

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 13 May 2025**

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

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

### *Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR OXLEY**

**The SPEAKER:** I acknowledge the member for Oxley and wish him a happy birthday today. I thank his parents for lining it up with a sitting day.

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** Welcome back, members. I welcome our guests in the gallery to question time in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. I extend a warm welcome to the guests of the member for Wyong. This is a biggie. They are from the NSW Swifts netball team and include Paige Hadley and Maddy Turner, who are co-captains, and Sarah Klau, Helen Housby, Briony Akle and Danielle Mace. I also welcome Lucy Sayers and Tim Fava from Netball New South Wales. It is great to have you here. Hang around and we can put a match on after question time.

**Mrs Sally Quinnell:** I'll be there.

**The SPEAKER:** I'm going on the wing. I welcome to the gallery the Beacon Hill Probus Club, guests of the member for Wakehurst. I also welcome the Bowral Combined Probus Club, guests of the member for Wollondilly. Probus is big today. All emeritus mayors like to acknowledge our emeritus mayor friends, and today that is Sonya Phillips. I understand the train made it, so there was no problem with you getting here.

I acknowledge guests of the member for Kiama from the Arbour, Berry. I also acknowledge student leaders from Heritage College, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. It was wonderful to meet you this morning. I hope you enjoy question time.

### *Bills*

#### **ABORTION LAW REFORM AMENDMENT (HEALTH CARE ACCESS) BILL 2025**

##### **First Reading**

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

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that I have received a written authority from Dr Amanda Cohn, MLC, advising that the member for Newtown will have carriage of the bill in the Legislative Assembly. I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

### *Question Time*

#### **PARAMEDIC WORKFORCE**

**Mr Warren Kirby:** Mr Speaker—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Riverstone will always be outgunned by the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:06):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. The Australian Paramedics Association assistant secretary said:

Special operations paramedics have specialised training in accessing patients in challenging environments. This includes everything from terrorism incidents to floods. They are not mental health specialists.

Are special operations paramedics being dragged into mental health call-outs because the Government has lost control of mental health staffing?

**The SPEAKER:** The Attorney General will come to order. I call the Minister. He will be able to answer the question.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:07):** The Speaker would agree from the outset that that was a very broad question. I will go through it slowly, and this time without pictures. Yesterday the matter was heard in the Industrial Relations Commission. For those in the gallery, the IRC is the independent umpire for industrial issues in New South Wales.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** They got rid of it.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Members opposite did not want it and got rid of it. They hate nothing more than an independent umpire. The Government brought it back. Members might have heard about an issue with mental health nurses once or twice. The former Government was going to terminate the employment of about 1,100 nurses from 1 July last year.

**Dr Hugh McDermott:** How many?

**Mr RYAN PARK:** At least 1,100 nurses. The Minns Labor Government saved those jobs. Regarding the mental health co-responder teams and the disputes, a longstanding model is in place in Western Sydney that a registered paramedic and a mental health clinical nurse consultant respond to mental health and 000 calls. Under that model, and in our attempt to avoid unnecessary emergency department presentations, the team conducts specialist mental health assessments in the community.

What are we trying to do here? We are trying to give the person care at their location because—I am sure members of the gallery will understand this—for a mental health patient, emergency departments are often the worst place. That is known. We have to do more in that space, from my perspective, but that is a known argument. From Tuesday 22 April NSW Ambulance commenced a 12-week trial on the new model. That model is similar to the previous one, and it will also operate across Western Sydney. In both models, the paramedic undertakes the medical assessment, and the mental health clinical nurse consultant [CNC] undertakes a mental health assessment and management.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order: It is taken under Standing Order 129. I am not asking what the Government is trying to do. Why is it ripping people out of the special operation?

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order. The Minister has the call.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Always prepared! This issue was heard yesterday. A settlement has been reached. We believe this model is worth exploring. We will continue to do that to provide the very best care for people suffering from a mental illness.

#### NORTH-WEST SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (12:10):** My question is addressed to the Premier. I thank the Premier for coming to the Riverstone Festival on the weekend and ask him to update the House on the New South Wales Government's work to deliver new and upgraded essential infrastructure for the north-west of Sydney?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:10):** I thank the member for Riverstone for his question, an important one for his community. We can announce the following to the House. I know that the Minister for Health and the Minister for Education were with the member for Riverstone this morning, announcing that the new Rouse Hill Hospital, in addition to in-patient beds, day surgery, short-stay medical assessments, pathology, pharmacy, medical imaging services, outpatient ambulatory care, virtual care, prehabilitation, rehabilitation, lifestyle medicine and an emergency department, will also have maternity services, thanks to the Federal Government's \$90 million investment. That is a staggering amount.

**Mr Ray Williams:** When are you going to buy the land?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Honestly, do we really have to take a lecture from the member for Kellyville? We waited 12 years.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Members may not know this, but the member for Kellyville promised Rouse Hill Hospital for 12 years. It was three elections in a row. Prior to the last election, he said "I'm going to run around one more time because I've got some unfinished business, like Rouse Hill Hospital." No kidding! It wasn't built. The unfinished business was that he did not do any business. In any event, it brings to a total amount of money \$910 million for Rouse Hill Hospital, one of the fastest-growing communities in New South Wales. It is absolutely crucial to see that community grow with essential infrastructure. If you add that to the announcement from the

Minister for Education and Deputy Premier yesterday about a \$42 million upgrade for Matthew Pearce Public School—

**Mr Ray Williams:** Our money, funded and planned.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** This is incredible. The member for Kellyville did that one too. It is amazing. We should have put it in the media release. The member for Kellyville has been a virtual member for a while now.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Honestly, he should be working from home. It will be a \$42 million upgrade for Matthew Pearce Public School with 24 new classrooms.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** I went to the school yesterday with the Minister for Education, and we were able to see that the demountable classrooms, some of which had been in place for 25 years, have been removed. In their place is open space for this public school.

**Mr Ray Williams:** You wouldn't find any demountables in Labor areas?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** What was that?

**Mr Ray Williams:** You wouldn't find any demountables in Labor areas?

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will not invite interjections. The member for Kellyville will cease interjecting. I call the member for Kellyville to order for the second time.

**Mr Warren Kirby:** I seek further information.

**The SPEAKER:** An additional two minutes is granted.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The member for Kellyville has demonstrated for 12 years that he was useless. None of these things happened during his period in office, not one thing. I am open to having it rebutted by the member for Kellyville but he is schtum—he has not said anything; he is struck mute—because nothing was done during his period in office. He was supposed to be one of the most influential backbenchers and Ministers in the previous Government: Nothing happened. In contrast, the Government is rebuilding or upgrading seven schools in the north-west, including Castle Hill Public School, Box Hill Public School, Box Hill High School and Gables Public School, along with major upgrades to Rouse Hill High School and Excelsior Public School. Get this: Across that region, 600 new permanent classrooms are being built.

#### MILTON ULLADULLA HOSPITAL

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (12:14):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. The member for South Coast promised before the election that women would be able to give birth at Milton Ulladulla Hospital. When will Labor deliver that promise?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:15):** I thank the member for Vaucluse for her question. I acknowledge the work of the member for South Coast in relation to Milton. For those of us on this side who know her well, we know she is a very hardworking, tenacious member.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Her elevation to an MP came off the back of those disastrous fires, and she has been a terrific advocate. In relation to those services at Milton, I am well aware of the issue and we are working through it. One of the challenges we have, so the member is aware—and it is a global challenge, not just a national challenge—is around midwifery staff and what we need to do in midwifery-led areas. We are certainly keen to do that at Milton. We want to do that. Our staffing is a little bit challenged in that region, particularly obstetricians and GP obstetricians. The member for Bega, the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, understands that better than most in this Chamber. It is an important thing that we want to do, and need to do, but we have got to make sure it is safe. We are working together through the challenges of staffing in relation to that.

**Ms Kellie Sloane:** Point of order: It is under Standing Order 129. A promise was made. When will that be delivered?

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister has been directly relevant.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** To be fair, we are just over halfway through our term.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** It is unusual. They are four-year terms. We have not finished our term yet. I am saying, as Minister, that this is an important commitment. I am saying, as Minister, that we are working through challenges in relation to staffing. Midwifery staffing is possibly the one facing the most acute shortages in the entire workforce. That is not just in this State; it is in other jurisdictions around the country, including—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** That is only when you want to blame the last Government.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** No, I am not blaming the last Government. In fact, this is a discussion that I have had with the former Minister many, many times in relation to midwifery and the challenges we face. I know that the member for Wagga Wagga also has a keen interest in making sure that we expand midwifery and birthing services, particularly for regional areas. I know that. What I have to do is make sure that the staffing is there to ensure it is safe for women and that it is reliable and sustainable. For some people that may be hard to understand, but for me it is very simple. At the core of our health system is providing safe clinical care. That is something that we will always put first, second and third.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (12:18):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Deputy Premier please update the House on the work the Government is doing to ensure that families across New South Wales have access to high-quality early learning opportunities?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:18):** I thank the member for Wallsend for her question. She is a great champion of public education, as a former teacher. She is also the representative of an electorate where this Government is proud to be building two new public preschools at Maryland Public School and Shortland Public School. Of course we know that that is two more than the former Government built in its whole time in office. It did not build one public preschool. This Government is proudly building 100 public preschools.

In the last month, we have awarded contracts for 51 new preschools. Cumulatively, that will provide an extra 4,600 public, free spaces across New South Wales in the two years leading up to school.

As with many other areas in education, I can come to this place and inform this House that we are in the middle of a serious clean-up job because of the mess left to us by those opposite. The members have heard me go on about this ad nauseam. The problems were not just with teacher vacancies, the lack of schools in growing areas—like the Premier mentioned, in the Hills—not building the schools where they were needed and the impact on teaching and learning; it also extended to early learning. We inherited a system in New South Wales that is quite different from other States and Territories across the Commonwealth. The previous Government's obsession with privatisation meant that from 2015 to 2024, for-profit services in New South Wales increased by more than a quarter, from 2,900 to 3,600. At the same time, not-for-profit services increased only marginally, by around 50 services.

So now 60 per cent of child care in New South Wales is private, for-profit services. At the same time, we have seen more breaches in New South Wales than in any other State. I have asked, since coming to government, for the regulator in early childhood education and care [ECEC] to increase its actions. More unannounced inspections have meant more compliance action taken. We have strengthened the ECEC regulator, but we have to be very clear with the people of New South Wales: We have been left with another part of the system that requires a significant clean-up job, and we are on it. There has been a 9 per cent increase in inspections, up to 8,600 inspections of our 6,300 services. Some of what is coming to light is in documents released in response to orders for papers under Standing Order 52 in the other place. In particular, I want to clarify a matter that was reported on 7.30 last night. [*Extension of time*]

Parents and the public have a right to know what action the regulator took in response to that sickening incident. The Department of Education advises me that both of the educators in that video have been prohibited permanently from working in early childhood in New South Wales. That information has been shared with all other jurisdictions and with the Office of the Children's Guardian. The first educator has been convicted of common assault and the second educator has been charged with two offences which are still before the courts. I thank the NSW Police Force for its vigilance in this matter. In terms of prosecuting people that do disgusting things to children, the Police Force does exemplary, extraordinary work in this area. Its actions are swift, it is fulsome in its response, and it has done an excellent job.

I also acknowledge the excellent work of the regulator in acting quickly in this matter. I note that there is strong public interest in making parents and the community aware when the regulator is taking action. There is

much more work that we can do here. This is why I commissioned former Deputy Ombudsman Chris Wheeler to do a root-and-branch review of the regulator. That interim report is due back to me by the end of the month. We will not hesitate to act on recommendations that ensure child care in this State is safe and of a high quality. We will continue to roll out public provision, and we make no apologies for that. We will keep a close eye on services. We will improve the quantity and the quality of services for our littlest learners, because they all deserve it, and families need it. That is what this Government will deliver.

### WATER BUYBACKS

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:23):** My question is directed to the Premier. The Murrumbidgee and Murray systems contain over 500 gegalitres of unaccounted for water held by the New South Wales Government. Will the New South Wales Government commit to sell some of this water to the Federal Government to protect our communities and resolve the water buyback issue once and for all?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:24):** I thank the member for Murray for her question. I imagine it is an exciting day for her. Sussan Ley has just been elected Leader of the Opposition. I know they are very close. Congratulations on behalf of all of us. We have been in discussions with the Minister for the Environment and Water to make sure that all of the water is accounted for. I do not know whether there is spare water to sell back. I am not sure whether, in the history of Federal-State relations, there has ever been a transaction of water from the State to the Commonwealth, particularly for water management. Obviously there are transactions between market participants on the waterways, but I do not know whether that has ever happened from a State jurisdiction to a Commonwealth jurisdiction. I cannot commit to an answer right now in question time, but I am happy to take it on notice and report back to the member.

### STATE BUDGET

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (12:25):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in his capacity representing the Treasurer. Will the Minister update the House on the state of the New South Wales budget?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:25):** I am more than happy to update the House on the current state of the New South Wales budget. The member for Camden understands that maintaining our fiscal management approach is the way to delivering more services to her electorate. In order to give a current update, it is important to undertake a journey of fiscal repair. Let us go back to March 2023. The Government had barely been sworn in when it was presented with some sobering facts by Treasury. Our Government inherited the two biggest deficits in our State's history—\$15.3 billion in 2021-22 and \$12 billion in 2022-23. By the time the Liberals and The Nationals left office, they had run up \$129 billion in debt, or around \$16,000 per person, and they were on track to hit \$188 billion by June 2026. That is the largest debt ever inherited by an incoming government in New South Wales.

It gets better. Former Liberal Treasurer Matt Kean—members opposite will remember him—added \$27 billion in "new policy measures" before the last election. That is costing this Government \$25 million a day. He was well and truly the biggest spending Treasurer in New South Wales history. Meanwhile, inflation was stubbornly high, which is now right down; interest rates were biting, which are now coming down; and our essential services needed attention after 12 years of neglect and deliberately suppressed wages under the Liberal-Nationals wages cap, which those opposite want to bring back.

The Minns Government began the process of delivering our key economic priorities: help to fight inflation, fix the State's essential services and only fund programs that work. We made choices reflecting Labor values and we will not push our decisions beyond the forward estimates because ignoring them means that inflation persists, interest rates continue to rise, living standards fall and the State's finances continue to deteriorate. We acted to stop working people from losing even more of their income and purchasing power. We acted to stop small businesses from having their margins squeezed further. But we cannot fix a decade of failure by the former Government overnight.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

Those opposite do not like to look at their record, do they? Let us refresh our memories of that record. We are doing everything in our power to manage the largest debt passed from one government to the next in New South Wales history. What was that debt? It was \$187.5 billion, or \$22,384 per person, by June 2026.  
*[Extension of time]*

We are working hard to repair the budget to rebuild essential services and reinvest in our frontline workers. Members opposite are pretty loud. What solutions do they have?

They have no plan to fix the structural deficit. We still remember when the member for Willoughby committed \$10 billion to the northern beaches link. Last week, he was at the Chinese Building Association of NSW Development Summit promoting the fact that the Minns Government is spending money on infrastructure in Western Sydney—how unfair, after 12 years of the former Government doing nothing! Of course, we remember the now famous incident when the member for Cronulla signed New South Wales up to host the Commonwealth Games without knowing how much it would cost. Guess what? It was \$7 billion on the tab for that thought bubble.

Is it any wonder that last week the member for Lane Cove wanted to join The Greens. Even they seem like better fiscal managers than the Opposition. The Minns Labor Government has a track record of two budgets that are building a better New South Wales. We are supporting families in the cost-of-living crisis. We are introducing bulk-billing incentives for the first time. We are addressing housing challenges. We are investing in schools and hospitals.

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** We are pumping money into regional health. We have done all that and reduced the State's gross debt, which is now projected to be \$9 billion lower than it was when we came to office. We did that while absorbing a \$11.9 billion hit to GST receipts. In New South Wales, only Labor governments can manage the State's finances responsibly. Only Labor governments understand the importance of getting the budget right to get the services right. We are working to build an even better New South Wales.

**The SPEAKER:** I allowed members to let off some steam during the Minister's answer, but members will now come to order. The Minister, representing the Treasurer, is passionate and certainly expresses himself volubly. He does not require my protection. Ministers will be heard in silence.

#### INFLUENZA VACCINATION

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (12:31):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. Flu vaccination rates are declining in New South Wales. Last year the Minister said our emergency departments were "smashed" by flu and other respiratory illnesses. Why will the Minister not listen to health experts and ease the strain on our emergency departments by making the flu vaccine free for all?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:31):** That is an outstanding question. I was preparing a very similar Dixer.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** Influenza is extremely serious. No member of this place can say that Dr Chant and I have not been reminding people about the importance of getting an influenza vaccination. We prefer to call it influenza rather than the flu because the flu has the connotation that it is just a cold or a cough. The influenza vaccine is free for very young children, elderly people, Aboriginal people and people with immuno-compromised conditions. Importantly, last week we announced that we are increasing the availability of the influenza vaccination in pharmacies for children as young as two. It was previously for children over five. I wanted to expand the availability and accessibility of the influenza vaccination to younger children and families. We know GPs are struggling at the moment. To achieve an increase in the availability and accessibility, they can now access it at pharmacies.

**Ms Felicity Wilson:** Point of order: My point of order goes to Standing Order 129. My question was very specific. I waited for 1½ minutes. My question was about whether it will be free for not only those under five, over 65 and—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for North Shore will resume her seat. She may ask a question, but she cannot prescribe how it is answered. The Minister has been directly relevant to the question at this point.

I call the member for Wahroonga to order for the first time.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I spend an enormous amount of time on this portfolio. It is the first question I asked of NSW Health, and specifically Dr Chant. Most people, and Opposition members in particular, would know Dr Chant. She supported the previous Government's incredible work during COVID. I asked Dr Chant about this, and she said her advice was that at the time—it was 2022, if I recall correctly—it did not make a tangible difference to the number of people who got vaccinated. In a fiscally constrained environment, where we need to make sure that every health dollar goes to ensure the very best availability and accessibility of services, I consulted Dr Chant and she provided me with that advice. Much like former Minister Hazzard and former Premier Berejiklian, members of this Government tend to listen to Dr Chant.

## HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (12:35):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's work to deliver new and upgraded health infrastructure across New South Wales?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:35):** If I were a National Party member, I would be asking for double time today! I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for the question about important infrastructure. I will focus particularly on Western Sydney. There are a lot of Western Sydney MPs on both sides of the House. I will explain the environment that Government members faced in 2023 when we were sworn in. It is important for the visitors in the gallery to understand that—as was outlined by the Minister representing the Treasurer—we inherited the State's largest ever debt. When one is the biggest spending Minister, that is very important and it is important to have that context.

Over the next few minutes, I will provide the context of our investment in Western Sydney in the environment of record debt we faced when we came to government in 2023. That is an important distinction, and an important context. We made the strategic decision both to advocate, agitate, lobby and harass our Federal counterparts and, at the same time, to increase our own investment in hospitals, particularly in Western Sydney. The member for Parramatta, the member for Granville and others understand the importance of the Children's Hospital at Westmead. It is a world-leading paediatric hospital, and more than \$600 million has been invested there. Canterbury Hospital is incredible. For the first time, hundreds of millions of dollars is being invested in the redevelopment of Canterbury Hospital—that investment is \$350 million.

In partnership with the Commonwealth Government, we are investing more than \$600 million in Fairfield Hospital. It is the first time that hospital has been upgraded since the back end of the '80s, and that is all happening in the context of record debt. In addition, \$120 million has been invested in the Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospital. Those two campuses are really important health facilities that do incredible work in a very high-growth area of Sydney. On top of that, today the Government made an announcement about Rouse Hill Hospital. That is going to be a great facility. [*Extension of time*]

**The SPEAKER:** The Premier will come to order. The member for Kellyville will cease interjecting.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** To be clear on what the Premier outlined earlier, it was not one election promise—that would be reasonable. After two election promises, it would be pushing it to go again. However, this was promised at three elections by members opposite.

It is incredible stuff. When I came to power, I had not realised that it was going to be a brand new hospital without an emergency department—a minor issue; don't worry about that! On top of that, we have made a decision, based on the incredible growth rate data for the north-west from the planning Minister, and based on the advocacy of our incredible member for Riverstone—we are yet to find a door he has not knocked on—and of the Deputy Premier and others, as well as the community campaign, to increase that investment again to make sure that there are birthing services in that facility when it opens.

We are going to fast-track, as much as we possibly can, every single one of those facilities because in Western Sydney, particularly in the north-west, the growth is so substantial. Despite facing some very difficult fiscal headwinds, particularly around debt, we are determined to make sure that we prioritise our expenditure to where it is needed most. In relation to Sydney, in particular Western Sydney and that part of north-western Sydney, the growth is enormous and we need to match the expenditure to it.

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Winston Hills, I acknowledge the wife of the member for Campbelltown, Melanie Warren, who is in the Cooper gallery. I apologise to her if she is embarrassed—by my acknowledgement, I mean, not by her husband. We cannot help who we fall in love with.

## HOSPITAL PARKING FEES

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (12:41):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. The Minister is on record in opposition saying that hospital parking fees are a tax on the sick and a cash cow. Last year the New South Wales Government raked in a record \$51 million in hospital parking fees. Why has the Minister's opinion changed?

**The SPEAKER:** Members on both sides of the House will come to order, particularly the member for Canterbury and the member for Kellyville. I call the member for Terrigal to order for the second time.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:42):** Mum will be happy. She does not like it when I do not get a question.

She will be really pleased. Mum and Dad are the two people watching this unbelievable debate. It was a pretty broad question so I will give a broad answer.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** No, it was not.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I will make that determination if I am asked to do so.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** In relation to car parking, there are two components. People in the gallery will understand the concept, but I hope they do not mind if I speak a little slower to make sure that I can clearly explain it to members opposite. In relation to car parking, there are a number of issues. Firstly, the Government has made regional car parks free.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

Just because we get a stupid question, it does not mean we do not have to answer it. Secondly, the people in the gallery will understand that the health system also needs to make sure that there is parking available for patients, carers and staff. That is important because people with chronic health conditions are often not single users of a hospital facility for an acute condition. For example, they may be receiving cancer treatment. We need to make sure we balance the availability of car parking for patients, their carers and their family—who may be transporting them, particularly if it is cancer treatment, because transport afterwards is extremely difficult, as many members of this House will attest to—with the availability of car parking for our staff.

On top of that, public transport in Sydney is by and large far better than it is in regional and rural communities. That is a fact, broadly, so I have to balance that. I say to the member for Winston Hills that we are delivering free car parking where it fits that particular geographical area and where we can get the balance right. But the secretary and I, as the Minister, have to take into consideration the two other groups that also utilise the hospital—that is, patients and their carers and families. We will continue to do that and we will continue to strike a balance.

#### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:45):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads. Today marks day three of National Road Safety Week. Will the Minister update the House on the importance of every driver and passenger playing their part to make New South Wales roads safer?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (12:45):** I thank the member for Cessnock for this important question. I was speaking to the police Minister at the beginning of question time about some of the infringements that police have caught in the Hunter Valley region that the member for Cessnock and I share. On 3 May highway patrol attempted to stop a motorcycle for random testing in Metford, in my electorate. The male rider failed to stop and engaged in a short pursuit, reaching speeds of around 130 kilometres per hour in a residential 50 kilometres per hour zone.

The next day, on Sunday 4 May, Newcastle highway patrol officers were following a provisional rider on a Yamaha R3 along Maitland Road in Sandgate in the electorate of the member for Newcastle—or it might be Wallsend; I always get confused. They were travelling at 153 kilometres per hour in a 60 zone. The rider had received his P1 provisional licence three days prior. Later that day, officers in the Hunter Valley detected a P1 provisional rider on Putty Road travelling at 201 kilometres per hour in a 100 kilometres per hour speed zone. That is just not acceptable.

I draw this to the attention of everyone in this place, including the people in the gallery. There are 93 members on the floor of the Chamber, as well as a few administrative staff and advisers. The total number of all of those people does not equal the road toll of people we have lost on our roads just this year. It is 134 people—more than everyone on the floor of the Chamber. Stopping people from going above the speed limit would have resulted in a 40 per cent reduction in that figure, which would have saved 53 lives already this year. Last year 340 people died on New South Wales roads. If we knocked out all the speeding offences that contributed to those fatal crashes, 136 more people would be driving around today. The Government has recently introduced average speed cameras. There was a lot of noise from The Nationals about targeting rural drivers. There were 1,000 warning letters sent out in the first week of that program. *[Extension of time]*

Those opposite have made comments in the media, with one wanting to know:

... if he overtook someone while speeding, between the speed cameras, that he wouldn't be classified as "speeding the whole way".

"Because I haven't. I've just had to overtake people who were going slowly," he said.

People have been clocked going at 144 kilometres per hour in those average speed camera zones.



That is a disgrace. We need to do better as a whole community. Yesterday I celebrated 100 years of law enforcement with the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. In 1935 the first sign on the Sydney Harbour Bridge stated, "Please drive safely". In 1937 the first speed limits were introduced at 48 kilometres per hour for built-up areas and 80 kilometres per hour for unlit areas. In 2001 we introduced 40-kilometre speed zones around schools in New South Wales. Imagine what would have happened if we had not done that. We need every single person listening today to talk to their family and friends about speeding.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** We need to be very clear. We have lower speed limits in pedestrian areas because there is a 10 per cent risk that a pedestrian hit at 30 kilometres per hour will be killed. When a pedestrian is hit at 50 kilometres per hour, the risk of being killed rises to 90 per cent. For head-on or frontal impacts at 70 kilometres per hour, there is a 10 per cent risk of being killed. At 90 kilometres per hour, the risk goes up to 80 per cent. So when people say, "It's OK. I know what I'm doing," they should be stopped because they are killing people. We need them to drive safely.

### CAMPSITE FEES

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (12:50):** My question is directed to the Minister for Jobs and Tourism. A seven-night camping trip at Thredbo Diggings used to cost a family \$6 for the week, but the Government is increasing that cost by at least 2,300 per cent, moving camping tourism out of reach for many families.

**The SPEAKER:** All members will come to order. The member for Tamworth will finish his question.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** A seven-night camping trip at Thredbo Diggings used to cost a family \$6 for the week, but the Government is increasing that cost by at least 2,300 per cent.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Tamworth does not need to begin the question again.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** That is moving camping tourism out of reach for many families. How can the Government justify that extraordinary price hike in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis?

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

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism) (12:52):** I thank the member for Tamworth for his theatrics. From what I understand, he has extracted something from a discussion paper from the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, and made it into a reality. The truth is that is where we are on the matter at the moment. I have nothing more to say. I thank the member for Tamworth for the theatrics.

### ROAD SAFETY

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:53):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the New South Wales police to crack down on dangerous driving through Operation RAID, which stands for "Remove All Impaired Drivers"?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:53):** I thank the member for The Entrance for his question. I wish to get it straight that New South Wales police are monitoring on our roads every day and night. They put their lives in harm's way, but they are keeping our roads safe.

As the Minister said, we have already seen far too many deaths on our roads this year. Shamefully, some people want to point the finger at the police and say they are not doing enough. Nothing could be further from the truth. Police are doing absolutely everything they can. Last weekend the NSW Police Force ran Operation RAID, which stands for remove all impaired drivers. Hundreds of stationary and mobile random breath and drug testing sites were rolled out across the entire State to target the biggest killers on our roads—the people who think it is okay to drink and drive, take drugs and drive, drive distracted, speed or drive fatigued.

The numbers are absolutely staggering. Police conducted 109,796 random breath tests and found 132 drink drivers. From 6,841 drug tests, police found 461 drivers with drugs detected in their system. Police handed out 1,373 speeding fines and 286 fines for mobile phone usage. Do members believe that? The most staggering figure of all was that 84 people were caught not using a seatbelt. That is crazy. Reflecting on this for a moment, do members still think that police are not doing enough? I hope not. Over just 72 hours, police averaged 1,524 RBTs per hour, which is 25 every minute.

That all came right after Operation Anzac Day 2025 just a few weeks earlier, where more than 150,000 breath tests were conducted and 9,000 infringements were issued, including 2,538 for speeding. We still

tragically saw 295 major crashes that weekend, with 113 people seriously injured and seven lives lost. We cannot keep expecting police to carry the entire load. The police are not the problem, but there is no doubt that they are part of solving the problem. Critics are taking cheap shots from the sidelines and pretending they know better. *[Extension of time]*

Our officers are out there doing the actual work of saving lives, stopping crashes, confronting horrifying road trauma and comforting victims. I am proud of the work they do. We all have a role to play if we want safer roads, less tragedy, fewer funerals and fewer horrific injuries and lifelong disabilities. Unfortunately, police cannot stop people driving like dangerous, aggressive idiots. Road safety is the responsibility of all of us. More and more people seem to think that the rules do not apply to them. They speed and text while driving. They drive with drugs or alcohol in their system. They feel that they can do whatever they like. These people are causing carnage on our roads. I find it offensive that the police cop the blame for the road toll. If we want to reduce the road toll, we have to change driver behaviour.

Anyone who makes the decision to drink alcohol or take illicit drugs and drive, to drive at speed or to drive while fatigued or distracted is committing a crime in New South Wales. It is a crime that can end lives and devastate families. They are risking their own lives and the lives of their passengers. They are risking the life of every road user. All of us are at risk. People need to start driving like their life depends on it, because it does. Yesterday, we marked National Road Safety Week. We were joined by Peter Frazer from the Safer Australian Roads and Highways Group. I like how he put it. He said it is about restoring courtesy and the rules-based order on our roads. He said that he wants to make a deal with people: "I'll take care of your family on the roads, but I want you to take care of mine."

#### VIRTUAL STOCK FENCING

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (12:59):** My question is directed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education in his capacity representing the Minister for Agriculture. Will the Minister update the House on the Government's recent announcement to legalise virtual fencing in New South Wales?

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:59):** I thank the member for Orange for his question and his advocacy for virtual fencing over many years. He has been a driver for a decision that I am very pleased to say was recently announced at the Orange Agricultural Institute, when the Minister for Agriculture announced that the New South Wales Government would legalise virtual fencing for cattle. That will unlock a technology for farmers that will bolster resilience and productivity for our agricultural sector. Farmers have been asking for it for a long time, and our Government listened and acted. I thank the member for Orange for his years of work. It was important to be in this place when he introduced the issue and saw it referred to a committee to look at how it could be introduced.

The technology is legal in many other jurisdictions across Australia, including Queensland, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. The technology contains stock animals without a physical fence by using signals from a device that is attached to the livestock, usually via a neckband that uses GPS technology to monitor animal movement and behaviour, and an audio or vibration cue signal warns the animal that it is approaching the virtual boundary. That is followed by an electrical pulse only if the animal does not respond to the audio or vibration cue. Virtual fencing is a useful technology for farmers, facilitating a simpler process for rotational grazing and natural resource management as well as the monitoring and management of stock to improve health. It can also play an important role in natural disasters when fences are burnt. It ensures that farmers can respond more quickly and that properties are not as vulnerable to natural disasters and fence damage.

Last year a New South Wales parliamentary inquiry was established to examine and report on the private member's bill that the member for Orange introduced, which aimed to legalise the commercial use of virtual fencing in New South Wales. I commend the member for Barwon for his work in chairing that committee. It was an important committee to provide a way forward for the Government in introducing the measures the member for Orange had been advocating for. Some of my city colleagues on this side of the Chamber were members of that committee as well. I am sure they found it an informative inquiry in working through the challenges facing many rural and regional residents and farmers in New South Wales. Virtual fencing is a new technology that can help our farmers to better manage their properties. One great thing about New South Wales farmers is they are early adopters of new technology. *[Extension of time]*

In my roles both in this place and outside it, I have seen the way farmers adapt quickly to the use of GPS technology in things like monitoring food and water consumption by cattle, telemetric monitoring of their irrigation systems and a whole range of things to make them more efficient producers and keep New South Wales agriculture at the forefront of the world in its efficiency of production. That is why it drives a big part of the export earnings for New South Wales. The fact that virtual fencing has been on the table and in other States for quite a long time makes us wonder why it did not happen under the previous Government.

In 12 years of the National Party in government, it did not happen. It is not as if it was not raised; the member for Orange, to his credit, asked a question about it of the then Minister for Agriculture, the member for Dubbo, in the Parliament. The member for Dubbo said, "Yes, we'll go away and look at it." But nothing happened. It was another one of those things that was obviously going to happen in the thirteenth year. They say, "We were going to do that in the thirteenth year if we'd had the chance." That is the story of the National Party. So many parts of rural New South Wales are represented by people like the member for Barwon, the member for Orange and the member for Murray because people in rural New South Wales understand that The Nationals do not stand up for them anymore.

This week, we saw the Federal Nationals representing their leader from Queensland, who took them down the path of a nuclear solution for net zero, which is irrelevant to most New South Wales farmers. The Federal Nationals took farmers down a path of losing export markets to China and, quite properly, were rebuffed at their election and ours. Agriculture needs the Labor Party and good crossbench members to represent it in this place.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I call the member for Oatley to order for the first time.

### **RETAIL WORKER SAFETY**

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (13:04):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety. Will the Minister please update the House on what the Minns Labor Government is doing to protect retail workers from physical and mental abuse?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (13:05):** I thank the hardworking member for Granville, who represents thousands of retail workers in her electorate and is a strong advocate for our legislation. Every single person has a right to go to work and come home safely to their family and friends. Earlier this month, we were appalled by shocking footage showing retail workers who were abused, spat at, had chickens thrown at them or were punched in the face. We saw workers shoved to the ground, grabbed or stalked through the aisles, which was deeply confronting. We know that workplace violence can have a significant impact on a person's physical and psychological health. Workplace violence can take many forms, including physical abuse, sexual assault, harassment or aggressive behaviour.

Unfortunately, many frontline retail staff have reported facing violence or aggression at work. A recent survey revealed that 88 per cent of retail workers have been subjected to abuse, including physical violence, with one in 10 reporting being spat on. The retail trade sector is the second largest employer in New South Wales, representing 9 per cent of the total workforce. That means one in every 10 workers works in retail, and that is why the Minns Labor Government took action very quickly in June 2023. I acknowledge the Premier, the Attorney General, the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees' Association, the Australian Retailers Association and the Shopping Centre Council of Australia, who all worked together because we had to act very quickly.

