales parliamentary inquiry in 2020 and subsequent legislative changes in 2022 to make coercive control a criminal offence, we are still experiencing significant under-reporting and under-prosecution of incidents of coercive control. I was shocked at the recent Bureau of Crime Statistics and Reporting report that showed that only 157 incidents had been prosecuted for the whole of New South Wales, when we know that it is so much more prevalent. The New South Wales Government has acknowledged this crisis and is committing \$230 million over four years to enhance domestic violence prevention support services, including Pathways to Prevention strategies aiming to address the underlying causes of domestic family and sexual violence. Additionally, \$6.6 billion of investment in social housing and homelessness services has been announced, prioritising 50 per cent of the new homes for women and children fleeing domestic violence.

Despite these efforts, we need to do more. Just yesterday I spoke with the police Minister, who informed me that domestic violence incidents now comprise a huge 60 per cent of general duties work for New South Wales police. This statistic underscores the extensive resources that are required to address the issue and firmly shows that we need to stop the culture of violence against women where it starts. We must educate our children, and we must create a culture of respect. I highlight two people in my electorate that have really put themselves out to spread the simple and very strong message: Stop killing women. Ray Lawrence, the filmmaker who made *Lantana*—which many people will remember—realised he could not join a local Stop Killing Women protest and decided instead to create his own single-man protest in Avalon. I think he was accompanied by his child and grandchild. He held up a sign asking people who passed him to toot their horn to give recognition and respect.

That made the local papers and is still remembered today, even though that was a little while ago. I have recognised Amy Clarke before in a community recognition statement. She makes T-shirts that simply read, "Stop killing women". Those T-shirts have been worn in Australian Parliament House by Independents who represent Federal northern beaches electorates. I recently watched the TV series *Adolescence* and *Until I Kill You*, which are harrowing watches. *Until I Kill You* is based on a true story. It shows that people are being let down by the system, from how we bring up our children and the need for conversations around respect for women, to systems abuse and the criminal justice system. On this day of remembrance, let us honour the lives lost by committing to tangible, urgent action.

PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE TOURISM

Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (20:40): From the wind in our sails to the hoops on the croquet court, there is a quiet but unstoppable momentum building in Port Stephens. My speech is all about that momentum—how we are harnessing our natural beauty, our infrastructure and, most importantly, our community to position Port Stephens as a world-class destination for sport, tourism and lifestyle. I am pleased the Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism got to experience that momentum on a recent visit to Port Stephens. He met with the team behind Sail Port Stephens, who last month launched the Performance Series.

The event started as a week-long regatta and has now grown into a month-long sailing super series. It is one of the biggest events on the Australian sailing calendar and is only getting bigger. With consistent nor'-easters, breathtaking scenery and both sheltered bays and open water racecourses, Port Stephens offers a sailing experience like no other. When Mayor Leah Anderson, the Minister and I caught up with Sail Port Stephens co-founder Paul O'Rourke, he summed it up perfectly when he said, "Our waters are among the best in the world for competitive sailing". Sail Port Stephens is backed by the Government and Destination NSW. It is a key part of a vision to grow Port Stephens into a globally recognised sailing destination. The event is expected to generate more than \$2 million in visitor expenditure this year alone, and that is just the start.

Port Stephens' visitor economy is booming. By the end of 2024 we saw more than 836,000 domestic overnight visitors. They spent over \$683 million in Port Stephens, staying in our great hotels, dining in our beautiful restaurants and experiencing all the natural wonders we have to offer. On top of that, 25,000 international visitors added another \$11 million to the economy. With the Newcastle Airport international terminal opening in August, Port Stephens is about to become even more accessible to the world. The airport expansion is being funded by the Albanese Government, with the full backing of recently re-elected member for Paterson Meryl Swanson. It is not just a new building or a stronger runway; it is a gateway. It will mean more direct flights, new international and domestic routes, and a streamlined journey for the thousands of visitors who want to experience what I already know—that Port Stephens is paradise.

The New South Wales Government, through Destination NSW, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Newcastle Airport to make sure we are doing everything possible to secure those new routes and open up even more opportunities for the Hunter. Imagine a world where competitors and spectators from New Zealand, Asia or the Pacific could fly straight into Newcastle Airport and be on the water in Port Stephens within an hour. That is the future we are building, and that is what happens when smart investment meets natural potential. It is not just about sailing; every new visitor means a stronger local economy—more work for our hospitality industry, more business for local shops and more local jobs. As I have said before, Port Stephens offers the full package. Whether people visit for the sailing regatta, the beaches, the dunes, the national parks or the seafood, we have it all. With the airport link, we will be rolling out the welcome mat to the world. Minister Kamper, the mayor and I took a look at the amazing airport upgrades, and I cannot wait for everyone else to see how incredible that asset is. They will be so proud of it.

While eyes were on the skies, I wanted to keep the Minister firmly grounded, so we also visited an amazing local sporting club. The Minister, the mayor and I swung mallets with members of the mighty Nelson Bay Croquet Club. We were not very good, but we all still received a very warm and wonderful welcome. The club were not just great hosts; they were a perfect example of the vibrant sporting spirit alive in every corner of Port Stephens and the enormous contribution sporting clubs make to our community. Croquet might not come with nor'-easters or sails, but make no mistake: It is a sport of strategy, stamina and skill. When we talk about growing Port Stephens as a sporting and visitor destination, clubs like those remind us of what really matters. It is not just the big events, the big boats or the shiny buildings; it is the people—the volunteers, players and supporters. It is the local small businesses that deliver memories for a lifetime and create local jobs. It is the community spirit that turns a good region into a great one. It is little wonder Wotif crowned Port Stephens Aussie Town of the Year, and the good news is that our best years are still to come.

RIVERWOOD COMMUNITY CENTRE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (20:45): I acknowledge the team from the Riverwood Community Centre, which is celebrating its fiftieth year of operation in 2025. What an incredible achievement. From humble beginnings as a small neighbourhood centre, Riverwood Community Centre has grown to become one of the largest and most prominent community centres in the Canterbury-Bankstown and Georges River regions. The community centre certainly looked a lot different in 1974. It started with just three members—Dick, Vic and Ivy—who ran services out of a small building along Belmore Road North. Despite their limited resources at the time, the team were still able to offer a number of important services to the Riverwood community, including child care and a youth group.

Since then, the organisation has continued to grow and thrive. Since opening the new centre in June 1983, it has been able to offer a number of new and improved services. Today they include but are not limited to youth programs, shopping services, out of school hours care, the Riverwood Men's Shed, a neighbour aid program, a housing communities assistance program, a tenant resource service and much more. When I describe this as one of the largest and most impressive community centres in Australia, I mean it, and the data supports that claim. The figures also highlight something equally important, which is that the programs are making a real difference across all age groups. In the 2023-24 financial year alone, the team helped just under 26,000 people, handled over 4,000 phone calls and email enquiries, provided more than 41,000 hours of social support, provided 7,300 food hampers to those in need and welcomed over 2,000 new people through their door.

With Riverwood being one of the multicultural hubs in the local area, the centre also hosts a number of special events each year, including Lunar New Year—Chinese New Year—and Ramadan celebrations. I have had the privilege of attending many of those events over the years, and I can say with confidence that the team at Riverwood Community Centre are deeply connected to the community that they support. I recently had the opportunity to attend their fiftieth anniversary gala celebration, and it was wonderful to hear the stories of real individuals who have had their lives completely changed in a positive way by the wonderful work of the staff and volunteers at the centre.

I think of an individual named Jacob, in particular, who immigrated to Australia with his wife and family after losing everything in the Lebanese Civil War. Whilst Jacob used to suffer from depression, he said that the community garden had a huge positive impact on his life. It became a space where he could detach and enjoy being outdoors, doing what he loved most, without the stresses of everyday life. There are countless other stories like that—people who were lost and without hope, who connected with the Riverwood Community Centre and whose lives were transformed as a result. Riverwood is a great place to live and work; however, there is also a great need for support in that community.

Riverwood Community Centre provides respite to those doing it tough through important programs, interpreter services for those who struggle with English and a welcoming space in the Riverwood Community Garden, one of the largest of its kind in New South Wales. Those services are not only incredibly high quality, thanks to the dedicated team of staff at the centre, but also accessible. The staff and volunteers can speak many languages—including Greek, Spanish, Arabic, Mandarin, Hindi, Cantonese, Indonesian and many more—catering for our multicultural and multilingual community.

Without strong leadership, none of this would be possible. I congratulate the board members, including chairperson Pauline Gallagher, OAM, vice-chairperson Karl Saleh, OAM, Tony, Kevin, Zorka and others. I also thank the management team for their incredible efforts, including chief executive officer, Ram; the aged care and disability services manager, Annie; and, finally, the manager of community, youth and family support, Salma. Looking back on everything that the Riverwood Community Centre has achieved over the past 50 years, it is clear that it is thanks to the fantastic individuals who have worked and volunteered there over many years. Their work in our community truly cannot be underestimated, with countless lives changed for the better thanks to their advocacy and support. I wish them all the best for the next 50 years and many more years to come.

JUNCTION STREET PLAZA

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (20:49): Thursday 10 April was a joyful day in Parramatta with the official opening of the Junction Street Plaza in the Warawara Reserve. Junction Street is so much more than just a new recreational space. Situated right under the M4 in a dank and disused part of our city, Junction Street is a pilot project that has turned this under-utilised space into a bright, happy little spot. Junction Street Plaza is the brainchild of Labor councillor Dr Patricia Prociv. Patricia and I were newly elected councillors of the City of Parramatta in 2017 and we have worked together closely as friends, colleagues and community representatives.

From day one on council, Councillor Prociv had a vision for this dirty and deserted space under the M4 and she would tell anyone who would listen, "We need to activate this space." Patricia is a former visual arts teacher and talented visual artist. Her ability to think creatively and laterally shows we need more creatives in government, shaping our parks and public spaces. Patricia has also lived in the Rosehill ward that she represents for over 40 years, demonstrating that local knowledge is invaluable. She understands that, for decades, this part of Parramatta has had a social infrastructure deficit compared to other suburbs in the local government area. Opportunities for new recreational spaces are limited, which is why her idea to activate a unique urban park from a once unused space below the M4 is simply gold.

This is a part of Parramatta where our youth generally live in apartments, townhouses or heritage worker cottages with small backyards. This plaza is an opportunity for everyone, but particularly 12- to 24-year-olds, to socialise outdoors with a brightly designed active zone which features parkour, a ballgame court and edges for urban skating. There are social areas with a range of seating options and low-impact recreational spaces with outdoor table tennis. A variety of seats are also set amongst gardens where people can enjoy spectating. Junction Street brings aesthetic changes to the area, improving liveability, attracting and helping to retain young families, and enhancing community spirit already existing in spades in Granville and Rosehill. The plaza is not only a better use of public space but also important remedy to teen disengagement and antisocial behaviour with alternative outdoor offerings.

The Parramatta electorate has the second youngest demographic in our State, so projects like this provide youth-oriented design and targeted support appropriate to the community. Something that did not go unnoticed in the west was the lack of importance that the previous Government placed on compensating our communities for the construction of WestConnex. Not only did our M4 freeway become the WestConnex tollway, but the land underneath and around the toll roads in our patch received zero urban spaces. While Haberfield parklands, Ismay Reserve and Rozelle parklands were delivered for the Inner West, Strathfield and Canada Bay councils, out west we got zip—a fat nothing. Councillor Prociv was determined to reverse this. Her approach to urban planning is indicative of her passion for equality and equity evident in all her council work.

I acknowledge the Minns Labor Government for funding the project through Places to Play. Special thanks also to City of Parramatta Council officers who worked alongside Councillor Prociv to realise her vision. Rounds of community consultation took place to ensure the community could shape the space. The first round gathered

122 contributions and 35 people participated in detailed feedback sessions. After the release of the concept plan, 94 people participated in further consultation, showing just how interested the community was in this particular project. As the process continued, Councillor Prociv lobbied hard, particularly former Minister Rob Stokes, who really understood the importance of this project and backed in Patricia's passion. Her work, advocating for the space, is a testament to her skilled community advocacy and ability to take the community with her as a councillor because Patricia works to ensure the west has it as good as the rest.

Junction Street Plaza officially opened with tears of joy. The relief Patricia expressed was felt by many of us. The lord mayor, the member for Granville, councillors and council officers along with local residents witnessed a full-on parkour demonstration by KongQuest and art demos by Sydney artist Nico Nicoson, who created the vibrant murals in the reserve. I thank Patricia for having the much-needed vision to look ahead and solve problems for the people of Parramatta. May the Junction Street pilot be the start of more incredible outdoor spaces to come.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (20:55): Today is National Domestic Violence Remembrance Day. We remember and honour those whose lives have been taken by domestic and family violence. In 2024 there were 39 domestic violence related murders across New South Wales. I recognise that the Government has taken meaningful action to try to address domestic violence in New South Wales with \$230 million allocated to a variety of programs in relation to domestic violence prevention and support and funding for refugees. I appreciate that this is a step in the right direction. I also acknowledge that there will be the introduction of the Bail Amendment (Ban on Private Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2025 and there have been the coercive control awareness campaigns.

I speak about the Bail and Other Legislation Amendment (Domestic Violence) Act, which was introduced in July 2024—something that I feel was very overdue and was part of the mix in addressing domestic violence in New South Wales. But I have a story to share, which will perhaps highlight a few gaps in the system. I share it for a couple of reasons. Firstly, a very dear friend of mine, who has given me permission to share her story, escaped a pretty horrific situation. Secondly, I hope that, by sharing this, we can continue to address the gaps and shortcomings in the system because it does, on many levels, continue to let families and women down, and make life difficult for survivors of domestic and family violence.

When I first had the conversation with my friend about her situation, I was pretty lost for words. I was shocked because I had known her for a really long time. I had known her and her partner actually—we were pretty close friends—and I had never suspected that any of the horrors that I was to learn about were happening behind closed doors. But they were. They were happening often; they were extremely violent and, at times, happened in front of their child. It took a sliding door moment in her life for her to initiate leaving this man, fleeing to another State to seek solace with her family. What followed was a barrage of violent torment, from physical abuse to emotional and financial abuse, and still to this day the struggle continues through the family court system for justice and for some form of peace and an ability to move on.

This man destroyed her place of employment, rendering her incapable of earning an income. He beat her with a screwdriver while she was stuck up a ladder. He spat on her, threatened to cut her throat and to hurt her family. He cut up her deceased mother's clothing. That is just a very small account of years and years of abuse. When the time came, he pleaded guilty to every single charge. Shockingly, with all the evidence and with no remorse shown, the judge gave him home detention. He was fitted with an electronic monitoring bracelet and he moved seven hours away to complete that sentence. She was left to try to rebuild her life, relocate to a new residence—which was difficult because everything was under his name—find the money for new furniture, find the money for new clothes after most of hers had been withheld or destroyed, and start from scratch. My friend had to find a psychologist for her child, who had witnessed horrific acts and was severely traumatised. She had to find legal representation to start the process of applying for custody and of preparing to go to court—all on top of working to provide for her family and keep on living.

I was shocked to hear that this person who had pleaded guilty and who was given a sentence of home detention, was often travelling over six hours back to the area. He was seen out at local pubs, clearly breaching orders, and was making demands on my friend for visitation. What right did he have to do that? Why should my friend have to be continually looking over her shoulder and relocate again to another residence out of fear for her safety and the safety of her child? Where is her protection? Where are her rights?

My friend is strong. She is capable, and she has a tribe of people around her who love and support her. But there are many others who do not have that. We, in this place, are caretakers of our communities. It is our job to keep people safe and supported. We must continue to address domestic and family violence. We must keep that at the forefront, and not as a reactive measure. We must listen to those with lived experiences so that the program funding that is delivered goes to the services on the front line where it is needed the most and can provide the best

outcomes. I thank my friend for allowing me to share her story today. She is really brave, and she inspires me every day. I am incredibly proud of her.

TRIBUTE TO SYED ATIQ UL HASSAN

Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (21:00): On behalf of the Auburn electorate, I pay my respects and honour the life of a remarkable man. Syed Atiq ul Hassan was a tireless champion for multicultural engagement, a beloved community leader and a true advocate for harmony and respect among all people. The people of Auburn are deeply saddened by his passing. On a personal note, I will miss his kind counsel and insights into foreign affairs. He was one of the first local community members I sat down with to share a cup of coffee after being elected as the member for Auburn. He was always engaging and knowledgeable. I know he was also held in the highest regard by the former member for Reid, Laurie Ferguson, who considered him a firm friend.

Syed dedicated more than three decades of his life to building bridges across cultures in Australia. Migrating to Australia in his early thirties, he quickly saw that his calling was in uniting communities and creating spaces where diversity could flourish. In the heart of Western Sydney, Syed's passion came to life. He worked closely with the local community, organising cultural forums, awareness campaigns and major events that celebrated our local community's multiculturalism and harmony, particularly in the Islamic community.

Syed's tireless efforts were reflected in many acknowledgements. Throughout his life, he received numerous awards, including the New South Wales Lifetime Achievement Award 2024, the New South Wales Premier's Multicultural Harmony Award 2014, the Auburn Citizen of the Year Award in 2014, the Stepan Kerkyasharian AO Community Harmony award, the Parramatta Senior Citizen of the Year award, and multiple acknowledgments from Multicultural NSW. Those are all fitting acknowledgments of his dedication to the people and communities that he championed. Yet his true reward was in seeing communities come together, sharing culture, celebrating diversity and standing in solidarity.

Among his many achievements, Syed Atiq ul Hassan was also an experienced journalist. He founded the *Tribune International (Australia)*—the first multicultural English newspaper—and created the Chand Raat Eid Festival, which started locally and grew into one of Australia's largest multicultural celebrations, with attendee numbers that often soared past 20,000. In 2015 he launched Halal Expo Australia, promoting opportunities for local producers with markets not just in Australia but also with some of our nearest neighbours, such as Indonesia. Those expos were not just about the promotion of Australian produce but, importantly, about fostering understanding and economic opportunities between diverse communities.

Syed's vision was simple yet powerful: to cultivate unity, mutual respect and active engagement among all Australians, particularly the younger generation. His events, writing, radio presentations and countless free workshops were all aimed at nurturing that vision. He was a prolific author, including the book *Australia for Pakistanis*, documenting the migrant experience and offering guidance for newcomers to Australia. As a life coach, journalist, educator and mentor, he touched thousands of lives, always offering a hand to lift others higher.

Though his work took him across Australia and around the world, Syed always returned to his roots, to his community in Western Sydney and to the ideals he believed in so deeply. Today we remember Syed not just for his extraordinary achievements but also for the spirit he embodied: a spirit of openness, compassion and tireless service. He leaves behind a powerful legacy of unity, hope and a community made stronger because of his unwavering efforts. I pass on my sympathies to his family and friends, and to the many in the community who will greatly miss Syed and continue to hold him fondly in their hearts.

KRISTY MCBAIN MEMBER FOR EDEN-MONARO

Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (21:04): The Federal election was held on the weekend. I know that many communities around the State expect representatives from different levels of government to work together positively and make sure that they achieve good things for their communities. I am thrilled to see that Kristy McBain, a wonderful Federal Labor member, has been re-elected in Eden-Monaro, because that is exactly what we do together: We work on issues for our community and produce results, we discuss the issues and see how we can get them fixed, and we also do that with the local government representatives in the area.

We work on things like the health system, where urgent care clinics have been delivered. Kristy made a wonderful announcement about a Medicare Mental Health Centre in Queanbeyan during the Federal election campaign. Jointly we work on things like the new women's change rooms at the Kangaroos club and at Seiffert Oval. We work on the Bombala hospital, where the State will be funding a capital program, and the Commonwealth will be funding the aged-care places. We are also working on a fantastic Cooma housing project, where 120 blocks are being developed on Crown land as part of a New South Wales Government initiative to increase housing supply.

That project will also include a couple of blocks of social housing, key worker accommodation and some aged persons units. We have been able to do that because the Federal Government has helped us to fund the capital for the infrastructure on that project from its housing fund. It is terrific to be able to work together in that way, and I am very pleased that Kristy's hard work over the past years, since she was elected in a by-election, has paid off so well during the election campaign and with the result on election night.

The election campaign itself was very interesting. I have been around in the area for several decades, and I do not think I can remember a Liberal Party campaign that was so obviously heavily funded. There was television advertising, blanket signage and people in blue shirts wall-to-wall, which I think actually served to turn off quite a few voters. It was obviously an extremely well-funded campaign. But Kristy's campaign, which was led by her wonderful team, including Lee, Steven and Noah and a huge range of volunteers, was out there giving the personal message about why they thought Kristy McBain was so good for Eden-Monaro, and why she should be re-elected. It is terrific that she was.

There are a couple of interesting things about that election, because the boundaries of Eden-Monaro change quite a lot. I do not entirely agree with where the boundary went, but the electorate now includes Goulburn. It is the first time Goulburn has been included in the electorate since 1984. In fact, Goulburn has not had a Labor member of Parliament since 1984. The great news for the people of Goulburn is that, after 41 years, they now have a Labor member of Parliament. It is great news about the representation that they will have in their area. This afternoon I spoke to the previous Labor member for Goulburn, Jim Snow. He is now 90 years old and living on the South Coast, but he is absolutely thrilled that Kristy McBain is the member representing that area. He was the member for Eden-Monaro from 1983 through to the end of the Keating Government, and he was a fantastic representative.

Members will be interested to know that the previous member to represent Goulburn for the Labor Party was my dad, from 1972 to 1975. Prior to that, it was Alan Fraser, who represented the area from 1943 to 1966 and then from 1969 to 1972. As I said, it has been 41 years since Goulburn was represented by a Labor member. I know it was challenging for the Labor campaign to go in and win so well in an area that had not been used to having Labor representation in so long. Now the area has the opportunity to see just how good that representation will be. I look forward to seeing the representation they will get over the next few years. As the member for Monaro, my entire electorate is within Eden-Monaro, so I work with Kristy McBain on a day-to-day basis. We have a terrific working relationship. I congratulate her and the wonderful team that has worked around her. I thank her family for the support they provide to her, including her husband, Brad, and their three children for their patience in being part of a team that delivers such good representation to Eden-Monaro.

WATER MANAGEMENT

Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (21:09): It is time for the Minns Government to stop, and I mean stop. Stop wrecking rural irrigation communities. Stop bowing to Canberra's every command. Stop causing man-made floods through sheer mismanagement. Stop using water sharing plans to gut irrigation communities beyond even what the Federal Government demands. Stop pricing our farmers out of existence. Let me tell you about Luke Gaskin, a hardworking bloke whose life has been turned upside down by bureaucratic madness. Two years ago Luke, a young farmer with a young family, bought a 2,500-acre farm and temporarily traded 300 megalitres of water believing he could legally irrigate. He borrowed from the bank and he paid for the water. He planted his crops. He invested in infrastructure, but now he has got no access to the water he paid for. His crop is dead and his assets are worthless. His business is in crisis. It turns out that his water source had miraculously been redefined as a significant wetland. Even though he had bought the water, he had no access to it and could not irrigate his newly planted crop. To add insult to injury, he had renewed his water licence for ten years and paid brokerage fees for water he could not use.

The outrage is that he asked government departments what he needed to do to be compliant within the licence he held. Those agencies knew that a wetland had been declared and, astonishingly, still advised him to install new meters knowing full well that he would not be able to use a drop of the water he had traded, with or without meters. He took their advice, still ignorant of the fact that he could not touch a drop of his so-called water, and he spent about \$20,000 installing new meters. They were intended to deliver that water to his property, but now they are obsolete and useless. This was so avoidable. The problem was created on paper through the absolute ineptitude of government bureaucrats, who had never set foot on his land, implementing flawed plans. As I mentioned, he has now lost his crop.