Under our laws, it is an offence to assault, throw a missile, stalk, harass, or intimidate a retail worker, even if no actual bodily harm is caused to the worker, with a maximum penalty of four years imprisonment. It is now an offence to assault a retail worker and cause actual bodily harm to the worker, with a maximum penalty of six years imprisonment. It is also an offence to wound or cause grievous bodily harm to a retail worker being reckless as to causing actual bodily harm to the worker or another person, with a maximum penalty of 11 years imprisonment. Since its implementation, 136 individuals have been charged with an offence under the Act. Sixty-four individuals have been convicted of an offence and 25 individuals are currently serving a custodial sentence. People will go to jail, and the Government takes this very seriously. [*Extension of time*]

The Minns Government said we would introduce strong new laws to help keep workers safe, and we are delivering. The retail workforce is made up of many different types of workers. For many teenagers, a job in retail is their first experience in the workplace. I have spoken to a number of 16- and 17-year-olds. For many, retail is their first job, but one of the first things they experience is being abused or yelled at. That is not right. When I was a retail worker, we always used to say, "The customer is always right." But in this instance, the customer is not always right. Members of the public have to respect retail workers. Many retail workers are women or teenagers entering the workforce for the very first time. They should not be subjected to yelling or abuse or thrown chickens or being spat at or stalked or assaulted or harassed.

It is a no-go. The Government has no tolerance for that.

People go to work to earn a wage, make ends meet and pay the bills. They should not have to worry about their personal safety. I have worked in retail, as have many members. Many of us had very good experiences. But something has happened in our society. I say to the people of New South Wales that they should be very tolerant and supportive of and patient and respectful towards retail workers. Those workers have a right to feel safe and be safe when they go to work, and these strong laws will continue to protect them. Every worker deserves to go to work safely, work in a safe environment and come home safely.

*Documents***LAW REFORM COMMISSION****Reports**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Law Reform Commission Act 1967, I table report No. 152 of the Law Reform Commission, entitled *Serious Road Crime*, dated February 2025.

*Business of the House***SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDER: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:11):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to permit:

- (1) The member for Newtown to be called on at the commencement of Government business this day to give the mover's second reading speech for the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025, after which debate may continue or be adjourned.
- (2) The Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 to be called on in order to proceed through any or all remaining stages at any time during the time allocated for consideration of Government business.
- (3) After 6.30 p.m. today and on Wednesday 14 May 2025:
  - (a) no quorums be called;
  - (b) any divisions called for during Government business to be deferred until 10.30 a.m. on the following sitting day; and
  - (c) provide that, during consideration of all remaining business, the following motions may not be moved:
    - (i) member be not further heard;
    - (ii) member be now heard; and
    - (iii) question be now put.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (13:12):** Given that members are allowed a conscience vote on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025, it would be helpful if the Leader of the House would indicate how he wishes to proceed. Paragraph (1) of the motion states, "after which debate may continue or be adjourned," which suggests that other Government business may be interposed. It would be fair for members to know how debate on the bill will proceed, given that it is a somewhat unusual conscience vote for members on both sides of the House.

**Mr RON HOENIG (Heffron—Minister for Local Government) (13:13):** In reply: If the House supports my motion, I propose that after lunch at 2.30 p.m., when Government business is due to commence, the member for Newtown proceed with her second reading speech. The motion was worded in this way because Government members have second reading speeches to make on other bills at some point either today or tomorrow, and public interest debates are scheduled for 5.00 p.m. on those days. I intend to treat the bill as Government business while not impeding other Government business. It is a conscience vote.

I certainly do not know how many members of the House will participate in the debate on this bill, but Government business will need to be completed. As I said, a number of second reading speeches will be interposed at various stages, usually after a break. That is usually the most convenient time for the House. I hope that is clear. If debate is concluded either today or tomorrow, there are bills listed to proceed today and tomorrow. There is plenty of Government business to proceed with as well as community recognition statements and private members' business that have to be dealt with today and tomorrow.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Documents***UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with Standing Order 117, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 13 May 2025.

*Committees***LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE****Reports**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 29/58*, dated 13 May 2025. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105 (3) general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 2687 to 2744 and general business orders of the day (for bills) Health Services Amendment (Industrial Relations) Bill 2024, Road Transport Amendment (Driving Through Floodwaters) Bill 2024 (No 2) and Automated External Defibrillators (Public Access) Bill (No 3) 2024 have lapsed.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.30 p.m.

*Bills***ABORTION LAW REFORM AMENDMENT (HEALTH CARE ACCESS) BILL 2025****Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (14:31):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

It is my absolute pleasure to introduce the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 to the Legislative Assembly on behalf of The Greens and my colleague in the other place, Dr Amanda Cohn, who is present in the advisers area. I thank her for introducing this important bill to the Parliament. Six years ago, along with many other members, I was very proud to co-sponsor the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019, which finally decriminalised abortion in this State. Even then, at that watershed moment, we knew that decriminalisation was the first step of many and would not be the last. I am pleased that we are now taking the next very important step to ensure the work done to decriminalise abortion is followed through by ensuring all people have access to this critical health care. Even in 2019, as we passed the critical reform to decriminalise abortion and remove it from the Crimes Act, we knew that legislation would never be enough on its own and that ensuring access was a critical part of the reform.

No-one knows the negative impacts and issues that arise from a lack of access better than those who seek to provide reproductive health care to people in regional and remote communities. That is why it is so powerful that this bill was developed and introduced by Dr Amanda Cohn, The Greens member of the upper House. During the 2019 debate on decriminalisation, Dr Cohn joined other healthcare practitioners in Wodonga to write an open letter to the former New South Wales Government that outlined the cross-border disparity in access to abortion and urged the former Government to support the landmark reform. The group wrote:

We ask that you similarly allow colleagues and our patients the freedom to make these choices safely, in their own communities, and without fear of prosecution.

Sadly, despite those calls when we passed the long-overdue reforms to decriminalise abortion, there are still vast swathes of the State where people cannot access a vital health service. Only three of the 220 public hospitals in New South Wales consistently and openly provide abortion services. Rural and regional communities disproportionately bear the brunt of the inconsistency, with people in regional and remote communities forced to drive hours to access their right to choose.

Last year, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported on a woman who became pregnant six months after a caesarean and developed a life-threatening pulmonary embolism. She was only able to access the care she needed at Westmead Hospital after she was turned away by four private clinics after waiting weeks for an appointment and being quoted several hundred dollars for the procedure.

The same report highlighted the story of a single mother of several children who had sought an abortion immediately after discovering she was pregnant at 10 weeks. After waiting weeks for the available appointments at a community-based provider and being initially quoted \$700 for the care she required, she was not able to get an appointment in a timely manner. At that point the cost of the care she required had risen to \$2,000. It took over two months for her to access the abortion care she needed at a public hospital.

When reporting from the ABC and *The Guardian* revealed the scale and prevalence of barriers to abortion access in New South Wales, there was widespread outrage and concern in this place and beyond. The Greens knew then, as we know now, that that outrage alone, without action, was never going to be enough. That is why today I am so pleased to introduce this bill to this House. What the bill seeks to do is as simple as it is consequential. It would allow nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives—highly trained, highly skilled, professionally qualified essential workers in our public health system and health services in this State—to prescribe medical abortions. That will have an immediate, major impact on access to reproductive justice, particularly in regional and remote communities, where many struggle to get an appointment with a GP or cannot access the health care that they require.

To enable that change, schedule 1 [3] to [5] expands the class of health practitioners who may perform a termination on a person who is not more than 22 weeks pregnant to include prescribed health practitioners defined as a medical practitioner, an endorsed midwife, a nurse practitioner or another registered health practitioner as prescribed by regulation. It is worth noting that the Therapeutic Goods Administration [TGA] has allowed nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe medical abortions since 2023. That position is supported by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, Family Planning Australia, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners and the Australian Medical Association (NSW).

While other States and Territories acted more swiftly to implement the TGA's position, New South Wales was lagging behind. With this landmark reform, brought to the New South Wales Parliament by The Greens, we have a chance to finally catch up and end the postcode lottery when it comes to people's ability to access abortions in this State. Members of this Chamber are listening closely to this debate and will vote with their conscience on this issue. This week they will have received correspondence from Dr Gillian Gibson, president of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, who reaffirmed RANZCOG's support to expand power to prescribe in this way and reiterated that this change will increase access in rural, regional and remote areas. Members also would have seen the statement from the president of the Australian Medical Association (NSW), Dr Kathryn Austin, addressing misinformation circulating about The Greens abortion access bill and calling for respect for an evidence-based approach to this policy area.

In debate on this bill in the other place, it was evident that there was some confusion about how expanding the power to prescribe medical abortions would impact on health practitioner standards. To be perfectly clear, nothing in this bill would impact the existing and extremely rigorous regulatory framework for healthcare practitioners, including the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act and the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act. Nurses and midwives would only be able to prescribe medical abortions; they would not be able to perform surgical abortions to up to 22 weeks gestation, as some members seemed to fear and have spread rumours that would be the case. To make it very clear, during debate in the other place, the Hon. Penny Sharpe moved an amendment relating to that specific clause to reassure members that that was not intended. Schedule 1 [3], section 5 (4) states:

- (5) Nothing in this section—
  - (a) permits a prescribed health practitioner to act outside the practitioner's scope of practice, or
  - (b) affects a prescribed health practitioner's obligation to practice consistently with the practitioner's relevant professional standards, or
  - (c) affects the operation of the *Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966*, the *Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022* or any other law governing a prescribed health practitioner's practice.

Surgical abortions would remain outside their scope of practice, and appropriate action through the Health Care Complaints Commission would remain available if practitioners act beyond that scope.

In debate in the other place it also became clear that members from all sides of politics want more information about abortion services being accessed in New South Wales. As such, schedule 1 [8] to the bill seeks to establish an annual reporting duty for the Secretary of the Ministry of Health that would require them to supply to the Presiding Officer of each House for tabling a report setting out:

- (i) a description of abortion service availability by region,
- (ii) detailed information about access to, and waiting times for, abortion services,

- (iii) information about the clinical performance of abortion service delivery, including how safely and effectively abortion services were delivered,
- (iv) information about any adverse events or clinical incidents reported in connection with terminations,
- (v) information about the performance of terminations in the State, by reference to region and district

It is our hope that the information included in that report will be part of the broad evidence base used to inform ongoing work in this important policy space. There has been an enormous amount of misinformation about the bill. Therefore, I urge all members who are currently considering their positions on it to ensure that they look closely at the bill before the House that we are debating today. I caution members who may have a tendency to look at speeches made by members in the other place to make sure that they are speaking in this Chamber to the bill before us, because significant amendments have been made to its original drafting. It is critical that we debate the bill before us in this Chamber and not prosecute arguments made in the other place about a different version of the bill.

That said, as originally drafted, the bill did include a duty for the public health system to provide abortion services. The Greens know that that requirement does not strictly need to be legislated, but we want to ensure that the Government is required to resource and support public health care, and that it is given priority and attention. It is unacceptable that people are being turned away from public hospitals in Queanbeyan and Orange because those hospitals are not adequately equipped to provide abortions. And they are only the hospitals that we know about, because patients and health workers at Queanbeyan and Orange were courageous enough to tell their stories to the media. We seek to legislate that provision to simply require that the Government provides the necessary services and the necessary access for people across New South Wales.

I acknowledge that the health Minister is in the Chamber. We should not have to rely on whistleblowers or individuals who have experienced traumatic events going to the media about the challenges they are facing at a public hospital for the Government to intervene in those processes. It cannot be on a case-by-case basis. We need full funding for public abortion services in our public healthcare system across the State. Primary care and non-government providers, including Family Planning and many others, do absolutely outstanding work to ensure that community members can access their right to choose, but they cannot be the only solution.

Last November in question time the Premier affirmed his Government's commitment to providing transparent and safe avenues for abortion care in New South Wales. That was in response to a question I asked about what the New South Wales Labor Government was doing to ensure full access to abortion and all reproductive healthcare services in the public health system. He said:

Members would be aware that, in most cases, medical or surgical abortions are provided in primary care or private practice settings, but of course we recognise that the public hospital network has a role to play here. That will be fully funded, and the services will be available.

While we welcome the Premier's position and thank him for it, and while it is all well and good to say that, we also know that ensuring fully funded, readily available abortion services in the public system is, sadly, simply not a reality at the moment. That is why we wanted the weight of legislation to ensure that it was the case. That said, that provision is no longer in the bill currently before the House, but it does not prevent the health Minister or Government members contributing to debate on the bill to put on record once more their commitment to ensuring that that is the case.

In turn, I give members The Greens' commitment that we will continue to hold the Government to account for this promise, so that we can see it delivered for people across New South Wales.

I acknowledge that this bill and debate are possible only because of generations of reproductive justice activists, feminists and other people who have campaigned for a woman's right to choose—for people to have access to safe reproductive health care. Those who have gone before us have fearlessly fought for our right to choose. In 2019, when the member for Sydney introduced the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill, I was proud to join my colleague in the other place Abigail Boyd as co-sponsors on behalf of The Greens, alongside the members representing the electorates of Blue Mountains, Keira, Summer Hill, Maitland, North Shore and Lake Macquarie, and the former members representing the electorates of South Coast, Wakehurst and Port Macquarie, as well as members in the other place the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Hon. Emma Hurst and the Hon. Trevor Khan.

Even in 2025, abortion access remains a hotly contested issue. We have a long way to go before it is finally treated, wholly and uncontroversially, as the matter of basic health care that it is. In 2022, when we saw the United States face a major reversal in reproductive rights with the overturning of *Roe v Wade*, we saw Australians turn up in their thousands in the pouring rain on George Street to say, loudly and clearly, that we will not go back. We will not allow organised right-wing groups to take away our right to access essential reproductive health care, and we will keep being loud and keep fighting to ensure that all those who need to access abortion care are able to do so, regardless of their postcode. This bill is an essential expansion of access to health care—access to reproductive

rights at a time when we are seeing abortion bans imposed in several states in the United States and organised campaigns of harmful disinformation that have caused considerable stress in our own communities.

Whenever we debate legislation where Government and Opposition members are granted a conscience vote, we know that much of the debate will contain personal stories. It will contain details about members' personal views and the values and experiences that have shaped their position. I am incredibly proud and pleased to be part of a party that does not grant a conscience vote on such matters, because I strongly believe that it should be the conscience of the person who is choosing whether to have an abortion that guides their decision. It is not for those of us in this House, who do not even know them, to allow our consciences to dictate what choice they have to make.

That said—and given that many members will currently be weighing up their own personal views and beliefs and, indeed, preparing to share their personal stories—I believe it is only fitting for me to do the same. At the age of 20 I was in London. I would never have imagined at that age that I would now be standing in this Chamber, debating this kind of law reform. I was working at a cocktail bar in Soho and was about halfway through a year-long backpacking adventure. Having a child was not on my radar, and it was certainly not what I intended or wanted. When I found out that I was pregnant, it was clear to me straightaway that I did not want to go through with it—that I wanted to have an abortion. I decided to have an abortion.

Unfortunately, my first step in trying to do this involved a very unhelpful and insensitive GP, who was clearly unhappy with my desire to not become a mother at the age of 20 and did not hide his own anti-choice agenda from me. Thankfully, after that unpleasant, confronting and hurtful experience—let's just say that having someone undertaking an internal examination of you and then undermining your autonomy to make a decision about your own body or your own future is fairly degrading—I found myself connected with an NHS clinic, a public clinic, and supported by healthcare professionals who gave me the option of taking a pill and looked after me during the relatively pain-free and stress-free medical termination procedure.

I have said publicly on record before, when we have talked about choice and access to reproductive health care, that I found the birth of my daughter a hell of a lot more traumatic than the termination at the age of 20. It was a simple procedure, and I was supported and assisted by a very good public healthcare system. This is how public health care should work. Sadly, for so many in New South Wales, despite us decriminalising abortion, this is not how it works.

As someone who was able to be the beneficiary of this kind of care at the age of 20, I hope that, with the support of members across the divide, we will be able to take the step of making this trauma-free option available to others, to make it easy for people to make the choices that are right for them, and not stand in their way.

It is fitting that a regional Greens MP, Dr Amanda Cohn, started the passage of the bill in the other place and that I, as a very inner-city Greens MP, continue the struggle in this place, because the bill ultimately seeks to remove the disadvantage and increase the access of those who, due to geographic, socio-economic and other reasons, are not able to access abortion care. It is much less an issue for the constituents that I represent, but it should not be a postcode lottery that determines who gets access to this health care. I reassure members listening to the debate who are feeling unsure about the prospect of supporting a Greens bill that many organisations and groups support the reform. Indeed, I remind members that NSW Health made a similar recommendation in recent times. I read from the letter provided by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists [RANZCOG] in support of the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025, which states:

RANZCOG supports equitable access to sexual and reproductive health care, including abortion. Women should be able to access the method of abortion most appropriate to their clinical circumstances, informed by their values and preferences, and free from coercion. Health professionals have a duty to provide evidence-based, unbiased information that supports informed consent and shared decision-making.

It is absolutely critical that we recognise that there are medical professionals on the front lines of providing health care across the State who are supportive of the reform. It is also absolutely critical that we remember that, if we do not increase access for people in this State, there is a genuine risk that there will be more harm done and trauma caused, not only to the health professionals who are finding themselves unable to deliver the services they wish to and are trained to deliver, but also to so many people who are unable to access this critical health care.

The Greens have always known that rights that can be granted and revoked through legislation are never set in stone, and that it is our responsibility to stand with the women's rights and reproductive rights activists pushing hard to ensure that our rights are accessible and not rolled back. I urge members in this place to support the bill. Should they have any questions during the course of the debate, I encourage them to speak with me and my Greens colleague Dr Amanda Cohn, who is available to speak to them in further detail.



## Second Reading Debate

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (14:52):** I contribute to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I acknowledge the contribution of the member for Newtown, and I acknowledge the work of Dr Amanda Cohn as the member who introduced the bill in the other place. She has been a collaborative legislator across the political divide on a difficult issue. On behalf of the Parliament, I thank her for that collaboration. This is a conscience vote for Government members. I therefore speak as the Minister for Health, but not as a Government spokesperson. I make that distinction very clear from the beginning.

My colleagues will have an opportunity to interpret and vote on the legislation, and I encourage them to do that. It is important that we outline that very clearly. I thank the member for Newtown for her speech. It is important that all members who speak to the bill acknowledge that at times the conversation can be very difficult for people, including our colleagues, people they represent or family members. It is important that members engage in the debate in a respectful way. I certainly hold the view that the way members show themselves to the community during the debate is an important part of what members do in this place.

I start by making the obvious point that abortion care is health care. It is and has been a very personal and important part of health care for a long time.

Those who have known me personally and professionally know that this has been an issue that I have discussed, debated, and agitated and advocated for for a long time. I acknowledge the work that Dr Amanda Cohn has done for this bill. I acknowledge the work of the co-sponsors of the bill, which I was a part of, including the member for Newtown, Minister Penny Sharpe in the other place, the member for Sydney, former Minister Brad Hazzard and many others. There were about 19 of us in total who backed the 2019 bill which opened up this debate.

This bill is now very narrow after the amendments made in the other place. I echo the view of the member for Newtown that, as legislators, it is important that we speak to the current bill. I will now make some remarks about the broader issues of the original bill, as the member for Newtown did, for the simple purpose of outlining my perspective as an individual member, my "health perspective" as the Minister for Health and to touch on how we got to this place. I acknowledge the work of Dr Amanda Cohn, Penny Sharpe and others who I have liaised with across the Government. I also note that the shadow Minister for Health is in the Chamber today. It is important for the community to see how seriously the Government, Opposition and crossbench are taking this discussion. I thank members for this.

I have formed my view based on my personal convictions and beliefs which are very strong and have not wavered for a long time either personally or professionally. This is important. I have also been able to obtain information and broad advice from the team at NSW Health about how a piece of legislation like this may interact with health services. I will contribute to this debate from both of these perspectives. I will say from the outset that this is a delicate balance for a Minister of the Crown. As the Minister for Health, it is difficult to act on my own conscience while knowing what I bring to this debate as the Minister.

I will briefly go through the four elements of the original bill and why I have decided to take a position on each of them. They have now been amended and are much narrower. The first element sought to mandate that the Minister for Health would be responsible for ensuring that abortion services in the State were provided within a reasonable distance from people's homes and that information about access to services was publicly available. I have made it very clear that I completely understand and am highly sympathetic to the intent behind improving access, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas. As was acknowledged by the member for Newtown, access to services five, 10 or 15 kilometres from here is very different to access 500 or 1,000 kilometres from here. This is largely the case for all health services.

I understand the intent behind this part of the bill, but I had a number of concerns, particularly around inconsistency, which have largely been ventilated. We do not have any other health services which are legislated in this way. Services we provide for dialysis, diabetes support or cancer therapies and services are not done in this way, and that is an important distinction to make from the beginning. This does not mean in any way, shape or form that we do not have a desire to improve access, because we do. I am responsible and accountable for doing this.

Women's health issues have always been important to me, as a feminist, and I am determined to see them improved.

I take seriously the input from members across the political spectrum, including Dr Cohn in the other place, about how we might do that. With a piece of legislation such as this, there is a challenge around implementation. It would be very difficult to fulfil that service provision. It depends on a range of factors. Staffing is significant and the ability to do it would be challenging with the staffing challenges that we have now and that jurisdictions

globally are facing. We also have concerns about that provision because of the power it would bestow on the Minister for Health to give directions to the Health secretary or a public health organisation. It is not clear that consultation occurred about allowing the Minister to give directions to affiliated health organisations, such as faith-based hospitals, to provide these types of services. This particular area did not reflect any of the recommendations from the statutory review, which I used as part of my thinking and decision-making on the bill.

The second component, importantly, is the scope of practice expansions. The second change to the Act was to allow nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and other prescribed registered health practitioners to prescribe abortion medication. I support that provision and was pleased to see that it passed the other place, albeit with amendments, which I also support. As Dr Cohn previously outlined and the member for Newtown touched on, the Therapeutic Goods Administration, or TGA, and the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme—the PBS, as we know it—amended restrictions on the drug MS-2 Step. That is a two-part medication that induces the termination of pregnancy and can be prescribed at up to 63 days of gestation, or nine weeks. Previously, MS-2 Step could only be prescribed by a medical practitioner.

The changes made by the TGA mean that that drug can now be prescribed by any healthcare practitioner with appropriate qualifications and training, including nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives. Nurse practitioners are a group of health professionals that many of us are familiar with. They are highly trained professionals. Their training is tough, long and arduous. If we could get more of them, we would. I assure the House that the group of health professionals that Dr Cohn is dealing with in this proposal are highly respected, highly qualified and highly trained. Importantly for members, all other jurisdictions have made changes to their regulatory frameworks to implement or mirror this change, except Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Not all jurisdictions require legislative amendment to implement the change; however, that is the case in New South Wales.

The *Report on the Statutory Review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019* recommended that the Government consider amending the Act to allow for the change to be implemented in New South Wales. The report noted that there was "strong support" for this change among respondents to the consultation process and that "allowing nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe medical abortion would increase access significantly, particularly in rural areas". The way I approach the bill is to ask how we increase access to and availability of this health care for women. The member for Newtown rightly pointed out that availability and access to this level of health care—and I would argue that this is probably the case across most health care—is very different in an electorate like hers compared with the community Dr Cohn is from. That is a reality that we have to deal with. This part of the bill tries to address that.

I now address some misinformation that I have become aware of about the change, which is unfortunately going around in some circles. Some are saying that the provision applies to nurses and midwives; that is not the case. It applies specifically to nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives. That is the classification of healthcare professional that Dr Cohn's legislation, albeit amended, focuses on. As I said, they have undergone extensive additional university training and supervision, and they have many years of specialist and clinical experience.

Importantly, they work both autonomously and collaboratively with other health professionals and are able to prescribe medicines and request diagnostic investigations, including ultrasounds and pathology.

Two key amendments were made to this proposal in the other place, both of which I support. The first was to remove a regulation-making power allowing additional registered health practitioners to perform terminations. The stated purpose of this proposal was to provide some future flexibility for changes by the TGA and PBS where appropriate. I understand that was the intent. I also understand that this proposal has created some concern among a range of community members and stakeholders. I am conscious that law reform in this area of health care remains a sensitive issue for many people both within the Chamber and outside, and that this level of flexibility is perhaps something we, as a State, are not yet ready for.

The second amendment to this proposal was moved by my colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe. I thank her for the amendment proposed in her capacity as a private member, not as a member of the Government. I discussed this amendment in detail with my colleague, and with other members over the past couple of months, and it is one that I support. The amendment moved by the Hon. Penny Sharpe provides clarification that the amendment to section 5 of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019 proposed by the bill does not permit a prescribed health practitioner to act outside their scope of practice, affect their obligation to practise consistently with their relevant professional standards, or affect the operation of the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act, the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act or any other law governing a prescribed health practitioner's practice.

The amendment makes it abundantly clear on the face of the bill that nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives cannot act outside their scope of practice—for example, to allow them to conduct surgical terminations. That will not be allowed and was never going to be allowed. To be clear, the bill would absolutely not have

allowed that in any event. However, I am glad the amendment was moved to ensure that there can be no doubt or confusion for anyone reading the bill or interpreting the Act once it has passed or moved through this place in some form. The change proposed by the bill to allow nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe MS-2 Step is an important one. It is in line with recommendations from medical and policy experts, and brings New South Wales into line with the rest of the country. It will be a key reform to improve access to a legitimate health service across New South Wales, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas.

The third change proposed by the bill was to amend the Abortion Law Reform Act in respect of conscientious objection. It would have required practitioners with a conscientious objection to abortion to identify themselves as having that objection and to transfer the care of patients requesting a termination to a practitioner who would provide the service. I was not supportive of this change and am pleased to see it was amended in the other place. Currently under the Act, a health practitioner must give the woman information about how to locate a practitioner who provides terminations or transfer care directly to another practitioner or provider who provides terminations. Instead, the bill would have required transfer of care in all circumstances.

Conscientious objection and the role of practitioners who have this objection to the provision of abortion service was a topic that was heavily debated and thoroughly canvassed during the debate in 2019 in this place and in the other place. A number of amendments on this topic were moved and voted on. I believe the balance the Parliament landed on is a delicate one that is right for New South Wales. In my view, it is not one that should be relitigated or changed at this time. Furthermore, this proposal is not consistent with the recommendations of the report on the statutory review of the Act which, as I outlined earlier, I used to form my view. Instead, the report recommended:

The Ministry of Health explore ways to increase understanding and awareness of section 9 of the Act in order to balance the rights of practitioners with a conscientious objection, with the rights of women to receive timely care and treatment. This could include a review of current (and if necessary, the development of new) policy documents and training related to termination of pregnancy.

I have been working to address that, together with NSW Health, and I will go into little more detail later in my remarks.

The fourth change proposed by the bill was to remove section 15 from the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019. Section 15 requires medical practitioners to provide information to the Health secretary within 28 days of providing an abortion. I was pleased that this change was amended out of the bill in the other place. Access to timely and accurate data about abortions, as with any health procedure, assists service providers with planning for future service needs. However, I acknowledge there are issues with the current reporting requirements, as identified by a range of stakeholders during that important consultation phase for the report on the statutory review of the Act. The report recommended that:

The Ministry of Health review the data notification requirements to consider how this may be improved to ensure data is consistently reported and of sufficient quality, to support service planning and, if necessary, update.

I have asked the Ministry of Health to review the data notification and reporting processes, including the current online forum. I expect that to be reviewed towards the end of the year. I understand a number of additional amendments were proposed in the other place. Some of them sought to relitigate issues that were canvassed quite extensively in debate on the 2019 bill. I will not address those amendments, other than to say I am pleased they were not successful. Members of the 2019 Parliament would recall we went up hill and down dale on the issue of abortion over the course of almost 60 hours of debate and in hundreds of amendments. In my view, through the course of that debate the Parliament landed on a delicate balance that is right for New South Wales at this time.

An amendment to the bill was passed in the other place, requiring the Secretary of NSW Health to prepare an annual report to Parliament setting out the following matters relating to abortion access: a description of abortion service availability by region; detailed information about access to and waiting times for abortion services; information about the clinical performance of abortion service delivery, including how safely and effectively abortion services were delivered; information about any adverse events or clinical incidents reported in connection with terminations; information about the performance of terminations in the State, in relation and by reference to region and district; providing funding to non-government organisations to boost targeted support for women who experience significant barriers to accessing abortion care; and increasing training for NSW Health staff and primary care partners who provide abortion care and support to women, including to strengthen understanding and awareness of conscientious objection provisions in the Act.

In closing, I thank my constituents, members of the community, members of the healthcare industry, policy experts, the union movement, women's rights advocates, faith-based groups, stakeholders and members of Parliament who contacted me personally, my electorate office and my ministerial office in the lead-up to debate on the bill. I particularly thank my staff. Those three amazing women in the Speaker's gallery worked incredibly hard on the bill. Rosie Rand and Lynden Bartrim led the policy work. They were great sounding boards for me as

I worked through this challenging piece of legislation. They also helped members across the Parliament in many ways. Of course, I thank my acting chief of staff, Jenelle Rimmer, for helping to steer a very busy legislative and policy load. She made sure we gave the bill the attention it required and helped members to engage with us and with NSW Health.

I understand that many stakeholders have many different views. As the Minister for Health, I respect those views and always will. This is a difficult topic and not everyone is always going to agree. That was the case with the 2019 bill. I thank Dr Amanda Cohn again for her consultative approach to working on the bill. I echo the words of my colleague in the other place Minister Penny Sharpe, who said we have worked together and tried our very best to provide the Parliament with accurate information about the bill, including what it does and does not involve, and also about any amendments to it. I thank her for her transparency and honesty. That was appreciated by Ministers and parliamentarians from both Houses.

I also thank the policy experts at the New South Wales Ministry of Health and NSW Health broadly for their work and guidance on this bill and legislation, particularly given the enormous policy and reform work being undertaken by the Government across health care at the moment. I particularly thank the healthcare workers across our local health districts who are working tirelessly right now to improve access to women's health care, including abortion care, in New South Wales. They are the front line when women have what are no doubt very difficult conversations. The initial conversation with a GP that the member for Newtown recalled in her second reading speech is one that we hope to change, and I take that very seriously as health Minister. I thank those healthcare professionals on the front line, through GPs within community practices and also in our public health system, for the work they do every day to support women at what is no doubt a very difficult time.

As I said at the beginning of my contribution, as Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health, I have the difficult role but also the privilege of having key decisions on this issue in my bailiwick. However, there are some decisions that need to be made not by Executive Government or public officials but by democratically elected members of the Parliament. Those are decisions we face as we debate and vote on this bill. I encourage all members to take the time to consider the bill carefully. The decisions we make in this place will have a lasting impact on the health of women and their ability to access health care. I once again ask members to engage in this debate respectfully. I thank Dr Amanda Cohn for her work in relation to the bill, and I thank all members for their respectful engagement. I acknowledge my colleagues, as Ministers and Government members, and also the shadow Minister, who is in the Chamber today.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (15:16):** I speak in support of the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. The bill is a matter of conscience for members of this House, and I recognise that views differ, often deeply. I respect those differences I know that for many in our communities and in this Parliament this is not an abstract debate; it is personal, it is emotional and it is complex. I have tried to approach the issue with care, consultation and a deep sense of responsibility as the shadow Minister for Health and as someone who believes that every woman in this State deserves dignity, safety and access when it comes to her reproductive health. Before I go any further, I acknowledge Dr Amanda Cohn from the other place. I thank her for her professionalism in the way she has engaged with members from across the political divide. I also acknowledge the health Minister and his staff, who have been very helpful with their engagement.

Let me start by clarifying what the bill does and what it no longer does. The bill before us has been significantly amended since it was first introduced in the upper House. It no longer mandates statewide service provision within a reasonable distance of homes, nor does it require medical professionals with a conscientious objection to refer patients elsewhere. It also no longer removes mandatory notification requirements. For a range of reasons, while I am sympathetic to the intent of that, I would not have supported those provisions in the upper House.

But I do support what is before us. What remains is a targeted, practical measure to improve access to early medical abortion, specifically by allowing nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe MS-2 Step medication up to nine weeks gestation. That is in line with the Therapeutic Goods Administration decision in August 2023 and reflects current clinical guidelines. Crucially, that provision does not allow anyone to operate beyond their training or professional standards. In fact, the bill explicitly affirms that no nurse practitioner or endorsed midwife may act outside of their scope of practice, and all prescriptions must comply with the Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act and relevant Commonwealth law.

This is supported by NSW Health, the Australian Medical Association, the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and most jurisdictions across the country. Let us be clear: Nurse practitioners are highly trained professionals with advanced clinical education and diagnostic capability. They already have prescribing rights for many medications. In many regional and rural areas, they are the front line of care. In some communities without a regular GP they

are often the only accessible health provider. Empowering them to provide MS-2 Step within strict safeguards helps close a troubling gap in our system.

Research from Family Planning Australia shows that 28 per cent of New South Wales local government areas have no doctor providing medical abortion scripts. Access drops off sharply outside of metropolitan Sydney. This disparity is real, and it is unjust. Walgett, Condobolin, Wellington, Mudgee and Dubbo are just some of the regional towns reported in the press in recent months as facing GP shortages. Notably, Orange base hospital, at a large regional centre, directed staff to stop providing surgical abortions to patients, leaving women, who have a legal right to that service, without care in that region. Regional women talk about—and as a regional woman described to me today—a "quiet cancelling" of abortion services and of having to drive hours and pay private fees for care.

Imagine a young woman in regional New South Wales, pregnant and scared, with no GP in her town. I would rather that young woman be able to sit down with a highly trained, highly specialist nurse practitioner who works in a local health clinic, where that practitioner could look her in the eyes, check that she is okay and check that she is making the right decision. If that young woman chooses to have a termination, that practitioner can walk her through it, and if she needs follow-up care, that practitioner will be there in the local community to provide it. Some might argue that telehealth providers are an adequate alternative—they are very good and provide such an important service for access, especially in regional communities—but it assumes that women have the necessary technology, internet access, privacy and support. That is not always the case, particularly for those who are experiencing domestic violence, coercion or isolation. It is also impersonal to some. If there is an opportunity for that woman to see a qualified nurse practitioner or an endorsed midwife, that is a far better outcome, in my opinion, than what might feel like a very impersonal online consult.

Abortion is already legal in New South Wales; the law was changed in 2019. This bill does not revisit that debate. What it addresses is access, because a legal right means little if it cannot be accessed safely and locally. We know that around one in three Australian women will access abortion services during her lifetime. We know that pregnancy termination is a time-sensitive procedure and delays increase medical complexity, cost and emotional distress. We know that when access is denied or obstructed, the consequences for health, wellbeing and equity are profound. In line with recommendation 1 of the statutory review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019, this bill brings New South Wales into alignment with the clinical and regulatory standards set by the TGA and already in place in all other States except Tasmania. Importantly, the bill also introduces a new accountability measure in the form of an annual report to Parliament that details access to abortion services by region including wait times, adverse events and clinical performance. This transparency is a welcome step.

We cannot claim to represent the health choices of women in this State while withholding practical access to that lawful care, nor can we ignore the clear direction of public sentiment. According to the Australian National University's 2022 election study, 73 per cent of Australians believe abortion should be readily available. Only 5 per cent believe it should be banned. I know for some both inside and outside this place, no abortion is acceptable, and I understand and respect what is often a faith-based, conscious choice for them. But I would say that it is already legal and we are not debating that today. What we are talking about is access. I think it is incredibly unfair that a young woman in my community might have access in the city, while others in regional areas—or parts of Western Sydney, indeed—may not. That is not fair and it is not equitable.

As the shadow Minister for Health, and as someone who believes in evidence-based policy and equitable care, I support this bill. It is not radical, and it is not reckless. It is respectful, responsible, targeted and aligned with national standards. No health practitioner will be forced to act against their conscience. I do not believe they should, and they will not be required to under this law. I am genuinely grateful that, in Australia, access to abortion care is generally treated as a public health issue rather than a political battlefield. Unlike the United States, where the debate has become deeply polarised and often dominated by extremes and misinformation, we have largely approached this issue with compassion, civility and a commitment to evidence-based policy. That does not mean we all agree—we certainly do not—but it does mean we are more inclined to listen, to consult and to find respectful common ground. I believe that is largely what we are seeing in this place and have seen in the other place.

In Australia, our parliaments have recognised that abortion is a deeply personal decision, not one to be used as a political wedge. I do not want women who happen to listen to news clips of this debate to feel afraid or judged or condemned for their choice—sometimes the toughest choice they will ever have to make. I hope we never lose that balance, because the women of Australia deserve thoughtful, respectful health care, not culture wars. I vote yes to this bill. I do so with conviction, with compassion and with the hope that we will continue building a health system that is inclusive and accessible.

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (15:25):** The debate on the Abortion Law Reform

Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 is an opportunity to reflect on the progress that we have made in New South Wales to advance reproductive health care in this State. I was proud to be part of the Fifty-Seventh Parliament that voted to settle this matter as a women's health issue, not as a crime. Passage of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 was historic. New South Wales was certainly behind the other States and Territories on the question of reproductive health care and female autonomy at that time. It was a difficult debate, but I thought it was a respectful one with strong views on both sides. As difficult as the debate was, we needed to have it. From my point of view, it resulted in better health outcomes for many people in New South Wales.

In debating the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019, I made the point that equality for women included having choice over our own bodies. These values continue to guide me as a longstanding advocate for reproductive healthcare rights. This Government has proven, through its actions, to be a champion when it comes to empowering women's choice over their health care. We have invested \$3.5 million to improve women's access to reproductive health services, including in regional New South Wales. We have made a 12-month contraceptive pill trial permanent, ensuring pharmacists can supply women continuously with the pill without them having to visit the doctor. This bill presents another opportunity for this Parliament to further advance women's choice, and I recognise the work of Dr Amanda Cohn in bringing the bill to the Parliament through the other place.

Six years on from decriminalisation of abortion and recognition of it instead as a health issue, it makes sense for this House to revisit this issue to ensure that the law is working as it was intended. I note the work of NSW Health and the statutory review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019. I thank all those who participated in the review. I speak in debate on this bill as a member of this place. I am the Minister for Women, but I am not speaking as a Minister of the Government. This is not a Government bill. We do not have a Government position on it. We have a conscience vote on it. I am bringing my personal views to this debate and, I believe, also the views of the majority of people in my electorate.

There has been much debate on this bill, and some of it has been constructive and some of it has not been as constructive.

There has been some misinformation about what the bill does. The bill in its current form represents modestly progressive but sensible reform. The bill was introduced in the other place in a different form by Greens member Dr Amanda Cohn. The amended bill before this House does not contain the provisions that concerned many who were following the debate. The bill makes no changes to conscientious objection. The bill does not compel local health districts to provide public abortion services. The bill does not scrap mandatory reporting requirements for medical practitioners. The core measure in the bill is to allow nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to administer prescribed terminations for women up to nine weeks pregnant. That is not a radical concept. It is important to note that surgical terminations will remain off limits for nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives because such procedures are outside their scope of practice.

Currently, under the Act, only doctors can prescribe and supply MS-2 Step. In 2023 the Therapeutic Goods Administration changed the rules governing who can prescribe and supply MS-2 Step to include nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives. Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have already moved on that. NSW Health's *Report on the Statutory Review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019* recommended that nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives be allowed to prescribe MS-2 Step for the purposes of a medical termination. That review was informed by consultation with stakeholders including local health districts, specialty health networks, NSW Health pillars and non-government organisations. Stakeholder feedback published in the review explained why that recommendation was necessary. One submission said, "Allowing nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe medical abortion would increase access significantly, particularly in rural areas." Another submission noted that they "were not aware of any situations where expansion of eligibility of health practitioners to perform abortions within their scope of practice has led to any negative consequences".

We have all heard about the barriers faced by women in regional and rural New South Wales when accessing abortion services. That has been raised in the debate, and I have no doubt it will be raised again. Those barriers only exacerbate the trauma and the burden on women who need to draw on their savings to find a provider who can supply the health care they need. Some of the stories from women are heartbreaking. This particular reform may not necessarily be a silver bullet for women in regional and rural New South Wales who struggle to access medical termination, but it is a step in the right direction to ease the burden. As the House resolved six years ago, this is a health matter and not a criminal matter. The days of this issue being a social stigma are behind us.

I appreciate the views expressed to me by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. President Gillian Gibson said, "The college unequivocally supports the inclusion of nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives in the provision of early medical abortion. Enabling appropriately qualified health professionals to deliver this care is a safe, evidence-based reform—and a necessary step toward ensuring

timely, equitable and patient-centred access to abortion services for women across New South Wales." I appreciate that the bill is subject to a conscience vote. In many respects, that is when this Parliament is at its best and inspires passionate and thoughtful contributions. On balance, the evidence stacks up to support the expansion of abortion services to nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives. For that reason, I will vote to support the bill.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (15:34):** I wholeheartedly support The Greens Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I agree with the Minister for Health, who said that abortion care is health care. The bill allows nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe MS-2 Step to women up to nine weeks gestation. I fully support The Greens bill because, from my experiences from where I have lived, the barriers to access women's reproductive rights are very difficult to overcome. I agree with what the member for Charlestown, the member for Newtown and the member for Vaucluse said about the postcode lottery.

In my early twenties, I lived and worked in Walgett and I remember the experiences of the young women there. We had to travel across a black soil road to Moree to see a doctor. It took two hours, which meant taking a day off work. But none of the young women wanted to see the Moree doctors because they were conservative men. I was lucky to have a car and a job, so I used to wait until the holidays to access my doctor in Newcastle. Of course, sometimes access is urgent. Many of the young women in Walgett at that time did not have a car or a job and it was very difficult for them to access the medical treatments and services they required. In many respects access has improved—but not enough. Nurse practitioners being able to perform this service on young women is important and vital. I urge all members to not make it more difficult for women to access their reproductive rights. It is hard enough as it is.

After I lived in Walgett, I moved to Kempsey, where it was almost equally as difficult. At that time, while there were more doctors in Kempsey, they were conservative Catholic men. The word on the street from women was to not go to them because they did not have much sympathy or empathy for women's reproductive rights. We chose to not go to those doctors. It was a difficult situation then but that difficulty continues today all over the State. Access is difficult and the barriers are still there, particularly for poor women who do not have access to a cars. Let us face it, public transport is difficult.

In 2019, when we debated the decriminalisation of abortion, I spoke about the experience of a person who was very close to me. I found out about her situation when I was older. At 16 she already had two children and experienced terribly difficult life circumstances. She had grown up in an orphanage. She was in a difficult marriage and could not face the thought of having a third child. She lived in the western suburbs of Newcastle, so she went to Hamilton and paid £10 for a backyard abortion. Imagine the great risks she took. That woman was my mother. I totally understand the reason my mother made that choice. She was poor and had no-one to support her. Although she had a husband, things were difficult. She already had two children at 16 and would not have been able to cope with a third.

Growing up in those circumstances, I understand why women feel how they feel. I will keep my contribution to the debate short because I know many members want to speak. I say again that I wholeheartedly support the bill. I am concerned that women all over New South Wales still face barriers when it comes to their reproductive rights. I urge all members to support the bill.

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (15:39):** I voice my opposition to the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 introduced by The Greens in the upper House. While I welcome the fact that the bill has been significantly amended, serious concerns persist, and the bill must be rejected and scrapped in its entirety. I take the opportunity to thank and commend outstanding members of the community and organisations across the Badgerys Creek electorate and Australia. Many people from the Badgerys Creek electorate have contacted me and expressed very strong opposition to the bill. In many cases, they gave a personal explanation as to why they are opposed, and I thank them for that.

Labor and The Greens have come together to use what should be time for Government business in this place to discuss a Greens bill, which is disappointing. It is unfortunate that we are now debating this bill, which is to be dealt with today. I acknowledge the incredible community leaders, the tireless workers and the average mums and dads who came out to various rallies to voice their opposition to the original bill. They still feel very strongly opposed to the amended bill we are debating today. I put on record my personal thanks to Dr Joanna Howe and her team for organising rallies and raising awareness about the bill in the community. I also acknowledge the great risk and sacrifice of those who have spoken out and rallied against this bill, as it is often the case that people feel pressure in their professional lives when they take a stance against broadening abortion services.

Contrary to what the member for Newtown said, I do not believe that the topic of abortion will ever be debated without concern, strong emotion and belief because it is fundamentally about a belief as to where life begins. The individuals and organisations who have taken the risk to speak out can be assured their effort was not

in vain. The proposed amendments include scrapping the changes to conscientious objection and scrapping the obligation of the Minister to direct the provision of abortion services, which would have imposed requirements on faith-based hospitals.

In this place, most members of Parliament—except members of The Greens political party—are gifted the opportunity to use their conscience when voting on life matters. I am grateful for that. However, I believe it is morally abhorrent that the original bill would have stripped away the conscientious objections of our fellow citizens by the wielding of our own conscience. Thankfully, that has been removed from the bill. Provisions extending the status of abortion providers to those who are not medical practitioners have been amended so that only endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners will be able to prescribe the MS-2 Step drug, if it is within their scope of practice. Nevertheless, this bill is to be rejected in its entirety because strong concerns persist.

Among those concerns is the bill's focus on abortion as the primary form of health care for pregnant women who may need assistance. That assistance could be extremely diverse. The bill expands the provision of abortion and widens the net of those who may administer abortion. Instead, options for pregnant women should be expanded through a range of measures so that pregnant women do not feel that the only answer to any physical or mental concerns or issues is the ending of their unborn baby's life. There must be access to a range of ongoing supports where physical and/or mental issues and concerns are met with the required treatment, monitoring and follow-up support. Such an expansion of support—the sharing of viable alternatives and options—never seems to find its way into these bills. The focus always seems to be simply on expanding access to abortion, not access to life advocacy, counselling, practical support and ongoing health care.

The New South Wales health system is under strain, as the Minister for Health acknowledged in question time and in his contribution to the second reading debate. Our good nurses and midwives are overworked and understaffed.

The expansion of the provision of abortion to allow endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners to administer abortion drugs is not the way to respond to the health system crisis. It simply increases their workload and responsibility. The administering of an abortion, regardless of at what stage and through what process, is a serious matter and may have physical and mental ramifications for the mother for decades. Some brave women have publicly shared their pain and regret on their choice to abort their baby. Clearly that is evidence enough that society needs to provide genuine options and support in response to the desires and wishes of those women.

In relation to drugs that medically induce abortion, a recent study reported an adverse event rate of over 10 per cent for women who access the abortion pill, with one in 20 requiring hospitalisation or a visit to an emergency department due to complications. Let that sink in. This is not simply a process of taking a pill for a headache; this is medication that induces a miscarriage. It is a serious matter. To redirect the provision of an abortion away from medical professionals is not in the interests of best health care for women. There is no indication that the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency will change its training requirements for endorsed midwives or nurse practitioners to reflect the new responsibility that the bill proposes.

On that note, the Therapeutics Goods Administration website advises that a new instruction has been included in the product information documentation for that drug. The instruction provides information about the circumstances where a person should be referred to a medical practitioner. It recognises the fact that there are occasions when doctors need to be involved. As such, the most appropriate way to assist with access is to invest in our health system so that our medical and healthcare professionals can conduct their roles without being understaffed and under-resourced, rather than just widening their responsibilities to a broader cohort. I strongly oppose the bill in its entirety.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (15:46):** I speak in debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. When I have spoken in Parliament before on conscience votes regarding abortion, euthanasia and other legislation, I have always tried to do so through the perspective and lens of social justice and human rights, which are important not only to me but also to people within my electorate of Prospect. I have always tried to reflect the views of the people of Prospect. Some 22,000 abortions are performed in New South Wales per year. There is a fiction about what a pregnancy termination or abortion is. It is hidden behind untruths, including that, at the time of the abortion, the child is not real, and that it is only a group of cells and not a fully formed person. The truth is that life begins at conception. When an abortion is performed, a human life is terminated.

It is deeply personal for a woman and her clinician to make such a terrible and hard decision. Often, it is a time of incredible difficulty and vulnerability. What has been missing in the majority of debate on the bill, particularly in the upper House, is that, regardless of someone's view on abortion, it is clear that government and



society must do more to support women—particularly single mothers, pregnant women and their families—who have financial and social challenges. Our adoption process must be improved, as well as family counselling and support services, maternity leave and paternity care, prenatal care and support for women who decide to keep their children.

The bill was introduced in the Legislative Council by a member of The Greens, Dr Amanda Cohn, MLC, and has been introduced into this House by The Greens member for Newtown. I acknowledge both of them and note they are in the adviser's area.

It is important to note that this is a private member's bill moved by The Greens, not a Labor Government bill. The Government does not openly support the bill but has allowed a conscience vote. There is a misconception that the bill implements recommendations of the statutory review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019, conducted in November 2023. That is not wholly correct. The recommendations identified by the statutory review were predominantly non-legislative, but the bill attempts to legislate beyond those recommendations.

In February this year the bill was introduced in the other place to require public hospitals in New South Wales to offer abortion as health care. It responded to reports of limitations being placed on abortion services in some hospitals in New South Wales—inflammatory reports that declared that hospitals had imposed abortion bans. In reality, some public hospitals, such as in Orange and Queanbeyan, internally changed their guidelines on the provision of abortions. Concerns followed that parts of our State had become abortion deserts, with women having to travel over 160 kilometres to access the medical procedure.

In debate in the other place and again today, The Greens have claimed that the bill endeavours to better protect the rights and health care of women in New South Wales. But, in my opinion, whether it had been passed as originally drafted or in its current form, it would have the counter effect. The bill would impede the rights and freedoms of hardworking health practitioners by forcing them to act, even in circumstances that may contradict their conscientious objection. It would also reduce abortion to a single-faceted issue when it is not. The bill does not extend health care; it legislates individual choices where a balanced approach already exists.

In the electorate of Prospect, I am proud to represent a very strong faith community. Prospect is home to one of the largest and most active faith communities in New South Wales, and I have received many letters—including in my mailbox at home—emails and phone calls about the bill over the past few months. I thank those members of my community for taking the time to share their perspectives with me. They have highlighted a distinct concern with all sections of the original bill, particularly the impact it will have on the right to conscientious objection for healthcare practitioners and faith-based hospitals. I received this letter from a resident of Greystanes:

Dear Dr McDermott,

I am writing to express my concerns about the Abortion Bill that has been introduced in the NSW Parliament. I am particularly troubled by the attack on the conscience of clinicians, as well as the expansion of abortion access statewide.

The risks to the safety and mental health of women cannot be overlooked, especially considering the potential complications of administering the abortion drug MS-2 Step. It is alarming that the review by NSW Health into abortion services advised against changes to conscientious objection, yet this bill seeks to undermine that.

Furthermore, the possibility that Christian hospitals could be directed by the NSW Health minister to provide abortions against their beliefs is deeply concerning. I strongly urge you to oppose this bill and protect the rights of healthcare professionals who have conscientious objections to abortion.

That letter illustrates the concern in my community. It is a concern for nurses, mothers, midwives, university students, retirees, doctors, teachers and, of course, unborn children. As the member for Prospect, my priority is to represent the views expressed to me by my community. In recognition of that duty, I must address the challenges the bill presents. Following the introduction of the bill, members in the other place—passionate advocates from all sides of the Chamber—spoke out about their objections. They highlighted the most problematic sections. Working collaboratively, they reformed the bill and tried their best to reshape it into a balanced piece of legislation. I take a moment to discuss the key challenges posed by the bill in its first print and highlight the amendments that tried to fix it.

In the bill's first print, at item [2] of schedule 1, the bill sought to introduce part 1A to the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019. It sought to impose a positive obligation on the health Minister to ensure abortion services are available across New South Wales within a "reasonable distance" from residents. In effect, that would have enabled and even required the Minister to issue binding directions to the Secretary of NSW Health and public health organisations. That could place additional pressure on our already under-resourced hospitals in the regions. It also disrupts local autonomy and the autonomy of medical practitioners. The section was drafted recklessly, offering no definition to quantify a "reasonable distance". That confusing language has no practical application. Fortunately, that proposed section has been rejected and removed from the bill.

In item [9] of schedule 1, the bill originally sought to alter the conscientious objection provision housed within subsection (3) of section 9 of the abortion Act. Those changes would have required health practitioners to provide a medical abortion and, if they objected, to directly transfer a patient's care to alternative abortion services. Posing the greatest concern to people within my electorate and to me personally, those changes within the bill have also been removed. As the bill stands before the Legislative Assembly today, it will not make any changes to the current conscientious objection provisions within the Act, thus protecting doctors, health professionals and hospitals when making a conscientious objection to providing abortion services.

In schedule 1, items [3] to [5], the bill expanded the class of health practitioners considered prescribed health practitioners under the Act to include midwives and nurse practitioners. That expansion enables nurses and endorsed midwives to provide the medicine MS-2 Step for women up to nine weeks pregnant, or to perform a surgical termination on a woman up to 22 weeks pregnant. That amendment remains in the current bill and will mean the expansion of abortion services in New South Wales. *[Extension of time]*

I thank the House for its indulgence. Originally, the bill also sought to remove section 15 of the Act, a requirement for anonymous reporting of terminations to the Ministry of Health. That is an important accountability mechanism that enables better understanding of women's holistic health needs in those situations. A key amendment passed in the Legislative Council saw the reinstatement of the reporting obligation under section 15A. If the bill in its original form had passed as intended, it would have seen our health practitioners lose their right to conscientious objection. It would have deprived them of a fundamental freedom. Every health practitioner, including our nurses, GPs and midwives, has a right to provide care for their patients without being forced to breach their core beliefs.

Never in any other health context in New South Wales have we legislated for health practitioners to act against their own values. Many of our health practitioners are people of faith. Many elect to work at hospitals or healthcare institutions where their faith can be respected and upheld, like the 20 faith-based hospitals across New South Wales. Many patients elect to have treatment at those hospitals because of the values they offer. From CatholicCare institutions like St Vincent's Private Hospital in Darlinghurst, to Calvary Mater Newcastle to Sydney Adventist Hospital in Wahroonga, where I was born, it is the right of those hospitals—and certainly, the right of our health practitioners—to act according to their own belief system. Forcing them, through legislation, to contradict their own values will do nothing productive. It would only cause greater division in our community. Our health practitioners are already under significant pressures. Our hospitals are under the pump. The last thing they need is for politicians to add a moral quandary to their day.

According to the latest medical data, the estimated number of abortions performed in New South Wales last year was 22,300. We are seeing fluctuating rates of abortion across New South Wales, but what we are not seeing in the bill is any reasonable solution to support women and families encountering an unwanted or challenging pregnancy. Abortion treats one issue—the pregnancy—but it fails to offer any support to the issues surrounding why the pregnancy may not be wanted.

A woman may be pregnant and be facing significant risk to her health. A woman may be pregnant and be experiencing coercive or violent behaviour in her home. A woman may be pregnant and be unable to provide a safe roof over her baby's head. A woman may be pregnant and face sacrifices to her career. A woman may be pregnant and face the threat of her partner leaving her. A woman may have become pregnant without her consent.

This bill is a political stunt that fails to address the challenges faced by women in New South Wales. I recognise the need for careful and balanced legislation, which is legislation simply is not. This bill hinges on the intersection of key civil, political and healthcare rights under Australian law. Abortion is a key healthcare issue with extensive moral implications. I respect women's right to health care, but I also adamantly respect the rate of health practitioners to act in accordance with their own values and beliefs. As such, I will not support this bill.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:00):** I speak in support of the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025.

*[Interruption from gallery]*

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** Order! Visitors in the public gallery will not applaud.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY:** I will build on the excellent points made by my colleague the member for Newtown. As my colleague Dr Amanda Cohn made clear when introducing this incredibly important bill in the upper House earlier this year, and as the member for Newtown has reiterated today in this place, abortion is health care. I was not a member of this place when abortion was finally recognised as health care by the State of New South Wales in 2019 when it was removed from the Crimes Act. It is hard to believe that it has only been decriminalised in this State for six years. Decriminalisation came after years of sustained advocacy from medical professionals, human

rights organisations, women's rights organisations and decades of feminist action. I am so grateful to everyone from all sides of politics who were involved in that long overdue reform.

While the decriminalisation of abortion was a critical step forward, it has become clear that more reform is needed to ensure fair access to services across New South Wales. Despite abortion being legal in New South Wales since 2019, services are not being provided consistently. As a result, people are forced to delay treatment, travel hundreds of kilometres or pay hundreds or even thousands of dollars to access private care. It is abundantly clear that the barriers to accessing health care, particularly for people in regional and remote parts of New South Wales, are resulting in poorer health outcomes and unnecessary hardship. The *Report on the Statutory Review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019* handed down a number of recommendations to improve equitable access to abortion care in this State. The first recommendation was:

The Government consider amending the Act to allow nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and other prescribed registered health practitioners to perform medical terminations.

In August 2023 the Therapeutic Goods Administration [TGA] and Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme amended the prescribing and dispensing restrictions of MS-2 Step to remove barriers and challenges for medical practitioners administering medical abortions. This opened the prospect of nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives being able to prescribe MS-2 Step, subject to State and Territory legislative requirements. It is worth noting that legislation in Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory has reflected this change since July 2024. It has given people seeking abortions in these States greater access. It has removed considerable barriers, particularly for those in identified abortion deserts across the country.

The bill before us today would bring New South Wales laws in line with the changes adopted in other States. It will update and harmonise the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019 with TGA changes to allow appropriately qualified nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe MS-2 Step medication up to nine weeks gestation. To be clear, these are highly trained and skilled medical professionals. This change is clearly in line with the recommendation of the statutory review of the Act by NSW Health. It is also supported by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Australian Medical Association (NSW), the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, Family Planning Australia and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners.

It is disappointing to hear this bill called a stunt when it has broad support from medical professionals. In an open letter in support of this bill, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists wrote:

The College unequivocally supports the inclusion of nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives in the provision of early medical abortion. Enabling appropriately qualified health professionals to deliver this care is a safe, evidence-based reform—and a necessary step toward ensuring timely, equitable, and patient-centred access to abortion services for women across New South Wales.

We know that this change will substantially improve access to medical abortion, particularly in rural and remote New South Wales. It will also bring New South Wales in line with other jurisdictions, including Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory. I thank my colleague in the other place Dr Amanda Cohn for bringing this important bill.

Research has shown that a majority of New South Wales cities and towns are "abortion deserts", meaning that the nearest service is more than 160 kilometres away. Let us let that sink in: The majority of New South Wales cities and towns are abortion deserts. Public hospitals refusing to provide abortion services have been widely reported, including the well-discussed incidents earlier this year at Queanbeyan and Orange hospitals. As my colleague Dr Amanda Cohn noted in her second reading speech, "Only three of the 220 public hospitals in New South Wales are routinely providing abortion and make that information publicly known." She noted that others provide care on an "ad-hoc basis" or through pathways that are "completely opaque". That is shocking and alarming to see. When looking at abortion access as a fundamental healthcare issue, those statistics are incredibly alarming. The impact on individuals who may be denied care is truly heartbreaking. There have been too many stories in recent years of women left feeling completely alone as they fight to access basic health care.

As Dr Noonan from Family Planning said last year, if a woman in a remote or regional part of New South Wales cannot access a medical abortion, they could be facing a nine-hour drive, \$2,000 out-of-pocket costs and additional time off work to pursue surgical options. For those with existing families, that can come with added barriers in terms of finding care for their children. It is not acceptable for women to struggle financially as a result of the need for health care, and it is not right that women may not be able to access the health care they need because of where they live. It is also worth noting that local communities in New South Wales expect that abortion services are more widely available than they are in practice.

As my colleague Dr Amanda Cohn noted when speaking on the bill, many people are shocked to learn that their local hospital may not provide abortion services. A representative survey commissioned by Australian

Clinicians for Choice in early 2023 found that 68 per cent of New South Wales residents believe that every public hospital delivering women's health services should also provide abortion. There was majority support for greater access to abortion services among voters for both Labor and the Coalition. The bill before us today will go some way to addressing those access problems and will hopefully reduce the number of heartbreaking stories we hear, particularly from those in rural and regional communities who are left without access to basic health care.

Importantly, in addition to increasing access by allowing nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe MS-2 Step, the bill introduces a requirement for a new annual report to Parliament. It is proposed that that report would include a description of the availability of abortion services by region; detailed information about access to, and waiting times for, abortion services; information about the clinical performance of abortion service delivery, including how safely and effectively abortion services were delivered; information about any adverse events or clinical incidents reported in connection with terminations; and information about the performance of terminations in the State by reference to region and district. That report would help to improve government oversight of access to abortion services in this State. It is clear that we need more consistent monitoring and action to improve access across the board. Having routinely reported figures is an important first step.

I reiterate that abortion is health care. I will always respect a woman's right to choose. I know so many people, both personally and professionally, who would have vastly different lives had they not been able to access this critical health care when they needed it. It is incumbent on all of us to do all we can to ensure fair and open access to abortion services across the State and to reduce the prevalence of so-called abortion deserts. I may be an inner city MP, but I do not want to stand by while rural and regional women struggle to access the care and support they need. I again thank my colleague in the other place Dr Amanda Cohn for introducing this important bill. I hope to see it widely supported.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:08):** I contribute to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025, which amends the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019 and makes consequential changes to the Crimes Act 1900. The object of the bill is to increase abortion health care by making further provision about health practitioners. It will not surprise members that, as a specialist practitioner in women's health for over 30 years, I have closely followed the debate on the bill. As a Government member I am not bound by a Government position on the bill and will express my conscientious support for the bill.

I support increasing access for a woman's right to choose termination of pregnancy. Reproductive choices are a health right for women and, as such, abortion is a health need and a health right. They are key aspects of reproductive rights and bodily autonomy.

Members know my commitment to women's health care. For more than 40 years, I have shared the most intimate experiences in tens of thousands of women's lives. I have done that clinically, professionally, ethically and without judgement. I have seen a lot in my career. I have seen the complications of early pregnancy and the complex medical and surgical terminations of second trimester pregnancies. I have seen the near-death of a woman who, within her rights, declined termination of a baby with an inevitably fatal fetal abnormality. I have witnessed the palliative care of newborns with avoidable undiagnosed terminal conditions, and I have seen the results of failed access to abortion services.

In this House, I have the unique position of having held the curette, held the forceps and held the scalpel. I cannot say that I have not had conflict over ethical reproductive issues. No practitioner can provide every service that is asked of them, either due to clinical circumstance or conscience, and no doctor enjoys performing abortions. They are confronting procedures for doctors and the healthcare professionals who assist them. But it is the women who choose or need an abortion who are the focus of our clinical care, and it is the responsibility of government to provide safe and accessible reproductive health care. Those women certainly have not taken their decision to exercise what is now their legal right either lightly, socially or electively. My community elected me knowing of my clinical background and my 22 years of local involvement in women's health care.

I believe my contribution today reflects the acceptance of the majority of the electorate of a woman's right to make reproductive choices. I believe that they, and many here, will accept my arguments to make wider access to abortion services safe and achievable. I entered this place too late to be actively involved in the historic legislation to free from criminality those women obtaining, and those health professionals providing, what is health care. I acknowledge all who contributed to the historic reform to legislation in 2019 who are still here or who have since retired. Many of them shared intimately close and personal experiences. All who voted in favour of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 recognised the right of women to control their reproductive choices.

Two-thirds of my specialist career was spent in a rural area. I have experienced the inequity of health care generally as well as specifically in women's health, including contraception and reproductive choices. Since

entering this place, I have successfully advocated on behalf of women's health clinicians in my local health district to overcome barriers to access local abortion services in rural and regional areas such as Moruya and Queanbeyan. I acknowledge my parliamentary and medical colleague in the other place, Dr Amanda Cohn, who has brought this private member's bill to the Parliament with the intent of increasing access to abortion services for the women of New South Wales. I sincerely want to work with her and members of this House to achieve improved safe and equitable provision of abortion services.

I acknowledge those who debated this bill in the other place and recognise the sensible amendments, which I support. Briefly, I wish to comment on the amendments to the original bill in the other place and, specifically, recognise the role of my colleague the Hon. Penny Sharpe. Firstly, legislating the duty of the Minister to provide abortion services is inconsistent with other health services and unachievable across all abortion providers. In the original Health Services Act 1997 that regulates the public health system of New South Wales, the Minister for Health, Dr Andrew Refshauge, identified the principles of Medicare to which we should all adhere: choice, universality and equity. The Act states:

To the maximum practicable extent, a State will ensure the provision of public hospital services equitably to all eligible persons, regardless of their geographical location

...

This principle does not require a local hospital to be equipped to provide eligible persons with every hospital service they may need.

...

In rural and remote areas, a State should ensure provision of reasonable public access to a basic range of hospital services which are in accord with clinical practices.

This is the reality of universality and equity in the provision of health care across our State.

Secondly, a conscientious objection is based on sincerely held beliefs and moral concerns, not self-interest or discrimination. The requirement for a health practitioner with a conscientious objection to abortion to refer a woman to a provider of abortion is a conscription which I could not support. The current legislation is consistent with the Medical Board of Australia and Australian Medical Association [AMA] code of practice and is supported by NSW Health regulation. It has been noted that, after prolonged debate on the issue, a balanced position was reached between women's healthcare rights and the right to conscientious objection.

Finally, I support the process of data notification and reporting because it is essential for service planning and update as required. The 2023 Senate inquiry into universal access to reproductive health care recommended improving data collection for abortion services. Data is available for surgical terminations as well as second trimester medical terminations via hospital admission procedure coding. The first print of the bill contained only one recommendation from the statutory review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019. It allowed prescribed health practitioners, including nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives, to perform medical terminations up to 63 days of amenorrhoea. That is the crucial element of the bill before the House.

The amended bill inserts "prescribed health practitioner" instead of "medical practitioner" and defines a prescribed health practitioner as a medical practitioner, endorsed midwife or nurse practitioner. I clearly state that the evidence shows that the combination of Mifepristone and misoprostol is the optimal regimen for medical termination of pregnancy up to 10 weeks gestation. This is the position of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists [RANZCOG] in its 2024 *Clinical Guideline for Abortion Care* and is an endorsed clinical guideline of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. The combination of active ingredients mifepristone and misoprostol is approved for medical termination of pregnancy in over 96 countries. Mifepristone and misoprostol have been registered and used safely in Australia since 2012.

Broadening the prescriber eligibility for MS-2 Step to include non-medical practitioner prescribers, in accordance with individual State and Territory requirements, is consistent with established practice for medical termination in comparable jurisdictions nationally and internationally. Medical termination of pregnancy by non-medical practitioner prescribers is currently allowed in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. It is supported by the RANZCOG, the AMA, the Therapeutic Goods Administration and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The ACOG 2023 issue brief *Advanced Practice Clinicians and Abortion Care Provision* recommended the training and employment of advanced practice clinicians, the use of mifepristone and the removal of physician-only mandates. It is also a recommendation in the statutory review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019 and the 2023 report of the Australian Senate Community Affairs References Committee inquiry into universal access to reproductive health care.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration acknowledged that a shortage of trained providers is a significant barrier to accessing abortion care services in Australia, particularly in rural, regional and remote settings. It noted

that increasing provision of nurse-led models of early medical abortion has the potential to increase access to abortion, not only for women in regional and remote areas due to greater reach of services but also for disadvantaged and vulnerable women in other settings. It could also potentially reduce associated costs at a health-system level. The Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care and the Therapeutic Goods Administration have previously reviewed the safety of mifepristone and misoprostol and studied their use by mid-level providers such as nurses and midwives with appropriate training. [*Extension of time*]

Evidence from three studies comparing provision of early medical termination by doctors and mid-level providers revealed that there were no safety concerns with provision of medical termination by mid-level providers, with effectiveness outcomes comparable for mid-level providers and doctors. The risk of failure is a known risk described in the MS-2 Step product information and was comparable for medical termination performed by mid-level providers and doctors in all studies.

There were no serious adverse events recorded in any of the three studies.

The Therapeutic Goods Administration has approved the use of combined mifepristone and Misoprostol by healthcare practitioners with the appropriate qualifications and training in accordance with individual State and Territory requirements. Nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives will be able to prescribe mifepristone and Misoprostol only up to 63 days amenorrhoea, consistent with Therapeutic Goods Administration authorisation. While respecting the beliefs of members here and in the other place, I cannot support the logical fallacies surrounding the clinical and professional issues around this debate. We have seen cherry-picking of data, the use of false experts and the warning of a slippery slope of consequences in the confounding of issues, from the safety of medical abortifacients to the use of surgical procedures by nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives, and from the conscription of healthcare providers to second trimester terminations by nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives.

Nurse practitioners or endorsed midwives are not able, by their professional limitations of scope of practice, to either prescribe other abortifacients or perform surgical procedures, including vacuum aspiration or curettage. They are not appropriately qualified and skilled to do so, and they are regulated through other laws and regulations, and by professional bodies. These include NSW Health, the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care, the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia, and the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency. This bill clearly limits that prescription to the gestational age as described in prescribing Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme authorised MS-2 Step. As a result, a qualified nurse practitioner or endorsed midwife is no more able to perform a medical or surgical termination of pregnancy between nine and 22 weeks gestation than a first-year intern, because of their professional scope of practice and professional standards.