This is not a one-off. Look at Moona lagoon near Calimo on the Edwards River. Traditionally, the lagoon fills when the river runs high, providing critical irrigation and the only source of domestic and stock water for four surrounding farms. One local farmer holds a legitimate 387 megalitre licence. Water NSW now wants to turn it into a fish breeding pond, draining it in dry times and keeping levels too low for use. The result is that licences are suddenly worthless, livelihoods are on the line and generations of work is undone overnight. This is happening

across New South Wales, behind closed doors, without consultation and with no thought for the people who feed, clothe and build this country. Enough is enough. It is time to stop and to start making sense.

It is time for the Minns Government to start counting every single drop of water it owns—to accurately, transparently and honestly measure what it owns—because if they cannot measure it, they cannot count it and cannot manage it. Start investing in complementary measures like carp control. Start real investment upgrades in Burrinjuck Dam. Look into Lake Coolah, including for flood mitigation. Start more reliable water supply for farms, families and the environment. Start extending consultation deadlines for water sharing plans so communities are not steamrolled. Pause all further action until the Murray-Darling Basin Plan and basin plan 2 reviews are complete. Start backing the bush and tell the Commonwealth to look at proper and sensible environmental measures that work for everyone. Start intervening with the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, just like they did in Sydney and Newcastle, because if city folk cannot afford water hikes, neither can the farmers who put food on your tables.

The Government needs to consult with people in the bush. We are seriously impacted by decisions made in Sydney and Canberra. The Government needs to stop splitting and pitting agriculture and the environment against one another. Farmers are by far our best environmentalists, and the Government needs to stop underestimating us. It is our land, and it is our water; we pay for it. New South Wales needs a strong water policy that represents the needs of irrigation communities, the economy and the environment. This is a matter of survival. It is time to back the bush and make the necessary changes. Stop the chaos and start the common sense.

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (21:14): Tonight I raise the issue of community mental health, particularly after disasters. In my electorate of Lismore and across the Northern Rivers, we are still recovering from the natural disaster that hit us in 2022 and some communities are yet recovering from the 2019 bushfires. The Black Dog Institute says communities that have faced multiple natural disasters are more vulnerable to long-term mental health impacts. The Black Dog Institute's report *Mental health impacts of floods* reviewed 83 studies and found that the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder, psychological distress, depression and anxiety are heightened in flood-affected areas. The National Disaster Mental Health and Wellbeing Framework acknowledges that the impacts of a traumatic event can appear months or even years afterwards. That is something that impacts our whole community as we continue our flood recovery. People can be distressed by a looming cyclone, as we experienced, by days of heavy rain or by events such as seeing a historic school building on fire—which happened in Lismore.

It is at those times that I often notice an eruption of distress or anger on social media and heightened agitation in the community. Those are the times to remember to look after ourselves and each other, and for people to know that they do not have to struggle through things alone. There are some wonderful government-funded mental health supports that have been provided to help with flood recovery in our region, and there are other regular ones too. It is often those regular supports that have work added to their services.

Often one of the barriers to mental health care is that those in need of help are reluctant to seek it. That is where low-barrier services such as the Safe Haven hubs play a key role. The Safe Haven initiative was launched in July 2022 using some NSW Health Flood Recovery Funds after the 2022 floods. Those services were established in response to the community's trauma and urgent need for accessible mental health support. The Safe Haven hubs operate in the downtown areas of Lismore, Murwillumbah, Woodburn and Mullumbimby in the Lismore, Ballina and Richmond electorates and are delivered in a partnership between Healthy North Coast and the Buttery. I recall talking with the then Minister Steph Cooke on the night before some of the additional funding for those hubs was announced.

Each is designed as a welcoming space with cosy lounges and, in some places, outdoor tables to sit and chat. Anyone can walk in for that free service. The staff is made up of peer workers, clinicians and case managers, and they provide immediate support to people experiencing emotional distress, suicidal thoughts or psychosocial stressors. People may be referred to Safe Haven by health practitioners or, as I said, they may walk in. A review of the service from July 2022 to March 2025 found they had supported 18,950 participants with 16,433 being drop-ins. It is clearly a place that people feel comfortable to just walk into off the street. All four Safe Havens experienced a marked increase in participant numbers during the Cyclone Alfred event in March, and demand remained elevated in the following weeks. In preparing for disasters, it is often when the disaster happens that we ramp services up, but we should be thinking beforehand about what we can do to upsurge services when things happen and build that into the business-as-usual operational models. But the Safe Havens I have seen work wonderfully.

There is also the Lismore Medicare Mental Health Centre based at Southern Cross University. Previously called Head to Health, that hub was launched in 2022 as a mental health service to support our flood-impacted

community. It is based at the Southern Cross University Health Clinic and provides in-person or phone support for people to access mental health information and services from multidisciplinary care teams. Anyone can reach out for support for themselves or a loved one. It is open seven days a week, and there is a phone line for help as well. The good thing about them and the Safe Havens is that they are accessible, because we all know, as members of Parliament, that one of the difficulties in getting help for people is that when they ring a number they are just told to hang on. It is hard, and that can be a barrier. Those services have removed barriers. That is a good model for mental health generally, and I have seen that work. I commend those services.

FAR WEST RAINFALL EVENTS

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (21:19): In late March, parts of Western New South Wales experienced record rainfalls over a 24-hour period, including 158 millimetres in Walgett, 154 millimetres in Lightning Ridge, 140 millimetres in Wee Waa, 89 millimetres in Narrabri and 86.5 millimetres in Boggabri, on top of more rain in Queensland. The Paroo River at Wanaaring reached a record flood level of 5.13 metres, surpassing the previous record of 4.88 metres, and isolating the village and surrounding areas of the Cuttaburra Basin. People and stock were evacuated, and roads were closed. The village of Wanaaring remains isolated, and many rural properties that have never had water on them previously were inundated.

I acknowledge the tireless work of the SES and its volunteers. The incident controller role is shared to allow people to have a break, but Brigid Rice mostly stayed in the role. I am grateful for her accessibility and willingness to work together. Through that relationship, we were able to implement daily briefings, which have now been reduced to two a week, and weekly landholder meetings conducted online. These landholder meetings are very important for a two-way exchange of information with the Government. Information from the Bureau of Meteorology [BOM] and SES is enhanced by local landholder knowledge of the river and its flooding behaviour which is sometimes gathered across generations.

When constituent feedback indicated that the BOM's methodology for predictions could be improved, I spoke with the Minister for Emergency Services and met with SES and BOM representatives. An agreement was reached to adopt a different methodology that was more realistic and provided landholders with earlier warnings of potential river heights. I thank the BOM and acknowledge its responsiveness and willingness to change. As a Federal agency, it took the decision to respond in the way it did. The more accurate and timely the forecast information is, the more notice graziers have to move livestock. This helps avoid the risk of people wading through floodwaters to open gates and shift stock to higher ground. Advanced notice also enhances animal welfare outcomes.

I worked with the Local Emergency Management Committee and Barrier Police District Superintendent Susie Johnston to put temporary gauging in place on the Paroo River. WaterNSW has installed two new gauges in the Talyawalka Creek flood plain to better understand the volume of water that would reach Menindee. An independent inquiry made a recommendation on this because it was a major blind spot in the 2022 floods. In fact, recommendation 1 is to provide more accurate and complete data for flood threat identification warning and modelling systems. It recommended that the NSW Reconstruction Authority work with the New South Wales Government to improve the rain and river gauge network and upgrade radar capability in New South Wales to ensure overlapping coverage and some redundancy through upgrades to existing fixed radars and investment in new fixed and mobile radars.

I have been pushing for a long time for residents in Far West New South Wales to have a Doppler radar near Fowlers Gap to cover the black spot in the State's far north-west. This would give the whole State richer data. It would inform Far West residents about impending storms so pastoralists can better prepare for livestock management and dam clean-outs before rain events. Another Doppler radar could mean all the difference in preparedness during a flood event. Local councils will continue to be integral as the event moves from response to recovery. I know some of the councils in Barwon have signed tripartite funding agreements between councils, the NSW Reconstruction Authority and Transport for NSW. Before the introduction of tripartite agreements, a council had to spend its own money to repair infrastructure before it could be reimbursed with disaster funding. The agreements mean councils can begin emergency work as soon as possible without waiting for cash flow. This is crucial for damaged and closed roads in council areas with small rate bases. Councils know where to prioritise spending to get communities back up and running, and being able to start emergency works as soon as possible is a huge benefit.

This event is ongoing. It will take some weeks until the bulk of the water reaches Menindee. The current estimate is up to 1,200 gigalitres of water, but it may well go beyond that. The next challenge will be to ensure that water remains at Menindee to protect the lower Darling and meet local needs. To this end, I will work with the State and Federal Ministers to make clear the importance of retaining water in the Menindee Lakes system. There are more reasons to keep water at Menindee than I can list here tonight. I will continue to work with the SES and other agencies to ensure that clear and accurate information is made available to the public, and that

years of experience from landholders and other stakeholders continue to inform decision-making and planning. I once again thank the combat agencies and my constituents for the collaborative approach to managing this event.

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (21:24): I would like to respond to the member for Barwon. I listened very carefully to what the member said. I join the member in commending the combat agencies, including people like Stuart Fisher who work for the SES. The tripartite agreement model works wonderfully. It is a new thing that works well because local councils do not have the money to start spending. I listened very carefully to the member's comments on radar and gauges. I will work with the member to help follow up with responsible agencies, including the Reconstruction Authority.

HEATHCOTE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (21:25): When the people of the Heathcote electorate chose me to represent their interests in the New South Wales Parliament two years ago, they knew that I was wholly committed to repairing public infrastructure and improving their lives. Over the past two years, I have worked hard to deliver on my promises. Garie Road and Heathcote Road are receiving repairs to restore usability and provide futureproofing. The duplication of Heathcote Road will soon be underway. Expressions of interest have been announced to find a tender to undertake the work.

Audley Weir has received upgrades to address weir closures and driver safety while long-term solutions are explored. Garie Road is a vital road, which allows community members and dedicated volunteers to access Garie Beach and Garie Surf Life Saving Club, which was left neglected for far too long. The major landslide and large amounts of rainfall in 2022 led to the full closure of the road. Repairs began on the road in 2024, and 73 out of 89 road stabilisation piles had been completed by February 2025. I thank the workers who laboured for over 27,000 hours to restore that vital piece of public infrastructure. Thanks to the efforts of the Minns Labor Government, repairs will be completed and ready for use by mid-2025.

I am sure that anyone who has set off to visit the stunning Royal National Park has noticed the ageing flip signs that were in place to notify drivers that Audley Weir had been flooded and was closed. The Minns Labor Government has installed a temporary electronic message sign at the entrance of the Royal National Park so that the community is better informed and drivers can make safer decisions. Permanent electronic signs have also been installed at multiple locations in the Royal National Park and Princes Highway to ensure road users are given advanced warnings of weir closures.

Automated gates will be installed on both sides of the weir in late 2025 to stop cars from crossing during floods. Community members will no longer have to watch updates being regularly posted to social media groups of an unfortunate car which got stuck on the flooded weir. The automatic gates will stop drivers taking the risk and keep those cars from getting swept out into our rivers. They will also remove any costs of removing the vehicle from the Royal National Park. This technology will keep drivers safe in the Royal National Park while we explore other viable long-term solutions at Audley Weir.

Like Garie Road, Heathcote Road has been neglected for far too long and is currently not fit for purpose for the more than 20,000 cars that travel it each day. Heathcote Road was long overdue for safety upgrades to protect drivers and our precious native Australian animals. The road experienced two major landslips due to the extreme rainfall in 2022. Although emergency repairs were completed at the time, the area has continued to experience movement. Transport for NSW crews have been working tirelessly since April this year to make the road safer and more stable. I thank Transport for its very hard work so that all drivers can use this arterial road safely.

The Minns Labor Government is not only working to make Heathcote Road safe right now but also futureproofing the road by going ahead with its duplication. The duplication of Heathcote Road has been a far-flung dream for many in my community thanks to over a decade of broken promises. We are now making it a reality. The Government has opened expressions of interest to design and construct a new lane between Lucas Heights and Engadine. This new lane will boost safety and traffic flow, and allow for better emergency management in the event of a car breakdown. Construction is expected to begin in late 2026. The lane duplication will also consider delivery of improved koala safety mitigation and infrastructure. I know that the Minns Labor Government is not done. We are committed to building a better New South Wales for everyone. I will continue to be a strong advocate for public infrastructure in my electorate of Heathcote, and to work tirelessly to deliver the promises I made to my community. Further, I will continue to communicate the changes and updates so that my constituents are well informed.

OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (21:29): Tonight I commemorate a special milestone for my local community: the tenth anniversary of Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School [OLA] in North Strathfield. Over the past 10 years, OLA has flourished into a thriving community where students belong and are given the very best opportunity to learn, grow and succeed in all aspects of their education. OLA opened its doors for the very first time at the start of term 1 in 2015, with just 70 students from kindergarten to year 2. There were just six staff members on the first day. At the time, OLA was the 150th school in the Sydney Catholic Schools network and the first to be opened in over 12 years, catering to the growing population of North Strathfield and Homebush.

Today the OLA community welcomes over 430 students through its doors each day. Almost 50 valued teachers and administrative staff members are part of the team, and hundreds of parents and friends who support the school. I was privileged to attend the tenth anniversary celebrations of OLA on 1 May 2025, which is exactly 10 years to the day since the new building was officially opened. It makes me so proud to see this closely connected school community thriving. That was evident by the number of past and present staff, former and current parents and students, community members and representatives who were present at the special mass and celebration last week.

OLA's mission statement was created in 2014, before the school opened, and laid the foundation for the journey. Every day at OLA is guided by "quality learning and teaching within which curiosity, imagination and a love of learning will be nurtured". The school's success is a testament to the many foundational members whose vision and dedication were paramount in creating a community where students can thrive. I take this opportunity to acknowledge those on the OLA steering committee, including foundational principal Dr Cathy Young; former executive director of Sydney Catholic Schools Dr Dan White; Sydney Catholic Schools director of teaching and learning Dr Michael Bezzina; inner west regional director Dr Michael Krawec; property and facilities director Mr Paul Gibson; and OLA regional consultant Ms Sybil Dickens. Their contributions, along with all staff at OLA, have shaped the school, and it was wonderful to see those members return for the tenth anniversary.

Since becoming the local member, I have had the privilege of working closely with the principal of OLA, Ms Siobhan Van Den Nieuwenhuizen. Siobhan was there on the very first day when OLA opened and has been the principal for the past few years. I also acknowledge assistant principal Ms Carmen Gulli and the entire leadership team and staff. Together, Siobhan and Carmen are passionate leaders who care deeply for the wellbeing of students and who strive to deliver the very best quality education. The success of OLA would not be possible without the dedication and vision of current and past teachers and support staff. I sincerely thank them for their work in shaping the leaders of tomorrow.

I thank the parents and school community for everything they have done to support and grow the school. Some families have been part of the school community since the first day the school opened its doors, and that is very special. I particularly thank those foundational families who saw the vision of OLA and became part of the family from the very beginning. That includes families like the Power family, who were the first siblings to start at OLA in 2015 and returned on the tenth anniversary celebrations last week. I encourage the wonderful and inquisitive OLA students to keep trying their best and to reach for their dreams. They have an entire school community to guide and support them. They are part of the school community's history. Tonight the New South Wales Parliament recognises and congratulates the entire community of Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School in North Strathfield. I wish the school, teachers, staff, students and families the very best, always.

GINA FIELD

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (21:33): In March I spoke in this place about the many achievements of Penrith local business owner and local legend Gina Field, founder of Nepean Regional Security. Gina was selected as a finalist for the 2025 Women Changing the World Awards, which were held in London on 3 April 2025. It is my pleasure to inform the House tonight that Gina Field, managing director and founder of Nepean Regional Security, was named Company of the Year at the Women Changing the World Awards. To win on a global stage against 55 countries is a remarkable feat that speaks volumes about Gina's excellence, innovation and drive.

I share with the House a reminder of this woman's remarkable success. Gina began her career in the security industry 37 years ago. In the late 1980s it was extremely rare to see a woman in security but, through sheer determination, resilience and vision, Gina not only broke barriers but also redefined what is possible for women in traditionally male-dominated industries. Gina started Nepean Regional Security in 1998 in the back room of her home. That was at a time when it was virtually unheard of for a woman to solely own and operate a security company in New South Wales. She headed the charge for women in the male-dominated security industry. Over

the course of her career, Gina has been awarded many prestigious titles, as well as being featured on TV and in regular media articles.

Gina is also a sought-after presenter and emcee, who brings a witty sense of humour and honesty to her inspiring story and talks. She is a role model, mentor and advocate. Her significant contributions to the local economy, gender equity and community wellbeing will have a lasting impact on Penrith for generations to come. Gina refers to herself as a self-proclaimed business misfit and a walking contradiction; however, her enviable success and business prowess prove that is far from the reality. Her company's reputation for professionalism, integrity and community-mindedness stem from her heart. Having known what it is like to build an idea from the ground up, Gina's commitment to the community is unwavering. She tirelessly supports numerous local causes, including Youth Empowerment Day, Penrith Community Kitchen, Pink Up Penrith and Penrith International Women's Day. She is also a mentor to young women looking for careers in diverse industries.

Gina Field was the winner of the Businesswoman of the Year Award at the 2017 NSW Women of the Year Awards, and she has won the Australian Small Business Champion for Services award seven times. She is a former president of the Penrith Valley Chamber of Commerce, where she was considered a pocket rocket in the business community and a champion for women chasing their dreams. She has won over 24 industry awards, including an international business award. Gina Field's nomination in the Women Changing the World Awards celebrates the outstanding achievement of building a small local business into a multimillion-dollar enterprise.

After 27 years of hard work, Gina and her husband, Paul, now manage a team of 47 professionals and a fleet of cars operating across Sydney. It is fitting that the award presented to Nepean Regional Security on the world stage recognises an exceptional company that is changing the world for women and girls, reflecting Gina's own resilience and determination. These international awards recognise the growing number of women who are leading the way and inspiring other women to answer the call and act. I am proud that Gina and her once home-based local business are now such integral parts of the Penrith community. Gina is one of the outstanding success stories of our city against all the odds. On behalf of the Penrith electorate, I offer my warmest congratulations and deepest thanks to Gina for her leadership, service and ongoing contributions to the community. She is, without question, a woman changing the world, and she is doing it from the centre of the world: in Penrith.

HOUSING POLICY

Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (21:38): I have said it in this House before and I will say it again that one of the most pressing issues for policymakers right now is how we rebuild the home ownership dream for a modern Sydney. I support efforts to improve the supply of affordable housing in our State—and I support sensible higher-density development in my electorate where it is well located, close to public transport hubs and essential infrastructure. As elected representatives, we have a responsibility to be constructive in delivering more housing, especially for young Australians and for key workers like police, nurses and schoolteachers. These are people who keep our communities running and they deserve an opportunity to live near their workplaces and in the communities they serve.

In my electorate, I have supported the Woollahra council's Edgecliff strategy, which includes a new 26-storey tower over the train station along with other increased development around that hub. I also support additional uplift around Bondi Junction, which is well served by public transport. But I am concerned about new measures that will irreversibly impact the character, the amenity and even the safety of our community without achieving the Government's intent of more housing for those who really need it.

Earlier this year the Government's low-rise and mid-rise planning changes came into effect. These changes allow for buildings up to six storeys within 400 metres of a town centre, or four storeys within 800 metres. This will impact residents near Bondi Junction Station, Double Bay town centre and Rose Bay town centre, and this is where local concern has grown sharply. The feedback I have received centres on two major themes—infrastructure capacity and genuine affordability. Let me be clear: 80 per cent of my electorate is already mid-density to high-density, and 66.4 per cent of my electorate is living in flats and apartments. But, unlike many other areas being rezoned, the area has only one train station—and that is Edgecliff. The train stops there. It goes no further.

Our main roads—New South Head Road, Old South Head Road and Bondi Road—are narrow, heavily congested and operating beyond capacity. Bus services run on these same overcrowded roads, with no dedicated lanes, and ferries are limited. We are also facing serious infrastructure challenges. Our energy grid is under pressure. Recently Woollahra council has reported that developers have been told by Ausgrid that the local grid cannot support even the most basic air conditioning in new buildings. Some developers have sought approval to install gas instead as a response. This is a system stretched to its limits. There are other environmental pressures too—flooding, sewage overflows and aging pipes that are already affecting our community. Unplanned density

risks worsening all of this. So the community is asking a fair question: What infrastructure will the Government deliver to support this increase in density?

On affordability, there is deep scepticism. In suburbs like Rose Bay and Double Bay, at the moment real estate agents are knocking on doors, encouraging people to sell so that developers can build six-storey luxury apartments—units that will likely carry multimillion-dollar price tags and will be well out of reach for most young people and key workers. Recently this happened on Dover Road. Five suburban homes were bought for \$75 million under the new provisions. The Government cannot tell me that that will help to support key workers and young people in our community. When we consider the high land values, construction costs and development margins, it is hard to see how that model will deliver genuine affordable housing. These reforms risk benefiting the wealthy, not the young or the essential workers they are meant to help. We need housing, but we also need smarter, place-based planning—planning that is informed by community feedback, infrastructure readiness and real-world economics.

I support Woollahra council's call for a temporary pause on the designation of the Rose Bay and Double Bay town centres until further flood studies and infrastructure assessments can be completed. I think that is necessary. If these reforms continue unchecked, the financial burden on the Government and the utilities to upgrade the roads, schools, emergency services and basic infrastructure may far outweigh the benefits of luxury development. I reiterate my support for high-density housing where it makes sense in our community. But these reforms applied bluntly to already high-density suburbs with limited infrastructure will not deliver the outcomes we need. Let's build more homes, but let's do it the right way—with care, with planning and with communities in mind.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (21:32): I wish to make a slight correction to the statement by the member for Vacluse, who mentioned that the train line stops at Edgecliff, whereas indeed it carries through to Bondi Junction. I also make the point that communities like mine are the ones that have experienced—

Ms Kellie Sloane: Point of order—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The member for Vacluse does not have leave to speak in response.

Ms Kellie Sloane: I am taking a point of order.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): There is no point of order.

Ms Kellie Sloane: Madam Temporary Speaker, you have not heard my point of order.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): There is no point of order. The member for Vacluse will resume her seat. A member cannot take a point of order when a Parliamentary Secretary is making a response.

Ms Kellie Sloane: I would like advice from the Clerk.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The member will resume her seat.

[Interruption]

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The member will resume her seat.

Ms Kellie Sloane: Chair, how can you not hear a point of order?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The member will resume her seat while I consult the Clerk. I will hear your point of order, but it must be a point of order.

Ms Kellie Sloane: My point of order is that those opposite are not able to say they are correcting a statement and then provide inaccurate information on the record in this House. It is misleading the House. That is my point of order. It should be struck from *Hansard*.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): I thank the member for Vacluse for her point of order. I will take that into consideration. The Parliamentary Secretary will continue.

Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA: Regardless, I make the point that one of the reasons we are experiencing the current housing crisis, which is necessitating increased densities, is that communities like mine have not had extensions to amenities, extensions to utilities and basic infrastructure. The point of housing reform is to have density where the infrastructure currently exists.

ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (21:46): Last month, like all members of this place, I attended Anzac Day ceremonies in my electorate. I was honoured to speak at the Tomakin Sports Club service. One hundred and ten years ago the Anzacs landed at Gallipoli. During that brave and ill-fated campaign, nine Victoria Crosses were awarded to Australians. The Victoria Cross represents the highest and most prestigious award for valour in the presence of the enemy—great courage in the face of danger. It is an official recognition of an act or, in some cases a series of acts, of outstanding courage. At Gallipoli, there were heroic leaders from all ranks who received the Victoria Cross—one private, two lance corporals, two corporals, one second lieutenant, two lieutenants and a captain. There were also 8,141 comrades who died during the Gallipoli campaign.

The Australian War Memorial in Canberra displays the Roll of Honour in its cloisters. On the roll, we can find the names of over 103,000 Australian service men and women who have died in war. The war dead are listed by surname and initials, without rank or any other distinguishing award. General and private soldier alike are honoured for the equality of their sacrifice. Charles Bean, Australia's official historian of World War I and a founder of the Australian War Memorial, thought that this was the most appropriate way to display each name. He said:

I strongly feel this: that the visitor, not knowing the conditions of the front, will stand before these lists and, seeing the dso's and mm's, will say to himself "ah, those are the brave men" (or, perhaps, 'the bravest') - a conclusion which is not true, how far from true probably only those who were actually through heavy fighting can realize.

The Victoria Cross recipients were often the readiest to concede that the bravery and sacrifice of thousands of other soldiers went unrecorded and remained unknown, except to their comrades in arms. Corporal William Dunstan, who won his VC at the Battle of Lone Pine, grew tired of the adulation he received when he came home wounded from Gallipoli. He disliked the civic receptions held in his honour that he was forced to attend. At a function in his hometown of Ballarat, the mayor announced a memorial fund to collect money for Dunstan, who came home almost blind. In a letter to the press the following week, Dunstan declined the money. Dunstan said:

I was lucky to be able to return home to such accolades while the actions of others went unobserved.

He wrote:

I only did my duty, and one does not wish to be recompensed for that.

Where we serve our electorates here, there were 13 State MPs and 13 staff members who served our nation in the First World War. Two members made the ultimate sacrifice and are remembered on the permanent memorial opposite me on the southern wall of this Chamber. *Hansard* records that Lieutenant Colonel George Frederick Braund, member for Armidale, and Sergeant Edward Rennix Larkin, former member for Willoughby, entered Parliament at a moment of profound peace, when the country was almost at the height of its prosperity, when progress and advancement were visible on every side, and when nothing was further from people's minds than the progress and advancement would be interrupted. The inscription reads, "In time of peace, they worthily asserted the rights of citizenship; in time of war, fearlessly protected them."

When Sergeant Ted Larkin lay mortally wounded in thick scrub above Anzac Cove, he refused to be taken by stretcher bearers. His last words were, "There's plenty worse than me out there." I have only met one Victoria Cross recipient: Sir Arthur Roden Cutler. Fifty years ago, I was seventeen and I was invited as a school leader to meet Sir Roden in his role as the Governor of New South Wales. Sir Roden Cutler had initiated the high school leader program, which continues today in New South Wales Parliament, where school leaders visit this place and Government House. When I meet student leaders from my Bega electorate during this program, I remind them of my connection with their experience. I always remind those young men and women that you do not have to be a hero to be a leader. Robert F. Kennedy said:

It is from numberless diverse acts of courage such as these that the belief that human history is thus shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

Leadership comes from example, which all those service men and women demonstrated in the defence of our nation. On Anzac Day we remember all who served our nation, lest we forget.

CHILDHOOD DEMENTIA

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (21:51): I speak on a matter that is not confined to statistics or medical journals, but a lived reality affecting hundreds of children across our State, including in the Hornsby area. Each year in Australia, approximately one in every 2,900 children are diagnosed with a condition that causes childhood dementia. That is more than 2,000 children living in Australia with a condition that will hinder their

ability to think, move and remember. Childhood dementia is a regressive and life-limiting condition that remains critically under-recognised in both public awareness and policy response. Unlike adult forms of dementia, childhood dementia is caused by rare genetic disorders, leading to a progressive deterioration of cognitive and motor functions. It is relentless, indiscriminate and currently incurable, with a mortality rate of 50 per cent before the age of 10, and 70 per cent before reaching adulthood.

For families, the diagnosis of childhood dementia is life-altering. It means they must navigate the heartbreak of watching their child's achievements begin to unravel. The psychological toll on families is prolonged and anxiety inducing. The unpredictability of the disease progression and constant threat of loss fosters a pervasive sense of helplessness. Studies show that caregivers of children with neurodegenerative diseases experience rates of depression up to four times higher than the general population, yet public awareness remains dangerously low. Family dynamics are affected, including for siblings, who have to endure their own grief whilst often experiencing complicated family circumstances.

Despite the magnitude of its impact, childhood dementia remains a condition that is largely invisible in our national conversation. Many Australians are unaware that it even exists. Awareness is low and funding for research and clinical trials is limited. In December 2023 there were 43 times more clinical trials recruiting children with cancer than children with dementia. That is not to prioritise trials for one disease over another, but merely to state the facts. During the same period that childhood dementia has seen no progress, death rates from childhood cancer have halved and the life expectancy for cystic fibrosis patients has doubled. This highlights the disparity in research and funding between childhood dementia and other conditions. Less than 2 per cent of children with dementia in Australia currently have any prospect of participating in clinical trials within the country. We need to do more.

In a nation as prosperous and compassionate as Australia, and in a State as prosperous as New South Wales, it is imperative that we act now. Progress will come with a commitment to funding the science that can give families the hope that one day their children will be cured, building the support systems that recognise the complexity of the journeys that these families walk, and lifting this issue out of the shadows and giving it the leadership it demands. Delays will only cost the children their future and their families the hope they deserve. The Childhood Dementia Initiative was established in 2020 to accelerate the development of treatments and improve the accessibility and quality of care for children with dementia. A coordinated national approach will be critical to ensuring the solutions defined through this initiative, including the availability of treatments and cures, access to quality care for children and families, and childhood dementia's position as a global health priority, are implemented.

WILTON HIGH SCHOOL

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (21:55): I speak on the exciting new infrastructure that is coming to Wollondilly. I say this recognising that it has been generations since the Wollondilly shire has received any brand-new infrastructure of significant size. Sure, we get additions and upgrades to halls and sports fields, and we did get the massive performing arts centre that I had the fortune to negotiate as mayor—it was a luxury item, not a critical necessity. But it is with such joy that I speak about the brand-new high school in the new growth area of Wilton. It was originally going to be another primary school, and one that I and my community would have been fortunate to receive. But with only one high school for an area the size of the Sydney Basin, and with 30,000 homes due to be built on top of the 40,000 homes we have so far, that was not good enough. The last school built in the area before this was in 1958. There is one other school in my electorate, so there are currently only two. This new school will make three.

I thank the education Minister and her staff for their willingness to meet with me and listen to my concerns. At a meeting late last year with the Minister and representatives of the department I suggested that the primary school for the growth area be designated a high school and fast-tracked. The entire community and I are so pleased that the Government heard our request and took our concerns on board. It will be fast-tracked indeed—there will be a K to 12, with a pre-school to come. Even better, the first cohort of the high school—not primary school—will be in 2027, before the next election. Election promise made, election promise fought for, election promise heard, and now, I am pleased to say as an Independent, election promise delivered. It took hard work, a willing government, some persistent staff and the guts to stick by your conscience.

I cannot wait for the school, where I think the opportunities will be wonderful. I have already received a lot of support for the project. I thank the council for its kind words and assistance in the past when it has raised the matter. I also thank the community—the many hundreds of people who filled in my surveys, the thousands who voted for me and the regulars who come by my office just to check that I am not giving up on the matter. I also thank the parents of students who have recently moved into their forever homes in Wollondilly and who have called for a high school for their children. In particular, I thank one student who will be in year 7 in the first

cohort, Emma Wilson, who wrote to me with such excitement about news of the high school. Her life and the lives of so many young people will be changed because of this.

Emma went to great lengths designing a whole book of uniforms that are based on red and black—a contrast to the blue and black of Picton High School—which reflects a connection to the west. A primary student's drawing of a red-and-black logo circling an open book shows how much it means to her. I am also told that her uniforms were designed specifically so as not to clash with her red hair. I know the road to delivering this high school has been long. I have spoken many times in this place of the need for it. I do not want to diminish a wonderful moment by talking about how and why it was not delivered previously. Now is not the time. It does not need to be said because the results speak for themselves. I say to the Wollondilly electorate: Enjoy your brand-new high school.

FAR-RIGHT MOVEMENTS

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (21:58): On Anzac Day we witnessed events in Melbourne that should remain forever etched in our national memory. At the dawn service, a sombre commemoration to honour those who have sacrificed everything for our freedoms, a group led by a known neo-Nazi disrupted the Welcome to Country. A day that should unite us, honouring sacrifice, service and shared national values, was instead hijacked by extremists to heckle and divide. Journalist Amy Remeikis said it plainly:

It's absolutely disgusting ... we fought against them in World War II ... that was the whole point ...

Make no mistake, that incident did not occur spontaneously. It is the product of years of growing far-right extremism, ignored, downplayed or misunderstood by too many in positions of influence. Across our country, and across much of the world, we are seeing the re-emergence of dangerous forces. Neo-Nazis are no longer hiding in the shadows but organising openly. And yet, too often, politicians and media outlets treat these groups as just another voice in the political conversation, another perspective to debate or dismiss politely. This is a fatal mistake. The far right is not just another political movement; it is an existential threat to democracy itself. This is not just about left and right and it is not just another political argument for the talking heads on news panels; this is democracy versus extremism. Fascism is not just another empty insult to throw around like woke, snowflake or Karen. It is not a buzzword.

In Germany, after the First World War, extremist groups like the Nazis were seen as fringe and irrelevant. Mainstream politicians underestimated them, believing they could be controlled or co-opted. The media often sensationalised them, giving them publicity and oxygen. Civil society groups were slowly worn down until resistance became impossible. By the time the true threat was recognised, it was too late. In 1930s Germany conservatives thought they could control Hitler. They believed he would serve their interests. One of them, Alfred Hugenberg, a powerful media baron and politician, realised when it was too late that he had, in his own words, "allied myself with the worst demagogue in history".

Today we allow hate speech to exploit the right of free speech. Politicians flirt with racism, division and conspiracy theories, all in the name of short-term political gain. We act as if civil discourse alone will somehow defeat extremists whose only—

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order—

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I am getting there.

Ms Robyn Preston: A private member's statement is supposed to be about a member's electorate.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I am getting there.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The member for Leppington will allow the member for Hawkesbury to speak.

Ms Robyn Preston: A private member's statement should relate to a member's electorate.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Imagine interrupting a speech about fascism. It says a lot about you.

Ms Robyn Preston: The member for Leppington has only two minutes left to speak and we have not heard one thing about his electorate. His contribution is about other things.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): I uphold the point of order. The member for Leppington will refer to his electorate.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: I will get there. Politicians flirt with racism, division and conspiracy theories, all in the name of political gain. We act as if civil discourse alone will somehow defeat extremists whose only goal is to tear civil discourse apart. In my own electorate of Leppington, when the media gives airtime to Neo-Nazis, it is not neutrality or both sides. It is complicity and it is platforming. Fascism has never been about

persuasion. It does not win arguments; it silences them. At its core, fascism thrives on bullying and intimidation. Mussolini had his Blackshirts. Hitler had his Brownshirts. They did not just campaign; they patrolled the streets, broke up meetings, bashed rivals and made public life unsafe for anyone who opposed them. Today's far-right movements have added more modern tools to their arsenal such as online harassment, doxxing and coordinated misinformation. This is not just about winning elections; it is about poisoning democracy itself. In the recent federal election, we saw an army of volunteers in blue shirts, many reportedly from a far-right Christian sect.

Ms Robyn Preston: Point of order—

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Locally in my electorate, voters were repeatedly harassed by these volunteers.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): I will hear the point of order.

Ms Robyn Preston: My point of order is about relevance to the member's electorate. The only time—

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): The member for Leppington has mentioned his electorate. The member for Hawkesbury will resume her seat.

[Interruption]

The member mentioned Leppington. The member for Hawkesbury will resume her seat.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: What about the clock?

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): I am not sure whether we can reset the clock.

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY: Locally in my electorate—in Werriwa—voters were repeatedly harassed by those volunteers. I was personally subjected to a screaming tirade lasting several minutes within the six-metre line by a volunteer in a blue shirt. One resident told me the following:

Nearly every day they were knocking or leaving advertisements at my front door.

First it was four guys.

When I told them it was none of their business who I was voting for, they actually sent the candidate to my house.

I told him that he wasn't getting who I was voting for, and he left.

That was followed by phone calls and additional visits. When she spoke to her neighbour, he said until he told them he was voting for them, they kept coming to his door. The weekend's result delivered a resounding message of resistance. The Werriwa electorate—and Australian voters at large—rejected these tactics.

HAWKESBURY ELECTORATE WOMEN

Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (22:04): May I give my private member's statement now, Madam Temporary Speaker? The member for Leppington's time ended 30 seconds ago.

TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis): Do you want to give your private member's statement? I suggest you do so.

Ms ROBYN PRESTON: Today I will speak about women and acknowledge their role as architects of society. With Mother's Day approaching, it is vital that women are acknowledged, thanked and celebrated for all that they do to make this world a better place. Women are present in so many professions, proudly offering their unconditional care and support to many vulnerable groups in society. These areas, inclusive of teaching, nursing, education and health, are opportunities for women to practise their skills of nurturing, empathy, care and many other characteristics that benefit the whole of society. In Hawkesbury, we are fortunate to have so many courageous and phenomenal women working day in and day out to provide the best for our community. It would be remiss of me to not share the names of some of these significant Hawkesbury women and thank them for their dedication and contribution.

Diane Russell, Hawkesbury Woman of the Year in 2023, continues her advocacy for suicide prevention, support for family and friends who are left behind and those impacted by domestic violence. Having had her own experiences with these issues, Di bravely shares her story with others and dedicates herself to raising awareness, funds and services for others, hoping to prevent them from experiencing the same hardships she faced. Di's non-profit organisation, hope4u, has been a critical component of mental health support for the people of Hawkesbury, offering a range of assistance and guidance for anyone facing these hardships.

Fiona Germaine, Hawkesbury Woman of the Year in 2024, portrays the importance of hard work and dedication through her many achievements. Beginning with a double degree at the University of Technology Sydney in textiles and international studies, she progressed to studying marketing and communications at the

University of Milan in Italy. Fiona has modelled for fashion houses such as Versace and is today the proud owner of her own fashion label. She is invested in Hawkesbury and feels compelled to helping others. That was extremely evident during the devastating floods when Fiona organised food hampers and supplies to those locals who were trapped and cut off from civilisation.

This year our Hawkesbury Woman of the Year, Jacky Turano, shows us how much impact one person's ideas and actions can have. Using a gift voucher she received as a birthday gift one year, Jacky purchased blankets and beanies and donated them to a homeless shelter after witnessing individuals bracing the cruel chill of winter. That action propelled Jacky into seeking support for homeless people, advocating for their rights to shelter and more support from within the community. From those actions the Jeremiah Project was born, instilling feelings of hope and belonging to these extremely vulnerable individuals. Jacky's project has gained a lot of traction over the years, going mobile with a food truck to provide better access to meals and affording those experiencing homelessness with a place to shower and sleep. In the coming weeks, the Jeremiah Project will celebrate its grand opening on newly secured premises in the heart of Windsor.

Numerous other organisations and services have done a wonderful job around Hawkesbury. Our emergency services are also strengthened by their female members, including Superintendent Nadine Roberts of the Hawkesbury Police Area Command. I also acknowledge and thank police Commissioner Karen Webb for her service and dedication to the people of New South Wales. Commissioner Webb, the first woman to hold that position, has announced her pending retirement, and I thank her for her service. I am proud to know each of these women, who are role models in society and offer inspiration and hope to the next generation of women. To mothers throughout New South Wales and beyond, I say happy Mother's Day for this Sunday. It will be a day of mixed emotion for me. It is the first Mother's Day since my beautiful mother, Hazel Gladys Reid, passed away. I love you, Mum, forever.

The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 22:58 until Thursday 8 May 2025 at 10:00.

Written Community Recognition Statements

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

KERRY THOMAS

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Kerry Thomas for her extraordinary contribution to the health and wellbeing of others. On 30 April, Kerry reached an inspiring milestone - making her 175th donation of blood and plasma at Lifeblood. This incredible achievement represents the potential to save up to 525 lives. Kerry began donating in 1971, following in the footsteps of her older brothers, and with a strong desire to give back to the community in a deeply meaningful way. Lifeblood donor centres rely on generous individuals like Kerry to provide blood, plasma, and platelets. These are lifesaving donations used for trauma care, surgeries, childbirth, and by people living with chronic illnesses. Kerry's dedication over more than five decades is inspiring. Her commitment reminds us of the impact one person can have - supporting the one in three Australians who will need blood or blood products in their lifetime. I sincerely thank Kerry Thomas for her extraordinary community spirit and her steady support of this life-saving cause.

MR NEIL SKELLY

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Mr Neil Skelly for his outstanding service to the Crookwell community. Mr Skelly spent 22 years with the Postmaster-General's Department before seizing an opportunity in 1994 to support local families in a new way -purchasing a 52-seater Hino bus to meet the growing demand for school transport from Fish River and Boorowa Road to Crookwell. But Mr Skelly did far more than the daily school run. He delivered parcels, groceries, medications, and essential supplies to families along his route, becoming a trusted and familiar presence to many. His work was not without challenge; navigating inclement weather, coordinating with police, SES, and schools to ensure students travelled safely, and adapting to increasingly complex regulations faced by independent operators. Today, I acknowledge Mr Skelly's enormous contribution to the community. His reliability, care, and commitment over decades of service have been deeply valued by many. As he steps into a well-earned retirement, I thank Mr Skelly and wish him all the very best. His legacy of service and dedication to others will long be remembered.

NICK MINOGUE

Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)—I rise to recognise Nick Minogue, an outstanding young athlete from Gunning. At just fourteen years old, Nick has already demonstrated exceptional talent and dedication in the sport of BMX racing. He began competing at the age of eight and, despite living with Cystic Fibrosis, has

pursued a demanding training schedule—including early mornings and regular travel to Western Sydney for coaching. Nick's determination has seen him compete at both state and national championships, where he continues to achieve impressive results and develop his skills. His passion, resilience, and drive have now earned him a place on the Australian team for the 2025 BMX World Championships, to be held in Copenhagen from 29 July to 3 August. This is an extraordinary achievement for someone so young and a testament to Nick's character and commitment. I congratulate Nick on his selection to represent Australia and acknowledge the support of his family and community who have helped him reach this point. We will all be proudly cheering him on as he takes on the world stage in Copenhagen.

CIVIC'S CARINGBAH INDOOR URBAN FARM

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate disability services organisation Civic on launching a state-of-the-art indoor urban farm at its Caringbah headquarters. This innovative project not only supplies microgreens to local restaurants but also creates inclusive employment opportunities for people with disability. At the launch event in April, Civic employees showed off their first crop of micro-herbs they produced onsite in the new facility that is impressively backlit by specialised lighting to help grow high quality produce for local dining tables. Civic is working to transform its Caringbah site to provide additional innovative employment offerings as part of work to establish pathways to mainstream employment for its clients. CEO Annie Doyle said: "It's important we, together with our community, continually challenge outdated perceptions, foster new opportunities – like this new indoor farm – and create a future where everyone has the chance to contribute their skills and talents to the workforce." It's great to see innovation like this from a local Shire organisation and I recognise Annie, the board and the entire Civic team on their efforts to ensure we have a more inclusive workforce.

CRONULLA TRIATHLON CLUB

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I congratulate Cronulla Triathlon Club members on their achievements at the School Sport Australia National Triathlon Championships where Australia's top student triathlon talent was on show. Contesting the senior triathlon race of a 750m swim, 20km cycle and 5km run, Kyle Mason was third among the 32 competitors [1] going into the final leg before unleashing blistering running pace to claim the gold medal. Kyle also competed in the crowd-favourite team relay held over a shorter distance and together with his NSW teammates he claimed a bronze medal. In the junior triathlon race run over a 300m swim, 10km cycle and 2km run, Lachlan Targett brought home more success for the Cronulla club. Lachlan had a powerful bike leg and took a silver medal, only being caught in the final moments after leading for most of the race. Petra Fransen also came home with a medal after being part of the NSW team that won silver in the intermediate teams relay event. Completing the Cronulla contingent were Sophie Fransen and Phoenix Rostron who also did their club proud in a strong national field. Congratulations to these five young athletes on representing NSW with distinction.

ALL STARS PICKLEBALL LEAGUE

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—The Oxley area is once again making its mark on the national sporting stage, with two of our very own Wauchope locals, Janie and Geoff Carter, being drafted into the inaugural All Stars Masters Pickleball League. This brand-new league, designed for players aged 40 and over, brings together the best master's talent from across Australia in a high-level, team-based competition. Janie and Geoff's selection is a tremendous achievement, not just for them personally, but for our entire community. It's a testament to the incredible depth of talent we have here in Oxley and the rising strength of our regional pickleball scene. Both Janie and Geoff train out of the popular Wauchope Pickleball Club, where the sport has taken off in recent years. The club has become a hub for players of all skill levels and ages, with strong community support and a competitive spirit that clearly produces results. With strong competition in the draft, having not one but two local players selected speaks volumes about the quality of players emerging from the regions. Congratulations Janie and Geoff!

COMMUNITY MARKETS GIVE BACK

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—From its grassroots beginnings in 2010, the Valla Beach Community Association has transformed the Valla Beach Markets from a modest gathering of local farmers into a vibrant and much-loved event that now draws crowds from across the region and beyond. Held in the heart of the Nambucca Valley, the markets offer not only an impressive array of stalls, delicious food, and live entertainment, but also a welcoming space for families and locals to connect. The markets showcase the charm and creativity of the Valla Beach community, with visitors regularly travel from neighbouring towns to attend, bringing business to local cafes and shops. The Valla Beach Community Association's tireless efforts have delivered real and lasting benefits for the Valla Beach community. The funds raised from the markets go to purchasing lifesaving defibrillators, supporting local arts and culture, maintaining the Valla Beach Community Hall, to lighting up the festive season

with annual Christmas Carols. The impact of these markets reaches far beyond the day itself and shows what community-led actions can achieve, and the dedication of the Valla Beach Community Association deserves to be recognised and applauded.

EXPRESSWAY SPARES 60TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)—Expressway Spares is an iconic family business that has grown from humble beginnings on the Mid North Coast to become a globally recognised leader in the heavy earthmoving industry. Founded in 1964, Expressway Spares was originally established to service the local timber industry. Six decades later, it stands as a testament to vision, hard work, and family legacy. The company recently celebrated its 60th anniversary, a milestone that honours not only its founders, but the generations that have followed. Today, Expressway Spares remains family run and operates five branches and employs more than 380 people. Congratulations to Geoff Fowler on his extraordinary 50 years of service! This is more than just a business. Expressway Spares is a pillar of the Wauchope community, a proud employer, and a shining example of what long-term family vision and commitment can achieve. To the Cassegrain and Dunn families, and to every member of the Expressway Spares team, congratulations on 60 years of excellence. Your legacy is not just in the machinery you service, but in the community you have helped build and the futures you continue to shape.