The scope of practice of an individual is that which the individual is educated, authorised and competent to perform. Nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives prescribing mifepristone and Misoprostol will be required to update or increase their knowledge, skills or competence to practise within the full contemporary scope of practice of their profession. Professional standards for practice are the expectations of the nurse practitioner's practice in all contexts, which also inform the education accreditation standards for nurse practitioners, the regulation of nurse practitioners and the determination of a nurse practitioner's capability for practice.

Finally, I support the amendment requiring an annual report to Parliament by the secretary of the Ministry of Health. That is consistent with my earlier support for the retention of data collection, which will inform future services and any necessary updates. In conclusion, I commend the bill to the House. It is further progress towards improving the availability of a healthcare service that is a rightful and legal reproductive choice for women in this State. I encourage the Minister to explore the availability of contraceptive choices for the women of New South Wales, including non-hormonal methods, long-acting reversible contraceptive methods and sterilisation.

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (16:22):** I speak on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. In 2019 I contributed to debate on the legislation that this bill seeks to amend. I made it clear then that there should be no debate on the sanctity of human life, and my view has not changed. While I recognise there are differences in what we are now debating, the life of the unborn remains the paramount issue. I am not going to support legislation that increases the number of people who can administer a procedure that takes a life. The bill as currently printed would allow endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners to prescribe abortive drugs currently recommended by the Therapeutic Goods Administration [TGA].

In my contribution in 2019, I expressed my concern about how abortion can result in medical complications and frequently causes intense psychological pain and stress. Those risks remain with medical abortions. I am concerned by a recent report published in April of this year that looked at almost 900,000 women in the United States who were prescribed RU-486 abortions, which the TGA currently recommends for pregnancies up to nine weeks. The study found a serious adverse event rate of over 10 per cent, including sepsis, infection or

haemorrhaging. The rate of serious adverse events was found to be 22 times higher than reported by the United States Food and Drug Administration. One in 20 women needed hospitalisation or visited an emergency room.

There will be an increased risk to women's safety if those not trained as doctors are allowed to prescribe and monitor medical abortions. I do not support those changes that remove the requirement for a qualified medical practitioner, who is better equipped to deal with complications that might arise. The TGA used to require a two-day course for GPs before they could prescribe MS-2 Step but, despite increasing concern, there is no indication that additional training will be required for endorsed midwives or nurse practitioners. I also believe that this House should be careful about delegating responsibility of regulating who can administer abortive drugs to the TGA. Members today are not just voting on where nurses and midwives can prescribe medical abortions up to nine weeks but are also abrogating responsibility from this Parliament to the TGA on that very issue. While this section unfortunately remains, it is pleasing that the other place has removed substantial sections of the original bill.

The attempt to have the Minister prioritise one service and ensure that it is provided across the State goes against the holistic nature of health delivery, which the Minister for Health is responsible for. As many in the other place noted in their contributions to debate, where is the requirement for cancer treatments, ocular surgery, maternity wards and neonatal intensive care units within a reasonable distance of where someone lives? There is something truly dark about prioritising a procedure that has the sole intention of destroying life over others that seek to protect and enhance life. We have also seen an attack on the ability of doctors, nurses and midwives to conscientiously object. This would have had the potential to impact faith-based hospitals, particularly Catholic ones. I have received countless letters and emails from my constituents and others in New South Wales stating that they did not pursue a career in health care only to go against their Hippocratic oath. They have also pointed out that being forced to refer a patient to another who will perform what they view as morally wrong is personally no different to taking a life.

The statutory review of the Abortion Law Reform Act did not recommend any legislative changes to conscientious objection, and I find it egregious that any member of Parliament who holds a conscience vote would be determined to restrict the conscience of doctors and midwives. It is telling that all Liberal and Nationals in the other place used their conscience vote to ensure the conscience of doctors, nurses and midwives would be protected. I urge my colleagues in this House to ensure this remains the case should an amendment seeking to attack conscientious objection be brought forward in this place.

The final element of the bill relates to reporting and data. The original bill sought to remove a requirement that a health practitioner involved in an abortion would be required under legislation to provide certain information about the abortion to the Secretary of the Ministry of Health. This requirement in section 15 of the Abortion Law Reform Act was included to ensure that data would be collected to indicate whether sex-selective abortions were occurring. It is important that this requirement remains legislated. The bill before us now includes a requirement that there be an annual report to Parliament on abortion. It is clear that it is very important that we improve transparency about abortion services provided in New South Wales as there is presently a lack of data available. Proposed section 15A in the bill requires the Secretary of the Ministry of Health to provide a report, which will include information about any adverse events or clinical incidents reported in connection with abortions.

In 2019 the Abortion Law Reform Act was rushed. This bill, I concede, is not as badly rushed, but I fear we are performing a disservice to the community again by using Government time to ram it through both Houses in a fortnight. I thank the many constituents who have contacted me directly about the bill, including those in support. The overwhelming majority have been against the bill. Even after the amendments in the other place last Thursday, the message has been to oppose the bill. As I said when I commenced my speech, I am not going to support legislation that increases the number of people who can administer a procedure that takes a life. I cannot support the bill.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (16:28):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. In August 2017, and again in August 2019, I said in this place, and I say it again today, that for too many years we have been fighting for women's reproductive rights and autonomy, and for access to those rights in both the public and private spheres. Again, I note the work of feminists before us in this place, especially those in the Women's Abortion Action Campaign.

Established in 1972, the objectives of the campaign were to establish abortion as a woman's right to choose; the repeal of all abortion laws; free, safe abortions; free, safe contraception; no forced sterilisations; and access.

I believe a woman is best placed to decide what is best for her. She knows the circumstances around a pregnancy and understands what she needs. She is the one who best knows her capacity to parent and her personal circumstances. It is the woman who should choose to continue or to terminate a pregnancy. That does not make it an easy decision, and many women in that situation will need a lot of support to make the best decision for them.

I am proudly pro-choice, I am a feminist and I am in this Parliament to advance the cause of women. I acknowledge the about 80 emails I received from people in my electorate, encouraging me to vote against this bill. I said to those people:

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your concerns and views regarding the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 introduced by The Greens Party.

I appreciate hearing from you and understand how important this issue is to you.

Please know that I am a strong advocate for the health and well-being of women; and steadfastly believe in a woman's right to choose—to make autonomous decisions regarding her own body and reproductive functions. Furthermore, I understand that the intent of the Bill (introduced by Dr Cohn of The Greens Party) is to address barriers to abortion care—to enable affordable and safe access—particularly for those in regional, rural and remote parts of NSW.

In 2019 I proudly played a key role in the decriminalisation of abortion, as a co-sponsor of the NSW Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill—which successfully became law—

and needed to become law. My email continued:

It is also important to note that I value the feedback from all Blue Mountains constituents on all proposed legislation. Rest assured, your thoughts and concerns have been carefully noted and will form part of my deliberations prior to the debate of this Amendment Bill.

Some important amendments have been made. It is commonly understood in women's politics that the "pro-life" label is shorthand for anti-choice. Long ago, fundamentalist Christian organisations co-opted the label, and they are well known for being steadfastly anti-abortion and anti-choice in all circumstances. I strongly believe that people should be careful about using the term "pro-life", because its meaning is immediately interpreted to be a description of someone who believes they have the right to make other people's choices for them.

As I speak, someone near a clinic or in a GP's office somewhere, or someone by themselves in rural New South Wales, is seeking information and medical advice about a termination, which is never an easy decision. In most circumstances, there will be a loud and invasive group of people waving placards and hurling abuse, all the while describing themselves as "pro-life". However, they are being anti-choice and judgemental. As a member and former State convener of EMILY's List, a very proud member of the Labor Party and a feminist here to advance the rights of women, I support a woman's right to choose and I support a woman's right to access a safe, free and legal termination.

I acknowledge those who work and advocate in this space. It is not an easy place to work, and some people have done it for decades. I make particular mention of my friend and colleague Claire Pullen who, as chair of Our Bodies Our Choices, has been a guiding light in articulating the many reasons that women need to access abortion services. People who live in areas outside metropolitan Sydney have difficulty accessing many types of health care. As a member of the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health, I have witnessed while travelling around New South Wales that people who live outside Sydney have difficulty accessing many healthcare services. For the purposes of this bill, I say that pregnant women still face too many barriers to accessing abortion and reproductive health care, particularly in regional, rural and remote areas.

No-one should be able to deny care to a patient seeking medical assistance because of their personal beliefs or where they live. We cannot allow individuals to exercise an effective veto over someone else's medical decisions. If someone objects to performing abortion or making contraception available, that is their right.

But we cannot allow them to deny that treatment to someone who knows what they want or who may have already experienced what they may see as a betrayal by the person who is refusing them care. I support the bill, after some important amendments passed in the other place. I support nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives—highly trained, skilled and professional workers—being able to perform terminations to expand access for women. Again, I support a woman's right to access a pregnancy termination. The bill will assist in offering that access.

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie) (16:35):** I support the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 and make some brief but heartfelt observations. In 2019, like the member for Blue Mountains, I was proud to co-sponsor the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill, which finally decriminalised abortion in this State. That bill was heavily debated and understandably so, given the sensitive subject matter that sought to overturn the historical statutory position determined by a Parliament of all men in 1903. I recall some of my comments in the debate on that bill, which are relevant to the bill before us today. Like the 2019 bill, this bill should not be dragged down by the partisan beliefs of a person, religious or otherwise. Instead, at the forefront of this debate should be women's health and the rights of every woman in New South Wales over her own body. Access to reproductive health care, including abortions, is paramount to give effect to that right.

The modest changes in the bill would allow qualified nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe medical abortion in line with their scope of practice, meaning that they can prescribe abortion drugs up



to nine weeks gestation. Nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives can already do that in every Australian jurisdiction except Tasmania and, of course, New South Wales. Currently, only medical practitioners can prescribe medical abortions in New South Wales. Of all the changes proposed in the original version of the bill, that change will do the most to increase access to abortions. I am pleased that the bill made its way through the Legislative Council—with amendments, which I support—to be considered by this House. The bill will be particularly impactful for those living in certain remote, rural and regional areas where access to abortion is severely limited or effectively non-existent. Those women deserve better. We cannot accept a status quo where women are deprived of choice because of where they live. They should not have to face the logistical and financial challenge of travelling hundreds of kilometres for care. It is just not good enough. That is why I support the bill.

In a world where we are seeing the shameful rolling back of reproductive health care and rights, we must do what is necessary to ensure that the women of New South Wales have a choice and safe access to abortions. I recognise the commitment of Dr Amanda Cohn, a former health practitioner, to improving health care in New South Wales. I thank her for bringing the bill to the Parliament. It has required sensitivity, commitment and patience in the face of what has been, in my view, a sustained and organised campaign of misinformation about the bill, which has unfortunately continued in this debate. I am grateful for the opportunity to stand in the House and support commonsense reform that seeks to improve access to health care in New South Wales. Many things have been said about the bill's objectives that are just not true. This is a simple question in a highly emotional space about whether there should be equity for women across New South Wales to make their own choices about their needs when a pregnancy occurs.

In my view, that decision is theirs to make, in conjunction with their doctor or a qualified health practitioner. It may involve discussions with their faith advisor or priest, if that is their desire. It may include their family or friends. But the decision should not be made by politicians. If we accept that abortion should be legal in New South Wales—and we do—then surely the fair-minded extension of that position is that access to abortion services must be equitable.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:39):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I am relieved that the bill was significantly amended in the other place. It is not the original bill introduced by Dr Amanda Cohn, which caused so much concern in my community. It no longer threatens the conscientious objection protections that are in place in the New South Wales public health system. It no longer mandates the provision of abortion services a reasonable distance from all people's homes. That provision was included in the original bill despite New South Wales not mandating the provision of any particular medical service close to people's homes—not even services that are life saving, such as oncology or dialysis. It has also been clarified that nothing will permit a prescribed health practitioner to act outside of their scope of practice.

The bill will permit nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe MS-2 Step to nine weeks gestation, but it cannot be interpreted any other way to expand services through a regulation-making power to surgical terminations or to services being provided by other healthcare practitioners. It also no longer seeks to do away with data collection and instead provides significantly enhanced reporting obligations. Access to abortion has been reduced in many parts of the State, despite the passing of the 2019 legislation that I voted against. In all likelihood, the bill before us will ensure that more of the abortions performed in New South Wales are performed early in pregnancy by improving access. I note that medical abortions are currently available through Telehealth, which does provide access in more remote parts of the State and regional areas where access to GPs is difficult. However, it is definitely preferable that the decision is made during a medical consultation with a nurse practitioner or midwife, rather than through Telehealth.

That said, I still remain opposed to the legislation passed in 2019. Although it was right to remove abortion from the Crimes Act, we should not allow abortions up to 22 weeks gestation. The bill before us does not address that concern. I do not believe abortion should be allowed—unless there is a medical risk identified—past the point at which a baby can be born alive and survive, which is 20 weeks. With the best neonatal medical support, a baby's lungs are sometimes well enough developed at 20, 21 or 22 weeks to not only take their first breath but also survive. In 2023 a baby called Ellyannah Lopez was born at 20 weeks gestation in the United States. She weighed less than a pound, or under 400 grams, and was not expected to survive, but she did. There are adults alive today who were born at 21 weeks gestation. It is incredibly rare for someone to go into labour at less than 22 weeks gestation and even rarer for the baby to survive, but it has happened, and they can survive. For that reason, abortion should not be performed as late as 22 weeks unless there is an unforeseen risk to the health of the mother. Unfortunately, it is beyond the scope of this bill to change the legislation to address the time frame for abortions to be sought without the need for the support of two doctors.

Over the past few months there has been a widespread misinformation and disinformation campaign about this bill. I make it clear that there is no way I would have supported the bill as originally introduced to the

Legislative Council. However, some of the campaign tactics engaged have amounted to bullying and spreading misinformation and disinformation—not lobbying. In particular, the behaviour of Dr Joanna Howe has been dreadful. Dr Joanna is a social media influencer campaigning against abortions. Some of her content usefully highlights the stories of women who were encouraged to have abortions because they would likely experience pregnancy complications or because their unborn children would be born with a disability or lifelong health problem. Some of those women sought alternative medical opinions and received the medical support they needed to have a successful pregnancy instead of a termination.

However, most of Dr Howe's content is misleading and her tactics are bizarre and nasty. I cannot make it clearer: Her obnoxious, attention-seeking behaviour does not influence me, and I doubt it influences any of my colleagues.

Instead of seeking meetings and presenting a rational argument based on facts, Dr Joanna organised a tour of the electorate offices of Labor MPs to arrange protests against a Greens bill. For some bizarre reason, she did not visit any Coalition MPs, despite Labor, the Liberals and The Nationals all providing a conscience vote on the issue. She misleadingly said that the Labor conscience vote was not genuine, despite many Labor MPs—me included—not supporting the 2019 legislation.

When Dr Joanna visited my office—I knew she was coming, but I was at a meeting in the city—I instructed my staff not to close the office, but to call the police if anything got out of hand. About 25 people showed up. Quite amusingly, one of my regular constituents left the office and started arguing with the protesters. After the uneventful protest ended, Dr Joanna entered my office and spoke to my senior electorate officer, who was heavily pregnant and on her last day of work before maternity leave. Someone else snuck in behind Joanna and filmed the interaction without the knowledge or consent of the heavily pregnant staff member. Dr Joanna then posted the video without the knowledge or consent of the staff member. She did not take the video down when requested to do so by my staff member, and it remains up to this day. While she did not say anything unkind, the video was still filmed and posted without the consent of a heavily pregnant and vulnerable young woman. That is not okay.

Dr Joanna also claimed to have delivered a leaflet targeting me across my whole electorate. However, as no-one has contacted me about it, I am not sure if all 40,000 homes were letterboxed as claimed. As members in this place know, letterboxing an entire electorate is quite an undertaking. If she did that, it was spectacularly unsuccessful. Given that I represent a very religious community, I suspect it had more to do with stirring up anti-Labor sentiment in the Federal seats of Parramatta and Blaxland ahead of the Federal election. Dr Joanna has also repeatedly called me a pro-abortion MP, which is obviously not true.

Describing anyone as pro-abortion implies an enthusiasm for abortions rather than a recognition that women can find themselves faced with a very difficult situation. It is a difficult decision that most women make fairly promptly, and do not require 22 weeks to make. In fact, the overwhelming majority of terminations occur before 14 weeks. I was a member of EMILYs List, but I resigned after I voted against the 2019 legislation. When I joined, I made it clear that I do not support late-term abortions and was told that neither do they. I did not ask what they meant by that, but I should have. That is on me, not them. I am still not sure why Dr Joanna is telling people I am a pro-abortion MP and a member of EMILYs List.

Dr Joanna is at pains to tell everyone that she is a law lecturer and a Rhodes scholar. However, it seems she has been too lazy to read the *Hansard* and work out which MPs voted against the 2019 legislation, because I am one of many who voted against the legislation who she still protested against. She also misrepresents that legislation as amounting to "abortion up to birth" legislation, which is just not true. She cannot even spell my name correctly. It is pretty simple: J-u-l-i-a. She is more interested in protesting and bullying Labor MPs than in building alliances with people who might be likeminded. It is a very strange coincidence that she only protested against Labor MPs, when all MPs, except The Greens, have a conscience vote on this issue.

Similarly, I received a strange letter from Lyle Shelton of Family First threatening to preference against me, or any other MP who supports the bill, in the 2027 election. I find that a bizarrely hostile letter to send to someone who voted against the 2019 legislation. Knowing and respecting my 92 colleagues in this place, I can quite honestly say that threatening people who have shown the courage to run for election and the capability to get elected is pointless. None of us are easily threatened. I also note that Family First received 1.95 per cent of the primary vote in the Federal electorate of Blaxland at the recent election. As the majority of my electorate falls within that area, it would have been more effective to just ask nicely for my support.

In contrast to that obnoxious carry-on, the actual constituents who raised this issue with me have done so politely and genuinely. Many people hold strong concerns about the bill. Most often, they raised concerns about the proposed removal of the conscientious objection provisions of the 2019 legislation. Thankfully, that proposal was defeated in the Legislative Council and is not contained in the bill before us. Almost all the people who have

contacted me opposed the bill—as was the case with the 2019 legislation. Some 500 people contacted me to oppose that legislation, while 12 people contacted me to support it.

This is an important issue. I make it clear that my opposition is to the 2019 legislation that this bill seeks to amend, although I do think that this bill improves that flawed legislation. I also make it very clear that I do not respond to bullying. Nothing Dr Joanna Howe or Lyle Shelton have said has remotely persuaded or intimidated me into opposing the bill before the House. In fact, if I did not have a strong view about the issue, I would do the opposite of what they have said just because they are being so obnoxious.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (16:49):** I am proud to support the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. Abortion is health care. I commend Dr Amanda Cohn from the other place for introducing this important legislation to Parliament, and the member for Newtown for introducing it to this House. Six years ago, in 2019, I worked with colleagues across the political divide to remove abortion from the Crimes Act and to regulate it as health care. We now have modern laws that protect women and doctors from criminal sanctions. I acknowledge the leadership of the then Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, as well as the Hon. Penny Sharpe, who had carriage of that legislation in the other place. I also thank all of the co-sponsors of that bill.

Those laws set a pathway for improved access, including through government investment in services and increased doctor participation. The five-year statutory review into the laws released last September found that they created a more supportive environment for women to access abortion and for clinicians to provide it without fear of prosecution. There was also a reduction in stigma, as we had hoped. But the review found that women in regional, rural and remote areas, Aboriginal women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, and women who are socially and financially disadvantaged continue to face barriers trying to access abortions.

In regional and remote areas, some communities do not have GPs. Where there are GPs working, getting a timely appointment can be difficult, causing delays. If the only GP in someone's town has a conscientious objection, further delays are caused. Many women miss the opportunity to have a medical termination. Medical abortions provide the least invasive and lowest risk termination option and can be done as early as a pregnancy can be detected in an ultrasound. They can only be performed up until nine weeks gestation, which means there is a small window of opportunity that could easily be closed by delays.

After that, the only option is a surgical abortion, which can be difficult to access in rural and regional areas. I understand that around one in three public hospitals refuse to provide legal abortion services, exacerbating geographical inequalities. Women serviced by those hospitals must find and pay for private services. Those who cannot afford it or who cannot get to a distant private clinic are left with no options. Early termination provides the best healthcare outcomes for women. Delays cause stress and increase costs and risks of health complications. At worst they can force a woman to go through with an unwanted pregnancy despite health or social impacts like an expected stillbirth or domestic violence.

The Therapeutics Goods Administration and the Pharmaceuticals Benefit Scheme have extended access to medical terminations through nurse practitioner and endorsed midwife referrals, but our laws only provide for medical practitioners to perform abortions, including medical abortions. Many regional towns that do not have a general practitioner have a nurse practitioner and/or a midwife. Endorsed midwives often visit communities and nurse-led clinics in Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory are growing in popularity. Nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives are highly skilled health practitioners whose abilities and expertise should be used to improve regional health. Laws in Queensland, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have been updated to allow nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe medical abortions. The Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 will do the same for New South Wales in line with the recommendations of the statutory review into our abortion laws.

I strongly support the bill. Abortion is standard medical care and the State should ensure women have universal access to safe terminations regardless of their socio-economic circumstances, their practitioner's belief system or where they live. I am proud to have introduced the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill in 2019 and I am glad to see that this piece of legislation seeks to improve access to abortion in New South Wales. I congratulate Dr Amanda Cohn in the other place and The Greens on introducing this important bill to Parliament. It will promote a woman's autonomy over her reproductive health care. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (16:54):** It feels like only yesterday that we were introducing the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019, and I am proud to be back in this place to support the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I have always been a loud and proud supporter of a woman's right to choose, and I represent my constituency in that support. Newcastle is one of the most progressive electorates in the State, and we always stand up for equality and access. Hundreds of Novocastrians gathered in 2019 for the Our Body Our Choice rally, and hundreds of Novocastrians gathered in 2022 in solidarity with

women in the United States following the overturning of *Roe v Wade*. However, this bill is not about whether anyone supports the right to an abortion; it is about whether every woman across the State should have equal access to that health service.

Today we are asked whether every woman in New South Wales should be treated equally. The answer is yes, and I will always vote for equality. The bill will allow the medication for early term medical abortions to be prescribed and supplied by nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives, as well as medical practitioners. That amendment brings New South Wales legislation in line with legislation in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. We always seem to be last. Following the amendments made in the other place, the bill is in line with Therapeutic Goods Administration guidelines and the recommendations of the statutory review into the operation of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019.

Nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives are professional health practitioners who have received further education and training to that of registered nurses and midwives. They are fully adept to prescribe the medication for early term abortions, and allowing them to do so will make it easier for women to access those services across all of New South Wales. Nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives will only be able to prescribe medication for early-term abortions and will not be able to conduct surgical terminations. The bill clearly states that, as prescribed health practitioners, they are not permitted to act outside of their scope of practice, so they will not be able to conduct surgical procedures. Like medical practitioners, who can already supply medical abortions, nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives will also have the right to conscientiously object to providing that service. No practitioner will be forced to carry out terminations.

I will not deny that I have received some opposition to the bill. I thank everyone who has contacted me and voiced their opinion, regardless of where they stand, but it was very clear to me that a lot of the opposition to this reform was misinformed. As such, I debunk some myths found in my inbox. As I stated before, no health practitioner will be forced to prescribe abortion medication and act against their beliefs or religion, nor will any hospital with a religious affiliation be required to provide those services. Nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives are fully qualified to prescribe the medication required for a medical abortion, and giving them permission to do so will not increase the possibility of those babies being born alive.

There will be no changes to late-term abortions because prescribed health practitioners will only be able to provide medication for early-term terminations. Much of the opposition I received also cited the impact that abortions can have on the mental health of women. There is no denying that having an abortion is not an easy decision. But the bill alleviates the stress on women in regional and rural communities who have considered all their options and have decided that an abortion is the best option for them—for whatever reason that may be—by making it easier to access a health practitioner who can prescribe a medical abortion closer to home.

The bill will ensure that abortion services are accessible to women right across the State. Every woman should have the right to choose. It should not be based on where they live.

Currently, only three hospitals in New South Wales openly provide abortion services. One of them is the John Hunter Hospital in Newcastle. My constituents should not be considered "lucky" because they have abortion services nearby. It should be a right that is equal throughout the State. The bill seeks to make that so. I thank all the health professionals at John Hunter Hospital who care for abortion patients. I also thank Brightwell Health, Gynaecology Centres Australia and Family Planning NSW as three local facilities that specialise in reproductive health and provide a safe space for the women of Newcastle to access abortion services. I am very grateful to have those facilities in my electorate, as well as a selection of GPs who care for abortion patients. I thank the Hunter Women's Centre for supporting women in Newcastle, and I of course thank Dr Amanda Cohn very much for introducing the bill in the upper House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** 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*

#### **STATE BUDGET**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (17:01):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes the previous Coalition Government left behind the biggest debt ever handed from one government to another in New South Wales history.
- (2) Notes that in the nine months to March 2023, the former Coalition Government added \$27 billion of new policy measures to the budget.

- (3) Notes the former Government left behind a \$7 billion black hole of unfunded programs in the budget.

When the Labor Government led by the Premier, Chris Minns, and Deputy Premier Prue Car won the election in 2023, the people of New South Wales could see that the Opposition was tired and useless when it came to economic management and delivering infrastructure. When Treasurer Daniel Mookhey from the other place opened the books, there was a dirty black hole. We inherited \$140 billion of the Coalition's debt. On the way to nearly \$188 billion by June 2026, it was huge—the biggest debt ever handed from one government to another in New South Wales history. Let us think about that. The New South Wales Parliament is nearly 200 years old. The people of New South Wales saw through all that. They voted for change and stability. I acknowledge the work that has been done by the Treasurer, Daniel Mookhey, and the Minister for Finance, Courtney Houssos.

Inflation is down. Interest rates are down. We have had to go about the task of budget repair. It is a challenging task that every Minister in this Government has been engaged in. Members opposite have not engaged; they have done nothing. They have actually done worse than nothing: They have opposed initiatives when we have tried to address the budget. Why? It is because they are addicted to spending. They spent more in the last nine months of the previous Government than in half the time of the COVID pandemic. There was \$27 billion in new spending initiatives in its last nine months. That is what drives up debt. The Minns Labor Government is building back a better New South Wales for all: more teachers, more police, GP bulk-billing incentives and reducing the State's gross debt, which is now \$9 billion lower than when we came to office. The New South Wales Government has maintained its triple-A credit rating from global ratings agencies.

**Mr David Harris:** We're not selling anything.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** Thank you, Minister. I am getting to that. The Minns Labor Government has ensured strong financial health and the ability to meet its debt obligations.

Let us look at the Opposition's record in detail. In a February 2022 interview with David Elliott:

Mr Elliott said he disliked seeing an increase in project costs but "that's what happens in construction" and variations occurred.

"Not since the building of the Great Pyramids of Giza has a construction contract gone without a variation," he said.

What a flippant comment to make rather than making hard decisions to address construction costs. This is taxpayer money, and we need to be fiscally responsible. In my own electorate of Heathcote, we have saved money on Garie Road roadworks and the new Helensburgh Police Station. On this side of the Chamber, we make sure that wasteful spending is not "just what happens in construction".

Those opposite spent \$1 billion on consultants between 2017-18 and 2021-22. They hired 10,000 consultants over five years, which is one per working hour. They rorted grants programs, including when 96 per cent of bushfire grants went to Coalition-held seats. This included \$11 million for a skydiving adventure park while the Blue Mountains missed out entirely. They also conducted a fire sale of State assets. Eraring Power Station was sold for \$50 million. Vales Point Power Station was sold for just \$1 million in 2015 to a former National Party candidate, Trevor St Baker, and was revalued three years later at \$730 million. The rest of the electricity network was also sold, including Bayswater Power Station, Mt Piper Power Station, Transgrid, Endeavour Energy and Ausgrid. WestConnex was sold over two stages for \$20.3 billion after they promised there would be no more privatisation. They even sold the Land Titles Office, which had the right to register property in New South Wales, for \$2.6 billion in 2017.

There will be 1,100 nurses left unfunded from 30 June 2024, which is a \$380 million hole in the forward estimates. There is a \$700 million funding shortfall for kids living in out-of-home care. If the Coalition gets back in, we know that it will bring back the wages cap, which saw real wages for everyone in New South Wales go backwards during their time in office. It will start selling off public assets again. Will members opposite rule out privatising Sydney Water or our hospitals, like they did with the Northern Beaches Hospital? Will they privatise Sydney Trains like they privatised the buses? Will they privatise the Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney Harbour Tunnel and Western Harbour Tunnel like they sold off the rest of the State's motorways, making Sydney the most tolled city on earth? Will they privatise Service NSW like they sold off the Land Titles Office? Will they privatise the Energy Security Corporation and the rest of the electricity network? What about stadiums like Allianz Stadium, Accor Stadium or CommBank Stadium in Parramatta? Maybe they will privatise TAFE or workers compensation.

The Minns Labor Government has had its shoulder to the wheel since it was elected. Since we came to office, we have created more jobs and more businesses than any other State over the same period, including 177,000 new jobs and 41,000 new businesses. We have got wages moving again. To put it another way, we are only spending 48 cents of every dollar of new revenue coming in and saving the other half. By controlling spending, we are turning the State's fiscal position around. We are delivering on infrastructure and overdue school facilities and maintenance. We are building new schools and preschools. There are more police and teachers. We

are doing long overdue maintenance on public transport. We are doing all of this while keeping public services in public hands. We are only halfway through our term, so watch this space.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (17:08):** Now it all makes sense. After the outcome of the Federal election, it is very clear that the Premier said to those opposite, "Do not be arrogant. Do not be complacent. The Federal result is not a reflection on the work you guys are doing." He clearly knows that the voters in this State know that there is a dangerous amount of complacency at the heart of this Government.

**Mr Clayton Barr:** That's unfair.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** Even the member for Cessnock knows.

**Ms Maryanne Stuart:** Did you not just listen to my speech?

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** I did, and it has reaffirmed this. The Government had every opportunity midway through its term to have a debate and prosecute its vision for the State over the next two years. The member for Heathcote could have looked back over the past two years at what has been done and what she is proud of. What did the member do? She spent six minutes bagging out the last Government—

**Ms Trish Doyle:** We put the boot into you.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN:** What other job can you be in for two years and make fun of the people in the role before you instead of trying to get on with it? It is shocking.

We have heard the talking points: record debt, unfunded programs, reckless spending. But the truth is that the last Coalition Government did what this Government has not been able to do in the past two years and will not be able to do in the next two years—that is, get things built and have the courage to make New South Wales the best place to work, live and raise a family.

The list of all the things the Coalition Government built goes on and on: the metro, WestConnex, the Sydney Gateway project, the Western Harbour crossing and 160 upgraded schools. Members opposite have heard it before. Any rational person would think that, after a decade on the Opposition benches, the Government would have had time to think, devise and articulate a plan, and then get into government and implement it. Instead, the Government is afraid of its own shadow. It is a bit jumpy. Mr Assistant Speaker, not that you have it, but you would know of imposter syndrome. Imagine winning an election, turning up in government and then for two years spending all your time literally cutting ribbons on projects that the former Government paid for and got rolling. But maybe that was the cunning plan all along, because that is all this Government has been doing. I suspect even Eddie Obeid would not have been comfortable with that approach. That is a very naughty thing to do.

What is truly galling is the same Labor members who are now wringing their hands about fiscal responsibility are opening projects that were initiated and rolled out by the former Government, on the back of investment decisions made by that former Government. The Government inherited the most advanced infrastructure pipeline in Australia, and its only contribution has been to botch the opening of the metro and install drivers on a driverless train. You cannot make this stuff up. We know how this goes: Labor cries poor and blames the Coalition for the deficit. But here is the truth: For over a decade, we invested whereas Labor retreated. We built hospitals, roads, metros, schools and all the infrastructure that this State needed for 50 years. That was not reckless; that was responsible.

The reality is that this State was once the economic powerhouse of Australia. It led the nation on innovation, infrastructure and investment. Today we are the caretakers of mediocrity. That is the best this Government can come up with. Economic growth under this Government has fallen to half the national average. Employment growth lags behind every State except Tasmania. Business confidence has plummeted to levels not seen since the pandemic. In all fairness, all that is not incompetence; it is just a lack of ambition. Every problem is under review, every decision is too hard and every announcement is a distraction. Frankly, the people of New South Wales deserve better than the management of decline masquerading as a government.

The people of New South Wales deserve leadership that sees challenges instead of opportunities. They deserve leaders who measure success not by headlines generated but by lives improved. As we enter the second half of its term, the message to this Government must be clear: Mediocrity is not acceptable. The time for studies, reviews and committees is over. The time for action has well and truly passed. If the first half of its term is any indication, the Labor Government is not building the New South Wales of tomorrow; it is barely maintaining the New South Wales of yesterday.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (17:13):** Budgetary management is absolutely critical. In this Parliament we legislate and regulate behaviour, but the provision of public goods and services is a cornerstone of a functioning government. Those goods and services must be funded, and we must ensure that we get maximum bang for our

buck. To help people as much as possible, fiscal discipline and fiscal management are critical. In that space, there is an opportunity cost attached to any decision that a government makes. When I entered Parliament I did a deep dive into Fairfield. I grew up in the Fairfield local government area and have lived there my whole life. This is a prelude to the previous Government's record spending across a bunch of areas. We heard the member for Manly speak about that.

When I look at Fairfield, I see an electorate that was forgotten and left behind. Its services do not match the narrative put out by the previous Government. For example, Yennora Public School did not have a school hall. Those kids had their assemblies outside in the heat of summer and the cold of winter. It was not fair and it was not right. We spent money to get them a school hall. As another example, I believe Chester Hill High School had 22 teacher vacancies. Across the State there were vacancies, and that had a profound impact on education.

Do not get me started on train stations. I have a petition going now to try to rectify some of the train stations in my electorate that the previous Government neglected. I note that on the North Shore line a whole bunch of train stations have been upgraded, but in my electorate it is at 20 per cent. Fairfield Hospital, a critical piece of infrastructure, was built in 1989 and has not been upgraded since. Our Government has now invested money to do that. The narrative of the former Government is not representative of what happened in my community and, I dare say, in other communities as well. That is aggravated by the budgetary situation we inherited. Regarding blowouts under the former Coalition Government, I am on the Public Accounts Committee with Mr Assistant Speaker.

**Ms Monica Tudehope:** How's that going for you?

**Dr DAVID SALIBA:** No, it's a serious matter.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Opposition members will come to order.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA:** The \$400 million Critical Communications Enhancement Program in 2016 was to be delivered by 2020 to support our emergency services. It went up from \$400 million to \$2 billion, we believe, with completion now in 2027. That is \$1.6 billion that will go to help people. That is why we get into government: to help people. It is fair commentary there. There are many other things I could talk about, such as Sydney Metro West, Sydney Light Rail, Northern Beaches B-Line and the dam business cases and whether or not they were fit for purpose. It is the exaggeration of spending that hurts communities, and Fairfield is one of them. In regard to the Opposition's record on the budget, I note that an op-ed yesterday commented on gross debt reaching \$200 billion under this Government. I contend that is misleading. To apportion that debt to this Government is grossly wrong.

It is in the budget, on the economic record, that the previous Government left behind a significant debt. In the nine months to March 2023 it spent \$27 billion on new policy measures in the budget. It just reeks of the political business cycle. The fact is that a core piece of any institution is its people, and we saw our essential emergency services personnel not getting the wages that they deserved. The decaying morale, and its impact on public goods and services, is an indictment. Obviously, time is about to escape me, but this Government has done a whole bunch of stuff to fix that. We can see that represented in Fairfield. In addition, the key thing is returning to a sustainable operating position as well as stabilising and maintaining a sustainable debt position to fund the things that we need to do. I support the motion. We are going to fix this.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (17:18):** Mr Assistant Speaker—

**Ms Trish Doyle:** Sing us a song, Tamworth.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I thank the member for Blue Mountains. The topic of the public interest debate is that the budget was mismanaged by the former Coalition Government. Clearly, during today's debate members of the Minns Labor Government are trying to rewrite history. I was going to say they are in Disneyland, but that would be disrespectful to Disneyland. So I take that back. The mismanagement of the budget is a result of the Minns Labor Government steadily ripping funds out of regional New South Wales since 2023.

The member for Blue Mountains and the member for Cessnock are quiet in the Chamber because they are thinking, "This is going to hurt." They are good members from the regions, but many of the funding programs that were so important to our communities are gone.

Families have been severely disadvantaged as a result of the mismanagement of the budget by this Labor Government. I remind the House of the vision and work of the previous Coalition Government prior to the 2023 State election. I will pick an electorate, any electorate—let's say Tamworth. Prior to the last election, I locked in and secured funding for a number of projects, and they are now under construction. However, the State Labor Government has claimed those projects as its own, which is outrageous. We continue to remind the community that that is not the case.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Government members will cease interjecting.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** State Labor has not committed any new funding for any new projects in our area. That is a real concern because the pipeline of projects will end and there is nothing new on the horizon. That clearly shows a mismanaged budget. The Government has nothing left. The infrastructure pipeline is empty. The light at the end of the tunnel is a train and it is coming. I will call out Labor as its members cut ribbons on projects that were conceived, fought for and funded by the Liberal-Nationals Coalition when in government—and Labor members love it. Our Government funded \$14 million for the Tamworth Regional Skywalk, \$20 million for the Gunnedah koala park and \$58 million for the new Banksia Mental Health Unit. I did not get an invite to the opening of that facility. We had to gatecrash that party. The community thought it was good that I turned up. Our Government also funded \$53 million for Gunnedah Hospital, \$7 million for Olympic-level hockey fields—we are hoping to get some interstate visitors—and \$15 million for a new aquatic centre.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Government members will cease interjecting or they will be placed on calls to order.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** That investment in schools, roads, hospitals and emergency services is now being realised and the State Labor Government is picking up the scissors and cutting the ribbons. Two years on from the election, Labor is yet to invest a single dollar into projects that would boost regional growth and economic development. Government members have hijacked media releases, but there is nothing new or exciting from this Minns Labor Government. Instead there are only crumbs.

**Ms Karen McKeown:** Steak knives.

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** Not even steak knives. Billions of dollars have been poured into Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong, so our community has a right to be concerned that the Labor Government has mismanaged the budget. We need honesty from Labor, not rhetoric or rewritten history. If Government members are serious, they will make sure they look after New South Wales as a whole. My colleague the member for Epping will move an amendment to this fairytale motion. We will set the record straight. I look forward to Labor realising that it has the fairytale wrong and the bubble is about to burst. I have not heard from the member for Cessnock. He is in the Chamber and he is hurting, as is the member for Blue Mountains. All the city-based Labor MPs are wondering, "What's going on here? Doesn't NSW stand for Newcastle, Sydney and Wollongong?" Government members must come out of the fairytale land they live in and support our amendment. They must realise they are mismanaging the budget. They must support New South Wales.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (17:23):** I support the motion and congratulate the member for Heathcote for introducing it to the House. I start with a few facts. The Liberal-Nationals Government lost our triple-A credit rating from Standard and Poor's in December 2020. Opposition members develop amnesia when we mention the five straight budget deficits that were delivered by Treasurers Perrottet and Kean.

They conveniently ignore that the first Mookhey budget uncovered \$13 billion worth of savings, plugged \$7 billion worth of unfunded programs and reduced State debt by more than \$14 billion. We should be referring to our Treasurer as "Magic Mookhey". The Government has stabilised debt. In June 2026 gross debt will be \$8.7 billion lower than was forecast when Labor took office.

Let us talk about the 12-year wages cap and suppression, and the ensuing economic chaos that resulted. Thousands of teachers, nurses, healthcare workers and police roles were left vacant. The Coalition left office with lower real wages than when it was elected 12 years earlier. Real wages have increased by 1.3 per cent since Labor was elected just two years ago, reversing the overall decline under the former Government. Labor made sure that 1,100 nurses whose positions were unfunded from 30 June 2024 were made permanent. There was a \$700 million funding shortfall for kids living in out-of-home care—disgraceful. There was no funding for Cyber Security NSW, and \$100 million was cut from the Destination NSW budget, which would have put at risk iconic events like the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras and the NRL Grand Final, for which I declare an interest.

**Mr David Harris:** Penrith won three in a row.

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN:** Four. The party of small taxes also introduced or increased taxes 21 times while in office and implemented a total of \$34 billion worth of revenue measures. What can we expect going forward? It would be more of the same under Coalition members. They left office and still cannot stop spending. They have racked up over \$61 billion in policy commitments, and they are not even in office. The question is: How would they pay for it? We know that if they got back in, they would bring back the wages cap. That is number one on the hit parade. They would start selling off public assets again: public schools, hospitals and the rest of our public transport. Nothing would be safe—the Harbour Bridge, harbour tunnel and Western Harbour Tunnel. They would sell off absolutely every road they could get their hands on. Anything that was not nailed down would be fair game.



The member for Manly asked what the Government is doing. The Government has a plan. Our strategy is to return the State to a sustainable operating position: stabilise and then maintain a sustainable debt position. The best thing we can do to address cost-of-living pressures is to put downward pressure on inflation. The Government will do that by controlling spending through cutting waste and limiting any new spending to only the must-haves. At 1.8 per cent, our expenses growth is almost threefold less than the former Government's, which spent at a rate that increased by 6.3 per cent every year. While the former Government repeatedly spent every cent that came in—and often even more than that—our spending growth is 1.8 per cent while our revenue grows at 3.9 per cent. Over time, that will help stabilise and structurally rebuild the budget after a decade of mismanagement. Put another way, for every dollar of new revenue coming in we are spending only 48¢ and saving the other half. It is a concept the Opposition needs to come to grips with. In conclusion, I quote the Treasurer, Magic Mookhey, who said:

... paying people enough to provide for their family is right morally; it is correct economically; and it is vital if we want to rebuild essential services to the world-class standards NSW demands.

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (17:28):** How great is it to have some humour in this place? We have had a very sombre debate today about a very important piece of legislation, so it is good to have some humour in this place as Labor members talk about mismanagement on the Opposition side. Before I move on, I acknowledge some students in the gallery.

I can see a Tangara uniform—a school that I went to. I welcome them to the gallery. At school we learned about budget management. Let me tell you about something—

**Mr Stephen Bali:** But not honesty. You should be the shadow Treasurer.

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE:** Do not worry, I am coming for that portfolio. I have let Dad know. When he was Opposition leader, the current Premier made himself out to be Mr Reasonable. He supported many of the COVID measures that were put in place to support small businesses, families, the art sector and the construction sector. In fact, anyone who suffered because of COVID was supported by the Liberals when we were in government because that is what surpluses are for. They are there to be used to support people. We used our surpluses to support the family personal budget and to provide the services that this State needs. That is what happened under the former Liberal Government: it delivered surpluses. It used those surpluses to build the infrastructure that this State needed like the metro, to provide cost-of-living relief for families like Active Kids vouchers and to make record investments in health, education and community safety. But now, the State faces deficits as far as the eye can see.

Those opposite do not want to acknowledge they will never produce another surplus. They will not deliver a surplus in this term of government, and they know it. Have they repaired the budget? No, they have not. Wait! Unless, is there a secret plan to raise taxes? There is a secret plan to get the Government back into surplus, and that is to raise taxes. They will raise taxes on anything that moves—clubs, land taxes, royalties or maybe they are even going to—

**Mr Kevin Anderson:** Camping.

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE:** Camping! Even the campers will get taxed more.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** Correction: It's a glamping tax.

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE:** The glampers get taxed as well. There is nothing in this State that they will not tax because that is their secret plan for budget repair. If they do not have a plan to raise taxes, then we are confronted with a budget that is in a very sorry state. State gross debt is projected to reach \$200 billion by 2027-28, more than one-fifth of State gross product.

**Mr Stephen Bali:** You gave us \$187 billion.

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE:** I am glad to see that the member for Blacktown read my op-ed yesterday. I thought it was quite good. State net debt is projected to reach \$137 billion. Gross debt is bad and net debt is bad. There is no feature of this Government's budget that is good. Those opposite have no plan to pay the debt down. Instead, the people of New South Wales will pay \$8.6 billion in interest payments. To put that in perspective, that is more than the combined annual budget of the police, Fire and Rescue and other emergency services put together. Every household in New South Wales will have to pay an additional \$2,500 in State taxes. Every household will be more than \$2,500 worse off, just to meet the interest bill. Families cannot afford that tax, but it is coming for us all. That is the Labor way. For those reasons I move:

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

- (1) Notes that the Minns Labor Government will add \$10.25 billion in deficits over the next four years.
- (2) Notes that interest payments under the Minns Labor Government are forecast to be \$8.97 billion for 2027-28— more than double the \$4.2 billion paid under the previous Government in 2022-23.

- (3) Notes that the Minns Labor Government created a \$10.5 billion black hole with its uncoded union wages deals.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (17:33):** In reply: I start by thanking the member for Manly, who talked about complacency and imposter syndrome. As I said, we built Helensburgh Police Station and we are duplicating Heathcote Road, something that the former member, who retired due to my election win—though some said he had been retired for some time before that—did not get to. There is no complacency regarding what we are doing about Helensburgh Police Station et cetera.

They were promises of the former member and never delivered in 12 long years. If the member wants to talk about imposter syndrome, he should look in the mirror.

I thank the member for Fairfield for his contribution. He spoke about the work being done in public transport, train stations, Fairfield Hospital and school halls. He spoke about how important it is to acknowledge and respect essential workers, and the way that that increases morale for them, which is something the Opposition, with its wages cap, would not know about. In the contribution of the member for Tamworth he spoke about how families no longer received funding cuts. That is what happens when a government does not put funding in the budget for things like Active Kids.

The former member for Heathcote, with the previous education Minister, promised the delivery of Heathcote High School weeks before the last election, and there was no funding in the budget for it. That is absolutely disgraceful and so disrespectful to that community. If the member for Tamworth wants to talk about what he has missed out on, I remind him that he was in government for 12 years. He should do his job, not just create hot air. Thankfully, the member for Penrith spoke about facts and sensibility. She also spoke about essential workers and public assets staying in public hands. Finally, we had daddy's little girl, who will be telling him how to work with a surplus, when members opposite delivered deficit after deficit. They increased taxes 21 times.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The Clerk will stop the clock.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Members on this side of the Chamber can have more than one talented person in a family. The language used by the member for Heathcote was incredibly unparliamentary. I ask the member to retract the statement and apologise.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Does the member for Heathcote wish to withdraw the statement?

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** No.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member does not withdraw.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** How rude!

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** Deficit after deficit, 21 times the previous Government increased taxes—

**Mr Nathan Hagarty:** Point of order: After taking a point of order about language used in this Chamber, the member for Coffs Harbour then accused another member of being rude. I am deeply offended and I ask that he retract the comment.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** To the point of order: Had the member for Heathcote withdrawn her comment, I would have had no reason to call her rude. The member is being rude, and continues to be so unless she withdraws the comment.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Members will calm down. There are 35 seconds to go until the end of the debate.

**Mr James Griffin:** To the point of order: Mr Speaker, the substantive issue remains. The comments made by the member for Heathcote about the member for Epping should be withdrawn.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I asked the member for Heathcote whether she would withdraw, and she declined to do so.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** I said no, and I will continue to say no, because the member for Epping said, "I will let Dad know."

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Members will cease debating across the table. They will direct their comments through the Chair.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** In closing, we talk about the fact that in 12 long years of the Coalition Government we did not get a surplus. Those opposite had deficit after deficit and, as I said, increased taxes 21 times for the people of New South Wales.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** Opposition members will come to order.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART:** That is what the public can expect if those opposite ever return to government: a wages cap, as their shadow Treasurer has said. The Government rejects the Opposition's amendment.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Heathcote has moved a motion, to which the member for Epping has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....34  
Noes .....51  
Majority.....17

#### AYES

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

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

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

#### NOES

Aitchison, J  
Atalla, E (teller)  
Bali, S  
Barr, C  
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  
Harrison, J  
Haylen, J  
Hoenig, R  
Holland, M  
Hornery, S  
Kaliyanda, C  
Kamper, S  
Kirby, W  
Leong, J  
McDermott, H  
McGirr, J  
McKeown, K  
Mehan, D  
Minns, C

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

#### PAIRS

Cross, M  
Wilson, F

Tesch, L  
Butler, L

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....51  
 Noes .....34  
 Majority.....17

#### AYES

Aitchison, J  
 Atalla, E (teller)  
 Bali, S  
 Barr, C  
 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  
 Harrison, J  
 Haylen, J  
 Hoenig, R  
 Holland, M  
 Hornery, S  
 Kaliyanda, C  
 Kamper, S  
 Kirby, W  
 Leong, J  
 McDermott, H  
 McGirr, J  
 McKeown, K  
 Mehan, D  
 Minns, C

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

#### NOES

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

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

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

#### PAIRS

Butler, L  
 Tesch, L

Saunders, D  
 Cross, M

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Bills*

### **ELECTORAL FUNDING AMENDMENT BILL 2025**

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (17:49):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Electoral Funding Amendment Bill 2025 proposes amendments to the Electoral Funding Act 2018 in relation to payments from the Administration Fund under part 5 of that Act. The bill clarifies the relationship between the entitlement of elected Independent members and political parties to payments from the Administration Fund and members' additional entitlements under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989. Firstly, the bill amends the

definition of administrative expenditure so that expenses can be claimed from the Administration Fund even if an item may also be claimed as an additional entitlement under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989. However, the bill provides that Independent members and parties will not be eligible for a payment from the Administration Fund where the Independent member, or an elected member of a party, has made a claim for the same item under an additional entitlement under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989.

Secondly, the bill provides that claims for payment from the Administration Fund by Independent members must be accompanied by a declaration that the member has not made, and will not make, a claim for the same item under an additional entitlement. The NSW Electoral Commission is also empowered to require an elected member of a party to provide such a declaration, where the party agent has made a claim for payment from the Administration Fund. These changes will have retrospective application from 1 April 2023. The bill contains savings and transitional provisions to deal with supplementary claims from the Administration Fund for expenditure incurred on or after 1 April 2023.

The Administration Fund is established under part 5 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 and is administered by the NSW Electoral Commission. One of the statutory objects of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 is to "provide for the effective administration of public funding of elections, recognising the importance of the appropriate use of public revenue for that purpose". As members are aware, the Administration Fund is used to reimburse eligible political parties and Independent members of Parliament for specified administrative and operating expenses incurred in a quarterly period, up to a capped amount.

Section 84 (1) of the Act specifies what expenses are included and excluded from the scope of administrative expenditure for the purpose of claims from the Administration Fund. Separately, elected members of Parliament are entitled to an electoral allowance and other additional entitlements under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989. The Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal determines the amount of the electoral allowance and fixes the classes, terms and any conditions of other additional entitlements that are available to members of Parliament pursuant to the provisions of its annual determination. The annual determination made by the tribunal on 24 May 2024, effective from 1 July 2024, provides for additional entitlements for members of Parliament, including the communications allowance, the general travel allowance and the skills and development allowance.

A category of expenditure that cannot be claimed from the Administration Fund because it is excluded by section 84 (1) (b) (ii) of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 is "expenditure for which a member may claim a parliamentary allowance as a member, other than expenditure for which an electoral allowance is payable". That provision was amended last year by the Electoral Funding Amendment Act 2024 to expressly carve out the electoral allowance and clarify that members' use of the electoral allowance does not constrain expenses that may be claimed from the Administration Fund.

Following the 2024 amendments, the NSW Electoral Commission has reviewed how parliamentary allowances other than the electoral allowance must be treated during the assessment of claims from the Administration Fund under section 84 (1) (b) (ii) of the Act. The Electoral Commission has recommended that the Government consider a further amendment to the Act to clarify the relationship between payments from the Administration Fund and members' additional entitlements under the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989.

I thank the commission for raising that matter with the Government.

The Government agrees that an amendment is desirable because the current operation of section 84 (1) (b) (ii) means that eligible independent members of Parliament and political parties cannot be reimbursed from the Administration Fund for items that are claimable under a parliamentary allowance even if a member has not actually made a claim under such an allowance. The Government understands that, without further legislative clarification, independent members and possibly minor parties may receive reduced administrative funding. The NSW Electoral Commission has also advised the Government that section 84 (1) (b) (ii), as currently drafted, creates undesirable administrative complexity in the claims assessment process, as well as uncertainty for members about the management of their electoral funding obligations and entitlements.

The bill addresses the concerns raised by the NSW Electoral Commission and provides clarity to other stakeholders, including independent members of Parliament, as to the relationship between, one, the entitlement of elected independent members and political parties to public funding under the Administration Fund; and, two, the entitlement of members to additional entitlements as determined by the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal. The aim is to provide certainty and clarity for those who are making and determining claims for payment from the Administration Fund. Retrospective application of those amending provisions is desirable for both the commission and members so that the commission can deal with supplementary claims from the fund consistently with those changes.

Moving to the details in items [1] to [4] of schedule 1 to the bill, schedule 1 [2] omits section 84 (1) (b) (ii) of the Electoral Funding Act 2018, which, as previously described, currently excludes "expenditure for which a member may claim a parliamentary allowance as a member, other than expenditure for which an electoral allowance is payable". Instead, the bill proposes to insert new provisions that provide that, one, an elected member is not eligible to claim an item of administrative expenditure from the Administration Fund where the elected member has also made a claim for the same item under an additional entitlement; and, similarly, two, a party is not eligible to claim an item of administrative expenditure from the Administration Fund where an elected member of that party has also made a claim for the same item under an additional entitlement. The bill inserts a definition of "additional entitlement" as meaning an additional entitlement, other than the electoral allowance, of the kind referred to in section 10 (3) of the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989. That provides greater clarity than the use of the term "parliamentary allowance", which is not a defined term in either the Electoral Funding Act 2018 or the Parliamentary Remuneration Act 1989.

I now turn to items [5] to [9] of schedule 1 to the bill, which insert new provisions into the Electoral Funding Act 2018 relating to the making of declarations that a claim has not also been made, and is not going to be made, for the same item of administrative expenditure under an additional entitlement. Schedule 1 [5] proposes to insert a requirement for independent elected members to provide a declaration—together with a claim for payment under the Administration Fund—that they have not made, and will not make, a claim under the fund and an additional entitlement for the same item of administrative expenditure. The aim is to provide certainty and clarity that members may not claim the same item of expenditure from both the Administration Fund and an additional entitlement.

Similarly, in relation to a claim made by a party for payment from the Administration Fund, the bill provides the NSW Electoral Commission with the power to require an elected member of the party to make a declaration that they have not made, and will not make, a claim for an additional entitlement for the same item of administrative expenditure. The Electoral Commission is expressly permitted to rely on such declarations. Schedule 1 [7] to the bill empowers the Electoral Commission to recover a payment that a party or elected member has received for an item of administrative expenditure if the member, or a member of the party, later receives an additional entitlement for the same item of administrative expenditure.

Schedule 1 [8] proposes that members and parties will not be eligible for a quarterly payment from the Administration Fund while a required declaration is outstanding in relation to the claim for the quarterly payment. However, an outstanding declaration will not affect a member's or party's eligibility for a quarterly advance payment or quarterly payment for an unrelated quarter, or their eligibility for other payments under the Electoral Funding Act 2018. Schedule 1 [10] to the bill provides for public consultation on draft guidelines that relate to administrative expenditure.

Section 152 of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 provides that the Electoral Commission may issue guidelines from time to time for or with respect to matters dealt with in the Act. The bill introduces a requirement for the Electoral Commission to publicly consult on a draft guideline that relates to administrative expenditure prior to the issue of a statutory guideline where practicable. The public submission period will be at least four weeks, and the commission must consider written submissions received during that period. That amendment responds to feedback from members of Parliament, who would like an opportunity to provide feedback to the Electoral Commission on the impact of proposed guidelines that relate to administrative expenditure. That amendment is not proposed to have any retrospective application.

I now turn to the transitional provisions in item [11] of schedule 1 to the bill. Other than the amendments that relate to consultation on draft guidelines in item [10] of schedule 1 to the bill, all of the amendments made by the bill will be taken to have commenced on 1 April 2023. The transitional provisions expressly enable Independent members and parties to submit supplementary claims, whether or not their previous claims have already been determined. Supplementary claims will be able to be made within 12 months after the commencement of the Act.

Supplementary claims by an Independent member must be accompanied by the requisite declaration that the member has not made and will not make a claim for the same item under the Administration Fund and an additional entitlement. The NSW Electoral Commission may require an elected member of a party to make the same declaration in relation to a supplementary claim submitted by the party agent. The retrospective application of the amendments will also enable the NSW Electoral Commission to assess previously submitted but undetermined claims from 1 April 2023 in accordance with the amended provisions.

Finally, the transitional provisions expressly provide that an extension of time is available in circumstances where a supplementary claim is determined and the Electoral Commission requires a member to repay an excess amount of administrative funding previously received by the member. The Electoral Funding Act 2018 contains an existing provision in section 153 that enables the Electoral Commission, in any particular case, to extend the

statutory time frame for doing something if it is satisfied that proper reasons exist justifying the extension. The bill provides that the making of a supplementary claim constitutes a proper reason to justify an extension of time required to repay an excess amount to the Electoral Commission beyond the usual 60-day statutory time frame. The time for repayment, however, cannot be extended beyond 31 December 2026.

This provision responds to concerns raised by members of Parliament about the time frame for repayments of administrative funding to the commission following the determination of supplementary claims. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **ABORTION LAW REFORM AMENDMENT (HEALTH CARE ACCESS) BILL 2025**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (18:02):** I contribute to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025, which I note has been heavily amended since it was first tabled in Parliament. Abortion has been decriminalised in New South Wales, and access to safe and legal abortion is a fundamental aspect of health care and personal freedom. The bill ensures that, regardless of income or postcode, women can get the care they need in a safe and respectful environment. Restricting abortion access undermines gender equality and disproportionately harms those who are already vulnerable: young women, older women, rural women and those experiencing poverty or violence. These are not abstract issues; they are lived realities.

As a society, we must stand for compassion, evidence-based health care and the right of every person to decide what is best for their own life. Over the past weeks I have received correspondence from constituents, some supporting the bill, some expressing concern and some not supporting the bill. That includes faith-based organisations and their members. I have listened to differing perspectives and understand the fears that some may have. I have respect for the deeply held beliefs that underpin some views.

I have also reflected on the values that are important to my electorate. Pittwater is a community engaged in socially progressive issues and supportive of women's rights, including those with respect to abortion, as are the majority of people in New South Wales.

The amendments to the bill are significant. Upon reflecting on the correspondence that I received that opposed the bill, it is clear that the key arguments have already been addressed in the other place. Certain aspects that were raised with me are now no longer relevant as the bill has been significantly amended. The greatest concern of many was about conscientious objections, specifically preserving the rights of individuals or faith-based hospitals that choose to decline abortion services or a role that facilitates them. That risk no longer exists, with the relevant provisions of the bill that sought to compel a health practitioner to refer on now removed. The provision compelling the health Minister to ensure abortion services are provided throughout the State within a reasonable distance of a resident's home has also been removed. I reassure those members of my electorate that the bill does not impinge on the conscience of clinicians.

I also received correspondence regarding nurse practitioners prescribing medical abortion to women up to 22 weeks pregnant. That is not the subject of the bill before us. The bill does not allow a nurse practitioner to prescribe MS-2 Step past nine weeks of gestation. I am concerned that there has been misinformation and disinformation in the politicisation of the bill, which I denounce. There are members of my community who oppose abortion completely but, again, that is not the subject of the bill. Abortions have been decriminalised in New South Wales since 2019. The only question the bill asks us to consider is accessibility, which is a right to access health care. That is not only a women's rights issue, it is also a health care issue. At its core, the bill seeks to address a glaring inequity in our healthcare system: the lack of accessible abortion services for women in regional and rural New South Wales, in particular.

As a member and prior to my election, the conversations and community forums I have participated in regarding access to abortion have demonstrated that my community is overwhelmingly pro-choice for women, and rejects the politicisation of women's health care. I acknowledge all members of this place, including those in Opposition and the shadow Minister for Health, who support the bill and have highlighted the need to support access to health care. We need rights to be actualised, and the bill focuses directly on enabling women to access those rights. The bill will improve healthcare rights for those in regional areas around New South Wales. Women will have access to abortions without the need to travel, extra expense or time away from their jobs, children or whatever else their life entails.

A report by Family Planning Australia revealed that, in 2022, women in remote New South Wales sought medical abortions at more than double the rate of their urban counterparts. Yet 37 local government areas had no

doctors providing those services. Even more alarming is the revelation that only three out of 220 public hospitals in New South Wales routinely provide abortion services. That has created "abortion deserts", forcing women to travel sometimes more than 160 kilometres to access care. Those distances can be insurmountable barriers for many, particularly those without the means or support to undertake such journeys. Despite the previous decriminalisation of abortion, access remains a postcode lottery. That should not be the case.

I have also received significant correspondence urging me to support the bill. The Zonta Club of Northern Beaches, Inc. and Zonta International both wrote to me to note their strong support for the bill. They emphasised the strong inequity in the delivery of abortion services across New South Wales and the lack of services available for women in rural and remote areas of New South Wales. They spoke of the fact that women may be forced to delay treatment, travel long distances and pay many hundreds of dollars for private care. The impact and trauma in the lives of those women and their families can be immeasurable. Clinic 66 also wrote to me to give its strong support for the bill. It noted that it witnesses the devastating consequences of New South Wales' current legislative and policy framework. It spoke of the economic benefits that will stem from the reform, which is not often spoken about.

Every dollar spent on improving abortion access can save \$4.30 in downstream healthcare costs. Reduced travel burdens also mean fewer lost work days and less strain on social services. Further, Clinic 66 provided a jurisdictional comparison, noting that the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand all allow mid-level medical practitioners to prescribe medical abortions. In Australia, the bill puts New South Wales in line with all other States and Territories in Australia, except for Tasmania.

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists supports this bill. It noted:

Women in Australia should be able to rely on their government to ensure equitable access to these services.

The bill also aligns with the findings of the NSW Health *Report on the Statutory Review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019*. The review recommended that current legislation should allow nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and other registered practitioners to prescribe and provide services in line with Therapeutic Goods Administration guidelines. Family Planning NSW shared with me that the availability of services needs to be urgently addressed. It emphasised the importance of timing in abortion care, with the available options for abortion decreasing with later gestation. There is often little time to prepare, particularly for those on low incomes or for those who are unaware they are pregnant until the last minute. The vast majority of women with unwanted pregnancies desire swift access to abortion services. Despite this support, I do understand and respect the concerns about conscientious objection raised by some in our community.

I share the story of a woman in my electorate, which has good access to abortion. Her story highlights that we must consider the complexity of accessing abortion in all of its forms. The woman who told me this story was experiencing domestic violence and coercive control in her relationship. While this constituent had wished for a third child and was a religious woman, she made the hard decision to undergo an abortion as she could not in good conscience bring another child into a relationship where the domestic violence was so extreme. She shared with me that her husband tracked her every move, making it very difficult for her to find time to see a doctor or to withdraw money for surgical abortion without fear of experiencing domestic violence. If these issues are facing women in the city, then we cannot underestimate the issues faced by some women in regional areas, which are compounded with issues of access and travel.

The GP crisis is worse in regional areas of the State where we know that access to health practitioners is limited. All women in Australia have the right to choose whether they want an abortion. This bill simply ensures that the barrier to accessing that prescription is overcome. As a strong supporter of evidence-based policymaking and decision-making, I also welcome the amendments in the other place that increase abortion reporting requirements. The bill now includes provisions for the Secretary of the Ministry of Health to prepare an annual report detailing abortion service availability by region, including access and waiting times, clinical performance and adverse events. This measure aims to improve transparency and ensures that abortion services are delivered safely and effectively across the State.

This bill is not about reigniting a debate on the legality or moral reality of abortion. It is about ensuring fair, safe and timely access to essential health care for all women regardless of where they live. The amendments address key concerns, balance protections for conscientious objection and clarify the scope of the proposed legislation. What remains is a clear and focused objective to remove unnecessary barriers that disproportionately burden women in rural and regional New South Wales.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**  
**(18:12):** I speak in debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I was one of the 14 co-sponsors of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019, which was introduced by Temporary Speaker Greenwich. I am on record as supporting access to reproductive health care for women. I have advocated



for it throughout my entire political career, which stretches back for over 30 years. During debate on both the Public Health Amendment (Safe Access to Reproductive Health Clinics) Bill 2018 and the 2019 bill, I said that life is complex, messy, difficult and unique. Access to abortion is a key right that enables women to deal with what is thrown at them.

I recognise that members will be taking a conscience vote on this bill. I am at ease with my conscience in support of this bill. Having ensured that women are able to access safe and legal abortions in New South Wales through the decriminalisation reforms we put in place in 2019, I must in good faith support this bill as should all other members. It will ensure that access is available for all women across the State. Women who are poor, who live in regional, rural and remote areas, or who are involved in relationships with domestic violence or coercive control should be free to make a choice about what happens to their bodies. The bill as amended in the Legislative Council is very simple. It helps to deliver the reforms that this Parliament passed by ensuring they are available to all women in the State.

It simply changes the definition of who can deliver this reproductive healthcare service from a "medical practitioner" to a "prescribed health practitioner" and then defines such a person as an endorsed midwife—a midwife whose registration is endorsed under section 94 of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)—or a prescribed health practitioner, which means a medical practitioner, an endorsed midwife or a nurse practitioner. It amends the requirement for information about counselling in section 7. In summary, it acknowledges that in this State—particularly in regional, rural and remote areas—there are women who cannot access abortion, whether because of a lack of access to doctors or because of coercion and control. They should not be barriers for anyone seeking access an abortion.

As someone who grew up in the Australian Capital Territory, I remember a harrowing experience when my friend could not access an abortion in Canberra. She had to travel to and from Sydney in a day and then work for four hours so that her parents and family would not find out that she had had an abortion or even, quite sadly and very disturbingly, that she was in a relationship. That was bad enough in the early 1990s, but it is dreadful that it can happen to women in 2025. I still remember working that shift with her and seeing her struggling through. For us to withhold that service from women who definitely need it—because of their location, for reasons of secrecy or because of the violence that they are experiencing at home—is very challenging. We should never accept that for women.

I understand that NSW Health is conducting a review of all maternity and early pregnancy policy documents to ensure that there are clear and transparent pathways, and that those will be reviewed this year. People talk about conscientious objectors, but a conscientious objector should not have the right to impose on someone a life that they have not asked for. We need to look at where that becomes an infringement of the right of women to have agency over their own bodies. I am advised that NSW Health is also looking at statewide training for staff and primary care providers about the operation of abortion services. That is very important work.

The delay in accessing abortion can lead to later term abortions, which can put women's lives at risk. People who do not support the bill need to think about that. While we always hope that abortion is a last resort and that it is rare, we must strive to ensure that women's access to abortion is always free, safe and legal for those who need it, when and where they need it. The bill is about ensuring all of those things. We cannot say we are giving those rights to women if they are conditional on their location, socio-economic status or the status of their relationship.

I strongly support endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners being able to provide medical terminations for those who seek them. That is consistent with the recommendations of the statutory review of the bill that was passed into law in 2019. It will ensure that women in areas of the State that do not have easy access to doctors can still access an early abortion with safer outcomes for them. I draw the attention of the House to the provisions of the bill regarding the annual report to Parliament. That will ensure that we have a real understanding of the abortion services that are available to women in New South Wales and any issues that, as a government, we need to manage in the safe and legal delivery of reproductive health care for women.

As a society, we must ensure that everyone has agency over their own bodies. To achieve that, we must ensure that, where anyone needs to have an abortion or any other reproductive health procedure, they can do it at the earliest opportunity to provide the safest outcome for them. It has been a long journey to get to this place. There are those who, after all the work we have done over decades, still want to shackle women's rights. I urge them to think of the women and the lives they put at risk by denying access to those people who most need it. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (18:18):** I contribute to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I start by marking two important dates that I think are relevant to the debate. The first is 5 May—International Day of the Midwife. The second is 12 May—International Nurses Day.

These dates are important occasions for members of this place to note, not simply because many of these incredible people are servants of the New South Wales public—however, let's face it, that would be enough—but because the bill is in all its substance concerned with them and their occupation. In achieving its two major objectives—expanding the scope of practice for nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe MS-2 Step medication up to nine weeks gestation, and requiring an annual report be presented to Parliament detailing the provision of these services—the bill changes the way nurses and midwives can serve our communities. That is why I have chosen to elevate them specifically when considering my position on the bill.

While parliamentarians like us may lead, in the end, it is the people who deliver. We should ensure they can do so in an informed way that improves the efficiency and functionality of the overall health system and avoids the inadvertent restriction in practice to what is already legal in principle. In its current form, this bill does that. What it does not do is change the legal status of abortion. Neither does it introduce a new method of performing an abortion, and nor can one obtain an abortion any earlier or any later than usual. Certainly, nobody's autonomy to choose whether to participate in an abortion will be infringed as a result of the bill. Preserving these outcomes has been a strong focus for some in the community, and I hope the amended bill brings some comfort that their major reservations have been addressed.