TONY BERNARDI

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—I would like to pay tribute to one of Forbes' true champions, Tony Bernardi, who has retired after building one of the Central West's iconic businesses during a 70-year career. Tony's story is the classic migrant story which helped build Australia. He arrived here from Italy as a 17-year-old with a few pounds in his pocket, one suitcase and no English, but now operates four large supermarkets and a discount store with his three sons. Tony's uncle gave him his first job working on his fruit farm and after two years he was able to lease 30 acres for his own market garden. He saved, bought a truck to sell his produce to outlying centres including Condobolin, Trundle and Tullamore before opening his first store, Bernardi's Drive In Food Mart, in Forbes in 1968. The Bernardi's presence has since been expanded to West Wyalong, Bathurst, Blayney and Parkes. The group now employs more than 500 staff, with a focus on supporting local suppliers and communities. I congratulate Tony on his incredible journey and the impact he has had on the central west. I am in awe of his work ethic, his determination and his generous nature.

SISTER MARY TRAINOR

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the incredible work of Sister Mary Trainor, one of Orange's most enduring and well-known humanitarians. A member of the Sisters of Mercy, Sister Mary has been a major force behind the Bloomfield Hospital Auxiliary which she joined just after its establishment in the early 1980s. Improving the mental health landscape in Orange has been a life-long pursuit for Sister Mary, who was the first woman to be appointed Bloomfield Chaplain, a position she held for 22 years. This work went hand-in-hand with her commitment to the Auxiliary, which funded projects such as a sensory garden, a fishpond and pool tables. Handing out Easter eggs in the wards is another way the auxiliary has made a difference to the lives of patients and clients. Now in her 90s, Sister Mary recently retired after giving more than 70 years of service to the Bathurst Diocese through the Sisters of Mercy, which she joined in 1951. Sister Mary's compassion for those struggling within our community is exemplary. The work she has done is astounding and I thank her for it.

LUCY MELLIS

Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)—Orange has produced its share of outstanding athletes who have gone on to perform on international stages and it looks like the local cricket scene has unearthed another junior with enormous potential. Orange High School's Lucy Mellis took a big step towards a career on the world stage when she was selected for the Australia-India womens cricket team to play in the ICC's womens Bali Bash International T20I in Indonesia in April. A wicket-keeper who is also handy with the bat, Lucy will also play in the Kartini Cup T10 tournament, also in Bali. The trip will provide her with great international experience against players from different cultures. It's a milestone selection for Lucy, who has played cricket since she was at primary school and who now travels to the metropolitan area most weekends to play for the Penrith Cricket Club in the womens premier league's Brewer Shield, for under 18 players. Orange's Phoebe Litchfield has blazed a trail on the international scene, setting a great example for girls interested in the game. It looks like Lucy Mellis also has amazing potential and I wish her well and look forward to watching her career progress.

DAISY WILLIAMS

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise and commend Daisy Williams' incredible artistic achievements. The former student of Danebank in Hurstville moved to America to pursue a career in entertainment and media. After studying journalism at Bond University and a semester at Washington College, she landed jobs working for Netflix, HBO and Rolling Stone before securing her current position as a

senior producer for NBC. Since then, she has worked on several big projects, including NBC's Summer House series and multiple episodes of Real Housewives. Ms Williams has always been interested in reality TV and now produces, plans and edits many sets and footage. Among Ms Williams successes, she has worked on several recordings for famous Hollywood celebrity Paris Hilton's wedding show in LA. Ms Williams has continued to work behind the scenes, making a name for herself in the highly competitive US TV industry. I would like to congratulate Ms Williams and I wish only the best for her future endeavours in Hollywood and thank her for inspiring many young producers in our local community pursue their own careers in media.

AUTISM COMMUNITY NETWORK

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to acknowledge and congratulate the 34 members of the Autism Community Network [CAN] who climbed Australia's highest peak, Mt Kosciuszko, to raise funds and awareness during Autism Awareness Month. The 2025 Annual ACN Mt Kozi Climb raised over \$15,000 in an extraordinary effort to raise awareness, encourage acceptance and create strong support networks for people with autism in our community. The ACN has been operating since 2011 and supports over 4,000 families with their Autistic Adults Social Clubs, Peer-to-Peer Carer Support Groups, Carer activities, Family Days and more. A special thanks to Georges River resident and Chief Executive Officer of the ACN, Vanessa Gauci, for leading the climb and to the Club Rivers team for joining in and providing food, transport and accommodation. I would like to thank the many volunteers of the ACN who provide and create such strong and welcoming support networks for people with autism in our community, with special thanks to the 34 Mt Kosciuszko climbers for their tireless and selfless commitment to people in our community.

ST GEORGE MEN'S SHED

Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)—I would like to recognise the St George Men's Shed and its fourteen years of service to workers and the wider community. The Men's Shed has been meeting since 2011 and is a place for attendees to socialise and share skills such as carpentry, furniture making, photography, and computer skills. The Men's Shed is also a place for older men to share their life experiences and help other members during life changing moments such as a new job or retirement. Thanks to the Shed's experiences and history, it has proven to be a place to develop strong friendships, hobbies and long term beneficial habits. The St George Men's Shed deserves commendation for its 14 years of service to workers and the wider community.

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - MADISSON LEWIS

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in wishing Madisson Lewis a joyous 20th birthday! Madisson's friend, Maisie, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Happy 20th birthday! Just a little reminder that No matter how dark it gets, the sun's gonna rise again. Have an amazing day!!." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Madisson's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Madisson!

BIRTHDAY MESSAGE - MICHELLE D'HEUREUX

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in wishing Michelle D'Heureux a joyous 47th birthday! Michelle's daughter, Emma, asked me to share these heartfelt words in the Parliament: "Hey mum, Happy 47th birthday! I hope you have an amazing day and enjoy being 26.... lol. I love you so much! Emmy xx." It truly is a wonderful thing to celebrate a birthday with the love and support of those closest to you, and I am humbled to be able to play a small role in making Michelle's day a little extra special. May this birthday be filled with love, laughter, and cherished moments that can be taken forward on life's journey. Wishing you continued happiness and prosperity in the years ahead. Happy birthday Michelle!

THE REVEREND ERIC CHEUNG

Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)—I ask the House to join me in congratulating the new Minister of Eastwood Parish, The Reverend Eric Cheung, on his recent appointment! The Reverend Cheung's induction was a moment of great joy for the Eastwood Anglican community. It marked the beginning of a new chapter in the life of the parish. A committed man of faith, Reverend Cheung brings with him not only strong pastoral experience but a deep commitment to his congregation's spiritual growth and unity. Seeing so many from the local community come together to celebrate his appointment was heartening - a testament to the strong bonds of fellowship that define our faith communities in Ryde. I have no doubt that Reverend Cheung's leadership will be a blessing to many, and I look forward to seeing the continued growth and outreach of Eastwood Parish under his stewardship. Congratulations again to Reverend Cheung and all those who participated in this momentous occasion. May his ministry be fruitful and filled with grace.

SANDEEP MADALA - PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AWARDS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I wish to extend my congratulations to Sandeep Madala, who was recognised with a Pride of Workmanship Award at the Castle Hill Rotary Club's ceremony on 9 April 2025. Sandeep has made exceptional contributions to community broadcasting through his work with Alive 90.5FM. As a website developer and dedicated volunteer, he has transformed the station's online presence—creating a dynamic, accessible platform that enhances engagement for listeners, presenters, and the wider community. Sandeep's technical skills are matched by his generosity of time and spirit. He has volunteered more than 1,000 hours to ensure the station runs smoothly, not only managing updates and maintenance but also offering consistent support for operations and programming. His work reflects the Rotary Club's theme for the awards: "Do it once—do it well." Beyond his individual contributions, Sandeep is admired for his enthusiasm, professionalism, and willingness to mentor others. His efforts have made a lasting impact on local media, helping Alive 90.5FM serve as a vibrant platform for community voices. I am proud to recognise Sandeep's commitment and congratulate him on this well-earned recognition for his outstanding dedication to community broadcasting.

DR JUANITA RUIZ - PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AWARDS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I wish to extend my congratulations to Dr Juanita Ruiz, who was recognised with a Pride of Workmanship Award at the Castle Hill Rotary Club's ceremony on 9 April 2025. Dr Ruiz has made outstanding contributions to community health, particularly through her work as a General Practitioner at Headspace Castle Hill. Her dedication to supporting young people's mental health has had a profound impact. With remarkable clinical skill and compassion, Dr Ruiz provides mental health reviews, Care Plans, and tailored support for vulnerable patients. She is known for her ability to put people at ease, building trust and offering care that is both professional and deeply empathetic. Her contributions extend beyond the clinic, through her volunteer work with Streetside Medics, providing healthcare to the homeless and those in need. Dr Ruiz fosters a positive healthcare environment, mentoring others and sharing her expertise generously. Her integrity, professionalism, and tireless commitment to her patients and community make her a role model and a deeply valued member of the medical field. I am proud to acknowledge Dr Juanita Ruiz's achievements and on behalf of this house thank her for her service.

NICHOLAS CARLTON - PRIDE OF WORKMANSHIP AWARDS

Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)—I wish to extend my congratulations to Nicholas Carlton, who was recognised with a Pride of Workmanship Award at the Castle Hill Rotary Club's ceremony on 9 April 2025. Nicholas has made outstanding contributions to urban planning and economic development in The Hills Shire through his role as Manager of Forward Planning at The Hills Shire Council. Under Nicholas's visionary leadership, the Council developed and finalised precinct plans for Castle Hill, Norwest, and Rouse Hill—strategic documents that will guide growth, improve business opportunities, and shape our region's future. His ability to manage complex projects with clarity and care has earned him the respect of colleagues and community members alike. In addition to his planning achievements, Nicholas leads the Council's Economic Development Program, supporting local businesses and fostering a strong commercial environment. He mentors his team and promotes sustainable development across all initiatives. Nicholas's leadership, integrity, and commitment to long-term community outcomes have left a lasting impact on The Hills Shire. I am pleased to recognise his achievements and thank him for his dedicated service.

DEBRA ATKINSON

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Debra Atkinson, owner of Picture This Custom Framing, whose expertise and eye for detail have made a mark in the Mid-Coast and Hunter regions. After identifying a need for custom framing in the Mid North Coast, Debra expanded her Maitland-based business to Nabad, where she has built a strong customer base from across the region. With a background in retail management and visual merchandising, Debra turned to framing after completing an apprenticeship, combining her artistic skills with precision craftsmanship. She is passionate about preserving memories through her work, taking the time to understand the personal stories behind each piece she frames. Her approach has not gone unnoticed, earning her multiple awards, including Best Customer Service at the 2024 Mid Coast Business Awards and Best General Business at the 2024 Hunter Region Business Excellence Awards. I congratulate Debra on her achievements and wish her continued success.

MELISSA PAYNE

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Melissa Payne, the Race Day Operations Manager at Tuncurry Forster Jockey Club. When she took on the role, Melissa had little experience in the racing industry beyond being a keen racegoer. However, she quickly embraced the position, working alongside the committee and volunteers who have built the club over four decades. Under her leadership, the club was named

Racing NSW Country TAB Race Club of the Year in 2023. Melissa and her husband, Robbie, relocated to Hallidays Point for a sea change but soon found themselves involved in the community. She plays and serves as president for Country Connections Netball Club, while Robbie coaches the Forster Tuncurry Hawks. Melissa also works as the function coordinator at Tuncurry Beach Bowling Club, organising everything from weddings to wakes. Her contribution to local sport and community events is invaluable. I commend Melissa for her hard work in making the Myall Lakes a better place.

ZARA FARNELL

Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)—I would like to acknowledge Zara Farnell, a Year 4 student at Nabitac Public School, who has made a splash at her school's swimming carnival. Zara broke four long-standing records, including a junior girls' breaststroke record that had stood for 19 years. Her achievements in butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle prove her hard work and love for the sport. Zara's success continued at the Manning Zone Championships, where she secured first place in breaststroke and backstroke, second in butterfly, and third in freestyle. Zara is an all-rounder, she also plays netball, surfs, and even excels in long jump. Congratulations, Zara - I have no doubt we'll be hearing your name again in the future.

OUTSTANDING CHOIR PERFORMANCE

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I rise today to commend the outstanding efforts of the Aria Park and District community, whose passion and commitment were on full display during a recent fundraising concert that raised \$5,500 for vital local infrastructure. Held in the historic Aria Park Memorial Hall, the concert featured the Aria Park-Mirrool Bombers Old Boys Choir alongside 53 members of the Wagga City Rugby Male Choir. It was described as one of the best concerts in the Hall for many years. Funds raised will support the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Aria Park Memorial Hall, as well as the Aria Park Memorial Swimming Pool, two iconic landmarks built through remarkable community spirit and resilience. Local historian Bill Speirs shared the rich history of both facilities, highlighting the Hall's reconstruction after a devastating fire in 1952, and the community-driven effort to build the War Memorial Pool, officially opened in 1961. This event is a testament to the enduring strength, unity, and generosity of regional communities. I congratulate everyone involved, performers, organisers, volunteers, and donors, for their contributions. Aria Park continues to demonstrate the power of grassroots action in preserving community assets for future generations.

CRAIG JOHNSON

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—After 32 years of service at the Grenfell Station, Fire and Rescue Station Captain Craig Johnson has decided to hang up his helmet. Craig joined Fire and Rescue in 1993 following a discussion with his friend Keith White. Craig served his 32 years in Grenfell, becoming an engine keeper in 2011 for 12 months before becoming Deputy Captain. In 2014, Craig was appointed Captain of the Grenfell Station. Craig has always been community minded and throughout his career with Fire and Rescue, Craig held a number of community positions including working at the Hospital, the Service Station and as a tyre fitter and driver with Loader's Coaches. During Craig's time with Fire and Rescue, he was deployed to Braidwood and Bateman's Bay during the 2019 bushfires and to Victoria in 2009 for the Black Saturday bushfires, making the role both satisfying and at times, sorrowful. We wish Craig all the best in his retirement where he will enjoy some quality time with family and friends including his granddaughters. Thank you, Craig, for your dedicated service to the Grenfell community.

WEST WYALONG PUBLIC SCHOOL PERFORM AT PULSE ALIVE 2025

Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)—I would like to congratulate the outstanding students from West Wyalong Public School who recently participated in Pulse Alive 2025 at Sydney Olympic Park. This incredible event showcased the immense talent of over 5,000 students from NSW Public Schools and captivated a sold-out audience. Students were proudly part of the Massed Choir, representing their school with great dedication and passion. They committed countless hours to rehearsing, even giving up their recess breaks to perfect the 17 songs performed during the show. In preparation, students had a full-day Zoom rehearsal with conductors, followed by an in-person session at Netball Central. On performance day, they rehearsed at the Arena, ensuring they were ready for the big event. After a brief dinner break with their families, they returned for the spectacular performance, which was a resounding success. I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the support team and the families of these students for making this extraordinary opportunity possible. The commitment and effort displayed by these students truly exemplify the talent and determination of our young people, and you should all be incredibly proud of your achievements.

VEER TANGRI

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)—You're never too young or old to give back to the community. Veer Tangri, who lives in Cherrybrook in my electorate, absolutely shows that to be the case. At just 9 years old, Veer

is helping to support underprivileged children his own age to get the equipment they need to get involved in playing sport. During a visit to India, Veer saw other children his age playing sport without shoes. On that day, he gave his football boots to one of those kids and then returned home with questions for his parents about why he had shoes while those children didn't. With those simple questions, Golden Wickets was born. Through Golden Wickets, Veer has worked with his school, The Kings School, and the local community to collect donations of football boots and sporting equipment to donate to underprivileged kids in both Australia and India. Late last year, Veer partnered with his school and the Indian Youth Soccer Association to collect and distribute second-hand football boots to 120 children in villages around New Delhi. The donations Veer has collected have also been donated to the Asylum Seekers Centre in Auburn. Congratulations on your exceptional work Veer!

HORNSBY RSL SUB-BRANCH

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)—The Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch does excellent work supporting the welfare of serving and ex-serving Defence Force personnel and their families across the Hornsby area. The Sub-Branch was formed in 1919 and has been consistently serving veterans in our community since that time. One of the Sub-Branches' most important initiatives has been the establishment of the Veterans Wellbeing Centre - Hornsby. That Centre is dedicated to delivering and, where needed, developing services to support veterans in the local area, and particularly younger veterans. Each year, the Hornsby RSL Sub-Branch also organises the largest Anzac Day event in the Hornsby Shire. Recently, thousands of local residents joined the Dawn Service at the Hornsby Cenotaph. Hundreds of serving and ex-Defence Force personnel, their families, and members of local community groups also participate in the Anzac Day march beforehand. I want to particularly acknowledge the hard work of the RSL Sub-Branch Committee, in organising the event and leading the Sub-Branch throughout the year. They include President BRIG Neil Turner AM RFD (Retd); Vice Presidents John Zeller and George Main; Secretary Kaye Carter; Treasurer Phil White; and Committee Members Doug Cable, Carolyn Parish, and Phil Loomes. Lest we forget.

BEROWRA RSL SUB-BRANCH

Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)—The Berowra RSL Sub-Branch does important work in the Berowra community, supporting the welfare of serving and ex-serving Defence Force personnel and their families. The Sub-Branch was formed in 1964 and, in the years since, has been consistently serving the veterans in our community. Each year, the Berowra RSL Sub-Branch organises an Anzac Day march and Commemorative Service. This year was one of the most moving and inspiring services held in Berowra. This reflects the Sub-Branch's connection to the Berowra community and the dedication of residents to supporting local veterans. This impressive turnout meant that the Berowra Anzac Day commemoration was particularly meaningful for all attendees. I want to particularly acknowledge the hard work of the Berowra RSL Sub-Branch Committee, in organising the event and leading the Sub-Branch throughout the year. They include President Graham Burr, Secretary Michelle Burr, Vice President Frank Miles, Treasurer Denis McCann, Vice President Brian Engert and Associate Member Nicole Taylor. Lest we forget.

CELEBRATING THE FEMALE FOOTBALL FESTIVAL

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations Football Canterbury and Strathfield FC on your fantastic recent Female Football Festival held on 30 March 2025. This annual preseason festival celebrates women and girls of all ages coming together for a day of football fun. As a precursor to Football NSW's 2025 Female Football Week, being celebrated from 2 to 11 May, the festival provides an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate all female participants who play a vital and growing role in the football world. I applaud Football Canterbury and Strathfield FC for coming together to support and celebrate their female athletes through this event. Congratulations to Trent Thomas Chief Executive Office Football Canterbury, Georgie Kokokiris from the Marrickville Red Devils, Strathfield President Michael Vertsonis, and everyone else involved in putting on such a great day.

BETH O'CONNOR – SUMMER HILL WOMAN OF THE YEAR 2025

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations Beth O'Connor Summer Hill Woman of the Year 2025. The Women of the Year awards celebrate role models who challenge inequality, innovate and inspire and that certainly describes Beth. A long-term leader at Inner West Council's Early Learning Services, Beth has given many years of dedicated service to the youngest members of our community through her work in early childhood education. Beth codesigned, implemented and led the Cooks River Kids program, which was later transitioned to "The Dharaganggal" meaning "people of the river". This innovative program teaches kids that the Cooks River is important for the local community and includes lessons about sustainability, safety and the rich Indigenous heritage of our local area. Beth also consulted with the Gujaga Foundation, embedding Dharawal language in the program. Beth's dedication and selfless service has and will continue to shape the lives of many young people in

the Inner West. Thank you, Beth, for all your incredible work and congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!

USHTIPE FESTIVAL

Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)—Congratulations to Nenad Radic and the Romani Arts and Culture Collective for organising the hugely successful Ushtipe Festival held at Addison Road Community Centre in my local electorate on 12 April. The Ushtipe Festival is an event that honours International Romani Day through a free and inclusive celebration of Romani culture. Featuring live Romani music, food and traditional craft workshops, the event celebrates Romani people and their allies. Popular events on the program were the Romani Verdon (caravan) building workshop, and the upcycled Romani clothes making session. The twilight event catered for all interests, even those wanting to learn a new dance or pick up some new language skills. There was also the opportunity to taste Romano Habe (Romani food) cooked over an open fire. Congratulations Nenad and the Romani Arts and Culture Collective. Thank you for your ongoing efforts in supporting Romani people living in Australia and encouraging others to learn more about the Romani culture!

RECOGNISING THE SCHOFIELDS SCORPIONS BASEBALL CLUB

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)—Congratulations to the Schofields Scorpions Baseball Club on an outstanding season marked by remarkable achievements across all levels of the game. The Division 9 seniors led the way, winning the Grand Final title and finishing the season as Minor Premiers—a reflection of their skill, dedication, and consistent teamwork. We also celebrate the incredible success of the Under 9s, who were crowned Premiers, and the Under 17s, who triumphed in their Grand Final to cap off a stellar season. The Division 10 team added to the club's success with a well-earned grand final victory, showcasing the depth of talent across the senior ranks. At the grassroots level, the U7 Akers had a fantastic season in tee ball. They learned the fundamentals of the game, had fun, and built a love for baseball that will carry them through the years ahead. To all the players, coaches, families, and volunteers — thank you for your dedication, passion, and support. The Schofields Scorpions continue to thrive, and your commitment ensures a bright future for baseball in our community. We look forward to celebrating more success in seasons to come!

RECOGNISING THE SCHOFIELDS CRICKET CLUB

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)—Mr Speaker, today I want to extend my warmest congratulations to Schofields Cricket Club on an outstanding 2024/25 season, marked by impressive achievements across both junior and senior levels. The U12 and U13 teams displayed exceptional skill and determination, each securing HDCA premierships. The U11 team capped off a remarkable undefeated season with a premiership title, reflecting their talent, discipline, and teamwork. On the senior front, the 3rd Grade team delivered a stellar performance to claim the BCDCA premiership, with Harjeet Chopra leading the bowling attack and Abhishek Nahar's 34 runs proving vital with the bat. The 2nd Grade team also had a strong season, finishing as minor premiers and earning a place in the semi-finals. They now prepare for a thrilling two-day clash against the Riverstone Rangers at Turnbull Oval, North Richmond. I commend all HDCA senior teams for their unwavering commitment and sportsmanship throughout the season. A sincere thank you to the coaches, captains, players, and volunteers whose dedication made these successes possible. Congratulations again to the U11 Green, U12 Gold, and U13 Green teams on their incredible accomplishments. I look forward to celebrating with you all at the upcoming presentation day!

RECOGNISING THE QUAKERS HILL PIRATE BASEBALL CLUB

Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)—Today, I proudly congratulate the Quakers Hill Pirates Baseball Club on an outstanding season filled with dedication, achievement, and community spirit. A standout highlight was the Division 3 team's Grand Final victory, a testament to their skill, perseverance, and teamwork throughout the season. I'd also like to mention Max Hayhow, a long-time junior Pirate whose remarkable talent has earned him a place on the Australian U18 Men's Softball Team to compete in New Zealand — an extraordinary achievement that reflects his commitment and drive. Max, the Riverstone community is behind you every step of the way! Additionally, both Max and Cam played key roles in the NSW U18 Boys Softball Team, which was recently crowned 2025 National Champions—a proud moment for our local sporting community. We also celebrate the Pirates' Hills team, who brought home the Silver Medal at the NSW Little League Girls State Championship, showcasing the club's strength and talent across all age groups. A heartfelt thank you to the players, coaches, and volunteers whose efforts make these successes possible. The Pirates continue to lead by example, uniting our community through passion, perseverance, and sportsmanship.