I particularly acknowledge the respectful and considered way that those in Ryde who may remain concerned—and the many others with strong views in support of the bill—engaged with me and my office in advance of this vote. It has been another reminder of the extraordinary privilege it is to live in this country, where even on issues that test the resolve of a society, the vast majority emerge respectful, even if in disagreement. Of course, not all will adopt that approach. The apathetic retreat and the fringes divide. Both extremes pose a danger but neither can prevail. Decisions are made by those who turn up, and while the apathetic miss out, so too do the fringes. Exclusion is the hallmark of the fringe, and without the inclusion of partners in progress, real and lasting change is impossible. That change has to come from the centre, which I believe is consistent with the essence of what is achieved in the bill. The centre is the realm of most citizens, particularly those in Ryde. It is also the place from where health policy should be made, and it is why I will support the bill as amended in the other place.

Before I speak in more detail about the bill, I reflect on its evolution. Those familiar with the initial proposal will recall that it sought to expand the availability of abortion services throughout the State to ensure they were located within a reasonable distance of people's homes. Proponents argued that this would have ensured better and more equitable access, but the measures presented some fairly obvious challenges in practice, particularly in remote communities. It would have required conscientious objectors to refer patients to a service provider that would have delivered the abortion service in their place. Proponents of this measure believed that the personal views of a medical practitioner should not impede one's right to a legitimate medical service. Others argued it placed the objector in a morally compromised position, where they would be required not to perform a termination but to participate nonetheless in a patient's journey of obtaining one. Finally, it would have removed mandatory notification requirements that were proposed in order to reduce the administrative burden on providing termination services.

While removing practical burdens to health care access is logical, it is similarly logical to believe that the benefits of more and greater transparency of data outweighs this minor inconvenience. All three components—location of services, requirement to refer and abolition of reporting—have been removed. All three components, but particularly the first two, were the overwhelming cause for concern among my constituents, and I have been pleased to see even some of the staunchest opponents of the bill concede it now takes a more reasonable form. It may not be one they expressly support, but it is a vivid reminder of the workings of our democracy and that reason and compromise can prevail.

I am also comforted knowing those with ardent objections to these changes retain the absolute right not to engage with the services. As a society, we owe it to them to always respect that choice, and empower them to pursue alternative paths in keeping with their own preference and conscience. That is why it is also right and proper that this matter be dealt with via a conscience vote.

That was the basis upon which previous reforms to abortion were introduced. It is respectful to the various strong views that are held across our communities and represented in this place. On that note, it is worthwhile acknowledging that members in this place—me included—have taken positions that run contrary to the views of their closest colleagues. I thank members for the respect and decency they have shown.

Of course, as I alluded to earlier, the most contentious and conscience-oriented components of the bill that raised concerns for my constituents have now been removed. That is why I approach the bill as it stands through a practical health staffing and policy lens. It is objectively right to make policy decisions with the benefit of contemporary and transparent data. The requirement to report to Parliament will help all policymakers to inform themselves more comprehensively on the matter, regardless of opinion on the merits of pregnancy terminations.

If there are problems, they are more likely to be uncovered and addressed as a result of the reporting requirements contained in the bill.

It is particularly important to give that confidence to our hardworking nurses, midwives and doctors, who are already under pressure in a stretched and challenging environment. That brings me back to my original point. In a week when we give thanks to healthcare professionals, the best gift we could give would be to tackle head-on the challenges they face in their roles. The bill has not occupied the headlines during this debate, which is one of the most salient points about why it should be supported. Today, notwithstanding the recommendation of the Therapeutic Goods Administration in 2023, New South Wales restricts MS-2 Step prescription capabilities to doctors. Our State is out of step with most of the country, which has passed enabling legislation to abide by that recommendation. However, leadership requires making the right decision in the circumstances, and the argument that others are doing something is no justification to follow suit.

That is why it is important to advance the argument for a more efficient healthcare system that utilises its best resources—its people—to the fullest. I have taken some time to understand the amount of work that goes into becoming a qualified nurse practitioner or endorsed midwife. They are exceptionally qualified people, and they are certainly overqualified to prescribe an oral medication. Why should they not be able to ease the burden on doctors, if needed, in order to improve the efficiency of the overall system? Such an approach is consistent with the multidisciplinary, team-based model of care which, in the case of pregnancies and terminations, already involves nurses and midwives. It is unclear why doctors should be treated in isolation for the purposes of just one component of a termination journey.

One small tweak in the system can make it work a little more smoothly. That wise policy approach could be applied to other avoidable bottlenecks to not only ensure quicker and better services for patients but also reduce the inevitable costs associated with delayed or cumbersome processes. This is about facing government outwards and putting it in the service of people, not process. That should be the basis of all legislation in this place and our communities expect that. Ultimately, this bill is for those who choose to use the measures contained within it and for a workforce that is already working so hard for the public good. On both counts, as I have articulated, the bill moves the needle in the right direction and is therefore worthy of my commendation to the House.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (18:27):** I speak in debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. When the issue of access to termination services was debated in this place in 2019, I said it was important that elected representatives are up-front with their constituents, particularly on matters of conscience, and that they outline their reasons for their decision. I do exactly that in my brief contribution. I support the bill before the House. I would not have supported it in its original form, but I support the amended version we are debating. I support the bill because it provides women with access to services when access was otherwise difficult or near impossible largely because of where they live.

That aligns with the view I expressed about to access to terminations in the 2019 bill, and I restate it today: I believe terminations should be safe, infrequent and legal. In 2019 the debate was about the legality of accessing abortion services and whether termination should continue to be part of the Criminal Code. Since the passage of that Act, termination services in New South Wales have been safe, infrequent and legal. But for many women, access to the service has not been available. For those women, it effectively does not exist when it should. In supporting the removal of terminations from the Criminal Code, I supported access. That meant access for all women.

Like other health services, postcodes should not be the determining factor on whether a healthcare service is available or accessible. In the *Report on the Statutory Review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019* it was recommended that the Act be amended to allow nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and other prescribed medical practitioners to perform medical terminations. That recommendation was made so that services were available in more parts of the State and to update New South Wales laws to bring them into line with the Therapeutic Goods Administration changes that allowed registered health practitioners with appropriate qualifications, training and lawful authority to prescribe MS-2 Step to perform a medical termination.

The Safe Access to Abortion Care Working Group's feedback was that New South Wales law should be aligned with the Therapeutic Goods Administration changes. I appreciate that not everyone holds that view. I thank those constituents who have taken the time to contact me to outline their concerns about the bill, particularly the bill in its original form. For many, their concerns related to the original bill prior to the amendments moved and supported in the other place. I have appreciated the many conversations that I have had with people both for and against the original bill.

I am disappointed that others have used this debate to spread misinformation and disinformation about the matter. Those tactics should not be used to cloud public discourse on important and often challenging matters for

individual members and members of the public in that way. It serves no-one well. It infects and diminishes the public discussion. However, my position on matters relating to termination services remains consistent. I consider the version of the bill before the House to be consistent with my position that termination services in New South Wales should be safe, infrequent and legal. For that reason, I support the bill.

**Mr RAY WILLIAMS (Kellyville) (18:30):** I contribute to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 and state from the outset that I oppose the bill in its current form. Whilst I note that the Legislative Council has made significant amendments that have greatly improved the bill, we are still dealing with the bill as proposed by The Greens. I will always stand up for the rights of women, but I will also always speak on behalf of the unborn, who have no voice. It has always been my personal belief that life begins at conception and is ended by abortion. That is a fact. However, that is not the view of the bill in its current form. I opposed the previous abortion bill for many reasons, and I invite anyone to read my comments on that bill. They were very personal views, and I expressed them as I think all members should in relation to conscience bills: members should stand up and, with personal conviction and on behalf of their community, say broadly and honestly why they support or oppose specific bills. I do that this evening.

Firstly, as I said, there have been certain amendments made to the bill in the upper House. Prior to those amendments, the bill would have forced clinicians with a conscientious objection to be complicit in the process of women accessing abortion through referral. To think that we, as parliamentarians, would legislate within the realms of a conscience vote, as we are doing tonight, to restrict clinicians, GPs, doctors et cetera from making conscientious decisions on how they should treat unborn life is absolutely and utterly absurd. I believe the bill would have been thrown out had that not been altered in the Legislative Council. Whilst I do not support the bill, I hope that amendment will go through and be included in the legislation.

Secondly, the bill will give the New South Wales Minister for Health powers to require hospitals, including faith-based hospitals, to provide abortion services within their institutions, once again stepping on the moral and ethical views of people who work in faith-based hospitals who, like I, support the life of unborn children.

Thirdly, it would have significantly reduced critical reporting and the collation of data about abortion that fundamentally informs the Government's ability to understand women's health needs. My understanding is that all those measures have been amended by the Legislative Council and that they will come to this House. Whilst I support all of those measures to amend the bill, I still oppose it, as I have already stated.

Conscientious objection is fundamental to a healthy society and a healthy democracy, and no-one deserves to be pressured into something they believe is morally or ethically wrong. As I said, the fact that members of Parliament get a vote to legislate the conscience view of someone else is absolutely absurd. We must respect the right of all decent Australians to conscientiously object, especially when it is a matter of taking what is scientifically deemed to be the life of an unborn child. I believe the bill in its current form still places the health of women in jeopardy. The proposed bill would allow nurses and midwives in regional and rural areas to prescribe an abortion-inducing pill for pregnancies up to 22 weeks gestation, which I believe places women's health in a very precarious position.

A report from the United States [US] that was only published two weeks ago revealed that nearly 11 per cent of the almost 900,000 women who had undertaken abortions had experienced serious adverse effects within 45 days of taking the drug mifepristone. I understand that mifepristone is supported by our medical associations and that it is legal to administer, but the severe health consequences some women experience after having been prescribed that particular drug are something that needs to be looked upon very carefully. Maybe there need to be greater precautions placed around that, especially in regards to the advice given to women about how their health may be affected following the taking of mifepristone.

The adverse effects cited in the report included sepsis, infection and haemorrhaging, and just under 5 per cent of those women required a visit to an emergency room. It is also important to note that US study had a maximum prescription limit of 10 weeks gestation, yet we are dealing with a bill that will allow the administration of mifepristone up to 22 weeks gestation. That is more than twice the tenure of gestation presented in this bill, yet in America they have raised serious concerns about mifepristone being prescribed to women with pregnancies of a gestation of less than half that time. I consider the potential dangers at more than double that time frame to be deeply concerning.

Support for women in emergency care is already seldom available in many regional and rural areas. The bill represents a dangerous ideological push to expand abortion without consideration for the practical dangers faced by women. It is also not the priority in regards to State-based health funding. We are placing such an emphasis here on the aiding of taking an unborn child's life. There will be people who argue that some women require an abortion, and I stand by the fact that women have the right to choose what they do with their bodies. But is this the most fundamental and important issue that the New South Wales Parliament should be dealing with today

when one considers problems created by domestic violence, youth crime and the stabbings and murders that have happened in those particular areas?

There are problems in our hospitals, with people unable to access medical care in what is a wonderful country with the best medical care you can gain anywhere in the world.

That does not mean we can rest on our laurels and stray from our fundamental objective of providing health care to everybody, especially in their time of need. As I said, I oppose the bill on several grounds. I have often stated that there are very few people willing to stand up on behalf of the unborn. I hope, in some way, I have given them a voice. I oppose the bill.

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (18:39):** I thank the members of the Hornsby community who contacted me in relation to the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 for the respectful and sincere views they shared. My personal view on abortion is that it is a loss of the potential for life. I respect those with a different personal view. I appreciate that no woman wants an abortion or expects to have one. I respect the ability of women to make decisions on the health care they will access in their circumstances. Legal and safe access to abortion in New South Wales has long been established.

The debate in this Parliament in 2019 simply confirmed a widely held public acceptance that had developed over decades: If abortion is to be legal, it should be accessible in line with usual medical standards and practices. The amended form of the bill on which I will vote enables nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe the MS-2 Step medication up to nine weeks gestation. This is in line with Therapeutic Goods Administration and clinical guidelines. This amendment is intended to ensure access for women to abortion in rural and regional areas, who may not have easy access to a GP or doctor but do have access to a nurse or midwife.

I will vote in line with the long-established community acceptance of safe and legal access to abortion and the advice of NSW Health. I will vote in favour of the amended form of the bill. I would not have supported the bill in its original form. I note that the bill was amended by the upper House to remove changes that would have taken away the rights of doctors and nurses to conscientiously object to providing abortion services or referring patients to access abortion services. I support this protection. I believe in the freedom of conscience. I do not believe this protection should be amended. I believe we should look to ways to support women and couples in making choices about abortion. This means support for women who choose to continue with pregnancy to feel empowered to have and raise their child and, if a woman chooses abortion, more support to help process that decision.

**Dr JOE MCGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:42):** I make a contribution to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I voted against the abortion decriminalisation bill in 2019, and members know my personal convictions and faith in this regard. I believe in the dignity of life and the importance of respecting life for every individual, no matter the stage of their life. In the euthanasia debate I spoke of the sanctity of life. As a medical practitioner, I feel an even greater commitment to enhancing and preserving life. I also acknowledge the difficulty of the decisions women have to make in this regard. I respect that, and sincerely acknowledge the sincerity of the advocacy of the people who have brought the bill forward. Although the bill we debate now has been extensively amended from its original form by sensible amendments that I welcome, I will reflect on the content of the original bill so that my position is clear. I note that many speakers today have said they would not have supported the original bill. Certainly, I would not have supported it.

During the decriminalisation debate, I raised significant concerns about conscientious objection. I attempted to move amendments to further strengthen protections for health practitioners who do not wish to participate or be forced to participate in providing abortions. The amendments were not successful. However, I know practitioners remain concerned about the issue. Accordingly, I fully support the changes made in the other place that remove proposals to further limit the ability of health professionals to practise in accordance with their conscience. I was also very concerned about any suggestion or attempt to require faith-based hospitals and health services to provide termination services.

The original bill also required abortion to be provided "within a reasonable distance of patient's homes", effectively raising it, in my view, above other urgent medical needs, especially for regional people.

The effect would have been to add extra pressure to the public health system, which is already stretched to capacity. I have spent the past two years chairing the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health. I have travelled extensively throughout the State. Major challenges remain in rural health. The committee has produced two reports and a third and final report will be tabled next week. Those reports detail ongoing significant issues in rural health.

One particular area it focused on is rural maternity care and obstetric services that are in crisis and need urgent action. Maternity deserts and women giving birth by roadsides, for example, are more pressing issues if

we are to deliver urgently needed reforms to rural and regional health care. As I have stated before, it is not reasonable for the State health system, as it is, to pick up this role, especially in rural areas. Clearly, the Legislative Council agrees. The legislation before the House, however, still imposes a burden on the overworked State system by attempting to have nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives, who are in short supply, perform a function that is already being delivered. That is proposed without real evidence that there is a shortage of the service. I agree with comments made by the Hon. Susan Carter in the other place. She said:

I can find no evidence that abortion is particularly hard to access in parts of New South Wales or comes with more onerous access barriers than many other medical procedures. We need to be sure that we are not voting for a bill that fixes a problem that may not exist.

Compared with the crisis in rural and regional health, this requirement for nurses and midwives only adds pressure to a system under stress, especially as the medication in question can be prescribed by doctors, including via telehealth consultations. Given the lack of evidence, I also welcome the amendment in the other place that requires annual reporting to Parliament detailing abortion availability by region, including waiting times, clinical performance, safety and adverse events, and relevant information. That is very important and highlights the lack of data to inform our decision in this place. Quite simply, it is a concern that we are debating this issue without the appropriate data to make the best decision possible.

Despite my concerns with the bill, I accept that it may be supported by the House. If that is the case, I foreshadow that I will propose amendments to minimise the risks that the bill may present. There has been reference already to complication rates related to this treatment. A paper released in April this year by Hall and Anderson cites an analysis of American insurance claims data. That study claims to show a more than 10 per cent risk of serious adverse events, and a one in 20 chance of a woman needing hospitalisation or a visit to the emergency room following the administration of MS-2 Step. I accept that this study was based in the American system, which is different to ours. There will always be concerns about the nature of research and arguments about data. However, complication rates of 3 per cent to 6 per cent have been cited elsewhere. The South Australian Abortion Reporting Committee *Annual Report for the Year 2023* cites a complication rate of 6.6 per cent. In other words, this service has complications.

I have concerns with the move to extend prescription of MS-2 Step to nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives. In the absence of full data, we should exercise caution. To protect patients and nurses, the bill should require compulsory training for nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives administering the treatment in the same manner that such training was required for doctors prior to 2023 after the introduction of the bill in 2019. I will propose amendments to require training and minimum experience before nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives are authorised to prescribe. The amendment will also aim to ensure that only nurse practitioners with sufficient experience should be tasked with this responsibility. It will require two years of practice experience.

I will propose another amendment to extend the requirement to provide information to health practitioners rather than just medical practitioners. With the adoption of the amendment about the provision of an annual report to Parliament, there was no amendment to the rest of the Act. If we are changing the Act to extend the ability to prescribe to other practitioners apart from medical practitioners and we are requiring a report with information, then there needs to be a reference to health practitioners, rather than medical practitioners, in the document. When the amendment was passed in the Legislative Council, members did not realise that, for that full reporting, there needs to be a reference to nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives providing that information.

In summary, I am pleased that the bill was amended in the Legislative Council. Many of my concerns with the bill were addressed. It was good those changes were made in the other place. Many members who have contributed to the debate today have said the original bill went too far. I still have concerns with the bill. In its current form, I will not be able to support it. I foreshadow that I will move some amendments that I believe will make the bill and the processes safer.

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (18:49):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I wish we did not have to have a debate about abortion. I do not like abortion. I do not think anyone likes abortion. Life is precious and the termination of life at any stage, for whatever reason, should be considered very carefully. The decision should not be made lightly. Like many other members, I would not have been able to support the original version of this bill. I can support the amended version. Whatever our personal beliefs, feelings and philosophies on abortion, back in 2019 laws were created to provide a legal pathway to abortion. The Abortion Law Reform Act 2019 changed the treatment of abortion from a criminal issue to a health issue.

Prior to the passage of that legislation, there were no respectful pathways for women considering abortion. That drove many to seek out illegal ways to terminate their pregnancies, with some terrible consequences. Making something illegal does not stop it. People need to accept that abortion happens and is a legal act. They also need to respect that it is a very personal choice. I believe that women should be in control of their own bodies. They

also need to be strongly supported in making what is a lawful but difficult choice. Under the law, there is no mandatory offer to discuss the decision for women seeking an abortion up to 22 weeks of pregnancy. Mindful of how difficult the decision can be, most doctors will offer some form of discussion.

Currently, several support services are available for women who are faced with this decision, including the government-run Pregnancy Choices Helpline; The Royal Women's Hospital pregnancy options counselling; a counselling service run by Children by Choice, a not-for-profit organisation founded back in 1972; and Family Planning Australia, which has been providing advice to pregnant women since 1926. Those organisations play a critical role. Having a discussion with someone is vitally important when it comes to a decision of this magnitude. If, after a discussion and considering all options, a woman decides she has no choice but to terminate, that is a legal decision that needs to be respected.

We also need appropriate medical support and equitable access to that medical support. I have heard a lot of people talk about regional New South Wales. I agree that help and support in regional New South Wales can be a long way away. The changes proposed in this bill are not radical changes to abortion law; they merely bring New South Wales in line with other States to allow nurse practitioners and qualified midwives to legally prescribe a medication to terminate a pregnancy. The service will only be available to women who are up to nine weeks pregnant. Allowing midwives and nurse practitioners to prescribe the medication will make a safer method of termination more accessible to people in regional, rural and remote areas.

I would like women who seek to access the service to be offered a discussion. I would like there to be more advice and opportunity to discuss the decision made available to any woman who seeks out advice to terminate a pregnancy. I intend to introduce a bill to the Parliament to ensure more advice and support is available for women who are thinking of undergoing the procedure. The bill would ensure there is an offer of a discussion—it would never be mandatory. I will seek co-sponsors for the bill from both Houses. As I said, abortion is a decision that should not be taken lightly, but should be supported in every way possible.

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:53):** I speak in support of the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. The bill is another step forward to ensure equitable access to reproductive health care across New South Wales. In 2019 I joined with other members from across the Parliament to co-sponsor a bill introduced by the member for Sydney to decriminalise abortion in New South Wales and ensure that abortion became a matter of women's health care. I did so because I believe that women across the State should have the right to exercise reproductive autonomy and safely access reproductive health care. The reasons that women seek abortions are varied and often complex. But in New South Wales we enshrined in law that the people best capable of making such personal and impactful decisions are the women themselves.

However, I do not just support a woman's right to choose in theory; women must be able to exercise that choice. The bill seeks to address a key barrier to women accessing and exercising their rights and their decision by expanding who can prescribe medical abortion medication, as recommended by NSW Health. I support the bill proposed by Dr Amanda Cohn in the other place. She is a woman, a doctor and a regional advocate. I thank her for taking up the challenge of bringing this Parliament together to break down barriers for women across our State. I am a feminist because I believe in women's rights and equality. I am a Liberal because I believe fundamentally in the individual and their ability to make the best decisions for themselves in each unique situation they face. In my first speech in this place, I said:

I will always be a champion for women, for our lives, our rights, our freedoms, our ability to determine our own futures, to compete on a level playing field, to access opportunities unconstrained by our gender.

Today I demonstrate that commitment to women again. When I contributed to debate in support of the decriminalisation of abortion in 2019, I spoke of my role representing the electorate with the highest proportion of women of any electorate in New South Wales, at 53.2% at the last census. I was keenly aware then, as I am now, of my responsibility to be a voice for my community and for women today and into the future.

I know the community of North Shore has compassion and respect for others' rights, and the overwhelming majority of my constituents support a woman's right to choose. I know they would share my expectation that a person's postcode should not determine their ability to access reproductive health care. While this is a conscience vote for the major parties in this place, and I do not speak on behalf of the Opposition as the shadow Minister for Women, nevertheless, I am the shadow Minister for Women and that role further informs my views on standing up for women's rights across New South Wales.

I also reflect that this year marks 100 years since the very first woman was elected to this Parliament: Millicent Preston-Stanley. Before her time in Parliament, she fought for a range of issues of concern to women, including sex education, family planning, and maternal and child health. She campaigned for the establishment of a chair of obstetrics at the University of Sydney medical school. When the school instead introduced a veterinary obstetrics course, her powerful catchcry was "horses' rights for women". We have made significant progress on

obstetric and maternal care in the past 100 years, but the fact that there are still limits to service provision needs to be addressed. There were instances just this year of public hospitals refusing to provide abortion services, including Queanbeyan and Orange hospitals.

I am proud that Preston-Stanley stood in this place as a member of a party that was a precursor to the Liberal Party. A key passage from her inaugural speech in 1925 reflected on the role of this place and its decision-making on women. She said:

As women taxpayers and workers, they are subject to the laws you make, the inadequate wages you impose, the taxes you collect, the injustices you perpetuate, the anomalies you tolerate, and they suffer under the many vital and important matters you forget to handle. They are also subject to the many unfortunate results which follow from the neglect of the Legislature to handle effectively many of the great questions which may be considered to be of vital importance not only to women, but to the entire nation.

In 2025 we have gone from one woman in the Parliament to 59—almost half of all members across both Houses. I hope today's Parliament will act to handle the vital and important matters that affect women. I move now to the detail of the bill. Five years after abortion was decriminalised, NSW Health undertook a statutory review of the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019, as required by the Act. The number one recommendation of that review was that:

The Government consider amending the Act to allow nurse practitioners, endorsed midwives and other prescribed registered health practitioners to perform medical terminations.

The bill before us enacts that recommendation in line with the 2023 changes made by the Therapeutic Goods Administration for MS-2 Step prescribing and dispensing. The bill, as it was initially presented in the other place, was more expansive. It addressed a range of issues that, in my view, should be considered further by the Minister for Health and NSW Health to ensure women have access to the health care they need. This bill addresses longstanding disparities in our healthcare system, particularly in regional and rural areas, where access to timely medical abortion services has been limited. A study done by the University of Sydney last year found that only three out of 220 public hospitals in New South Wales routinely provide abortions, creating what has been termed "abortion deserts" where services are over 160 kilometres away for many women.

By enabling nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives to prescribe MS-2 Step, which is the most common medical abortion medication, at up to nine weeks gestation, New South Wales is aligning with practices already in place across most other Australian States. The change reflects the evidence-based recommendations of health authorities and clinical experts. It also helps bridge the service gap that has disproportionately affected our regional communities. The second element the bill introduces is an annual reporting requirement for the secretary of NSW Health to Parliament, which is intended to ensure transparency and accountability in service provision and access across the State. That addition, which was made during the Legislative Council debate, will hopefully act to support continuous improvement in healthcare delivery.

I understand that this is a deeply personal and sensitive issue for many. Even with the amendments to the bill, some may still have concerns, and some constituents in my electorate will be disappointed in my decision. I respect their right to hold a different view from mine and I appreciate their constructive engagement with me. We are fortunate in Australia and in New South Wales that we are not subjected to the culture wars that have played out in other parts of the world, including parts of the Free World that have wound back hard-fought-for rights for women. If anything, the passage of the bill will demonstrate once again that New South Wales is a progressive State, with legislators focused on the rights and needs of our people, over whom we have the awesome responsibility to govern, rather than on politicising the bodies of more than half the population.

As a representative, I am deeply committed to advocating for women's health policies that ensure all individuals have access to the care they need when they need it. Supporting the bill aligns with my dedication to advancing women's health rights and addressing the healthcare disparities that exist within our State. In 2019 I became the mother of a baby girl and contemplated her future growing up in New South Wales and what our society's attitude would be towards her rights and choices as a woman. I look at her every day and think of what the world will be like for her and for every little girl across our State when they grow up. She has since been joined by her little brother and I—like, I imagine, every member of this place—want every girl and boy to grow up in a State that enshrines their rights and opportunities.

Becoming a single mother during that time has also given me a new and different perspective on parenting, families and the role we all must play to consider all types of family units, because, while parenting is the greatest choice I have ever had the privilege to make, it is a lifelong commitment that should always be a choice. I support the bill because I believe in ensuring safe, timely and equitable access to health care for all individuals, and abortion is health care. The proposed legislation represents a pragmatic and carefully considered step forward for reproductive health care in our State in line with the advice from health professionals. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (19:02):** I make a contribution to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I appreciate the sensitivity that comes with a bill of this type. There are wide and varied views on abortion, which has been legal in New South Wales since the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill passed in 2019. I thank all my constituents who have written to me and expressed their views on the topic. I am always open to listening to or reading their views, and I appreciate when they take the time to put those views in an email and send it to me. That is an important part of our democracy, and long may it continue.

The changes to the bill since it was introduced in Parliament are significant. It is now nothing like the original version that was first discussed in Parliament. I must be clear that I could not and would not have supported the bill in its original form; however, it has changed significantly. I can now summarise it as follows. First, it allows the prescription of the abortion pill by nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives. Second, it requires that those professionals prescribe those drugs in accordance with the Therapeutic Goods Administration guidelines and within their scope of practice. Third, it requires that we collect the data from those services and present it to the Parliament in an annual report. It is also important to discuss the types of professionals referred to in the bill, who are nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives.

Nurse practitioners have completed advanced nursing education—typically a master's or doctor's degree in nursing practice. They can work independently or collaboratively with other healthcare providers. Nurse practitioners have an expanded scope of practice and the authority to diagnose, treat and manage a wide range of medical conditions, including prescribing medications and ordering tests. They focus on providing comprehensive and individualised care to patients. Most importantly, nurse practitioners provide improved access to care. They help to address healthcare access challenges, particularly for underserved areas such as the regions and for other vulnerable populations. Studies show that nurse practitioners can improve access to care and enhance the cost-effectiveness of health care.

The pathway to become a nurse practitioner is not easy and requires many years of practice as well as different courses of study. Firstly, people become a registered nurse by obtaining their bachelor's degree in nursing and passing their RN exam. They gain years of clinical experience by working as an RN, and then they pursue advanced education by enrolling in a Master of Science in Nursing or a Doctor of Nursing Practice program with a focus on advanced nursing practice. They complete a clinical practicum to gain hands-on experience in a specific area of nursing practice, and then they pass a certification exam. Finally, after achieving all of the above, they apply for their endorsement as a nurse practitioner from the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia.

Endorsed midwives are highly skilled midwives with additional education, experience, training and certification. That means the midwife has met the requirements of the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia endorsement for scheduled medicines for midwives. They are qualified to prescribe scheduled medicines and provide associated services required for midwifery practice in accordance with relevant State and Territory legislation. They can provide Medicare rebatable services and become an authorised Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme prescriber. Both nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives are highly skilled professionals who are given the responsibility to prescribe medicines to treat people with a wide variety of conditions. I am very satisfied that the professionals we are talking about have the skills and expertise to be able to deliver appropriate health care in the difficult circumstances described in the bill.

I have not viewed the bill through the lens of whether or not I agree with abortion. That debate has come and gone, and it has been firmly resolved that it is now legal. Instead, I have viewed the bill through the lens of the availability of health care to regional people. It is my core belief that access to health care should be the same in regional areas as it is in metro areas. That is one of my core drivers in the role that I am in today and is one of the key things that guides my decision-making. It has certainly been a huge consideration in assessing the bill. Access to timely, affordable and high-quality specialist care is critical to improving the health outcomes of remote, rural and regional communities. I believe the bill is about making sure that people in regional areas who are in search of those types of health care receive equivalent treatment, and that is why I support the bill.

Those who oppose the bill have stated that that type of medical treatment should be provided only by GPs. That may be the case in an ideal world, but the ability to access specialist health care in regional areas is a major issue. I seek to find and support practical solutions to that issue. I support the measures in the bill based on the fact that I believe New South Wales faces major issues in regional health care. It is important that I speak quickly about those challenges because it is important that my constituents understand why I support this expansion of practice. Regional New South Wales faces a particular GP workforce shortage. We continue to lack specialist services, and crisis levels have been reached in specialties such as GP obstetrics and psychiatry. It cannot be overstated how bad the regional health care situation is, whether people need to see a doctor for a treatment or are having a baby.

The wait for an appointment to see a GP can stretch to a number of weeks. Many people now travel to metropolitan areas just to see a doctor more easily. Maternity services have retracted to such an extent that, on their current trajectory, I fear that we will not even be able to have a baby in the Upper Hunter electorate in the near future. We may instead need to travel to the major centres in Newcastle and Maitland. Hospital birthing services continue to close, and there is little evidence of plans to re-establish rural and regional birthing units. There are persistent and unresolved workforce challenges, including challenges in attracting and retaining obstetric trainees and midwives.

There are some absolutes that we need to achieve for regional New South Wales health care, and they are based on providing equitable care. We have some incredible professionals who can help people when needed. We need to develop their skills and give them the level of trust they need to do the job they have been trained to perform. That means GPs have to let some of their traditional services go to others. The perfect situation of having a GP available for consistent, long-term care is now unachievable in many regional areas in the medium term, so we need to look to other professionals such as nurse practitioners and endorsed nurses. The bill speaks to the need to give nurse practitioners and endorsed nurses the ability to provide a treatment that women should already have full access to. In regional areas, the change allows ease of access for women in need of it. That is why I support the bill.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (19:11):** The Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 is a shadow of its former self. It can no longer be characterised as a "radical Greens bill". There is no way I could have voted for the bill in its original form. Successful amendments have now thankfully stripped the bill of its attacks on freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, and stripped the bill of its undermining of transparency and accountability through data collection. Nor is the bill anything like the abortion legislation in 2019, which I opposed. The bill will not widen the circumstances in which it is lawful for a woman to seek an abortion. What remains now is a narrow bill giving effect to Therapeutic Goods Administration guidelines that allow highly qualified nurse practitioners and midwives to prescribe abortion medication in the case of pregnancies of up to nine weeks.

The objections to the bill that I have received fall into three broad categories. First, because of the loss of a life or potential life in an abortion, is objection to what is said to be the expansion of abortion generally. Second is objection to what is said to be an increased health risk to the pregnant woman. Third is objection to what is said to be an encroachment on freedom of conscience. As to the first category of objections, I agree that the commonplace nature of abortion in modern Australian society, and the loss of lives or potential lives, is a matter of great sorrow. However, I do not think expanding the categories of health practitioners who can prescribe abortion medication will increase materially the number of abortions taking place.

Instead, some women who would be choosing abortions anyway will now have access to earlier and less traumatic treatment. For example, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists wrote that:

... in Canada, following the reclassification of mifepristone as a normally prescribed rather than restricted medication, the frequency of early medical abortions rose substantially, while the overall abortion rate remained materially stable.

More productive ways to reduce the number of abortions would be focusing on counselling and supporting women, especially single women, who keep an unborn child; facilitating adoptions as an option; and relieving economic pressures, including the cost of housing, that affect the choices which women make.

I will now address the second category of objections. Some opponents of the bill, some of whom have admittedly relevant health expertise, contend that if the bill is passed it will increase risks to the health of women seeking abortions. The prevalent view, however, as expressed by the Australian Medical Association and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists [RANZCOG], among others, is that this is not the case. RANZCOG, for example, wrote:

The College unequivocally supports the inclusion of nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives in the provision of early medical abortion. Enabling appropriately qualified health professionals to deliver this care is a safe, evidence-based reform.

The amended bill brings New South Wales into line with the rest of the Australian mainland. The member for Wagga Wagga has foreshadowed some amendments about practitioner qualifications of which I am broadly supportive. As to the third category of objections, some opponents of the bill have written to me in a standard form letter, arguing that the legislation:

... would compel nurses and midwives to participate in abortion by prescribing abortion pills—undermining their rights to conscience and freedom.

This objection is based on misinformation. The attacks on freedom of conscience and freedom of religion in the original bill have now been removed by successful amendments. Dr Joanna Howe emailed me last night, describing herself as "the lead advocate against the bill". She wrote:

Should Premier Minns vote for the bill and enable its passage, I will be leading a 20-month campaign across five marginal seats that are currently Labor-held but are also in socially conservative electorates.

But to my shock, she then threatened:

However, if you choose to vote for the bill, I will be left with no other choice but to suspend my planned campaign against Labor in order to lead a public campaign aimed at encouraging a grassroots opposition to you as Liberal leader.

I will not cave to brazen bullying like this nor to the Americanisation of New South Wales politics. I will vote according to my conscience and balance difficult and sensitive ethical, social, moral and medical concerns.

I thank all constituents who have contacted me. I have carefully considered their sincere and varying views. I will therefore vote for the bill. I think that, on balance, the bill will make no material difference to the rate of abortion in New South Wales. It will not interfere with freedom of conscience and will probably lead to better, not worse, health outcomes for many pregnant women seeking abortions.

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama) (19:17):** I speak in contribution to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. This bill proposes to allow nurse practitioners and midwives the power to prescribe medical abortion at up to nine weeks gestation. It proposes a new annual report to Parliament which includes the description of abortion services, availability by region and other medical statistical data, including adverse events and clinical incident reports. I was not in a position to support the bill that was presented to the Legislative Council. In fact, I was strongly against it.

The original bill took the extraordinary step of removing the capacity of health professionals to conscientiously object. Removing this right was an extremist step and a step too far. I have been contacted by many constituents who were concerned by the original bill and what it meant for women, the medical profession and religious freedom. I certainly shared these concerns about the bill in its original form. The original bill presented to the Legislative Council has now been heavily amended to the point where it is almost unrecognisable from its original form. It appears that we have had a rare event in this Parliament where sanity has prevailed in the Legislative Council.

I have been disappointed by some members who have attempted to use debate on this bill as a proxy debate for abortion law. Abortion has been decriminalised in New South Wales. This debate is not about whether abortion should or should not occur. The clear question posed by this legislation is simply who can provide MS-2 Step medication. The bill is not about whether MS-2 Step medication should be legal in New South Wales; it already is, and it has been for decades. The question is whether nurse practitioners or midwives, in addition to doctors, should be able to prescribe an existing, lawful medication in New South Wales.

Right now any person can present at a pharmacy and ask a pharmacist for a morning-after pill. Like any pharmaceutical, those drugs are not without their risks. A large-scale United States study published on 28 April 2025 revealed that over 865,000 women who used mifepristone at up to 10 weeks gestation. Nearly 11 per cent experienced a serious adverse event within 45 days, including sepsis and infection, and almost 5 per cent required emergency care. That is why the reporting provisions in the bill are important. The bill is supported by the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Australian Medical Association, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, Family Planning Australia and the Royal College of General Practitioners.

I am a person of faith. As a Christian, I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible teaches the power of love, the importance of forgiveness, the value of family and the compassion of common humanity through Christ. As a human being, I believe abortion should be safe, legal and rare. But, as I have said in this place before, I believe in a woman's right to choose. As a philosophical liberal, I believe in the freedom of speech and the freedom of religion or not to believe at all. I believe in the inalienable rights of individuals to make decisions about their own lives and the importance of favouring personal liberty over government authoritarianism. I have never used my faith to impose my religious values on others.

Values are not talking points; values need to be demonstrated and lived. In a liberal democracy it is an anathema to impose values. Every time legislators side with rules over individual freedoms, the flame of liberty is slowly suffocated. My philosophical reason for fighting to preserve religious freedom and choice is exactly the same philosophical reason why I defend the right of a woman to make a heartbreaking, challenging and confronting decision to not proceed with the potential for life. Whilst I believe in the dignity and sanctity of life, I also believe in women making healthcare choices within the reasonable limits of the law. Every single life is important. As the former family and community services Minister, I was responsible for children whose parents were no longer able to care for them.

Certainly, we have moved a long way from children being left in a basket at a church door, but we have also moved a long way from women dying from backyard abortions, administered by unqualified people using

unsafe and unhygienic means. This Parliament should be talking more about how we can support women and women's health. We do not do it enough. Millicent Preston Stanley may have broken the glass ceiling when she entered this place, but we still have a long way to go when it comes to ensuring that women enjoy the same opportunities as men. We need to talk more about how we can support women considering abortion and how they can make the right decision in an environment of understanding, care and compassion. We can talk more about women's health, and it should not just be in a context like the one before the House.

I want this Parliament to talk about how we can expand birthing services at places like Shellharbour so that mothers can have their babies closer to home. Whilst Labor promised birthing services at Shellharbour Hospital before the election, now that it is in government, it has ruled out those services. At Milton Ulladulla Hospital, Labor promised birthing services but, two years on, it still has not delivered on that promise. I thank my constituents who provided feedback. That was not an easy decision for many. I respect those who passionately contributed to this debate in an effort to ensure that I can best represent the community. In doing so, I had some very personal conversations.

However, I did not appreciate the threats of certain people who sought to Americanise or Trumpify this debate and import its nastiness and viciousness into Australian politics. Like the Leader of the Opposition said, I will not be bullied into making decisions because of threats of electoral defeat or backlash at an election. All of us come here to do what we think is right. None of us are perfect. We have differences of opinion, but they should be exercised in a respectful debate. As I have seen over many years, these debates have been where the talents, abilities and passions of members of the Assembly have been on best display. Sadly, what has not been at its best are some people who think they can intimidate others into outcomes rather than allowing democracy and free speech in this Chamber to be the deciding factors of these debates. I commend the bill with its substantial amendments to the House.

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (19:23):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. My position on the bill will likely not be a surprise, given the values and faith that I have been brought up with.

Before turning to the substance of the bill, I thank all those who have written to me. I am indebted to those people who have taken the time to participate in our democracy by writing to their local representative. The bill before us in the Legislative Assembly is markedly different from the bill presented to the Legislative Council. I am grateful to those who worked hard in the other place to make amendments to the original bill, particularly the Hon. Susan Carter, whose leadership on this issue has been exemplary.

While no longer in the bill, I think it is worth calling out the egregious provision that attempted to remove the ability for doctors to act according to their conscience. It is ironic that we are being afforded a conscience vote, but they were not. But then this place often excels in irony. About the bill that is in front of us I will make a few remarks. Listening to many of the contributions made in favour of the bill so far, it appears that some members wish they had been here for the debate in 2019, while others are merely taking the same position they did in 2019. In my view, this bill is not about reproductive rights. That was dealt with in the 2019 legislation. Indeed, the mantra of those that support this bill is that abortion is health care. If we accept that frame for this legislation, then this bill is a matter of health policy and is not about abortion rights. It is my view that this bill undermines the health care of women.

The substance of the bill goes to extending the ability to prescribe abortion medication to nurses and midwives. I echo the views made by colleagues in the upper House that there is little evidence presented to make the case that there are issues with access, even in regional New South Wales. There is evidence that regional New South Wales does not have access to some medical procedures, but there is no legislation to mandate the provision of those services. Further, there appears to have been limited consultation with nurses and midwives as to whether they are seeking an expanded scope of practice to be able to administer the abortion medication.

The 2019 bill sought to balance abortion with protecting the health care of women. I am not convinced that this bill does enough to ensure that the protections that bill achieved will be maintained. I refer to a study from the Ethics and Public Policy Center published in April of over 900,000 women. Almost one in 20 of those women needed hospitalisation or a visit to emergency after they were prescribed with the abortion medication. Labelling nurses and midwives as "experienced" does not magically make the drugs being administered safer. There is no indication that the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency is changing their training requirements for endorsed midwives or nurse practitioners to reflect the new responsibility that this bill will give them with its significant rate of medical complications. If these procedures are to happen in New South Wales, then I believe women should have access to the medical care that can be provided by a doctor. I will not be supporting the bill.

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill) (19:27):** I speak tonight in debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment Bill 2025, which was introduced into the other place by Dr Amanda Cohn, who I note is in the

advisers area. The bill was introduced today into this House by the member for Newtown. I thank Dr Cohn and the member for Newtown for the respectful way in which the bill has been debated. The bill seeks to amend the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019. I am pleased to be able to contribute concerning the bill that is now before this House. Like many members, I was not a member of this House when the original Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019 was debated. I note that is a private member's bill, which would normally be debated in its turn on Thursdays.

As members are aware, Tuesday is not normally a day for private members' bills; it is normally a day for Government business. The Government has suspended the standing orders to permit the bill to be debated today. I listened carefully when the Leader of the House suspended the standing orders to permit debate on the bill. The Leader of the House did not provide to members of this House or to members of the community a reason as to why debate on this bill has been given priority. Whilst I understand the bill raises the emotions of many in this House and many in the community—and perhaps that is a reason to give the bill some priority—there will be many in the community who will not understand why the Government has given the bill priority over Government bills.

I do not intend to make an extensive contribution on the bill. Many of its provisions were deleted during the debate in the other place. Today I speak after having read many emails and discussed the bill with many in my own community.

I represent a strong faith-based community. I have considered the views of all members of my community who have contacted me. The majority were strongly opposed to the bill, which considers whether to extend the category of persons who may terminate life by means of medical abortion. We are told the bill increases access to health care. Many in our community would argue that the decision to terminate life could not be properly regarded as health care. Life commences at conception. As such, the bill considers the termination of life under the broad description of health care. I am aware that, because of the passing of the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019, abortion is now legal in our State, and this bill expands the category of persons who may prescribe drugs such as MS-2 Step.

I have received many emails from constituents in my community about the bill. Many commented on the expansion of abortion access statewide, the removal of the conscientious objection provisions and concerns about the safety and mental health of women. My community highlighted concerns with all provisions contained in the original bill. I place on record one email. Many of the emails I have received contained similar statements. A resident of Dural said:

As a concerned healthcare worker, I am troubled by the potential implications of the Abortion Law Reform Amendment Bill currently before the NSW Parliament. Allowing nurses and midwives to administer the abortion drug MS-2 Step poses serious risks to both the mother's safety and the unborn child's potential for life. Furthermore, I am deeply worried that Christian hospitals could be compelled by the NSW Health minister to provide abortions against their moral and religious beliefs. I urge you to oppose this bill and ensure that the rights of healthcare workers and religious institutions are protected.

Members of the other place removed some of the provisions in the bill we are debating. I am extremely grateful to those members who voted to remove a number of offensive provisions. I am pleased that the provision to enable the Minister to direct hospitals, including faith-based hospitals, to provide abortion services was removed. I am also pleased that changes to the conscientious objection provisions were removed. I would not have supported changes to the conscientious objection provisions that were in place when the 2019 bill was debated. That bill was debated for many hours in 2019, and I could not have supported the removal of the conscientious objection provisions then either.

I have expressed to the many constituents of my community who wrote to me that the removal of the conscientious objection provisions represented an unprecedented attack on values of liberty and freedom in our society, including the freedom of religious beliefs and the freedom of conscience. As such, I could not have supported their removal. Even though the worst parts of the bill have been removed, what remains is still objectionable. Schedule 1 to the bill amends section 5 (4) of the Act to expand the persons who may provide abortion services to include medical practitioners, endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners. I cannot support a provision or bill that expands the category of persons who may terminate life.

While I am fundamentally opposed to the termination of life, irrespective of who is performing the termination, I am also opposed to measures that endanger the health of women. A recent study in the United States that looked at close to 900,000 women who were prescribed MS-2 Step abortions revealed that over 10 per cent suffered an adverse event, over 5 per cent required hospitalisation and 10.93 per cent experienced sepsis, infection, haemorrhaging or another serious adverse event within 45 days following the abortion. I appreciate the argument that nurse practitioners and midwives can prescribe medical abortions in States other than New South Wales and Tasmania. However, a recent report into MS-2 Step that was released in April this year must cause members to carefully consider whether the category of persons who may prescribe abortions should be expanded.

I also believe we should be careful about delegating to the Therapeutic Goods Administration the responsibility for regulating who can administer abortive drugs. I note it has been suggested that some women who have been unable to obtain a prescription for medical abortion because of distance have missed the opportunity for a medical abortion. I am not aware of the data or background information that supports such an argument. In his contribution earlier today, the member for Prospect—who I note has just left the Chamber—observed we do not see anything in the bill that supports women who encounter a crisis pregnancy and their families.

I agree that we should help women and families who encounter unwanted pregnancies, rather than extend the categories of persons who may administer medical abortions. I have taken into account the many persons from my community who have contacted me about the bill. I thank everyone who sent emails and contacted my office concerning this bill. After considering their views and my own, I will be voting against the bill.

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (19:35):** The Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025 is not about whether it is a criminal act to have or perform an abortion in New South Wales, because the Parliament decided that question in 2019 and made it clear that abortion would continue to be lawful, as it had been since 1971 due to the District Court decision in *R v Wald* [1971] 3 DCR (NSW) 25. In 2019 the Parliament confirmed by legislation that the only persons who could perform an abortion were legally qualified medical practitioners, commonly known as doctors. As I will explain, this bill has been substantially amended in the upper House. I would not have been able to support this bill in its original form because it made unacceptable changes to the abortion bill that was passed in 2019 after much debate and many amendments. The issue that this Parliament now has to decide with this bill is, principally, whether the persons authorised to prescribe a drug that will induce the termination of a pregnancy should be expanded from legally qualified medical practitioners to also include nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives.

Before preparing this speech last night, I read the 2019 Act, the bill and the second reading speech, and I have read all the correspondence received by my office on this bill. In the weeks since the original bill was introduced in the upper House, I have met with some constituents, including doctors who personally expressed to me their opposition to the bill in its original form. I met constituents and read all of their emails from 2019, when the original abortion law reform was before the Parliament. I thank the many constituents who have communicated their views for and against abortion generally and about this bill to my office. I have taken those representations into account, but I am obviously only able to vote one way or the other on this bill, as was the case in 2019.

As I observed in my speech in 2019, abortion is an issue about which people have strong opinions. Discussing and hearing different points of view respectfully is important to arriving at the best decisions and, I believe, makes for better laws. It is a great privilege and the most valuable part of being a member of Parliament to meet and hear the people of my community and receive their views. As I have said, I could not support this bill in its original form. I could not have supported the attack on the conscientious objection provisions in section 9 of the 2019 Act that was originally contained in this bill. In the 2019 debate, I spoke about the need for robust, conscientious objection provisions for medical practitioners.

No independent professional person should be required to perform their services against their conscience. To take that away would be a major attack on freedom of religion and freedom of enterprise in our community. The provision that this bill sought to change was carefully debated and formulated in 2019.

Thankfully, changes to conscientious objection provisions originally contained in the bill were removed by the upper House. This bill also sought to remove other important provisions of the 2019 Act, such as the mandatory notification requirements under section 15, which state:

**15 Medical practitioners to provide information about terminations**

- (1) A medical practitioner who performs a termination must, within 28 days after performing the termination, give the Secretary of the Ministry of Health the information about the termination decided by the Secretary.
- (2) The information must be given in the way decided by the Secretary including, for example, by using a form approved by the Secretary for the purposes of subsection (1).
- (3) Information provided by a medical practitioner to the Secretary under this section must not include any particulars which would allow a person on whom a termination was performed to be identified.

The provision in this bill to delete section 15 was amended by the upper House. That means that section 15 remains in the 2019 Act as part of New South Wales legislation if this bill is passed by the Parliament. However, by removing the provision to delete section 15 of the 2019 Act, the upper House did not change the words "medical practitioners" in the heading and in subsections (1) and (3) of section 15 to the words "registered health practitioner" as has been done by this bill in all of the other comparable sections of the 2019 Act. That is a problem, because without changing section 15 so that the words "medical practitioner" are replaced with the words "registered health practitioner", abortions carried out by an endorsed midwife or a nurse practitioner under this

bill will have to be reported, and therefore be recorded by the health department, in the same way as abortions performed by a medical practitioner are under section 15. It is a further problem for the new section 15A inserted by the upper House, because it will now become meaningless. Section 15A is in the following terms:

**15A Annual report to Parliament**

The Secretary of the Ministry of Health must, on or before 30 September in each year—

- (a) prepare a report setting out the following in relation to the previous year ending on 30 June—
  - (i) a description of abortion service availability by region,
  - (ii) detailed information about access to, and waiting times for, abortion services,
  - (iii) information about the clinical performance of abortion service delivery, including how safely and effectively abortion services were delivered,
  - (iv) information about any adverse events or clinical incidents reported in connection with terminations,
  - (v) information about the performance of terminations in the State, by reference to region and district, and
- (b) provide a copy of the report to the Presiding Officer of each House of Parliament for tabling in each House.

This new and further reporting requirement to Parliament on abortion that has been inserted in the bill in section 15A will be meaningless because the data will not include abortion services performed by endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners. Their data will not be collected by the Secretary of the Minister for Health under section 15 because, without amendment, it will only collect data from legally qualified medical practitioners, commonly called doctors. Section 15A is desirable because greater transparency in any area of government-regulated health activity is to be commended. It is easy to see why the upper House wanted this data to be provided to Parliament but the data has to be meaningful. As the bill is currently drafted, it will not provide complete and accurate data.

Another provision in the original bill, section 4A, required the Minister to ensure abortion services are provided throughout the State within a reasonable distance of a person's residence.

This gave rise to a serious concern in the community that religious hospitals would be required, against their religious beliefs, to perform abortions. It was also possibly an attempt to make an unconstitutional incursion upon the independence of Executive Government by the Parliament and the introduction of a money bill in the upper House. However, that has also been taken out of the bill by the upper House.

The sole remaining original provision of any substance in the bill is the insertion of a new section 5 (4) to the 2019 Act. In its original form, it would have enabled endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners to legally perform abortions up to 22 weeks of pregnancy, well outside of legislation governing their prescribed health practitioners practice, their scope of practice and relevant professional standards. This was remedied in the upper House by a new section 5 (5) inserted into the bill that requires endorsed midwives and nurse practitioners to comply with legislation governing their prescribed health practitioners practice, their scope of practice and relevant professional standards. The effect is that nurse practitioners and endorsed midwives may prescribe drugs to induce an abortion. [*Extension of time*]

At the moment that is by a drug to terminate the pregnancies of women who are up to nine weeks pregnant. Finally, I make clear that I have always understood that sound medical opinion is that an abortion should never be a woman's primary contraception strategy, having regard to the risks to a woman's physical and mental health from having an abortion. As I stated in my 2019 speech on the abortion bill, abortions can be for sound medical reasons. It is the reason so many tests and ultrasounds are conducted during the course of a pregnancy. Sometimes a fetus, for various reasons, cannot survive beyond birth, and so the mother is carrying a growing fetus which will be born and die shortly after birth, creating unimaginable grief for the pregnant women and her partner—a grief much greater, for some, than the anguish of a decision to terminate.

Sometimes a pregnancy can so endanger the life of the pregnant women that its continuation may kill both the mother and her fetus unless there is a termination. Sometimes people who greatly want a child are confronted with the reality that an abortion is an unwanted but best medical outcome, in the circumstances. Some of my constituents who have corresponded with me are clearly against all abortions, which are allowed by the 2019 Act. Others have opposed the matters around conscientious objections and the operation of private religious hospitals. Those matters have now been removed by the upper House, as I have explained. Constituents have also raised that there should be an expansion of pregnancy and family support services. I agree with them.

Unfortunately, this Parliament cannot prescribe the provision of such services. It is for the Government, headed by the Premier, to allocate expenditure to achieve this outcome. I look forward to the error with regard to

the failure to amend section 15 of the 2019 Act, which I raised earlier in my speech, being rectified by amendment to this bill. I otherwise repeat my sincere thanks to the many constituents for their thoughtful and sincere correspondence on this bill.

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (19:47):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. In 2019, Parliament passed the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019. The 2019 bill, debated extensively over a number of weeks, recognised access to abortion in its own legislative framework, with regard to elements including safety and the health of women. In that debate, I spoke of how, for the individual, the decision is and will always be profound—a decision that balances the preciousness of life with the complexity of human experience. That bill had my support.

Today, we debate the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025, which seeks to amend aspects of the 2019 Act. From the outset, I state that in my view we should exercise caution in changing a framework with regard to safety and rights that was obtained through lengthy, considered debate.

Dr Amanda Cohn's original bill was heavily amended in the upper House, reflecting the significant concerns, which I have also held, across all sides over a number of aspects. I thank the other place for the amendments. After the upper House amendments, the bill presented to us seeks to amend the Abortion Law Reform Act 2019 to extend who may be able to perform a medical abortion, to also include endorsed midwives or nurse practitioners. The amended bill will also require the Secretary of NSW Health to report annually on abortion services.

It is estimated that between 1 per cent and 4 per cent of medical terminations will be incomplete and may require surgical intervention, while excessive bleeding and infection are other possible complications that require access to timely medical care. In a 2023 Royal Australian College of General Practitioners article, Gino Pecoraro, Associate Professor and President of the National Association of Specialist Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, raised issues around safety, indemnity, and administrative and legislative issues that in his view needed to be resolved before opening this medication to non-doctors. Associate Professor Pecoraro stated:

Everybody agrees that it's not acceptable that women can't access the full range of medical services in the regions – I don't think anybody would argue with that.

However, he also stated:

We should have the appropriate pathways in place to deal with complications that might arise in resource-poor environments ...

I take this opportunity to thank all those in my community who have reached out to me about this issue. In 2019 I spoke about how "both sides of the debate recognise that we should provide more support, more education and more care". My concern is that, six years after the introduction of the Act, it is less the ability to access a prescription for MS-2 Step but rather the support and care that remains less accessible.

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (19:51):** I contribute to debate on the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025. I acknowledge the speakers who made contributions before me this evening to note the respectful nature of the debate. Me and the member for Bankstown, who is present in the Chamber, were members of Parliament in 2019 when we debated the abortion law reform legislation. It was a pretty long night for all of us that night. That debate showed the best of this place. We were able to come to the Chamber with what are colloquially called conscience votes to have a full, frank and respectful discussion about the legislation before us. That is one of the best traits of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly.

I note the extensive debate carried out last week in the Legislative Council. We often joke in this place that we wonder what the other place does. I will not reference Paul Keating and his commentary on upper House members. Members from the other place appropriately scrutinised the bill and amended parts of it that were of deep concern to many members in this place as well, as we have heard this evening, and also many members of our communities. Like so many, I have received quite a lot of correspondence on this matter, but nowhere near as much correspondence before the Reproductive Health Care Reform Bill 2019. I was proud to stand in the Chamber to support the conscience of the people of the Terrigal electorate who elected me. They made their position clear that they wanted me, as their elected representative, to support the legislation. Obviously, that bill was amended.

You were not a member at the time, Temporary Speaker Kemp, but conscience votes are the highlight of this place. I often take the position that it is not about my conscience but the conscience of the 55,000 voters who I represent in the Terrigal electorate and the 77,000 people who are blessed to live in that area.

I come into this place with the position that I will represent the majority view of the people who elected me to represent them and be their voice in this place. I take that role very seriously. It has been a huge honour for the past 10 years. It is hard to believe it has been 10 years—that time has gone so quickly. In 2019 I was proud to represent their voices. At that time, the overwhelming response was to support the legislation, which I did. It is incumbent on all members to listen to their communities. We are in this place at the behest and good grace of our



communities, who vote us in for four-year periods. During that time, we hope that we do the right thing by all of the people who elected us to be their voice.

As I said earlier, it was interesting to see the progress of this bill through the Legislative Council last week. It was a very respectful debate, with all members wanting to do the right thing. Many parts of the original bill were deeply concerning, including the removal of the conscientious objection clause for practitioners. I know many practitioners of incredibly good character. They have the right to conscientiously object if they feel strongly about a particular situation, whether it is voluntary assisted dying or abortion. We have to respect the position that those professionals take. I was very pleased that deeply concerning provision was removed from the bill.

The Legislative Council also removed the provision that required the Minister to ensure abortion services are provided throughout the State within a reasonable distance of residents' homes. It was interesting that issue came up because I live in a regional area. It is clear that the availability of health care in metropolitan Sydney is very different to the Central Coast or Shellharbour. It is difficult enough for regional people to even get in to see a GP on the Central Coast, let alone have a regular one. It is a very different situation outside of metropolitan Sydney when it comes to the availability of health care. The ability to travel the huge distances required to access services in regional New South Wales can be a challenge in itself.

Other members have discussed that issue. I note the excellent contribution to the debate by the member for Upper Hunter, who articulated very well the challenges faced by people who need to access a GP or doctor in regional New South Wales. They are not located just around the corner. I suspect it would be a similar case in the electorate of Oxley. Regional people have to rely on specialists, including nurse practitioners. I know a number of nurse practitioners. I am pleased that this bill incorporates nurse practitioners. Let me be very clear: Nurse practitioners are highly trained professionals. I have had the pleasure of meeting a number of nurse practitioners working out of Gosford Hospital and Wyong Hospital. They may not have the title, but they are as highly trained as any doctor.

This bill is a credit to them, their training and their discipline. They make every effort to stay at the forefront of their specific medical practice. That is a challenge. I am pleased that the bill permits nurse practitioners to provide MS-2 Step medication up to nine weeks gestation. Obviously, it also permits midwives to prescribe that medication. Again, midwives are highly trained professionals. They spend their entire lives working in a field that they are extremely passionate about. Midwives are often at the forefront of delivering newborns. Abortion is not a decision a midwife would take lightly. That is why it is so important that the provision that prohibited a conscientious objection was removed. It is important that we removed the mandatory notification requirements.

It is also important that there will be reports back to Parliament, which is stipulated in the amendments agreed to by the Legislative Council. The new section requiring an annual report to Parliament states:

The Secretary of the Ministry of Health must, on or before 30 September in each year—

- (a) prepare a report setting out the following in relation to the previous year ending on 30 June—
  - (i) a description of abortion service availability by region,
  - (ii) detailed information about access to, and waiting times for, abortion services,
  - (iii) information about the clinical performance of abortion service delivery, including how safely and effectively abortion services were delivered,
  - (iv) information about any adverse events or clinical incidents reported in connection with terminations,
  - (v) information about the performance of terminations in the State, by reference to region and district ...

That is very important and will ensure that valuable data is fed back to Parliament. I have heard many contributions to debate on this legislation, and I am guided by the conscience of the people I represent in Terrigal. I thank all those people who have taken the time to contact my office. Some people were deeply concerned about the first iteration of the bill—as was I. I would not have been able to support this bill in its first iteration. However, given the amendments that have sensibly been agreed to by the Legislative Council, I will obviously be supporting the wishes of the people in the Terrigal electorate who have contacted me about the bill. I will also support the foreshadowed amendment to the Abortion Law Reform Amendment (Health Care Access) Bill 2025.

**Debate adjourned.**

*Community Recognition Statements*

**DOMENIC PEZZANO**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (20:00):** It is with great pride and deep respect that I recognise Domenic Pezzano as the Leppington Senior of the Year for the 2025 NSW Seniors Local Achievement Awards. Domenic has served as president of the Leppington Progress Association since 2018, dedicating countless hours

to advocating for the community across all three levels of government. His leadership has driven major improvements to the Leppington Progress Hall, from upgraded facilities to enhanced safety and accessibility. Domenic's efforts go far beyond infrastructure. He is a connector and community communicator, managing the association's Facebook page to keep residents informed and heard, and guiding locals to the right avenues for support. As a valued member of the Camden Local Planning Panel since 2022, Domenic continues to represent community interests with integrity and insight. When the future of the St Mary Mother of God church at Leppington was uncertain, Domenic stepped in to help preserve its place in our community. I congratulate Domenic on all his work.

#### SE JIN

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove) (20:01):** I acknowledge Se Jin, a year 8 student from Marist Sisters' College in Woolwich, who recently won the Transurban Art Prize. She is a talented artist. I look forward to seeing her artistic talents flourish well into the future, and I wish her all the best on her future artistic endeavours. I am sure she has great things ahead of her and that we will all follow her career very closely.

#### VESAK

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (20:02):** On Sunday 11 May 2025 I had the honour of joining my community to celebrate Vesak at Phuoc Hue temple in Wetherill Park. Vesak is one of the most sacred occasions for Buddhists worldwide. It is especially meaningful to the more than 22,000 Buddhist followers in the Cabramatta electorate. The day commemorates three significant events in the life of the Buddha: his birth, enlightenment and passing. It is a time for reflection, joy and reaffirming the teachings that guide us towards a more compassionate and peaceful world. We reflected on the important message shared by Senior Venerable Thich Phuoc Tan, Abbot of Phuoc Hue temple, who spoke about the core values of humanity, compassion and peace. In light of today's global challenges, those teachings remind us that inner peace and kindness can create ripple effects, helping to make the world a better place for all. I extend my sincere appreciation to Phuoc Hue temple for the kind invitation.

#### ROTARY CLUB OF SAWTELL

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:03):** The Rotary Club of Sawtell is a proud local organisation serving the Coffs Coast with distinction. Club members are celebrating 50 years of supporting our community and were joined by friends and the wider community for a special birthday dinner. Guests included three previous Rotary-sponsored exchange students. Over the years, the Rotary Club of Sawtell has sent 30 students overseas for 12 months at a time and has hosted 27 international students. The club is renowned for supporting many local organisations and important causes. I congratulate the club on its fiftieth anniversary and thank its leaders: president, Denis Gleeson; vice-president, John Turner; secretary, Gerald De Gabriele; treasurer, Michael Fayle; public officer and club executive secretary, Ellis Nicholson; community service chair, Rodney Baldock; international service chair and youth services chair, Alan Freedman; and club service chair and membership chair, Peter Paff.

#### EVELYN RANKMORE

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (20:04):** I acknowledge the achievement of Evelyn Rankmore from Shell Cove, who was awarded the Aunty Mary IWD Scholarship for Indigenous Women at the Illawarra International Women's Day award ceremony. Evelyn is a proud Ngadju woman who has worked in the Aboriginal community for more than 25 years in different roles. She has worked in the challenging field of domestic violence for the past decade. Recognising the importance of mental health, trauma and identity, she has undertaken studies to be one of the select few working in the field of Aboriginal psychotherapy. Evelyn also volunteers for 13YARN and Lifeline, offering a kind and understanding voice to the most vulnerable. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate Evelyn on her amazing achievement.

#### ARMENIAN GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (20:05):** I honour the 1.5 million Armenians, along with the one million Greeks and Assyrians, who perished during the Armenian genocide between 1915 and 1923. I had the honour of attending Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day in Chatswood on 24 April 2025 on behalf of the Armenian community in Epping. It was a time to reflect on and reaffirm our collective responsibility to stand against hatred, preserve historical truth and uphold universal human rights. The Armenian genocide is often referred to as the first genocide of the twentieth century, and the solemn day of remembrance serves to commemorate its victims, primarily of Armenian descent, and underscores the importance of acknowledging that atrocity. Recognising the genocide is crucial to ensuring that such horrors are never repeated. It reinforces our commitment to human dignity and justice. I express my solidarity with the Armenian community in Epping to honour the memory of those who perished during the genocide in 1915.

**DAVID VIDLER**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:06):** I express my appreciation and acknowledgement of David Vidler from Revesby Fire Station, who received the Unit Commendation for Meritorious Service at the St Florian's Day award ceremony. The well-deserved recognition reflects David's exceptional bravery and dedication to our community, and it is a privilege to have him based at our local fire station. David's service is an example of the courage that all firefighters demonstrate every day when they put themselves at risk to protect lives and property. Earlier this month we marked International Firefighters' Day on St Florian's feast day. On that day we reflected on the courage and sacrifices made by firefighters like David. It was an opportunity to honour the tradition of St Florian, the patron saint of firefighters, whose legacy of bravery and protection lives on today. On behalf of our community, I express our deepest gratitude to David and all firefighters. We are incredibly fortunate to have them keeping us safe. I thank them for all they do.

**ISABELLA MORRISSEY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (20:07):** I acknowledge Isabella Morrissey for her commitment to the profession of health care and her dedication to her studies so she may serve her community. Isabella recently graduated from Charles Sturt University with a Bachelor of Nursing after completing her high school education at Bathurst high school. Being a Bathurst local, Isabella has experienced life in regional health care through a number of work placements, including the Rylstone Multipurpose Service, the Bathurst Health Service and the Lachlan Health Service. She now looks forward to beginning her career at Opal Aged Care in Bathurst. Isabella is an inspiration to those who choose to train and stay in the region, highlighting the importance of regional universities to all sectors, including, in this case, our health workforce. As a graduate she has demonstrated a commitment to the Bathurst community. She is a leader in the next generation of nurses who will care for locals. Nursing is a career path that requires compassion, care and selflessness. I congratulate Isabella on completing her studies, wish her the very best in her chosen career and thank her for being an integral part of the regional New South Wales healthcare workforce.

**GIRMIT DAY**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (20:08):** Tomorrow Fijian Indians will mark Girmit Day. That extremely important day commemorates Indians who were transported as indentured labour from India to Fiji, amongst other places. On 14 May 1879 the first group of Girmitiyas arrived in Fiji aboard the *Leonidas*, beginning a chapter defined by hardship, resilience and hope. Over 60,000 men, women and children came in the years that followed. They were promised opportunity but found themselves working under brutal and exploitative conditions. Yet through their courage, determination and enduring spirit, they not only survived but built new lives, communities and generations that have shaped Fiji's identity today. Girmit Day reminds us of their sacrifices, but it is also a celebration of their strength and their legacy. It is not about glorifying slavery but recognising the strength and survival of the Girmitiyas. Their descendants became community builders in Liverpool. They have contributed enormously across business, health care, construction and many other areas. I wish Fijian Indians in Liverpool and beyond a day of reflection. We are grateful for their contributions.

**NATIONAL RALLY AGAINST VIOLENCE**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (20:09):** I pay tribute to the community in my electorate for participating in the National Rally Against Violence on Saturday 10 May. The rally commenced at the Tamworth Town Hall, and the large supporting group marched to Bicentennial Park. The message was clear: No more. Enough is enough. Stories were told of women who have tragically lost their lives. The crowd were united in solidarity for zero tolerance to violence. The day was organised by Tara Grant, and I thank her very much for the invitation. It was an honour to be there.

**MICHELLE LONG**

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (20:10):** I acknowledge Michelle Long, an Engadine local who is no stranger to supporting community causes to fight cancer. In June Michelle will be walking 150 kilometres from Sydney to Newcastle over three days. She is making that massive trek to raise funds for the Mark Hughes Foundation, which funds vital research and support to brain cancer patients. Michelle is also honouring her late brother, Adam "Simmo" Simpson, who was diagnosed with brain cancer at 26 and fought hard for 14 years. Michelle has been dedicated and committed to keeping the memory of her brother alive. I am sure Adam would be proud that Michelle is representing such a good cause in his name. On behalf of the Heathcote electorate, I wish Michelle luck on her long journey to Newcastle and commend her continued advocacy for brain cancer research.