CAMDEN SHOW 2025

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I have been a Patron of Camden Show for many years and have always loved the family friendly atmosphere. I would like to offer my thanks to the incredible volunteers – both

committee members and the hundreds of helping hands that made this show the great success it was. The weather was perfect at the 2025 show, as was the atmosphere. Each year there is something a little different, but you can always find the things you have grown to love. From the horses, cattle and other livestock including the poultry and the newly refurbished poultry hall, to the rides, stalls and even a ute muster it was an incredible weekend. The entertainment was spectacular, and I enjoyed catching up with so many old faces and being greeted by many new ones. This event was a real celebration of an iconic country show attended by the local community and thousands upon thousands of people from near and far. Congratulations to the organisers for another successful year in this annual favourite event.

BOWRAL BOWLING CLUB NSW CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—Bowral Bowling Club has recently celebrated the victory of its members Stephen Della-Fiorentina OAM, Kevin Stafford, and Mick Spong, who became the NSW Senior Men's Triples Champions for 2024-2025. Stephen, Kevin and Spong travelled to northern NSW to compete in the NSW Bowls State Championship against 15 other teams from across the state. This was off the back of their previous win at the Nepean Highlander regional title in August last year. The Bowral team proved their skill, steely nerves and sportsmanship overcoming favourites Charlesville in the semi finals, defeating them 27-20. They managed a change in location from Alstonville to Ballina as the heavy rain and wind made the green unsuitable to continue play for the finals, where they faced previous state champions Belrose. The game was suspenseful with both sides holding the lead throughout, however in the end Bowral proved victorious, cheered on by members of the Bowral Ladies Club members and other supporters in the crowd. This is the first time that Bowral Bowling Club has won the State Championship, and I am honoured to extend my wholehearted congratulations to Stephen, Kevin and Mick for their outstanding achievement.

BARGO SCOUTS

Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)—I was delighted to attend Bargo Scouts Annual Presentation last week and it's great to see that Scouting is thriving in Wollondilly. The AGM saw new committee members elected and other members staying on. As always, a huge thank you to all these volunteers without whose time and commitment organisations like Scouts couldn't function. The Bargo troop now has more than 40 members – from Joeys starting at 6 years old up to Rover Scouts and adult volunteers over 25 years. This is an adventure where the whole family is welcomed and supported throughout the journey. These days Scouts welcome boys and girls alike with the agenda to provide fun, youth development activities, building resilient and confident children and adolescents. I remember being a Brownie myself as a young girl and the fun and adventures I experienced will stick with me forever. Congratulations to all involved.

ANZAC DAY 2025 AT ROSEVILLE

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Friday 25 April, I attended the ANZAC Day Dawn Service at Roseville Memorial Park. It was a moving occasion to honour the courage and sacrifice of those who have served our nation. The service was conducted by The Roseville Club. They continue the proud tradition established by their founders, the Roseville RSL sub-Branch. I recognise President John Whitworth of The Roseville Club for tireless work leading a dedicated team to put this commemoration together – especially while the club is being rebuilt. I also recognise Ku-ring-gai Council for their organisational efforts. Laying a wreath on behalf of our local community was a meaningful moment, standing together at dawn in quiet reflection, united in respect and remembrance. We will remember them. Lest We Forget.

LADY GAME COMMUNITY KINDERGARTEN: MOTHER'S DAY CAKE STALL 2025

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—On Saturday 10 May, Lady Game Community Kindergarten will celebrate its 64th annual Mother's Day Cake Stall at the West Lindfield Shops. This much-loved tradition brings together parents, carers, friends and local residents to help raise funds for the kindergarten through a wonderful range of cakes and baked goods, generously donated by families. This stall is more than a fundraiser. It's a valued opportunity to support a preschool community that's nurtured and educated generations of children. It's also the perfect chance to pick up something sweet ahead of Mother's Day. I acknowledge Director Melissa Wilson, the 2025 Lady Game Community Kindergarten Social Committee, and all volunteers for their work to carry on this special tradition.

DR BELINDA KHONG: RAISING SPRING KIDS

Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)—I recognise Dr Belinda Khong who released her third book, "Raising Spring Kids: A Psychologists Guide to Nurturing Mindful Kids". The book was officially launched and celebrated on Saturday 26 April 2025 at Wahroonga Park by the Member for Wahroonga, Alister Henskens SC MP. Dr Khong's books are notable and valuable in teaching mindfulness in an informative and insightful way for children to approach life. Dr Khong shows us how to use innovation to help kids become spiritual, positive,

resilient, imaginative, nimble and grateful [SPRING]; as well as generous, respectful, empathetic, appreciative and thoughtful [GREAT]. I am so proud that Dr Khong is a valuable member of our Davidson electorate community. She helps bring out the very best in our children. Thank you for all that you do in your beneficial, insightful and meaningful contributions.

VALE NICK LALICH

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—On 26 March 2025, Cabramatta, and New South Wales more broadly, tragically lost a dedicated public servant, Nick Lalich. Over the years, I had the pleasure of spending time with Nick, and I always found that his wit, vast knowledge, wisdom, and humour truly unmatched. Nick's life was a story of struggle, perseverance, success, and progress - one that reflects the great Australian migrant journey. Growing up in Bonnyrigg, Nick first served as a Councillor in the 1980s, then Mayor, and eventually as the State Member for Cabramatta until his retirement in 2023. Throughout it all, he dedicated his life to fighting for Cabramatta and ensuring our community had a strong voice in Parliament. From his early days as a union man to becoming one of the most respected and well-liked Members of Parliament, Nick earned friendships across both sides of the Chamber. At his memorial, held at the local Cabra-Vale Diggers, I had the opportunity to speak with many who knew Nick professionally and personally. A common thread ran through every story - his empathy, determination, and unwavering dedication to his community and family were truly extraordinary. Vale Nick Lalich.

MRS LAN PHUONG TRAN

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I recognise a remarkable community member whose extraordinary journey from refugee to influential advocate has made a lasting impact on many lives. Following the Fall of Saigon in 1975, Mrs Lan Phuong Tran embarked on a perilous voyage in search of freedom. She survived pirate attacks, horrific violence, and the harsh refugee camp before arriving in Australia on 14 February 1982. Driven by her firsthand experiences and gratitude for Australia, Mrs Tran has devoted herself to supporting fellow refugees and continues to be a strong advocate for inclusive policies to strengthen Australia's growing multicultural community. She goes above and beyond her role as a social worker, delivering support that spans settlement assistance, social welfare, advocacy for victims of domestic violence, and promoting education as a pathway to integration into Australian society. Besides, Mrs Tran has been a proactive contributor to the Vietnamese Women's Association and the Vietnamese-Australian Women's Forum, supporting social and cultural welfare for women of Vietnamese heritage. Mrs Tran's selfless dedication and courage continue to inspire. I thank her for her lifelong community service and commend her ongoing efforts in driving impactful social change.

MS VINH XUAN TRAN

Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)—I recognise Ms Vinh Xuan Tran for her selfless dedication and exceptional service to the Vietnamese community in my Cabramatta electorate and beyond. Arriving in Australia as a refugee from Vietnam in 1991, Ms Tran is an invaluable member of her community. Despite personal hardships, she finds purpose in helping others, particularly vulnerable women and the elderly. For many years, Ms Tran has volunteered with the Vietnamese Community in NSW Association, the Vietnamese Women's Association, and the Vietnamese-Australian Women's Forum. Her contributions are especially notable through her role managing the canteen at the Vietnamese Community Cultural Centre in Bonnyrigg since its early days. Deeply connected to her roots, Ms Tran actively participates in cultural and historical commemorations, supporting her community in honouring and preserving the rich traditions of Vietnamese heritage. Through her involvement in the Vietnamese-Australian Women's Forum, she strives to ensure her knowledge is shared and passed down to future generations. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Ms Tran for her remarkable contributions and commend her tireless efforts in preserving her cultural heritage, which will continue to inspire and enrich our multicultural society.

MAGGIE LEONARD

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Maggie Leonard, teacher at Corpus Christi Catholic High School, for being awarded a Certificate of Teaching Excellence in HSC Society & Culture at the Society and Culture Association's 2024 Society and Culture Awards evening held on 7 March 2025. Teachers such as Maggie are such an important part of our children's lives, helping them to achieve their best and leave school with the knowledge and confidence required to excel in their chosen field of endeavour. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Maggie on this wonderful achievement.

MADISON HOGG

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Madison Hogg, from Warilla High School, for participating in the prestigious World Skill Australia Hospitality

competition, late last year, where she competed against some of the top Hospitality students in the region and completed a variety of challenging tasks. Madison received a Certificate of Completion, alongside a Bronze Medallion, placing her among the top three competitors. The judges were particularly impressed with her skill, dedication, and overall performance. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Madison on this wonderful achievement.

KATE SHERRIFF

Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Kate Sherriff, from Warilla High School, for participating in the prestigious World Skill Australia Hospitality competition, late last year, where she competed against some of the top Hospitality students in the region and completed a variety of challenging tasks. Kate earned a Certificate of Completion, with the judges praising her performance and professionalism throughout the competition. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Kate on this wonderful achievement.

BUDGEWOI PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Budgewoi Public School for its outstanding accomplishments in mathematics. This recognition follows the school's inclusion in a recent Grattan Institute report, which highlighted exceptional schools that are excelling in nurturing strong mathematics skills and fostering a love of learning. Budgewoi Public School distinguishes itself not only through its unwavering commitment academic excellence but also through its innovative approach to improving educational outcomes. The school has demonstrated remarkable success in creating an environment where students are empowered to thrive and excel in learning. It is crucial that we continue to recognise and support schools like Budgewoi Public School that are leading the charge in transforming maths education. I congratulate the staff, students, and the school community for their hard work and commitment to excellence.

ISSAC BOAG

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Issac Boag 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. Issac was awarded State Champion in the U19 2x1km Beach Run alongside Tye Worell. 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 Issac 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.

KALEAH KINGSTON

Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Kaleah Kingston 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. Kaleah placed first in the U17 Ski Relay and received a silver medal in the Open Taplin alongside Eliza Johnson, Katy Rees and Xanthe Calov. 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 Kaleah 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.

12 HOUR MARATHON FOR LOVE YOUR SISTER

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—Congratulations to Darren Crispin for his nine months of dedication and hard work in planning a 12-hour challenge to raise funds for charity, Love Your Sister. This event was held on the courts at Junction Hill Tennis Club on Saturday April 5 with a fun-filled marathon of alternating games of tennis and pickleball. Darren had the support of so many from the local community who have been there alongside him every step of the way. Once Darren chose the charity Love Your Sister, actor Samuel Johnson, who

co-founded the charity, later confirmed that he would be there in Junction Hill for the event. Samuel joined Darren and the many participants of the event on the courts throughout the day for some great games. Darren had a goal to raise \$2000 but his efforts far exceeded this as it was revealed his incredible efforts had helped to raise \$20,000, a remarkable achievement indeed. Well done to Darren and the local community who helped make this a really enjoyable and special event. What an outstanding effort also from the many local businesses who donated and sponsored the event.

CHRIS CONNORS – SUNSHINE SUGAR

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge and thank Mr Chris Connors who is stepping down as CEO of Sunshine Sugar after an extraordinary 17 years of leadership and a career spanning more than five decades in the Australian sugar and mining industries. Chris Connors has made an indelible mark on the sugar industry, particularly here in New South Wales, where he has led the only 100% Australian-owned raw and refined sugar manufacturer through times of great transformation and challenge. Under his leadership, Sunshine Sugar achieved international Bonsucro certification, pioneered Low GI sugar with patented nucane technology, and played a central role in the recovery of the business following the devastating 2022 floods. Chris is known not just for innovation and strategy, but for his commitment to the values of teamwork, integrity, safety, and excellence. He has built strong relationships with growers and the community, always leading with professionalism and purpose. On behalf of the people of the Clarence electorate and the broader Northern Rivers region, I thank Chris Connors for his service and legacy. His leadership has helped secure the long-term sustainability of an iconic Australian industry. We wish him every happiness in his next chapter.

FIRE AND RESCUE NSW SOUTH GRAFTON 307

Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)—I would like to acknowledge and thank two of Fire and Rescue NSW South Grafton 307 branch members for their outstanding efforts and involvement with Fire and Rescue NSW. During a recent drill night there was some well-deserved recognition for two amazing on call Firefighters. Captain Kenneth (Paul) Danvers, who received his Long Service and Good Conduct Medal - 2nd clasp for over 30 years of service with Fire and Rescue NSW. Firefighter Jonathan Lodge, who received his National Service Medal for 15 years of service with Fire and Rescue. I would like to thank you, Paul and Jonathon, for your service and commitment to your community and also to your crew. Thanks must go not only to yourselves, but to your family and support network who allow you to give so much of your time and attention to help the wider community. Well done to you both and keep up the fantastic work, we all appreciate you and your team.

LEGAL AID CELEBRATES ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY

Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise the significant, sustain and valuable work achieved over the past 10 years, by the Port Macquarie office of Legal Aid. Solicitor in charge, Ms Cody Baxter notes that during this time, Legal Aid has provided an astonishing 75 000 services to people in the Port Macquarie region. Of these, over 4 000 have been support services to victims of domestic violence. Legal Aid provides essential services to people who are unable to afford a lawyer. The work done by this service is critical to keeping women safe from violence when applying for or amending Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders. Advice is given to people seeking assistance on a variety of problems, from driving under the influence of alcohol, drug possession charges, child custody or parenting issues, managing rent or mortgage problems, or social housing. Providing this high-quality, accessible, legal support assists individual, families and the wider community in times of personal need. I praise Cody's ongoing commitment to supporting First Nations people in our region, ensuring they have access to justice and legal support. I celebrate and thank Legal Aid for a decade of outstanding service.

PORT MACQUARIE MUSEUM

Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)—I rise today to congratulate the Port Macquarie Museum on the amazing achievement of being awarded a Bronze award in cultural tourism at the recent Australian Tourism Awards. Following its Gold award in the NSW Tourism awards in 2024, the museum was nominated for the National Tourism awards in March 2025. This is an exceptional acknowledgement for this regional museum, which is completely managed and staffed by a team of dedicated volunteers. This award recognises the prolonged effort, which has been sustained over many years, to continually improve the preservation of its collections and displays, to ultimately ensure that the story of our regional history will endure. The museum has previously won regional tourism awards, however the step up to the State Gold award in 2024, and now the Australian Tourism Award for cultural tourism is indeed a spectacular achievement! I heartily congratulate the museum's curator Debbie Sommers, the Executive committee and all the volunteers who work tirelessly at the museum. The museum is a precious asset for Port Macquarie. It is of interest to locals visiting its everchanging stories and collections of our area and to visitors exploring our heritage trail.

THE BAKED PICKLES TAKE ON THE WORLD!

Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)—I rise to recognise an incredibly skilled group of young people with a very unlikely name, The Baked Pickles! These inspiring students from Port Macquarie-Hastings Secondary College (Port Macquarie Campus) have reached the World Youth Robotics competition in Texas, USA. The Team is comprised of 8 students; Isaac Barry, Rex Reeve, Oskar Morris, Oscar Medcalf, Xavier Kelly-Walsh, Tom, Isaac Lavis and Frida Aaso, all skilfully mentored by science, technology, engineering and mathematics [STEM] teachers, Ryland O'Connell and Warren Reynolds. I congratulate The Baked Pickles, who late last year defeated 70 teams from schools across Australia, to qualify to compete against more than 160 of the World's best. It is a nerve-racking and exciting time, but the students have invested hundreds of hours fine-tuning their designs and coding to prepare for this challenge. Teams rely on problem solving and collaboration to tackle complex tasks within a set time. They must also present a real-world application. In this instance they have developed a purpose-built device for boats which detects and responds when a person falls overboard, by releasing a life jacket and emergency beacon. May all your hard work bring richly deserved results.

BEN MILES, GRADUATE OF CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to congratulate all the individuals from Charles Sturt University who graduated on April 8. Graduation day is always a significant milestone, and I had the privilege of witnessing the next generation of graduates as they take their steps towards a brighter future. One student who really stood out was Ben Miles, Bachelor of Nursing graduate, and a previous student from James Fallon High School. Ben began his academic pathway through TAFE, completing several subjects that counted toward a Nursing Degree, demonstrating his commitment to both education and personal growth. Ben was honoured with the National Mental Health Pathways to Practice Scholarship (Foundation Scholarship), awarded by Charles Sturt University. This scholarship will help Ben's passion for pursuing a career in mental health nursing. To Ben, and all the other graduates, all the best as you embark on the next chapter of your journey. I have no doubt that you will go on to make a real difference in your chosen endeavours.

FAREWELL TO MULWALA'S BELOVED MECHANIC – JOHN LEE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the outstanding career of Mr John Lee, Manager of Mulwala Auto Tyre & Marine, who has announced his retirement after an incredible 60 years in the motor industry, including 47 years of dedicated service to the Mulwala community. Mr. Lee, who turns 80 this July, has lived and breathed the motor vehicle trade. A true local icon, John has spent decades servicing and repairing all makes of cars, trucks, buses, boats, as well as working with tyres, batteries, and windscreens. His reputation as a boat specialist and a licensed vehicle tester for both Victoria and NSW. Beyond the tools and trade, John has always been about people. Known for his kindness, honesty, and willingness to help, he has built a loyal customer base who kept returning not just for his expertise, but for the man himself. While it's sad to see Mulwala Auto Tyre & Marine close its doors, I thank Mr Lee for being a great mechanic, a true gentleman. I wish you every happiness and good health in your well-deserved retirement.

GIRLS ON FIRE – EMERGENCY SERVICE

Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)—I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Year 9 and Year 10 students from Albury High school, Billabong High School, and home-schooled students who participated in the "Girls on Fire" program in collaboration with Albury PCYC. The 21 students had an incredible opportunity to visit Thurgoona Rural Fire Brigade where they engaged in various hands-on activities. These included trying on firefighting gear, using fire blankets learning essential skills to act as first responders during emergencies or natural disasters. This invaluable experience not only provided them with crucial knowledge but also opened the door to potential future careers in emergency services, particularly Fire and Rescue. One of the most inspiring moments of the program came when students had the chance to hear from experienced female firefighters. Their personal stories were nothing short of inspiring, and for some students, firefighting is a proud family tradition, with parents, grandparents, and other relatives serving in this vital role. I thank everyone who made the "Girls on Fire" program possible, including the dedicated staff, volunteers and mentors from Albury PCYC and Thurgoona Rural Fire Brigade.

MANLY ELECTORATE SURF LIFE SAVING VOLUNTEERS

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Over the Easter weekend, our surf lifesavers faced incredibly challenging conditions along the coast, responding to holiday crowds amidst abnormally large swells and extreme heat. Tragically, it became the worst drowning period in NSW history for an Easter holiday. Across NSW, more than 150 people were rescued and the Westpac Lifesaver Rescue Helicopter undertook 30 critical missions. In the face of this, the dedication of our local surf life saving volunteers in the Manly electorate, and across the state, was nothing short of extraordinary. To the members of Dee Why, North Curl Curl, South Curl Curl, Freshwater,

Queenscliff, North Steyne and South Steyne Surf Life Saving Clubs – thank you. Your tireless efforts ensured that, despite the dangerous conditions, no lives were lost between the flags on our beaches. I also acknowledge the work of Surf Life Saving NSW, who coordinated operations and provided vital support throughout. The physical and emotional toll on volunteers was significant following each day of intense patrolling. Yet, our volunteers continued to show up – protecting lives, supporting one another, and exemplifying the meaning of community service. Your commitment, courage, and care saved lives, and our community is deeply grateful.

MANLY ELECTORATE 2025 ANZAC DAY SERVICES

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—Mr Speaker, this ANZAC Day, thousands of locals across the Manly electorate braved wet weather conditions to pay their respects to those who have served and sacrificed for our nation. It was a moving reminder that the ANZAC spirit continues to live strongly within our community. I want to particularly acknowledge the outstanding Dawn Services hosted by Dee Why RSL, Balgowlah RSL Memorial Club, and the Northern Beaches Council at Manly, as well as the commemorative service at Harbord Diggers led by the Harbord RSL Sub-Branch. Each service was a powerful and respectful tribute, made possible by the tireless work of volunteers, veterans, local organisations, and community groups. It was heartening to see people of all ages gathering in silence and reflection, united in their appreciation for our servicemen and women. The strong turnout despite the weather is a testament to the enduring legacy of the ANZACs and the deep respect held across the Northern Beaches for our veterans.

MANLY ELECTORATE SCHOOLS SUPPORT SYDNEY CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)—I rise to recognise the incredible generosity of students, families and educators from 9 schools across the Manly electorate who, together, have contributed to raising over \$177,000 in support of the Sydney Children's Hospitals Foundation. These schools are: St Luke's Grammar School Dee Why, NBSC Mackellar Girls Campus, NBSC Freshwater Senior Campus, Stella Maris College, Manly West Public School, Manly Village Public School, Seaforth Public School, Seaforth Kindergarten, and Arabanoo OOSH - Balgowlah Heights Public School. From bake sales to colour runs, these school communities have shown outstanding commitment to helping sick and injured children across New South Wales. The Foundation supports the Sydney Children's Hospitals Network, ensuring every child receives world-class care - no matter where they live or what they're facing. To every student, parent and teacher involved, thank you. Your compassion, energy and generosity should be commended, and I know that I speak on behalf of the Manly area when I say how proud we are of your efforts.

MOOREFIELD BOWLS KOGARAH CLUB

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)—I would like to commend the efforts of Moorefield Bowls Kogarah club in supporting men's mental health in the local community. On the 18th of March, the club hosted a fundraiser for Mongrels Men, a charity organisation dedicated to preventing, controlling and reducing the occurrence and impact of suicide and mental health illnesses and disorders impacting Australian men. The organiser of this event was Mel Olsen whose father, Paul 'Ando' Anderson, was a dedicated member of the club but had experienced struggles in mental health and had recently passed away. This event was hosted in Paul's honour, as well as former club members Jamie and Clark. We are reminded every day not only how precious our loved ones are but also how invisible their pain can often be. The event included a sausage sizzle, barefoot bowls, a jumping castle, men's haircuts, and auction with a range of prizes. I am proud of both Mel Olsen and the Moorefield Bowls Kogarah club for their efforts for men's mental health.

SANS SOUCI SEA DEVILS

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)—I rise today to recognise the outstanding success of the Sans Souci Sea Devils' 2025 Summer Carnival, held on February 14 and 15 at the Sans Souci Leisure Centre. This vibrant event brought together over 300 swimmers from 32 clubs across Sydney, showcasing the incredible talent and dedication of young athletes aged 5 to 20. The carnival was a thrilling celebration of competitive swimming, with numerous meet records broken and countless personal bests achieved. The event's success was made possible by the tireless efforts of the Sea Devils' committee, led by President Helen Evans, as well as the invaluable support of parents, volunteers, and local businesses. Their contributions, from officiating to providing raffle prizes, ensured the carnival ran smoothly and inspired a true sense of community spirit. The Sans Souci Sea Devils continue to foster a culture of excellence, sportsmanship, and camaraderie, making their Summer Carnival a highlight of Sydney's swimming calendar. Congratulations to all involved for another unforgettable event.

FRED POOLE – BAYSIDE MEN'S SHED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)—I would like to take this opportunity to recognise Mr Fred Poole for his enormous contribution as President of the Bayside Men's Shed. After over a decade at the shed, Mr Poole continues to show what a dedicated, understanding and easy-going person he is. Fred has worked tirelessly over the years alongside a team of hard-working volunteers, having accomplished several projects that have benefited our community. Just last year, Fred was challenged to build a musical sounds board for St. Francis Xavier's Catholic Primary School in Arncliffe. Fred's imagination and creativity made for a wonderful final product which was an instant success with the students. Not only was Fred named 'Shedder of the Year 2024', an award presented to him by the Hon. Chris Minns MP, Premier of New South Wales, but he was most recently named 'Bayside's 2025 Citizen of the Year' at the 2025 Australia Day Citizenship Ceremony. These accolades are a testament to Fred's ongoing effort, exceptional skills and kind nature. I extend my most sincere congratulations and thanks to Mr Poole for his outstanding work and contributions at the Bayside Men's Shed.

KNIT2GETHER – THE YEAR SO FAR

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate and thank Linda Pritchard and the entire team from Knit2gether. They have certainly achieved a great deal over the last year and I would like to update the house on the progress they have made. Knit2gether is a group of local residents who meet together every month, making all sorts of knitted goods which go directly to those in need. Currently, they are a group of just over 70, meeting at Oatley Uniting Church. So far this year, they have already made a real difference, donating almost 2,000 Back to School items to Riverwood Public School in January alone. They have also collected essential men's toiletries for The Wayside Chapel in February and in March, gathered socks and bras to support homeless women across Sydney, many of whom lack access to basic essentials. The generosity and commitment of Linda and the Knit2gether team truly exemplify the best of our local area. Their compassion, creativity, and hard work do not go unnoticed. I look forward to visiting them again very soon!

LITTLE LEGS GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I rise to congratulate the Little Legs Foundation, a local organisation based in Riverwood that recently set a Guinness World Record! The record was set for "Most people playing Monopoly in a single venue" on March 30, 2025, at The Venue in Alexandria, with 918 participants. The Little Legs team absolutely smashed the previous record of 733. I attended the event with my wife, Adla two boys, James and Sammy, which was an absolutely privilege. The event was a fundraising and awareness initiative in memory of Alegra Vasiliou, a six-year-old who passed away from brain cancer in 2017. The Little Legs Foundation has raised over \$2.83 million for childhood brain cancer research in Alegra's memory. Each and every single participant played Alegra's special Hasbro-licensed version of Monopoly – the "Alegra's Army" edition, which was very moving. I would like to congratulate the board members on this success, including Sue-Ellan Vasiliou, Anthony Mathews, Chris Demertze, Kathy Chiotis, Phillip Gakadellis, Dr. Helena Gawlinska, and Con Kouzoukas. I would also like to recognise my Parliamentary Colleague and Minister for Finance, Courtney Houssos MLC, who joined us on the day.

MT LEWIS PIZZERIA OPENS IN SOUTH HURSTVILLE

Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)—Speaker, I would like to recognise Jason Tarraf and the team from Mt Lewis Pizzeria, who have recently opened a brand-new store in South Hurstville along King Georges Road. This exciting new spot brings a fusion of traditional Italian and Lebanese flavours to our local food scene, offering everything from classic pizzas to authentic manoush and Middle Eastern dishes. Many locals may have already seen their unique approach to social media, using platforms like Tik Tok and Instagram to build a strong following. There is no doubt that this location will open to great fanfare! Small businesses are the key drivers of our local economy, and it is always so great to see new businesses popping up in the St George area. I will always encourage locals to shop and eat local and I would encourage everyone to support local businesses when they can. I wish them all the very best of luck with their new venture and I look forward to trying some delicious pizza with my family very soon!

ILLAWARRA WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS

Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)—Congratulations to PhysioHealth & Sports Injury Clinic in Corrimal for their exceptional success at the 2025 Illawarra Women in Business Awards, taking home an impressive five awards – a true testament to their leadership, innovation, and impact in the local health sector. The clinic was named Best Business, recognising its outstanding service, community connection, and professional excellence. Founder and

Director Kylie Moffitt was honoured with two major individual awards: Business Woman of the Year and the Innovative Business Award, celebrating her visionary leadership and forward-thinking approach to allied health. Further recognising the strength of their team, Jess McGuinness received the Outstanding Executive Employee award, while Abby Wallace was named Outstanding Employee – both celebrated for their professionalism, dedication, and excellence in patient care. This clean sweep is a reflection of the clinic's dynamic culture, strong female leadership, and commitment to delivering high-quality physiotherapy and injury rehabilitation services to the Illawarra community. Congratulations to Kylie and the entire PhysioHealth team – your hard work and passion are inspiring, and your achievements are well deserved.

DUNGAY PUBLIC SCHOOL STAFF TAKE ON HONG KONG

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—Congratulations to the seven staff members from Dungay Public School who recently undertook a self-funded trip to Hong Kong to engage in two days of focused observation and learning at Hong Kong International School [HKIS]. The purpose of the visit was to deepen their understanding of explicit teaching practices in Reading, Writing, and Numeracy. Across the two days, they participated in 12 structured learning walks across various year levels, observing a range of classroom environments and pedagogical approaches. The visiting team included: Judi Ryan – Kindergarten; Joshua Baker – Year 1/2; Rebecca Summersford – Year 3/4; Mel Renshaw – Year 5/6; James Simpson – Music; Lauren Ambrose – APC&I (Assistant Principal Curriculum & Instruction); Joshua Stephens, Principal. This initiative stemmed from Principal Joshua's experience at HKIS, where he completed a one-year contract as Associate Principal in the Upper Primary School in 2023-2024. Since returning to Dungay Public School, Joshua says it's clear that his staff's strategic directions, particularly in Reading and Numeracy, mirror many of the same high-quality teaching practices at HKIS. The visit served as a source of new ideas and an affirmation that teachers' current work is aligned with best practice on a global scale.

FRIENDS OF TENTERFIELD AERODROME (FOTA) MAKING PROGRESS

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I Wish to congratulate Friends of Tenterfield Aerodrome Incorporated President Rob Evans and his team on great progress they are making to upgrade the aerodrome with support from the local community. Rob kindly emailed me FOTA's newsletter detailing the latest grant-funded works in progress or complete. These included the fauna-proof perimeter fence (NSW Clubgrants) installed by John Claydon and team with John donating the cost of his labour, enclosed-cab tractor and a 5-metre-wide flail mower (NSW Clubgrants), kitchen (Fire to Flourish) and ablutions block (Fire to Flourish). Alan Kneale Electrical has completed the major electrical work to connect the solar power system across the infrastructure and provide apron lighting and power at the fuel facility. Tenterfield Rotary Club donated a barbecue and provided lunch for FOTA volunteers during a rock picking working bee. Barry Bicknell donated a workbench for use in the machinery shed. FOTA thanked DTB Fabrications, Tableland Surveys, Darryl McCarthy, SeeCivil, Bruce Lyons Mechanical, Alford and Duff, Clifford Tyre Services, Grant Townes Haulage and the Townes Group for their ongoing support. Bec Luxford's Gourmet Drovers food van has also been donating \$1 from the sale of each chicken burger to FOTA.

SUNSHINE SUGAR CEO CHRIS CONNORS STEPS BACK

Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)—I wish to pay tribute to sugar industry leader Chris Connors, who last month announced that he was stepping back after 17 years as Chief Executive Officer of Sunshine Sugar. Chris can be extremely proud of his time at the helm of the nation's only 100-per-cent Australian-owned raw and refined sugar manufacturer. In a media release, Chris Connors said there are a lot of programs the organisation had introduced to deliver longer-term sustainability. "However, it is the base programs and policies that deliver the results," he said. "Continuous improvement, safety and cultural change programs detailed in our Strategic Business Plan, are underpinned by the values developed by our people – teamwork, integrity, excellence, accountability and safety." Among many milestones was leading the business recovery following catastrophic flooding in 2022 across all three cane growing regions of New South Wales and unprecedented damage at the Broadwater and Condong sugar mills. This culminated in a successful application for a \$12.6 million grant under the Anchor Grant scheme, which I strongly supported. It is expected that the search for a successor will take several months followed by a transition period. I wish Chris and his family well.

RAMADAN EID BAZAAR FESTIVAL

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—The Ramadan Eid Bazaar Festival, held at the Whitlam Centre in Liverpool on 29th March 2025, has been a cherished tradition for the past 16 years, marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan with joy, unity and cultural celebration – and 2025 was no exception! With over 10,000 attendees, the festival created a lively and inclusive atmosphere, featuring a vibrant mix of cultural

performances, delicious food, and local artisans displaying their crafts. The evening's official ceremony was a beautiful moment, bringing together people from all walks of life to celebrate shared values of respect, kindness, and community spirit. The Eid Bazaar is a wonderful way to mark the end of Ramadan and celebrate togetherness. It's events like this that highlight the best of multicultural Australia – where traditions are honoured, stories are shared and everyone feels welcome. I would like to commend the efforts of Multicultural Festivals Australia Inc. in organising this year's Ramadan Eid Bazaar Festival. Your hard work continues to strengthen and enrich the cultural landscape of our city and community.

ORTHODOX GOOD FRIDAY MASS – ST EUPHEMIA

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—On Friday, 18 April, I had the honour of joining the Orthodox Good Friday service at St Euphemia Greek Orthodox Church in Bankstown, alongside my colleagues Tony Burke MP and Deputy Mayor Karl Saleh. The sacred service, led with grace by Father Panagiotis Protosaltis, commemorated the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It was an evening filled with deep reverence, reflection, and heartfelt devotion. Through the powerful hymns, Scripture readings, and the moving procession of the Epitaphio, which symbolises Christ's body laid in the tomb, St Euphemia, together with thousands of parishioners, created an atmosphere of spiritual depth and unity. It was a powerful reminder of the strength of faith, tradition, and community in Bankstown. I would like to commend the clergy and the students at St Euphemia College for guiding the faithful with compassion and wisdom and the entire congregation for upholding the values of community, humility and prayer. Thank you to St Euphemia Orthodox Church for letting me be a part of such a sacred night. Wishing the Orthodox Christian community of Bankstown a blessed Easter season. Christos Anesti – Christ is Risen!

THE GALLIPOLI TURKISH CULTURAL FOUNDATION IFTAR

Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)—I was honoured to attend the annual Iftar Dinner hosted by the Gallipoli Turkish Cultural Foundation, an evening filled with warmth and generosity. The Iftar brought together people from all walks of life to break bread and celebrate the spirit of unity and togetherness that defines this Holy month. The evening featured heartfelt speeches, traditional Turkish hospitality, and a delicious meal that was shared among friends, families, and community leaders. I am grateful to the Gallipoli Turkish Cultural Foundation for their ongoing commitment to fostering harmony, inclusion, and dialogue between communities. It was wonderful to see the Turkish Australian community warmly welcoming people of all backgrounds to share in a meal that holds deep spiritual significance. These gatherings not only deepen our appreciation for one another's traditions but also highlight the strength that comes from our diversity. Ramadan is a time of reflection, compassion and connection, and this event embodies all those values. I extend my sincere thanks to the organisers, volunteers and everyone who made the night so special. It is events like these that make me proud to represent such a vibrant and inclusive community.

BROOKLYN KERSHAW

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I congratulate and commend Glenmore Park local and Regentville Public School student Brooklyn Kershaw on being selected for the prestigious 2025 Greater Western Sydney Junior Drama Ensemble. As part of the ensemble, Brooklyn will join fellow talented young performers from across Western Sydney to create and perform an original piece of theatre for the Lights Up Drama Festival which is scheduled to be held at the Joan Sutherland Centre next month. The process for Brooklyn's selection involved endorsements from her teachers and principal, which is a reflection and testament of her commitment, quality and skill as a performer. Brooklyn's talent was recognised in 2024 when she won the Evvy Walker Memorial Trophy at the Penrith City Speech and Drama Eisteddfod. I congratulate Brooklyn and wish her the very best for the 2025 Greater Western Sydney Junior Drama Ensemble and in all her future endeavours.

ST CLAIR HIGH SCHOOL - WORLD'S GREATEST SHAVE

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—I commend and congratulate St Clair High School students and staff for participating in this year's World's Greatest Shave to raise funds in support of The Leukemia Foundation. The Leukemia Foundation supports Australians living with blood cancer and their families, while investing in research. In particular, I recognise students Lenny and Bayley who had their heads shaved in support of this important initiative. Today, there are approximately 150,000 families facing blood cancer, and on average 17 Australians lose their life each day from blood cancer. All participants in the World's Greatest Shave helped fuel real, tangible change in the fight towards a blood cancer free future. I thank and commend all St Clair High School students and staff involved in the World's Greatest Shave.

INTERNATIONAL GUIDE DOGS DAY

Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)—30 April 2025 marked International Guide Dogs Day, an opportunity to raise awareness of the important role Guide Dogs play in assisting individuals who are blind or have low vision to live independently. I commend and thank all individuals in my electorate of Badgerys Creek who conducted an important role in the training of the Guide Dogs so that the Guide Dogs may support the independent living of people who are blind or have low vision. I commend and thank those who more broadly support people who are blind or have low vision, including via raising awareness of the issues they face. I also recognise those in my electorate of Badgerys Creek who are blind or have low vision and I wish them the very best in the future and trust that their Guide Dogs are assisting them with their quality of life.

EILEEN HILL CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)—It is with much pleasure that I congratulate Eileen Hill from Kingswood on her 100th birthday which she celebrated on the 19th April. It was also fitting to acknowledge this momentous milestone with a commemorative certificate. Eileen emigrated to Australia in 1981 to be closer to family after the passing of her husband. She also gave much back to community by volunteering with the Smith Family for over twenty years. The official 100th party was held at the Penrith Bowling Club, where family and friends travelled from as far as London and New Zealand to help Eileen celebrate in style. While Eileen was the second eldest of eight children her two remaining siblings brother Doug age 98 and sister Shirley age 85 also attended the festivities. Eileen has two children, three grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren. Wishing you all the best Eileen at 100 years young.

BAY2BEACH EXPRESS

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—We would like to acknowledge Fantasea Cruising for launching the Bay2Beach Express, a weekend cruise service that connects the Northern Beaches and Eastern Suburbs. This new route allows locals and visitors to easily travel between Double Bay, Watsons Bay, and Manly, offering a scenic and stress-free alternative to driving. Bay2Beach Express is a wonderful way to explore everything our beautiful coastal communities have to offer. Thank you for helping bring our harbourside regions closer together.

HOLY CROSS PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMUNITY DAY

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—We would like to acknowledge Holy Cross Primary School in Woollahra for hosting their Community Day on March 22, bringing together families and local residents for a vibrant day of connection and fun. Attendees had the opportunity to meet their Principal, Kylie Brakel, explore the school's newly renovated facilities, and enjoy a variety of activities for the children. This event exemplifies the school's commitment to fostering a welcoming environment and strengthening community bonds. Thank you to everyone involved for creating such a joyful and inclusive experience.

COMMUNITY HEALTH SUPPORT AND NSW AMBULANCE

Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)—We would like to acknowledge Community Health Support [CHS] and NSW Ambulance for hosting a Family Day event on Sunday, April 6, in Dover Heights. This engaging and educational event provided community members of all ages with the opportunity to learn lifesaving skills, tour an NSW Ambulance, meet dedicated paramedics, and participate in activities such as crafts, face painting, and balloon art. CHS, a community-funded not-for-profit organization, is committed to empowering individuals with confidence in medical emergencies through advice, first response, training, and consulting services. Events like this Family Day exemplify their dedication to enhancing community well-being and preparedness.

THE WHICH WAY? QUIT PACK

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—The Which Way? Quit Pack pilot program is an Indigenous-led intervention program tackling smoking and vaping, the leading preventable cause of chronic disease and preventable death for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Developed by a Newcastle research team, which includes Charlestown electorate local and Wiradjuri man Kayden Roberts-Barker, the program will go national after being awarded a \$4.7m Medical Research Future Fund Indigenous Health Research grant through the National Health and Medical Research Council. Working under the leadership of Associate Professor Michelle Kennedy of the Hunter Medical Research Institute's Equity in Health and Wellbeing program, Kayden and his fellow research team members are building on existing research to evaluate the impact of the innovative intervention for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adolescents and adults. They have already supported more than a thousand Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to quit smoking and vaping in NSW, Victoria and the ACT through the pilot Which Way? programs, and I am sure the expansion of the program will make a big

difference in tackling this difficult and importance issue. Congratulations to Kayden, Assistant Professor Kennedy and her team.

SURF LIFE SAVING

Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)—Sunday 27 April marked the end of the official surf lifesaving season. I want to offer a heartfelt thank you to our incredible volunteer lifesavers for your dedication, time, and courage. Your service keeps our beaches safer and our communities stronger. Enjoying a swim at the beach is a way of life for so many Australians, especially in the Charlestown electorate. Without the work of those lifesavers, and the countless people supporting them from the sidelines, it just wouldn't be possible. My thanks to the many trainers, assessors, facilitators, rescue services team members, call out team members, coaches, officials and every volunteer who showed up to keep beaches around my local area and across NSW safe—with a special thank you to those who live in the Charlestown electorate. As we head into the cooler months, it is important remember that beach safety is important year-round, always check conditions before entering the water, never swim alone, stick to patrolled areas when possible, and stay on the safe side If you're unsure. We can all do our part to stay safe at the beach and support our surf life savers.

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)—It was a real pleasure to attend Dementia Australia's Hunter Memory Walk & Jog at the Warners Bay Foreshore on Wednesday 2 April. The Memory Walk & Jog is an initiative aimed at raising funds which then go on to support counselling programs, education, support lines and even research into a cure for dementia. Dementia is one of Australia's biggest health challenges, with 433,300 Australians living with dementia. In the Charlestown electorate, around 1,595 people are currently living with dementia. The events are designed with the whole community in mind, helping people of all fitness levels to get involved: they can walk, jog, or run the full course, or complete shorter distances. Even dogs are welcome to join in! It was inspiring to see so many locals come together to get active for brain health and support those living with dementia. With around 685 participants and over \$82,400 raised, the event was a fantastic reminder of what our community can achieve when we come together. A big thank you to Dementia Australia for hosting such a meaningful event! I look forward to future Memory Walk & Jogs.

SEASONS OF NEW ENGLAND EXPO

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the Seasons of New England on hosting their 11th annual expo weekend in Uralla recently. This event showcases and celebrates producers, makers, creators and musicians from the New England, having over 160 exhibitors and 5,500 people attending each day. The event draws from every industry, supporting businesses producing products made within the New England. I congratulate Tara & Andrew Toomey, founders and the driving force behind the expo, along with their family, Jacob, Helena, Greg and Lynn McClenhan. Each member has generously given their time and support year after year. Thank you to all involved, with this truly being a team effort - whether through employment or those who volunteer, with Seasons of New England in turn making a donation in lieu of hours, to their chosen organisation. Special thanks to the people of Uralla for continually supporting the expo with good will and a warm Uralla welcome. I commend all involved in this event, for their foresight, hard work and commitment to the New England region, as well as giving of their expertise and generosity of time, ensuring the expo is a success and an enjoyable experience for the whole community.

CONGRATULATIONS CRUMP STOCK & STATION AGENCY

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise Bingara locals Damien and Sarah Crump, owners of Crump Stock & Station Agency on winning RateMyAgents 2025 Agency of the Year Award, along with Sarah being named the winner of the Agent of the Year Award. These awards recognise Australia and New Zealand's top real estate professionals, being the only award where customer satisfaction is the cornerstone of the selection criteria. I congratulate Damien and Sarah on the achievements of their family business since its inception in 2020. Such an honour exemplifies the high level of customer service provided to their clients, associates and the community. Thank you also to staff member Jayne Roberts, for her support and contribution to the success of this dependable local business. I commend Damien and Sarah on their hard work, commitment and excellence of service to Bingara, Warialda and to the surrounding districts. This is an impressive accomplishment – well done!

AIRLIE MERINO STUD

Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)—I recognise the achievements of Walcha's Airlie Merino Stud, for taking out the Supreme Merino Exhibit at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. This is indeed a

prestigious honour, with the competition recognising produce that has achieved the highest level of quality. I congratulate stud owners Murray and Michelle Power on this inspiring win, which came at the back of winning the national pair event. The stud bred duo Airlie 20022 and 20029 were up against ten August-shorn pairs, with judgement coming down to Airlie's superior bulk and size. Such success comes at the back of long-term dedication and expertise, seeing Airlie achieve similar accolades previously, including at the show, being twice the most successful Poll Merino exhibitor; winner of Otway Faulkner Cup for best exhibit of 5 Poll Merinos; and in 2014, champion and reserve champion for their fine medium wool poll rams. I commend Murray and Michelle on their commitment to breeding well balanced sheep that meet the requirements of the wool and meat industries and commend their valuable contribution to Australian agriculture. The win catapults the ram and ewe to the Australian Sheep and Wool Show, and we wish them every success.

MARK WORRELL

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—Mark Worrell is a committed member of the Terrey Hills community who has volunteered at local Rural Fire Brigade for over 10 years. Mark joined Terrey Hills Rural Fire Brigade in 2013 and has recently received his Long Service Medal. He is the current Secretary of the Brigade and often responds to emergency calls at all hours of the day. Following the call to help during the Black Summer Bushfires, Mark bravely worked on the ground to put out fires which helped to save lives and homes. In 2022, Mark volunteered to go to Lismore to help the community recover from the catastrophic floods. Mark received the Premier's Bush Fire Emergency Citation and the National Emergency Medal for his service during some of the worst times for communities in our state. The dedication Mark shows to both Terrey Hills and other communities in need is admirable, his commitment to help others when they are in the worst situations is something we can all strive to do. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Mark for helping keep our Pittwater community safe and thank his family, Brigade and the Terrey Hills community for supporting his service.

ROWLAND G SCHULTZ

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—Rowland G Schultz is a Pittwater guitarist and poet with excellent artistic talent. Rowland was accepted into Newtown Performing Arts High School and the Conservatorium for his talents playing flamenco guitar which he specialised in for over 18 years. Rowland then released his debut album in 2010 at The Basement which was very popular and led him to perform as a busker. Following an accident in 2015, Rowland struggled to play his guitar. Through years of perseverance, Rowland has started to play again and has recently purchased a French acoustic steel string guitar to add to his fantastic collection. Rowland currently works to write poems and rhymes about the things he is passionate about and has applied for funding to help further his artistic career. Rowland has recently released a collection of 202 original poems and rhymes through various platforms which I have enjoyed listening to very much. I would like to encourage Rowland in his artistic endeavours and thank him for continuing Pittwater's artistic legacy by creating wonderful music, poems and rhymes.

KARLA ROTHPLETZ-TATT

Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)—Karla Rothpletz-Tatt is a dedicated community member who runs the Elanora Heights Newsagency and Post Office. Karla has been the owner of this vital community resource for over 24 years. During this time, she has been a cornerstone of Elanora Heights and is passionate about creating a sense of community. For Karla the post office isn't just a business, it's a community hub where the elderly have easy access to important resources and where young families can come to take passport photos. Karla has also employed a number of the local community to support the services that the post office and newsagency offers. In addition to running the post office, Karla helps organise the Elanora Heights Christmas Markets. The markets are open to Pittwater vendors that provide delicious festive foods, gifts and activities. The markets are a local favourite and attract many people to the northern side of the beaches. I would like to thank Karla for all her hard work and dedication to her local community.

AFFINITY HOME IFTAR DINNER

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—On the 10th of March, my wife and I had the immense privilege of sharing an Iftar Dinner with the Agar family in Prestons – an experience made possible by the Affinity Intercultural Foundation. Stepping into their home, I was met with warmth, generosity, and the true spirit of Ramadan—a time of fasting, reflection, and community. Our gracious hosts, the Agar family, opened their hearts and home, treating an eclectic group of dinner guests to an evening of heartfelt hospitality. Running for many years, Affinity's Ramadan Home Iftar Dinners are more than just meals—they are moments of genuine connection. Sharing food, exchanging stories, and embracing the richness of different cultures remind us how much we have in common. It was an honour to be part of this tradition, experiencing firsthand the generosity and togetherness that define Ramadan.

LADIES LIKE TO LUNCH IWD

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—Not-for-profits like Ladies Like To Lunch are a heartbeat of our community, offering strength, support, and solidarity to women affected by cancer in South West Sydney. Their work is more than just assistance—it's about empowerment, creating a space where patients, caregivers, families, and friends can connect, heal, and inspire one another. This year's International Women's Day Celebration at Austral Bowling Club on the 10th of March was a testament to that mission. With laughter, friendship, and a touch of friendly competition with Camden Barefoot Bowls, the day brought together cancer warriors and their loved ones for a moment of joy and connection. Events like these remind us that while cancer can change a life, it does not have to define it. Through kindness, compassion, and community spirit, Ladies Like To Lunch continues to lift up those facing one of life's toughest battles. Their work ensures that no woman walks this journey alone—and for that, they deserve our deepest gratitude and unwavering support.

YOUTH AMPLIFIED PODCAST

Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)—It was a privilege to take part in Good Morning Macarthur's Youth Amplified podcast on March 11, joining Ronna and Brian, and hearing from incredible young voices like Kady, Juhi, and Trent. Our discussion focused on acceptance—what it means to us and how young people can use their voice to create change. While we share many commonalities across cultures, faiths, and backgrounds, acceptance is also about embracing individuality. Each of us brings something unique to the table, and when we see people for who they truly are, we build a world where everyone feels valued and included. And now, young people hold even greater power. The 35-and-under demographic is on the verge of becoming the largest voting bloc. The problems we face today—be it climate change, inequality, mental health—won't solve themselves. It's time for young people to stand up and speak out. Your voice matters. Don't wait for permission. Don't wait for someone else to lead. Step forward and make your mark. The future is yours to shape.

MELODIES FOR MELANOMA

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—Congratulations to Paralympian Christie Dawes, NBN reporter Jane Goldsmith, Travel Guides stars Matt and Brett and Councillor Callum Pull on raising not only their voices but \$20,000 for Hunter Melanoma Foundation at the inaugural Melodies for Melanoma concert. Christie trained her musical muscles in her rendition of Pat Benatar's 'Hit Me With Your Best Shot'. Jane embraced her girlboss persona with Shania Twain's 'Man, I Feel Like A Woman'. Matt and Brett's took from their experiences 'round the world with Dead or Alive's 'You Spin Me Round'. And Councillor Pull brought it home with Neil Diamond's classic 'Sweet Caroline'. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in Australia, and early detection is the key to survival. Hunter Melanoma Foundation are an asset to my beachside community, offering free skin checks throughout the summer and educating all Novocastrians on how to prevent skin cancer. Let's see if next year's stars can top this massive \$20,000!

PROFESSOR GEORGE WILLIS

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—I want to commend George Willis, the University of Newcastle's Emeritus Professor, on being awarded the Thomas Ranken Lyle Medal by the Australian Academy of Science. This award is one of the top achievements for Australian scientists commends Mr Willis on his prestigious career within the mathematic field. Professor Willis' invention of 'the scale' and its function have introduced a deeper understanding of locally compact groups. His approach, now known as 'Willis Theory', has led to new research, understandings, and applications of topological algebra across the globe. Professor Willis was elected as Fellow to the Australian Academy of Science in 2014, an exclusive group of only 22 scientists from across the country. Congratulations Professor Willis on this monumental achievement.

MATILDAS IN NEWCASTLE

Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)—On April 6, the legendary CommBank Matildas dazzled Novocastrians in a sensational 2-0 victory over the Korea Republic in Newcastle. Affectionately known as 'the Tillies', the international friendly saw an incredible 28,019 people fill the McDonald Jones Stadium, eclipsing their previous 2021 attendance record against the United States Local superstars Emily van Egmond, Clare Wheeler, and Natasha Prior each made an appearance, making Newcastle proud with their sensational skills and professionalism. In addition to inspiring the next generation of female players in Newcastle, the match also had significant benefits for our local tourist sector, generating an estimated \$2.6 million for the Hunter region. It was a privilege to witness the team's relentless effort, determination and passion first hand, and I wish them all the best in their upcoming campaign.

AARON CARTER

Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)—I would like to commend nine-year-old Aaron Carter, a rising star of the East Hills Baseball Club. Aaron has shown outstanding commitment to the sport, playing every summer since the age of five. Starting in T-ball, he helped his team, the Astros, secure a premiership win last season. This year, Aaron stepped up to the challenge of machine-pitch baseball - also known as Zooka - for the first time. Demonstrating remarkable skill and teamwork, his team finished the season as runners-up, an impressive achievement for such a young group. Aaron's passion and dedication to baseball continue to grow with every game. His only request for a reward? A strawberry milkshake, a sweet reminder of the joy and personal reward that sport brings to our young athletes. I congratulate Aaron and look forward to following his journey in seasons to come. I also thank all the coaches, volunteers, umpires and his family for their guidance and support.

TAMIL ARTS AND CULTURE ASSOCIATION INC – SYDNEY CHITHIRAI FESTIVAL

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—Congratulations to the Tamil Arts and Cultural Association Inc on hosting the Sydney Chithirai Festival at Blacktown Leisure Centre on 4th May. The Sydney Chithirai Festival is a highlight in our Western Sydney community calendar. It celebrates the beginning of the Tamil New Year by showcasing vibrant displays of Tamil language, culture, and art. Now in its 13th consecutive year, more than 1500 individuals attended this celebration. Tamil communities from across the globe celebrate the Chithirai Festival. At home in Western Sydney, the Festival welcomed our Tamil community from India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji, South Africa and Mauritania. The Festival also welcomed our broader community, to learn and engage with Tamil culture. Through delicious cuisine, colourful stalls and captivating performances, we were immersed in Tamil culture – as though we'd travelled all the way to Colombo or Tamil Nadu. Congratulations to Karnan Chidambarabharathy, President, Anagan Babu, Secretary, and all the dedicated committee members, and volunteers at the Tamil Arts and Culture Association Inc for organising such a marvellous Chithirai Festival in Western Sydney. Thank you for your ongoing support for our Tamil-Australian community.

AAFA – 5-A-SIDE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITIES WORLD CUP

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On Saturday 19th April, I was pleased to address hundreds of Western Sydney locals at the 5th Annual 5-a-side Multicultural Communities World Cup Football Tournament and Community Festival, held at Wanderers Football Park, Bungarribee. Organised by the African Australian Football Association, more than 500 players, families and community members celebrated one of the most exciting and dynamic football community tournaments. Alongside the Annual NSW Multicultural World Cup also organised by AAFA, the 5-a-side Tournament is a very real display of what makes Prospect Electorate and Western Sydney such an amazing place to live, work and play. This year, 20 teams represented a rich tapestry of cultures, faiths and backgrounds on the pitch, in a competition that was also a celebration of diversity and unity. I was delighted to witness the power of football to bring us all together, watching from the sidelines and presenting medals to the winners. Congratulations to Mohammed Omar, Secretary, African Australian Football Association, and all Committee members for hosting this wonderful tournament. Thank you to all our amazing players, referees, fans and volunteers on writing another successful chapter in our proud and vibrant Western Sydney sporting culture.

CATHOLIC YOUTH PARRAMATTA – GOOD FRIDAY 2025

Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)—On 18th April, I was delighted to support Catholic Youth Parramatta and join their annual Good Friday Night Walk through Western Sydney. Part of the Diocese of Parramatta, CYP's mission is to equip young people with dynamic witness, training and events, connecting youth and young adults of Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains with the Catholic Church through quality programs and local youth groups. The Good Friday Night Walk is a solemn yet meaningful tradition, where more than 1,400 young people reflect on the passion of Christ through prayer, commemorating the sacrifice of Good Friday in a profound and communal way. Commencing at 9:00pm at St Patrick's Catholic Church, Blacktown, the 21-kilometre pilgrimage stopped at 6 Western Sydney churches and walked through Prospect Electorate. I was happy to serve alongside Bishop Vincent Long OFM Conv, Bishop of Parramatta and volunteers at St Anthony of Padua Catholic Church, Toongabbie, distributing refreshments to pilgrims, before joining the pilgrimage path to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, Wentworthville. Thank you to Bishop Long, Eleanor Bonwick Manager, Catholic Youth Parramatta, the Diocese MET and all pilgrims and parishioners on a wonderful display of faith, community and Easter spirit.

BJL WELDING AND FABRICATION

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Locally owned and operated family business BJL Welding and Fabrication, a structural and steel metalwork fabrication company based in Beresfield, is celebrating twenty years of business in 2025. BJL has been a National Champion Industrial Business Winner, Australian Small Business

Champion Awards Winner in 2023 and a Local Business Awards 2021 Winner. Director Brad Lloyd started BJL in his parents' backyard and from that time, the business has grown steadily, with a workforce increasing from four to twenty members. BJL prioritises transparency, meticulous preparation and exceptional craftsmanship. The business expanded into a larger shed at Redhead in 2007, eventually adding team members, a business manager, and investing in more training for the team. Brad wants BJL to be the best in the industry. He says that the foundation of the company's success is the value placed on clients and the team and future plans include expanding BJL's market share, innovating even more, putting customer satisfaction at the absolute forefront, investing in employee development and building an even stronger company culture. Congratulations on your first twenty years, BJL. May there be many more!

DARYL HOLMES

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—Daryl Holmes, 74, a local legend known for exceptional customer service and his jovial personality, is retiring after ten years at McDonald's Wallsend. As Customer Experience leader, Daryl was one of the oldest employees at the restaurant, though he inspired a new dining system that other McDonald's stores are starting to adopt. His final shift was Friday 11 April 2025. Originally from Bellingen, Daryl moved to Taree then Newcastle, working at BHP, ELCOM and in the disability sector. He retired in 2023 but needed a retirement hobby. Daryl's pastime became a passion. He was well-known for dressing up as Mr Monopoly in a vest and a black top hat emblazoned with the Golden Arches and for Big Mac themed McHappy Day costumes - and customers loved him. Daryl greeted and helped people use the self-serve kiosk, even serving their food. He duly won a national customer experience competition that saw him travel overseas for the first time. Daryl completed a lot of work for charity, especially for Newcastle's Ronald McDonald House. Daryl – thank you for your warmth, humour, and customer-first attitude. You will be missed.

PROFESSOR GEORGE WILLIS

Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)—In April 2025, University of Newcastle academic since 1992, Emeritus Professor George Willis, was awarded the Australian Academy of Science Thomas Ranken Lyle Medal, recognising outstanding achievement by a scientist in Australia for research in mathematics or physics. Among 22 scientists recognised by the Academy in 2025 for outstanding contributions, Professor Willis was elected as a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science in 2014. Early work focused on the theory of totally disconnected locally compact groups and now extends beyond theoretical mathematics, with potential applications in growing industries such as computer systems and global social networks. In years of achievement collaborating with international researchers, Professor Willis has ensured Australia is at the forefront of knowledge in pure mathematics. Driven by curiosity and "the explanatory power of maths" as a universal language, a way of communicating ideas, concepts and images in one's mind, Professor Willis understands that he is following in the footsteps of brilliant mathematicians over thousands of years. The problems he is working on are not all resolved, and he understands the need for continued research. Congratulations on receiving this prestigious award.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today, I acknowledge the remarkable work of the Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond and their impactful Domestic and Family Violence Campaign. Initiated in 2018, the campaign aims at raising awareness of domestic violence, implementing educational programs, and Supporting Families escaping Domestic and Family Violence. Their proactive approach to addressing Domestic and family violence by fostering successful partnerships with local businesses, clubs, government agencies, the police and not for profit organisations over the last six years has been outstanding. A key initiative of the campaign has been the "Purple T-shirt Fridays" where workers in businesses around Ballina Shire commit to wearing purple on Fridays. The T-shirts send a clear and visible message: 'No to domestic violence, yes to respectful relationships.' Local police reports indicate that there has been more reporting recorded in the past three years might suggest that greater awareness from the Club's campaigns is directly helping survivors and their children. I commend Dave and Robii Harmon, the brains behind the campaign for their dedication and oversight of the project and applaud Jodie Shelly, Tresse Heselwood, and all members of Ballina-on-Richmond Rotary Club for their support and commitment to the campaign.

BALLINA ALLSTARS ATHLETICS

Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)—Today I recognise Ballina Allstars Athletics for their comprehensive success at the Australian Athletics Junior Championships in Perth. Their exceptional results included performances from Ayla Kowalczyk, 14, who broke two Australian records in the long jump (4.18m) and 100m (14.43s) in the U15 T38 Women's division. Ayla won three silver medals altogether. Lexie Brown, 14, who has already been selected into the Australian Para team for the upcoming Para World Championships in New Delhi in September for the 200m, placed 7th in the Open Women's PA. Alexandra Dogan became the Australian Champion in the U15 Women's 2000m Steeplechase, winning gold in the lightning-fast time of 7:33. Other great

results included Oscar Levack becoming the eighth fastest boy in the U14 Boys' 400m in Australia. In the U17 Women's 2000m Steeplechase, Skye Dogan came fifth; Aaliyah Garang-Hall secured a bronze in the U15 Women's Discus; and Connor Legzdins won silver clearing 1.94m in the U17 Men's High Jump. It is wonderful to see such achievements and I applaud the commitment the club has shown to the development of this young, diverse group of athletes.

110TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—The 110th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide was marked on 24 April. It was moving to see the resilience and strength of the Armenian community at the Holy Mass and March to the Khachkar at Beauchamp Park in Chatswood, organised by the Armenian Apostolic Church of Holy Resurrection. That evening, the Armenian National Committee's commemoration at the Chatswood Concourse heard a powerful keynote address delivered by Mr Gegham Stepanyan, the former Human Rights Ombudsman of the now occupied Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh). These commemorations served as solemn reminders of the atrocities committed in 1915 and the ongoing injustices faced by the Armenian people, particularly following the displacement of the Artsakh population. In 2023, I had the privilege of visiting Armenia and was deeply moved by the courage, warmth, and steadfast spirit of its people amidst continuing hardship. The Willoughby community stands with our Armenian brothers and sisters, recognising their significant contributions to our society and reaffirming our commitment to truth, justice, and remembrance. We honour the memory of the victims and continue to advocate for recognition and justice.

ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS IN WILLOUGHBY

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—This year marked the 110th anniversary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli, a solemn occasion of remembrance and reflection for our nation. It was inspiring to see so many members of the Willoughby community come together at services across our area to honour the courage, sacrifice and enduring spirit of the men and women who have served Australia. The dawn services at the Chatswood Garden of Remembrance and at Willoughby Park were particularly moving, each marked by strong community spirit and solemn reflection. Both services were very well attended, demonstrating the deep respect and gratitude that lives on in our community for those who have served and sacrificed. I acknowledge and thank the Chatswood RSL sub-branch, the Willoughby Legion Ex-Services Club and Mr David Ross for their outstanding organisation and commitment to ensuring these important traditions are upheld. It is through commemorations such as these that we honour the memory of the fallen, pay tribute to all who have served, and ensure their legacy endures across generations. We will remember them. Lest we forget.

ST THOMAS CHURCH, WILLOUGHBY – POPE FRANCIS

Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)—The passing of Pope Francis has been deeply felt around the world, including here in our local Catholic community in Willoughby. I was moved to attend a votive Mass at St Thomas Catholic Church held for the repose of the late pontiff. It was a moving and dignified service that brought parishioners together in prayer, remembrance and gratitude. I thank the parish for its warm welcome and for providing this opportunity to honour such a significant spiritual leader. Pope Francis will be remembered for his humility, compassion, and his tireless advocacy for the poor, displaced and vulnerable. He called on the global community to show mercy, pursue justice, and care for our common home. His papacy reached across faiths and borders, reminding us of our shared humanity. I extend my sincere condolences to all those mourning his loss — especially the Catholic faithful across Willoughby. May Pope Francis' message of peace and service continue to guide us all. May he rest in eternal peace.

MAITLAND YOUTH WEEK 2025

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—I am proud to celebrate the outstanding achievements of our young people during Maitland Youth Week 2025, held from 9 to 17 April under the inspiring theme "I am... brave, kind, unstoppable". The week was marked by creativity and unity, as events empowered youth to explore art, sport and leadership. From the raucous cheers at Youth Week Live on 10 April, which lit up the Maitland Regional Art Gallery with unforgettable performances by teenage bands and solo artists, to the gleeful determination at the Learn to Skate sessions at Woodberry Skate Park on 12 April, where professional coaches guided budding skaters through tricks and safety drills, our youth showcased resilience and boundless enthusiasm. Environmentally conscious participants rolled up their sleeves on 17 April at the Youth Tree Planting event at Beryl Humble Sports Complex, combining art and conservation to nurture habitats for our endangered flying foxes. I applaud every volunteer, coach and mentor whose dedication ensured the success of Youth Week, and congratulate all participants on setting a standard of passion and engagement that will inspire our community for years to come.

MAITLAND AQUATIC CENTRE

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to the Maitland Aquatic Centre team for their unwavering commitment to community safety and wellbeing. In the 2025 Royal Life Saving Aquatic Facility Safety Assessment, the Maitland Aquatic Centre earned an impressive 99% safety rating—an improvement from last year's 98%—and maintained a 99% five-star Safety Partner Accreditation score. This rigorous 40-point assessment benchmarks facilities against Australian Standards - the national average safety score is 79%. This accomplishment reflects the dedication and professionalism of the aquatics team, led by Coordinator Suellen Goyne. With 38 years of experience in the industry, Suellen's leadership has been instrumental in fostering a culture of excellence and continuous improvement within our aquatic facilities. Beyond these impressive safety metrics, the Maitland Aquatic Centre continues to serve our community year-round, offering a range of programs including aqua-fitness classes and swim school sessions. These initiatives not only promote physical health but also ensure that residents of all ages and abilities can engage in safe and inclusive aquatic activities. Congratulations to Suellen and the entire aquatics team for their exemplary service. Their dedication ensures that our community can enjoy the benefits of these facilities with confidence and peace of mind.

TOTAL 60-YEAR GRADUATION

Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)—Congratulations to the 2025 graduating class of Tocal College, who this year completed their studies and also marked the institution's 60th anniversary. For six decades, Tocal College has been a cornerstone of agricultural education in New South Wales, shaping generations of skilled, innovative, and resilient professionals. This year, approximately 180 students graduated and are now equipped to contribute meaningfully to our state's agricultural sector - vital to our economy and communities. Among the 2024 graduates recognised for excellence were Hunter locals Michael Lynch of Millfield, named Dux of the Certificate III in Agriculture; Grace Lawrence of Rosebrook, Dux of the Certificate III in Horse Care; and Mariah Livingston of Stockrington, Dux of the Certificate IV in Agriculture. Their achievements exemplify the talent and dedication fostered at Tocal. Tocal College's commitment to accessibility and diversity is commendable, with over 60% of full-time enrolments in 2024 being female and more than 12% identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. I am proud to celebrate Tocal College's 60 years of excellence in agricultural education and commend the 2025 graduates. Their accomplishments not only honour the legacy of Tocal but ensure a vibrant future for agriculture in New South Wales.

KEEP AUSTRALIA BEAUTIFUL NSW

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—I would like to take this opportunity to thank Keep Australia Beautiful [KAB] NSW, located in Parramatta, for their outstanding work in protecting and improving the environment across our state. KAB NSW is an apolitical organisation that partners with local and state governments, industries, schools and communities to create a positive yet sustainable change. Their commitment to the environment is evident through their longstanding programs, including the Tidy Towns and Sustainable Cities awards, which have been celebrating the efforts of local communities, councils, businesses, and schools since 1981. KAB NSW's Annual Litter Congress demonstrates their commitment to a greener NSW which brings together experts to share successful projects, research and strategies for litter prevention and management. Alongside this Congress, their EnviroMentors is another vital initiative that provides sustainability education services to schools across the state, promoting environmental awareness and action among the next generation. I also note that the NSW Premier is an Honorary President who, in that role, hosts an annual charity dinner bringing together businesses, local governments and community groups. Their ongoing dedication to a cleaner, greener future for NSW is truly inspiring, and I am proud to support their efforts in our community.

PULSE ALIVE AT MELROSE PARK PUBLIC SCHOOL

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Melrose Park Public School for hosting a vibrant and truly memorable PULSE Alive event on Thursday, 20th March. The event witnessed students in Years 4-6 flawlessly execute a dance piece which was surely a treat to the eye – so well-rehearsed and coordinated. Dressed in a brilliant sea of blue, the students dazzled the audience as they danced to 'Dancing in the Street', performing with precision, confidence, and joy. The choreography was beautifully rehearsed, and the coordination displayed on stage was nothing short of exceptional. Despite the scorching heat during the full-day rehearsals, the students showed unwavering resilience, giving it their all with smiles on their faces. Their commitment and teamwork reflected the values that are held dear at Melrose Park Public. A huge thank you to all the dedicated staff members, especially Bianca Di Nicola for her hard work in leading this event and her exceptional choreography. I would also like to acknowledge Principal Nicole Doig for her ongoing support for the activity. Congratulations again to all the supportive families and the amazing students who made this event a success.

NSW YOUTH WEEK 2025

Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)—NSW Youth Week 2025 took place between 9 to 17 April providing an opportunity for young people across NSW to come together in their local communities. This year the themes were celebrating every young person's unique strength and recognising individual and collective power of our current and future influencers, leaders and decision makers. Youth Week 2025 coincided with school holidays when those aged 12 to 24 were able to share ideas and participate in organised activities, attend live events, perform, contribute to the community and compete. I proudly represent the second youngest electorate in New South Wales. During Youth Week I invited local students to meet with me to discuss enhancements to Parramatta to make the city more welcoming and cater to youth of all ages. Ideas included growing a youth music scene, improving street and park lighting and safe public spaces. While Parramatta has many great public spaces that are safe and inviting for youth to visit, including PHIVE, Parramatta Square and Junction St Plaza with parkour and outdoor courts there is more to do. I look forward to our active youth helping to shape the future.

BRENDA KENT

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today, I would like to acknowledge Brenda Kent for her outstanding service to the Birchgrove Public School community as our cherished school crossing supervisor for the past 7.5 years. Brenda has been a constant presence — rain, hail, or shine — greeting children and families with her warm smile and ensuring the safety of our children every single day. Her kindness, reliability, and unwavering dedication have left a lasting mark on our community, and her absence will be deeply felt. Brenda, thank you for your remarkable contribution and the care you have shown to every student and family over the years. I wish you all the very best in your retirement. May it be every bit as rewarding and joyful as the years you've given to the Birchgrove Public School community.

BRIDGE HOUSING COMMUNITY GARDEN WORKING BEE

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I would like to acknowledge the efforts of Tania Thompson and other local residents, Bridge Housing and students from University of Technology Sydney for bringing together a working bee to refurbish the rooftop community garden. This was a fantastic occasion that brought together residents, staff and volunteers to create a shared space that will be valued for many years to come. I was so grateful to be able to get involved and lend a hand, and I hope to see the space, with all of its flowers, fruits and veggies become an important resource for the resident community. Initiatives like this are a fantastic example of sustainable solutions in our urban areas. I would like to give a special thank you to tenant's advocate Tania Thompson for her work that helped to bring this project to fruition. I would like to also extend my thanks to the staff at Bridge Housing and the student and community volunteers whose efforts have helped to establish a fantastic community resource.

THE GIDGET FOUNDATION

Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)—Today I would like to acknowledge the vital community work of community organisation the Gidget Foundation. The Gidget Foundation is a not-for-profit organisation that helps to provide mental health and well-being supports to new and prospective parents in our community and across the country. Recent estimates suggest that as many as 100,000 parents in Australia each year are affected by perinatal or postnatal depression and anxiety, making supports like those offered by the Gidget Foundation essential community resources. I would like to give my sincere thanks to all of the staff involved in the Gidget Foundation's programs for their important work with parents, and for shining a light on an issue that remained stigmatised and under-discussed for such a long time. I give special thanks to Gidget Foundation CEO Arabella Gibson, for taking the time to meet with me and I hope to be able to continue to discuss opportunities for the program's expansion in our community.

DANIEL BARBER

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like acknowledge Daniel Barber who has been selected to contest the UCI Nations Cup in Turkey. Only the best riders in the world are selected to compete in this competition, which consists of six events around the globe. The first leg this year will take place in Konya, Turkey, from 14 to 16 March 2025, giving Daniel the opportunity to race against the strongest cycling athletes worldwide. Not only will Daniel be proudly representing his club and town, but his selection also marks the first time since 2013 that Dubbo has had representation in the world cup team. Joining other equally formidable riders, Daniel will compete in the Team Spirit, and event where three riders each complete a single lap, with the time recorded at the end of the seven-hundred-and-fifty-meter race. Speeds reach more than sixty-seven kilometres per hour, and results are determined in thousandths of a second. As the third rider in the trio, Daniel carries the responsibility of bringing it home for Australia! Other events that Daniel will compete in are the Sprint and the Keirin. I wish you all the best as you proudly wear the green and gold in Turkey!

SPITS THREE GOLD BARS CHARITY GOLF DAY

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge the committee of Spits Three Gold Bars Charity Golf Day held in Narromine on Friday 14 March 2025. Now in its fourth year, this special day is held in honour of the late Graham "Spitter" Walsh, who tragically passed in 2019. More than just a golf event, it is a chance for the community to come together, share laughter, reminisce, and raise funds for local charities dedicated to mental health. Despite the extreme heat, eighty enthusiastic golfers took to the course for a nine-hole round. Competing in challenges such as the nearest to the pin competition and an NTP shootout, added extra competitiveness to the day! With the generous support of local businesses, participants had the chance to win excellent prizes, while a fantastic raffle drew strong interest with many tickets being sold. Headspace and Social Futures were selected as the beneficiaries of this year's golf day. Thanks to the kindness of all involved, nearly six thousand dollars will be shared between them. Congratulations to the organisers and supporters of the day, through your camaraderie and generosity this day will continue to make a meaningful impact.

STEPHANIE RICHARDSON

Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Stephanie Richardson from Dubbo who is about to undertake The Big Three Trek, in honour of her late father, John. Stephanie will walk from Sydney to Newcastle over three days, a total of one hundred and fifty kilometres to raise funds for the Mark Hughes Foundation. After losing her dad to Glioblastoma (brain cancer) shortly after his diagnosis, Stephanie felt compelled to act, so reached out to the organisers of the Big Three trek, which is run in partnership with the Mark Hughes Foundation. Although registrations had officially closed, the organisers made an exception and welcomed her into the event. The walkers will start from the Sydney Cricket Ground before heading to Circular Quay. From there they take the ferry to Manly and begin the walk to Newcastle, arriving just in time for the Newcastle Knights to face the Canberra Raiders as part of the NRL's Beanie for Brain Cancer round. Stephanie, I commend you on your incredible dedication to honouring your dad's memory and raising vital funds and awareness of brain cancer. Your strength and determination is inspiring, and I have no doubt your dad would be very proud.

CHRISTINA SCALONE

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to acknowledge Christina Scalone, for her outstanding contributions to our community. Christina is a local constituent of Breakfast Point and she has been recognised as a recipient of the 2025 Drummoyne Electorate Local Seniors Award. Christina is a dedicated volunteer who has worked tirelessly for decades, supporting a wide range of causes with humility and heart. She is a valued parish member of St Nectarios Greek Orthodox Church Burwood where she facilitates The Cottage Kitchen, coordinating the preparation and delivery of free meals to those in need across our local community. Beyond her role at The Cottage Kitchen, Christina has led baking classes, provided support to youth-led fundraising initiatives and has helped many through her career as a naturopath. Her dedication to service, and compassion for people is truly commendable. I sincerely thank Christina for her continued service to our community. Her example reminds us all of the power of kindness, and it is an honour to recognise her exceptional contributions. Congratulations Christina.

ROSA PARISI

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to sincerely acknowledge Ms Rosa Parisi for her contributions to the Sovereign Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem Craft Group. Rosa is a local resident and she has been recognised as a recipient of the 2025 Drummoyne Electorate Local Seniors Award. This Award is a well-deserved recognition of her selfless service and dedication to our community. The members of the SHOSJ Craft Group meets regularly to knit blankets, beanies and scarves for local homeless shelters and domestic violence support organisations. Some of these items are also sold at St Vincent's Hospital. Rosa is an incredibly talented knitter with a keen attention to detail. And most of all, she is an incredibly kind and compassionate person. I know that our community, and particularly our Italian community is extremely proud of everything that the SHOSJ Craft Group has achieved. I sincerely thank Rosa for her time and enthusiasm in making a difference for our community. I congratulate Rosa and wish her all the best in the future.

MARY PAPPALARDO

Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)—I rise to sincerely acknowledge Ms Mary Pappalardo for her outstanding contributions to charitable work and volunteering in our local community. Mary is a local constituent and she has been recognised as a recipient of the 2025 Drummoyne Electorate Local Seniors Award. Mary is a dedicated member of the Inner Wheel Club of Balmain where she has been involved in many fundraisers and regular charitable events. She has volunteered and helped with events such as the Club's Walk for Cord Blood Research, raising funds for a great cause. Beyond her service at the Inner Wheel Club, Mary provides essential transport for elderly residents, helping people by taking them to and from doctor's appointments and church.

Her willingness to help where she can is a testament to her kind and selfless nature. I sincerely thank Mary for all she has given to our community. She is a wonderful example of the impact a volunteer can have on the community, and I wish her all the best. Congratulations Mary.

SUE BROOKHOUSE

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Coonabarabran's local Sue Brookhouse was recognised for her commitment to the community by being awarded a lifetime membership of the Coonabarabran PAI & H at the 2025 show. Sue has been involved with National Parks for a total of 45 years, delivering ski tours at Mount Kosciuszko in 1979, then Ku-ring-gai, the Blue Mountains and since 1995, the Warrumbungle's and Pilliga. Now retired from her role Warrumbungle's National Park, Sue went on to operating the information and discovery centre and working as a discovery ranger. Sue organised events and educated tourist and has had significant impact on the National Parks and those who visited. Beyond National Parks, Sue has dedicated 45 years to rescuing and rehabilitating native wildlife. I would like to congratulate Sue for being awarded lifetime membership. Your community has recognised your dedication and commitment and you are clearly appreciated.

ROBERT HOLLAND

Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)—Robert Holland, or better known as "Dutchie" amongst the Coolah community, was presented with the Chevron award for his 45 years of service with the Lions Club. Robert was acknowledged for his care and dedication to his community, taking on any project that was required. I would like to thank Robert for his 45 years of commitment with the local Lions Club. Small country towns rely on Volunteers to thrive and your dedication to the community does not go unnoticed.

SALT CARE

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Salt Care and its dedicated team, led by Mr Peter Dover, for their outstanding support of vulnerable members of our community. Based in Bomaderry, Salt Care provides vital services including food relief, temporary accommodation, outreach support and long-term housing pathways for those facing homelessness and hardship. As the colder months approach, Salt Care's work is more important than ever. Programs like the Safe Shelter and Wellness Farm not only meet urgent needs, but also foster connection, wellbeing and dignity — offering both immediate help and long-term hope. Whether it's a warm meal, a safe place to sleep, or a pathway to independent living, Salt Care's commitment to practical, compassionate support is changing lives across our region. I commend Peter Dover and the entire Salt Care team for their tireless service. Their work is a shining example of compassion in action, and a testament to what community care can achieve.

DYLAN EGAN

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the outstanding sporting achievement of Gerringong Junior Dylan Egan, who is set to make his debut for St George Illawarra in the 2025 NRL season. At just 20 years old, Dylan becomes the latest in a remarkable line of professional players hailing from Gerringong — a community with a population of just 4,000 people and a proud rugby league tradition. Dylan's debut is not only a celebration of his talent and hard work but also a tribute to the legacy of rugby league great Mick Cronin. Cronin's decades of mentoring, coaching and leading the Gerringong Lions laid the foundation for many local players to reach the professional stage, instilling discipline, work ethic and pride in playing for their town. Gerringong has become a true nursery for NRL talent, with the likes of Reuben Garrick, Jackson Ford, Tyran Wishart, and now Dylan Egan and Hamish Stewart, all rising through the same club and community. I commend Dylan on his debut and pay tribute to the wider Gerringong rugby league family — from coaches and volunteers to families and mentors — whose support and commitment continue to produce outstanding ambassadors for the game.

KIAMA YOUTH FEST

Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)—Today, the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Sentral Youth Services Kiama and Kiama Youth Fest that was held in our wonderfully upgraded Hindmarsh Park on April 15. Celebrating Youth Week 2025 with live music and markets, the event was a success, with talented youth bands, musicians and young entrepreneurs connecting with the community. I take this opportunity to thank local emergency services, the Minnamurra Lions Club for their volunteering and BBQ, Headspace Kiama, and Kiama Municipal Council for supporting Sentral and the Kiama Youth Fest. The future of Kiama looks bright, and I thank everyone for sharing their skills and talents with the Kiama community. The streets and cafes were filled with music from Hindmarsh stage for four hours - it feels like we already have a humming precinct down in Hindmarsh Park, Kiama. I thank Sentral Youth Services and their fantastic team of Youth Workers who provide a free and inclusive space for young people in the Kiama area to learn new skills and connect with their community. Don't

forget to check out the Sentral Studio rehearsal and sound recording studio and here's looking to an even bigger and better Youth Fest next year.

MIRANDA RSL SUB-BRANCH ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the importance of Anzac Day and the commemorations facilitated by the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch on 25 April. Anzac Day is one of the most significant days on our national calendar. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War at Gallipoli where more than 8,000 Australian soldiers lost their lives. To mark the occasion, the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch hosted a Dawn Service at the Miranda War Memorial. The service provided the opportunity for our community to come together and reflect on the sacrifices our veterans made in defending our nation. I recognise Warren Barnes OAM, Major Jeremy Barraclough, Greg Beavis, Joan Thorp, Melissa Bush, Simon Militano, Todd Ridgeway, Josh Candurra, Zara Hawthorn, Taylor Harding, Evan Moukatas and Madeline Davis for their contributions during the service. I also commend the hard-working executive of the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch. I recognise President and event organiser Alan Lark, Jo Beavis, Shane Hall, Zac Miner and Steve Bull for their ongoing efforts. I thank the Miranda RSL Sub-Branch for hosting this commemoration and ensuring that this important day is remembered in our community.

WOOLLOOWARE SHORES RETIREMENT VILLAGE ANZAC DAY COMMEMORATIONS

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the importance of Anzac Day and the commemorations held by the Woollooware Shores Retirement Village on 25 April. Anzac Day is one of the most significant days on our national calendar. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War at Gallipoli where more than 8,000 Australian soldiers lost their lives in defence of the Commonwealth and Allied Forces. To mark the occasion, the Woollooware Shores Retirement Village hosted its annual Anzac Day Service in their auditorium. The service provided the opportunity for residents to come together and reflect on the sacrifices our veterans made in defending our nation and share stories of family members serving in times of conflict. I recognise Woollooware Shores Retirement Village General Manager Liza Fox, Residents Committee President Dr Janice Hall as well as Reverend Garry Dawes, Reverend Brad Galvin, George McLean, Brian McGrath, Lorna Jackson, Ron Jones and Jim Jenkins for their contributions during the service. I thank the Woollooware Shores Retirement Village for hosting this commemoration and ensuring that this important day is remembered in our community.

CRONULLA JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE

Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)—I acknowledge the Cronulla Junior Rugby League, who hosted their Senior Competition Launch at Sharks Kareela Cronulla on 28 February 2025. Established in 1964, Cronulla Junior Rugby League boasts over 5,000 players competing in age groups from Under 6 to Open Age, across 13 clubs including Aquinas Colts, Como Crocs, Joeys, Gynea Gorillas, Menai Roosters and Taren Point Titans in the Miranda electorate. The night featured local legend, Luke Lewis who spoke of his career and his pride in the Luke Lewis Cup, an annual clash between Panthers Juniors and Cronulla Junior Rugby League. None of this would be possible without the efforts of the dedicated team behind the Cronulla Junior Rugby League. I recognise the leadership of executive members John Mannah, Simone Osfield, Amanda Kayes, Faith Perryman and Adam Wrightson, the efforts of general committee members Belinda Green, Michael Toro, Elliott Waugh, Tim McKay, Lisa McKay, Paul Kempton, Brett Robinson, Tony Robinson, Kathy Ismay, Alan Kayes, Paul Tubridy and Shaun Osfield and the operational excellence of Chris Bannerman, Jenny McNamara and Joel Mani. I commend the Cronulla Junior Rugby League for fostering a love of rugby league in our community.

BEECROFT ROTARY CLUB - ANZAC DAY 2025

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I acknowledge the Beecroft Rotary Club for their continuous service to ANZAC Day, our country, and our broader veteran community. On the 25th of April 2025, I attended the ANZAC Day service at the Beecroft War Memorial Cenotaph, commemorating the 110th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing in 1915. ANZAC Day remains a solemn occasion to honour all Australian and New Zealand members of the armed forces who have served, particularly those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. The Beecroft Rotary Club organises this service each year, providing the local community with a meaningful and accessible way to reflect and pay their respects. It was my privilege to lay a wreath during the ceremony alongside fellow community representatives. The service featured a commemorative address by Brandon Etto and was led by Beecroft Rotary Club President Daniel Dummer. I acknowledge the Beecroft Rotary Club and key organisers, including Greg Keighran, for their dedication to preserving this important tradition. Their efforts ensure that the legacy of the ANZACs continues to be honoured by future generations within our local community. Lest we forget.

ANDREW BRAYSHAW – EPPING RSL SUB BRANCH

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I acknowledge Andrew Brayshaw for his service to our veteran community. After a distinguished military career in both the British and Australian Armies, where he rose to the rank of Major, Andrew has continued to live a life of selfless service. His experiences on the frontlines, where he cared for the wounded and endured personal injuries, not only shaped his sense of compassion and commitment to others but also demonstrated his bravery and valour. Since his retirement, Andrew has been a vital member of the Epping RSL Sub Branch, serving as both a trustee and a wellbeing officer. Andrew provides dedicated support to sick and infirm veterans, visiting them in their homes or hospitals, and offering comfort in their final moments through special RSL tributes. He also engages with local schools, sharing the ANZAC legacy with young Australians. Andrew's actions embody the enduring values of the ANZAC spirit—courage, sacrifice, and mateship. It is with great honour that we acknowledge Andrew Brayshaw and his ongoing contribution to Epping through the Epping RSL Sub Branch.

EPPING RSL SUB BRANCH - ANZAC DAY 2025

Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)—I acknowledge the Epping RSL Sub Branch for their dedication to ANZAC Day, our nation, and the broader veteran community. On April 25th, 2025, I attended the ANZAC Day Dawn Service hosted by the Epping RSL Sub Branch at Forest Park in Epping. This annual gathering remains a meaningful occasion for the community to come together in reflection and pay tribute to the men and women of the Australian Defence Force, both active and reserve, who have served our country and made the ultimate sacrifice in defence of our freedoms. Held in the quiet hours of the morning, the ceremony provided a respectful and contemplative atmosphere, drawing strong support from the local community. The Epping RSL Sub Branch continues to uphold this tradition with dignity and purpose, offering residents a poignant way to observe ANZAC Day close to home. I commend their continued leadership in preserving the spirit and legacy of the ANZACs. Lest we forget.

APPOINTMENT OF STEVEN ALDERTON AS DIRECTOR OF MOSMAN ART GALLERY

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I want to congratulate Steven Alderton, on his appointment as the new Director of Mosman Art Gallery and Mosman Council's Manager of Cultural Services. Steven brings with him more than three decades of leadership in the arts, and his appointment is a significant moment for our local cultural landscape. His impressive career includes leadership roles at some of the nation's most respected institutions, including the National Art School, the Australian Museum, and Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre. His curatorial achievements, including exhibitions with some of Australia's most iconic artists such as Margaret Olley, John Olsen, and Tracey Moffatt, demonstrate a lifelong commitment to excellence in the arts. Steven's depth of experience, both here and internationally, will be an incredible asset to Mosman. His vision for cultural development, education, and community engagement aligns perfectly with the values that have made Mosman Art Gallery such a treasured institution. I thank outgoing Director John Cheeseman for his 15 years of dedicated service and leadership and congratulate Steven Alderton on his appointment. I look forward to seeing the next exciting chapter for Mosman Art Gallery under his guidance.

RECOGNISING AMINATA CONTEH-BIGER

Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)—I am honoured to recognise the extraordinary contributions of Aminata Conteh-Biger, whose unwavering dedication is transforming maternal healthcare in Sierra Leone. Aminata's journey from a survivor of Sierra Leone's civil war to the founder of the Aminata Maternal Foundation is a testament to resilience and compassion. Through her foundation, headquartered in Lavender Bay, Aminata is addressing the maternal health crisis in Sierra Leone, where women face a significantly higher risk during childbirth compared to Australia. Her efforts are not only saving lives but also empowering women and communities, fostering hope and change in regions that need it most. I've been proud to support her including joining the bluff and swagger ball. Aminata's story is one of courage, determination, and an unyielding commitment to making a difference. Her work exemplifies the profound impact that one individual's dedication can have on the lives of many, and the positive influence that global initiatives can have when rooted in local communities. I commend Aminata Conteh-Biger for her exceptional leadership and service to humanity. Her work continues to inspire and uplift, reminding us all of the power of compassion and action in creating a better world.

ANZAC DAY GUILDFORD LEAGUES CLUB

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I commend the Guildford Leagues Club for organising their ANZAC Day memorial service at Guildford Leagues Club on 25 April 2025. As the daughter of a World War II veteran, Anzac Day is always special to me and our area hosts many commemorations on the day. I was saddened that due to clashes I was unable to attend Guildford Leagues Club's 2025 commemoration. Guildford Leagues Club's memorial service is always well attended and comprises the reading of the Oath, wreath laying by each of the

club's Sporting Intra Clubs, a prayer followed by morning tea. This year's commemoration held particular significance. The 110th anniversary of Anzac Day is important as it marks the commemoration of the Gallipoli landings and the service of all Australians in times of peace and war. It's a time for reflection on the sacrifices of those who served, ensuring their legacy endures. The Anzac Spirit, embodying courage, mateship, and selflessness, remains relevant today and inspires unity and a commitment to a better future. In conclusion, I thank the Guildford Leagues Club for their efforts in organising this important event and for their unwavering support in honouring our heroes. Lest we forget.

ANZAC DAY CLUB MERRYLANDS

Ms JULIA FINN (Granville)—I commend the Club Merrylands for organising their ANZAC Day Service at Club Merrylands on 25 April 2025. This year's commemoration held particular significance. The 110th anniversary of Anzac Day is important as it marks the commemoration of the Gallipoli landings and the service of all Australians in times of peace and war. It's a time for reflection on the sacrifices of those who served, ensuring their legacy endures. The Anzac Spirit, embodying courage, mateship, and selflessness, remains relevant today and inspires unity and a commitment to a better future. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the organisers for their dedication in ensuring that the legacy of the ANZACs are remembered and cherished within the Merrylands community and beyond. To all the participants, volunteers, and attendees, I express my deepest appreciation. Your presence and involvement demonstrate our collective commitment to preserving the memory of our ANZACs and upholding the values for which they fought. In conclusion, I thank Club Merrylands for their efforts in organising this important event and for their unwavering support in honouring our heroes, especially on this significant centenary. Lest we forget.

CUDGEN HORNETS CRICKET TEAM

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—Congratulations to Cudgen Hornets cricket team for claiming a record eight premiership in the Far North Coast LJ Hooker League. Cudgen defeated Marist Brothers in a rain-affected final held in Kingscliff at the end of March. The two-day final was limited to one day due to the weather, with the Hornets winning by four wickets. Cudgen is the most successful team in the 30-year history of the competition. Well done to the Hornets for another winning season.

BRIAN VICKERY OAM

Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)—The service, commitment and dedication of Tweed veteran Brian Vickery OAM was honoured on Anzac Day with Brian deservingly awarded Life Membership of the Returned Services League [RSL]. Brian toured Vietnam as platoon commander with the 9th Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment and went on to achieve the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Brian is a former Vice-President of the Kingscliff RSL sub-branch and has also serviced the sub-branch as secretary. Brian has been an integral member of the sub-branch and has played a vital role in planning and coordinating services, fundraisers and community engagement activities for the thriving Kingscliff sub-branch. Congratulations to Brian on being awarded this prestigious honour and thank you for your service to Australia and your community.

PORT HACKING PUTTERS REGATTA

Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)—I was pleased to be part of the recent skipper's presentation night where the category awards winners were announced in a celebration of February's Port Hacking Putters Regatta. The Regatta has become a yearly fixture in the Shire to celebrate our beautiful waterways and boating culture, while promoting water safety and raising funds for Marine Rescue NSW volunteers and awareness of the great work they do. More than 40 classic boats joined this year's colourful parade and the category winners in the fleet were Vasco da Gama (best dressed), Leilani (best putter), Knot Dreaming (heritage), RME (Commodore's call), Viking (commander's commendation), No Rush (ship shape) and Gooyong (pride of the port). The crew of Viking received the Commander's commendation for logging in to the free Marine Rescue NSW app, which is a valuable resource to help boaters keep safe on the water. I congratulate Brad Whittaker and Fiona Bell-Whittaker for their ongoing commitment to running this community event. I acknowledge the contribution^[1] of Steven Clifford, Rod Haris and Peter Currie from Marine Rescue, event support vessel skipper Stewart Dunn and Ned Doherty and Stephen Mahnken who generously provided their boats as event vessels.

GLADESVILLE RSL SUB-BRANCH

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I like to acknowledge the Gladesville RSL Sub-Branch and thank them for their tireless work in honouring the memory of our ANZACs, particularly their solemn ANZAC Service. I would like to thank their President, Jim Butt, for his efforts and all those that worked alongside him to make the day so memorable.

HUNTERS HILL RSL SUB-BRANCH

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)—Mr Speaker – I like to acknowledge the Hunters Hill RSL Sub-Branch and thank them for their tireless work in honouring the memory of our ANZACs, particularly their solemn ANZAC Service with 400 people in attendance. I would like to thank their President, Steve Mitchell, for his efforts and all those that worked alongside him to make the day so memorable.