**PETER CRISP, OAM**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (20:11):** I recognise Mr Peter Crisp, OAM, a world-renowned and celebrated Australian glass artist from Bowning. His glass sculptures have been exhibited across the world, and his skills and talents secured requests from the Royal Australian Armoured Corps to create glass tableware as a wedding gift for Prince Charles and Camilla in 2006. He was again approached in 2024 by the Royal Australian Armoured Corps about making a coronation gift for Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla for their royal tour to Australia in October. Mr Crisp created a design called *Camelot* for Their Majesties' wedding present in 2005. Despite being such a highly acclaimed artist, Mr Crisp has been truly humbled by the great honour bestowed upon him in being commissioned by the Royal Australian Armoured Corps on those two occasions to create commemorative works for Their Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla. *[Time expired.]*

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** I remind members that community recognition statements are limited to one minute. If members exceed their time, I will call the next speaker.

**TWOFOLD BAY COMMUNITY ROWING CLUB**

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (20:12):** On 16 March I was proud to launch the newly completed St Ayles skiff on behalf of the Twofold Bay Community Rowing Club. In 2022 the Boydtown Shipyard purchased a \$10,000 kit for a St Ayles skiff, which was completed by students of Eden Marine High School under the mentorship of technical arts master Mr Brendon Richards. It was taken to the Merimbula Men's Shed, where it received painting and a final fit-out. With a \$2½ thousand grant from the Bendigo Bank, a second-hand trailer was purchased and modifications were carried out by members of the Pambula historic car club. Stored at the Twofold Bay Yacht Club at Quarantine Bay, it will be available for community use and hopefully for the reintroduction of whale boat racing in the Eden Regatta, which was last held in 1935. It is also a permanent memorial of the history of inshore whaling associated with the Port of Eden and Twofold Bay. I congratulate the president of Boydtown Shipyard, Mr John Gaul, and its secretary, Mr Peter Ayling.

**MOUNT JELLORE COMMUNITY WALK**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (20:13):** I could not have asked for better weather for the Mount Jellore Community Walk. I extend a huge thanks to the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS], which hosted the walk. Around 40 people took part from Wingecarribee, Wollondilly, Sydney and the surrounding areas. I particularly thank walk coordinators Jonathan Berry, Willy Hall, Michael Barton, Raf Pedroza and Mim David, as well as the other conservation park rangers who were present. I also thank the rescue paramedic specialist team, and I thank Jim Halls for the welcome to country. I encourage everyone to participate in the walk next year when the NPWS team offers up the next adventure. The walk to the summit was steep and rugged, but it was well worth it once we got to the top. The incredible views towards Sydney, Nattai and the wilderness in the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area, and the southern views over the highlands, were breathtaking. It was an excellent opportunity for us all to reflect on, share and appreciate those important cultural and natural values. It is beautiful land, and we need to join all of the Crown land and privately owned land to the NPWS land to protect it forever.

**TRIBUTE TO GAEL DAVIES, OAM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:14):** Newcastle recently lost one of its most prominent arts advocates: Gael Davies, OAM. Originally a librarian, Gael always had a strong presence in the Newcastle art scene. She helped establish the Newcastle Art Gallery Society in 1968, took on the role of manager of the former Von Bertouch Galleries in Cooks Hill in 1975, and was a member of the Newcastle Art Gallery Foundation from 1978. In 2014 Gael received an Order of Australia Medal for her service to the arts and the local community, an award she was most worthy of. Newcastle has the most artists per capita of all cities in Australia. Gael's passion for the arts was an unstoppable force in making our city the amazing arts and cultural hub that it is. Vale, Gael Davies.

**JEREMIAH PROJECT**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (20:15):** The Jeremiah Project recently opened The Bunker in Windsor, a safe place that serves the homeless across Windsor, Richmond, Mount Druitt, Blacktown and Parramatta. The facility provides daily cooked meals, shower and toilet facilities, industrial washing machines and dryers and access to clean, fresh clothing. The Bunker also intends to offer job training and career support, counselling and psychological care, and drug and alcohol recovery programs. I acknowledge Windsor RSL, which is a major sponsor of The Bunker, keeping the rent ticking along each week. A Community Building Partnership program grant of \$130,000 also enabled the Jeremiah Project to secure a food truck to continue its support in the

community. I congratulate Jacky Turano and her team for the vision, determination and dedication they give to those in need.

#### CONISTON FOOTBALL CLUB SEVENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (20:16):** Established by a group of miners who moved from Cessnock to Coniston in 1955, this year marks the seventieth anniversary of the Coniston Football Club. In a nod to Wollongong's mining industry and to the gold and black colours of Cessnock, Coniston FC adopted the gold and black and have never looked back. In its early days the club received considerable support from Coniston Hotel owner Neville McKinnon, naming their home ground in his honour. The club later moved to the fenced JJ Kelly Park ground to meet association rules. It went on to take out its first Illawarra premier league grand final in 1981. The years since have seen the evolution of the club, merging with Crown United in 1984 and later bringing the junior and senior Coniston clubs together. This year it entered a women's team in the Illawarra Premier League. The club has ridden the highs and lows of being part of the Illawarra's elite football competition, taking out divisional finals and the premier league grand final in 2021 and 2023. But the heart and soul of the club is the volunteers and supporters who commit their time to training, ground maintenance, administration, recruitment and game days. I particularly acknowledge John Karayiannis, who has transformed the club over his 15 years as president. I congratulate Coniston FC on 70 years of football in the Illawarra.

#### JULIE FRAGAR

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (20:17):** I congratulate Julie Fragar on winning this year's Archibald Prize, with her painting *Flagship Mother Multiverse (Justene)*, a portrait of her friend and fellow artist Justene Williams. Julie was born in Gosford but, when she was young, her parents moved to Wee Waa in the Barwon electorate. Her parents still live there. She once said, "I could not overstate the impact that growing up in Wee Waa and going to Wee Waa High School has had on my life." Julie said the school had lots of "dedicated, smart and valuable teachers". After graduating from Wee Waa High in 1994, Julie completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts and a master's at the Sydney College of the Arts, followed by a PhD at the Queensland College of Art and Design. She then became a lecturer and head of painting at the Queensland College of Art and Design. Julie was a finalist in the Archibald three times before winning this year, and her paintings are held in collections in major galleries. I congratulate Julie Fragar on her much-deserved win.

#### VARIS AND ROBYN PREISS

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (20:18):** Today I inform the Parliament about a tale of true love. On 1 May 2025, Varis and Robyn Preiss celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary. Varis and Robyn's story is one that is not heard too often about bona fide high school sweethearts. Varis and Robyn met in 1961 during their last exam at Fairfield High School. Varis saw Robyn across the car park and instantly knew she was the one. Robyn might argue that Varis fell in love with the Jaguar she was driving, which was borrowed from her father, but who is keeping score? Four years later, Robyn and Varis married at All Saints Anglican Church in Parramatta. They strived and saved to give their family a head start. They bought land in Rouse Hill for \$4,000. From the first brick, they built a home for their two lovely daughters. I congratulate Varis and Robyn. My flowers were not quite as special as the ones they received from Elle Macpherson on their fortieth anniversary, but I thank them for including me on their special day. On behalf of the members of the New South Wales Parliament, I wish them many happy years to come.

#### PHOEBE BRITTEN

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:19):** I congratulate Phoebe Britten of Avoca Beach on being awarded the prestigious Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development Create Change Award at the 7NEWS Young Achiever Awards. Phoebe is a trailblazer for educational equity and youth empowerment. As the founder of Inspire Tomorrow Education, she is revolutionising access to learning through free tutoring, scholarship support and AI-powered tools that benefit disadvantaged students across Australia. Her work with her team of more than 150 volunteers already impacts over 100 students annually through partnerships with six leading universities. Phoebe's influence extends globally by contributing to international policy and frameworks around gender equality and climate displacement at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations and the World Trade Organisation. She also sits on advisory boards for the Global Institute for Women's Leadership, Future Forward Australia and Voices of Influence. She is a TEDx speaker and passionate advocate. Our community is immensely proud of her vision, commitment and drive. I congratulate Phoebe.

## RIVERSTONE FESTIVAL

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (20:20):** The annual Riverstone Festival is a day on which residents, performers, schools and businesses gather to celebrate our community. For the last 25 years the festival has gone off without a hitch thanks to Phyllis McAlpine. Phyllis has been at the helm of the festival since its inception. What started as a one-off passion project with local church groups has grown into the most important date on the community calendar. The highlight of the day is the legendary street parade, which is undoubtedly the focal point of the event. Stallholders offer a range of attractions, including rides and activities, delicious food, goods and services. It really is a wonderful display of community spirit and inclusivity. It symbolises what it means to call Riverstone home. I congratulate Phyllis and the other committee members—Cheryl Ramsden, Kurt Hippe, Helena Greedy, Natasha Doherty and Joel Vemuri—for their hard work. The festival would not be possible without the assistance of Blacktown City Council and the Riverstone police. I thank them for their support.

## NATHANIEL KIM

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:21):** I ask the House to join me in congratulating Nathaniel Kim from Prime College in Eastwood on receiving a Ryde excellence award. Nathaniel was recognised for his outstanding growth and talent in creative writing. His work is highly imaginative, engaging and vividly expressed. It captures the attention of readers with its originality and depth. Nathaniel possesses a rare gift for storytelling. His attention to detail and thoughtful narrative approach have allowed his unique personality to shine through in every piece of writing. His love for reading and his deeply reflective nature have enriched his creative voice, which continues to inspire those around him. At a time when we are encouraging young Australians to find and express their voice, Nathaniel is leading by example. I commend Prime College in Eastwood for nominating and nurturing young people like Nathaniel. This award is not only a personal milestone for him but also a reflection of the vibrant student talent in the Ryde electorate. Nathaniel should be immensely proud of his achievement. I congratulate him once again and thank him for sharing his creativity with us. I look forward to seeing where his journey takes him next.

## DIANNE GREENING

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (20:22):** I congratulate Ms Dianne Greening on being named as The Entrance Senior of the Year for 2025 for her outstanding contribution to our community through her extensive volunteer work. Di is a dedicated member of the community. She gives her time as a justice of the peace, as an active member of a Probus group and as a valued volunteer with the Police Force. Her commitment to parkrun is a particular inspiration. Di has volunteered an incredible 184 times and has dedicated approximately 185 hours to ensuring that parkrun remains a vital and welcoming event. With an average of 175 participants at each event, her efforts have positively impacted thousands of people. She has fostered social connection, encouraged physical activity and strengthened community spirit. Di's dedication to volunteering exemplifies the very best of our community, and I thank her for her unwavering service.

## ST MARK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (20:23):** I sincerely congratulate St Mark's Catholic Primary School in Drummoyne, which was recently recognised as part of the top 100 primary schools in Sydney. The 2024 Better Education analysis placed St Mark's at rank 84 in Sydney, with an overall State score of 99 out of 100. The school scored five out of five for both English and mathematics, a truly remarkable achievement. Since first opening in 1889 with just 13 students, St Mark's has grown to support over 500 students and their families from kindergarten to year 6. The quality of education at St Mark's is a testament to the outstanding leadership of principal Mrs Melissa Lentini and her dedicated team of teachers, learning support officers and staff. The school's vision encourages students to "discover, achieve and become", and I am so proud of this recognition for the school and for our leaders of tomorrow. I congratulate all members of the St Mark's Catholic Primary School community, and I wish the teachers, students and their families all the very best.

## SIR JOSEPH BANKS HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:24):** I congratulate the outstanding students of Sir Joseph Banks High School who have been selected to represent the Bankstown zone team in their respective sports. These students—Ali, Jordan, Viliami, Rhys, Ahmad, Damali, Cooper, Nooan, Liliana, Alyssa, Diama, Isabeau, Adyldaide, Ranya, Laylah, Kelela, Sio, Aaliyah, Diamond, Ahmed, Gabriel and Joshua—have shown remarkable commitment, effort and sporting talent. Their achievement is a testament to their hard work and the strong culture of encouragement and excellence at Sir Joseph Banks High School. A special congratulations goes to Liliana on her incredible achievement in being selected for the Sydney South West Girls under-15s touch team. That fantastic milestone deserves extra recognition. I congratulate all the students and their families and teachers. We are proud to see such dedication and community spirit in our local schools.

### LOWESDALE PUBLIC SCHOOL P&C ASSOCIATION

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (20:25):** I congratulate the Lowesdale Public School P&C Association, which has been awarded the P&C Association of the Year award for Regional NSW by the Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations. That outstanding achievement recognises the dedication and tireless efforts of Lowesdale Public School P&C volunteers, who support the small yet high-achieving rural school community of 10 students. Special recognition goes to the following members of the P&C team: president Rebecca Kos; vice-president Carol Kuschert; secretary Ronan Taylor-Ware; treasurer Ailsa McDonald; and committee members Elise Wenden, James Southam, Tom Boyer, Kerrie Kuschert, Anna Kuberczyk, Milosz Kaczanowski, Ian Cocking, Warren Clifton, Terry Sharp and Dale Sharp. A special mention is also due to Club Corowa, which has generously granted a beautiful reading garden. That space will provide the students with an inspiring setting as they explore the world of literature and learning. Once again, I congratulate the Lowesdale Public School P&C Association on this outstanding achievement.

### ARAB COUNCIL AUSTRALIA

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (20:26):** Earlier in April I had the opportunity to meet members of Arab Council Australia to learn more about the vital services they provide to the community. It was a valuable chance to hear directly from the team about the impactful programs they deliver across south-western Sydney, supporting individuals and families from more than 20 different Arab backgrounds, and about the excellent work they are doing with newly arrived Palestinians, primarily from Gaza. Arab Council Australia offers a broad range of services, including family support groups, social and information networks for seniors, and dedicated assistance for people living with cancer and their carers. Its strong commitment to community wellbeing and inclusion is inspiring. I was particularly impressed by its leadership in promoting gender equality and the prevention of domestic and family violence. Through its pilot intervention program, From the Ground Up to Equality, it is raising awareness about gender inequality and equipping community workers and frontline responders with training on coercive control and family violence. I appreciate the warm welcome and look forward to supporting its continued work. I congratulate Hassan Moussa and the team at Arab Council Australia.

### MARSDEN HIGH SCHOOL

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:27):** I ask the House to join me in congratulating the outstanding students from Marsden High School who recently excelled in Rotary's Pitch for Purpose competition. In a remarkable achievement, four teams from Marsden reached the finals, with the school taking home both gold and silver medals. Their winning pitches—"Dual-pipe Filtration" and "Smart Shark Nets"—showed creativity, environmental awareness and innovative thinking. The other finalists, with projects titled "Taptok" and "One Step in the Gym", also impressed the judges, who included former Chief Scientist, Dr Alan Finkel, and Professor Veena Sahajwalla. I thank the Rotary clubs of Ryde, North Ryde and Macquarie Park for sponsoring those teams, and Rotary district governor, Niranjana Deodhar, for supporting such an inspiring initiative. This is a terrific result for the school and our wider Ryde community. These young leaders from Marsden High School have made us all very proud, and I look forward to seeing what they all achieve next.

### THE MEN'S TABLE

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (20:28):** I commend local organisers of the Men's Table for their important work in establishing a new table in our community. The Men's Table brings together small groups of men for monthly dinners to share openly about life—the highs, the lows and everything in between. It is a simple but powerful model that helps men build genuine friendships, connect meaningfully and support each other through the ups and downs of life. In March a local "Entree Dinner" was held at Condell Park Hall to introduce the initiative to men in our area. The event was hosted by longstanding members of the Men's Table who generously shared their experiences and helped create a safe, welcoming environment for new participants. I thank the local team behind this effort for bringing this life-changing program to our neighbourhood. Their leadership is helping break down stigma around men's mental health and encouraging connection through conversation. I encourage any men looking for support or friendship to reach out and learn more about this valuable community initiative.

### BRYAN SEUNG-HOON LEE

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (20:29):** I ask the House to join me in congratulating Bryan Seung-Hoon Lee from Prime College at Eastwood on receiving a Ryde Excellence Award. Bryan was recognised for his outstanding achievements in creative and persuasive writing. His work stands out not only for its imagination and clarity but also for its compelling structure and originality. With a keen eye for detail and a thoughtful approach to storytelling and argument writing, Bryan has consistently demonstrated analytical thinking and a very strong

personal voice. His passion for reading and logical reasoning has enriched his writing, allowing him to express ideas creatively and precisely. These qualities have helped him develop into a confident and articulate communicator whose work captures and holds the reader's attention. Bryan is a talented and passionate writer, and I am really delighted that this award has acknowledged his remarkable growth and dedication. I hope that it continues to inspire him in all of his future endeavours. Well done to Bryan. I thank him and the team at Prime College for making the Ryde community very proud.

*Private Members' Statements*

**MACQUARIE FIELDS ELECTORATE**

**Mr ANOULACK CHANTHIVONG (Macquarie Fields—Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading, Minister for Industry and Trade, Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology, Minister for Building, and Minister for Corrections) (20:30):** To some people, it may appear that there is a lot of luck in politics. However, I can attest to the fact that it is mostly hard work. Since I was first elected 10 years ago as the State member for Macquarie Fields, I have continually fought for my community's fair share. I have worked extremely closely with my Federal colleagues, Federal member for Macarthur Dr Mike Freelander and Federal member for Werriwa Ms Anne Stanley. Not only are they colleagues; they are also dear friends. Both have been elected for a fourth term, and I congratulate them on winning their respective seats. I very much look forward to continuing to work with both members in delivering for our shared community.

I am proud of Labor's track record for the people of Macquarie Fields. An accessibility upgrade for Macquarie Fields station is now underway. A much-needed high school for Edmondson Park is currently under construction. New schools include Bardia and Passfield Park. We are saving Hurlstone Agricultural High School at Glenfield, building multi-deck commuter car parks at Edmondson Park and the list goes on. The Federal redistribution at the most recent election means suburbs like Macquarie Fields, Ingleburn and Glenfield are now in the electorate of Hughes. I am thrilled that Mr David Moncrieff has been elected as the new member for Hughes, and I congratulate him wholeheartedly on his emphatic victory. After 29 long years, the people of Hughes now have a Labor member. What a fantastic result.

As anyone in politics knows, doing the hard yards matters. Consistency matters. Local representation matters. Integrity matters. Politics is a tough gig, it is true. But nothing is more punishing than the ballot box. The new member for Hughes, David Moncrieff, certainly deserves credit where it is due. He campaigned the old-fashioned way: listening to people, focusing on the positive and being prepared to put in the hard work. I look forward to working closely with the new member for Hughes to deliver for our community and build Australia's future by easing some of the cost-of-living pain through new tax cuts for everyone, providing an additional \$150 in energy bill relief for every Australian household, wiping 20 per cent off student debt, strengthening Medicare, making free TAFE permanent, delivering affordable child care, continuing the biggest ever housing build, training more tradies and helping first home buyers.

In exciting news, Macquarie Fields is set to be home to one of 10 new suburban university study hubs in 2025, which will bring university learning closer to home for residents in south-west Sydney. The study hub will provide student support and campus-style facilities for students who are studying a university or TAFE course without them having to leave their community.

Evidence shows that where the study hubs are located, university participation actually increases. Building Australia's future starts with our young people. We can never invest enough in their futures, aspirations and ambitions. That is why the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments have reached a 10-year agreement to fully fund the State's public schools. That will see an estimated \$4.8 billion in additional Commonwealth funding to New South Wales public schools over the next 10 years, representing the biggest ever new investment in New South Wales public schools by the Australian Government. Building a future made in Australia is about building the jobs of the future, supporting workers and bringing manufacturing back to our local communities.

I am delighted to now have three Federal members whose electorates cover my State electorate of Macquarie Fields: Mike, Anne and David. I offer hearty congratulations to them for their hard work, effort and commitment to our community. I look forward to working with those members to ensure that our community has a strong voice in both the State and Federal parliaments. We are a team with committed, shared values. We want to ensure that nobody in our local community misses out on the resources they need to fulfil their aspirations and ambitions, not only for themselves but also for their families and local communities. I congratulate those three local members and I look forward to working with them to build Australia's future.

**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (20:35):** Domestic and family violence is the crisis that continues to devastate families and women across New South Wales, including in my own community. Domestic



and Family Violence Prevention Month is a time to reflect on the progress we have made and, more urgently, to confront the challenges that remain. The statistics are stark and deeply troubling. Over the past decade, domestic violence-related assaults in New South Wales have increased by an average of 3.1 per cent annually. In Greater Sydney the rate is slightly lower at 2.7 per cent, but it still represents a significant upward trend. Domestic violence-related deaths in New South Wales reached a grim total of 39 in 2024, including 16 women and 10 children. That marks a stark increase on the 25 deaths in 2022 and underscores the escalating severity of the issue.

In my own community, in the North Sydney local government area, from January to December last year, 155.5 domestic violence-related assaults were recorded per 100,000 people. Members all know those numbers are not just statistics. They represent women, mothers, daughters, children, fathers, brothers and friends who have lost their lives due to violence, and it is preventable violence. It is our duty to ensure we do everything we can to protect the most vulnerable. My community is feeling the impact of the crisis. Our local support services are overwhelmed by increasing demand for assistance. Despite the rise in these incidents, the response from the Police Force needs additional resources.

The number of compliance checks on apprehended domestic violence orders has declined significantly from 117,803 in 2022 to 96,886 in 2024. The reduction is partly due to understaffing. The Police Force is currently short of its authorised strength of over 2,000 officers. The failure to properly enforce apprehended domestic violence orders leaves women and children in particular at greater risk, even though the Government has pledged to prioritise the issue. Just last week I was pleased to meet and welcome 11 new probationary constables to the North Shore Police Area Command. It was by far the largest class that I have welcomed in my time as an MP, and I would like to see more. I spoke with those officers, as I do every time I greet new officers, about domestic violence in our society and the role officers play in keeping us safe and creating a culture where women and other victims of domestic violence feel safe to come forward and report.

The criminalisation of coercive control, spearheaded by former Attorney General Mark Speakman, was an important step forward, but it needs to be accompanied by a significant increase in resources and enforcement. The fact that 33 incidents of coercive control were reported in New South Wales in August 2024 alone illustrates the growing recognition of this form of abuse. However, the current system is not sufficient to effectively respond to the new law, and too many victims are falling through the cracks. Aboriginal communities in particular are disproportionately affected by domestic violence. Aboriginal women are eight times more likely to be the victims of domestic violence-related assaults than non-Aboriginal women. This is a crisis within a crisis and it demands urgent culturally appropriate resources and responses that reflect the unique challenges faced by people in these communities.

I acknowledge the vital work being done by local services in my community, such as Mary's House Services, Lower North Shore Domestic Violence Network and all our community organisations, shelters, legal services and refuges. They are on the front lines of this battle, providing essential support for those in need. However, despite their best efforts, they are continually overburdened and under-resourced. We need to do more to support those services so they can continue to provide safety and hope to those affected by domestic violence. The lack of affordable housing options also exacerbates this issue. Many victims of domestic violence find it increasingly difficult to escape abusive situations because they do not have anywhere safe to go.

The lack of safe housing options forces far too many women and children to return to violent homes or remain in unsafe environments for too long. We know that housing should not be a luxury, and we must ensure that every person fleeing domestic violence has access to safe, affordable housing. It is clear that the current approach is insufficient, and we need to work harder for a comprehensive, whole-of-government response. Much progress has been made, but we cannot rest on our laurels. There is much more to be done to protect the women, children, men and families who are living in fear.

I welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault last week. I will work alongside her to achieve outcomes for this State. I implore the Government to join with me this Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month in addressing it head on. We owe it to victims and survivors to ensure that they are supported and protected, and that every individual in New South Wales can live free from fear and violence.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (20:40):** I congratulate the member for North Shore on that amazing and important private member's statement. I know she is passionate about domestic violence. Much work has been done, but I know there is much more to do. The Government is working hard, and I credit the former Government for its work too. I know the member for North Shore worked hard on the issue. The Parliament best achieves outcomes by ensuring it has solutions. That is what we need because this is a scourge on society. As the member for North Shore said, there is much work to be done. Let's knuckle down and get it done. I thank the member for North Shore.

### BATEMANS BAY COMMUNITY HEALTH FACILITY

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (20:41):** On Tuesday 15 April I was pleased to be at the site of the new Batemans Bay Community Health facility. I was there to celebrate a major milestone in this exciting project. The sod turn and tree planting ceremony marked the start of main works construction for this \$20 million facility. I was also pleased to announce that Monarch Building Solutions has been awarded the contract to deliver the new Batemans Bay Community Health facility following a competitive tender process and statutory planning approvals. Monarch Building Solutions brings a wealth of experience in delivering projects in regional areas and in Canberra. It is also actively involved in the Bega electorate with the Cobargo village reconstruction project and the Bega sports ground construction program.

After the ceremonial sod turning, site establishment work will get underway to secure the construction zone and prepare the area before the new facility is built. The Batemans Bay Community Health facility will play an important role in making sure everyone can receive the care they need close to home. To make sure that the services there meet the needs of the community, the team has consulted widely, including with staff, patients, the community and Aboriginal community representatives. The centre will bring a range of services together in one convenient location. These include allied health, such as psychology, physiotherapy, audiology and speech pathology; child and family health services; women's health; community nursing and wound management; palliative care; Aboriginal health; community mental health and drug and alcohol; specialist outpatient clinics; and pathology services. Having all these services in the same place means less travel between appointments, making health care more accessible for everyone. The community health facility will also make it easier for our visitors to receive care when they come during the busy tourist season.

The new facility is expected to be completed in 2026. This will be followed by a comprehensive operational commissioning process to support staff working in their new purpose-built facility. The community health facility also complements the Medicare urgent care clinic located onsite that opened in December 2023. This federally funded clinic was achieved by the member for Gilmore, Fiona Phillips, who has been successfully re-elected, and it has seen over 12,000 patients since opening. That is 12,000 patients who did not occupy space in our busy emergency departments or who either could not get a timely appointment or afford to see a GP.

This community health centre will go hand in hand with the services being delivered as part of the new \$330 million Eurobodalla Regional Hospital project. When it is completed, the new level 4 hospital will include services such as an emergency department bigger than the combined capacities of the emergency departments in Batemans Bay and Moruya; the first intensive care unit in the Eurobodalla, with an eight-bed intensive care and close observation unit; expanded medical imaging, including the first MRI service in a public hospital in the electorate; the first paediatric unit and the first special care nursery within a maternity service in the Eurobodalla; and enhanced education and training facilities, including a simulation laboratory.

This hospital is designed to meet the needs of local communities long into the future, with room to expand as the demand for services change. A tender process has been opened to provide local radiation oncology services on the site of the new hospital, which will be the first on the far South Coast of New South Wales. Incredible progress has been made on the construction, which was promised to commence during the term of the former Liberal-Nationals Government, but it failed to deliver. These investments in health care for the whole Eurobodalla shire are part of the New South Wales Government's commitment to the health and wellbeing of our regional communities. The 2023-24 budget includes a significant investment for new and upgraded hospitals across the State, including \$3.8 billion over four years for new and upgraded health facilities in regional New South Wales.

In addition to the clinical investment in regional New South Wales, building projects like these also creates local jobs and boosts economic growth, including opportunities for local businesses, employment opportunities for skilled trades and related professionals, as well as upskilling and training opportunities such as apprenticeships and expanded health-related employment. I look forward to the completion of the Batemans Bay Community Health at the end of 2026, as well as the completion of the Eurobodalla Regional Hospital in 2027.

### COFFS COAST

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (20:46):** The Coffs Coast has long been considered the number one destination in New South Wales. In our slice of paradise we are renowned for our laid-back coastal lifestyle, sun-drenched beaches, lush hinterland and rainforest adventures. More and more people are going there to immerse themselves in Mother Nature's majesty, as well as everything else the Coffs Coast has to offer. Locals have chosen the Coffs Coast because they love it. They have a strong sense of community, generosity and a fair go, and they always reach out to help those who need it when the going gets tough. Let's face it: Life has been getting extremely difficult of late in regional communities like the Coffs Coast, which have endured drought,

bushfires, floods, the pandemic, the rising cost of living, the lack of housing and rampant crime. I am proud of the way we always seem to come together as a community to tackle these challenges, some of which are ongoing, to find a way through to better times.

The Coffs Coast is a diverse, thriving and growing regional community. We have a booming tourism industry and we play host to significant national and international sporting and cultural events and conferences. One that takes particular pride of place in Coffs Harbour is the Australian Children's Content Summit, where delegates from around the world are again expected to converge on our city when the summit returns for a third year this year. The expanded summit will now run across four days from 25 to 28 August at the Pacific Bay Resort. Founded and presented by Coffs Harbour-based SLR Productions, it is the only summit of its kind in Australia and it offers opportunities for industry representatives to connect, create and collaborate.

For the past two years, the summit has boosted Coffs Harbour's tourism, with 260 delegates from 12 countries in attendance, including a distinguished line-up of industry leaders from the ABC, NITV, BBC, BBC Studios, CBC, PBS Kids, Apple, Disney, Netflix, Sony, Paramount, Nine and Hello Sunshine. SLR Productions CEO Suzanne Ryan said the Australian Children's Content Summit had quickly become one of the most relevant and exciting industry events on the calendar, which is why the format has been expanded to four days in 2025. Suzanne said:

The summit offers a rare and focused opportunity for creators, producers, buyers, investors and industry leaders from around the world to come together to discuss ideas, forge partnerships and explore the future of children's and family content. The quality of our speakers and sessions continues to set the bar high and delegates love the mix of insightful discussions, meaningful networking and the stunning setting of the Coffs Coast.

Our beautiful region also boasts a near-perfect climate, which means families holiday there year round.

No trip is complete without a family snap in front of the Big Banana, which is just one of our many trailblazing and award-winning tourist attractions. Our tourism trophy cabinet may soon have another addition, with Coffs Harbour officially in the running to be crowned a 2025 NSW Top Tourism Town. Celebrating the best of the best visitor destinations across the State, the Top Tourism Town Awards recognise places that deliver unforgettable experiences and a strong, sustainable connection between locals, businesses and visitors. The City of Coffs Harbour's submission to the awards focuses on our region's growing reputation as a destination for adventure seekers. The city's acting general manager Andrew Beswick said:

Our entry highlights the wild, unforgettable experiences available right across the Coffs Coast—from skydiving and kayaking to Indigenous cultural immersion, scuba diving and rainforest exploration ...

... all underpinned by our strong sustainability credentials as NSW's first ECO Certified Destination.

The tourism winners will be announced on 27 May. The Coffs Coast also has a thriving agricultural sector, with horticulture, beef, dairy, forestry and fisheries all represented, while exciting developments in the innovation and digital space are creating important new opportunities. I will always seek to achieve opportunity and growth for my regional community. I will also continue fighting to ensure the people of the Coffs Harbour electorate have access to the same services and the same opportunities as people living elsewhere in the State.

## NATIONAL RALLY AGAINST VIOLENCE

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (20:50):** On Saturday 10 May, I joined hundreds of Novocastrians in the National Rally Against Violence as we marched from Newcastle Museum to the Foreshore. At the rally, I promised to raise their voices and tell their stories here in Parliament, and I intend to keep that promise. First and foremost I thank the organisers of the rally: Emmilee, Elke, Charli and Kristy. I praise everyone who came out and marched. Emerald Wardle was 18 years old when she was strangled to death by the man she loved and trusted, Jordan Brodie Miller, in 2020. Miller was originally sentenced to 20 years in prison with a non-parole period of 13 years. However, last year Miller's sentence was overturned as he had since been diagnosed with schizophrenia and was found not criminally responsible for murdering Emerald. Miller was then admitted as a forensic patient to a mental health facility and has been let out on day release and found to be active on social media and dating apps.

Emerald's aunt, Kristy Smith, was an organiser at Saturday's rally, and is a tireless advocate for domestic violence law reform. Kristy and other members of Emerald's family sat in the gallery here in February of this year when we passed the Mental Health Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. This amendment ensured that no forensic patient, including Miller, can access social media and other online communications while they are on day release. This was an amendment that Kristy pushed for and made happen. Kristy shared her experience of witnessing a domestic violence case from the courtroom. She shared how distressing and dehumanising it was for her and her family to hear Emerald being referred to as simply "the deceased". Kristy has also made calls for a domestic violence register, where people can check whether their current or ex-partner has a history of abuse. This has been a successful system in other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom.

Paige Bush was another speaker at the rally who told her story of domestic violence and coercive control. At the time, Paige felt as though it would be more dangerous for her to report his behaviour than not to. No-one should ever feel that way. They should feel able to reach out and ask for help. As a government, it is our responsibility to make sure that victim-survivors feel safe to access services. Since Paige broke out of her abusive relationship, coercive control has been criminalised. I also acknowledge Sheydin, who shared the story of her best friend, Rachel McKenna, one of the Australian women who lost their life to domestic violence in 2025, and Libby, a survivor of sexual assault and a strong advocate for change. I praise you all for your strength and resilience, for standing up and sharing your story, and turning your traumatic experience into advocacy.

This rally could not have come at a more important time. Earlier this month, Mackenzie Anderson's murderer went to court and was handed an insultingly light sentence for his crimes. Mackenzie was a 21-year-old Mayfield mum who was stabbed 78 times by Tyrone Thompson, her former partner.

He was on parole at the time after being released from prison for his domestic violence offences against Mackenzie. He breached his apprehended violence order, broke into her home and took her life. Despite his criminal record and the brutal nature of the assault, he has been sentenced to just 22 years of prison and is eligible for parole in 2038. Mackenzie's mother, Tabitha Acret, has been outspoken about that appalling sentence. She has called for the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP] to appeal the sentence and has met with the Premier to make the case. I am also calling on the DPP to have a good, hard look at the sentence of Tyrone Thompson for the murder of Mackenzie Anderson.

It brought me great pride to stand at the rally and announce the great reforms that this Government has introduced in the past two years. We have invested \$245 million this financial year to enhance the safety of victim-survivors and bolster efforts to stop violence before it begins. We have made coercive control illegal. We have strengthened bail laws on serious domestic violence offenders. We have introduced electronic monitoring for alleged serious domestic violence offenders that are granted bail. We have extended the jail sentence for those who breach apprehended violence orders. We have limited forensic patients from accessing social media and online communications. We recognise that there is more work to do. I will continue advocating for change and I will continue to say no more on domestic violence until there is no more domestic violence.

#### WATER MANAGEMENT

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (20:55):** What does Max Weber, a German political economist from 150 years ago, have to do with the frustrations of our irrigators trying to get on with the job of producing fibre to clothe us and put food on our tables? It is bureaucracy. Weber's theory of bureaucracy is still spot on. He described it as a large group of people involved in running an organisation but who are not elected, a system of government or business that has many complicated rules and ways of doing things, and a system of administration marked by officialism, red tape and proliferation. Farmers in my electorate spend time making submissions to endless rounds of consultations, which mostly go unread, unanswered or are not even considered in final reports or decisions. Those submissions and government consultations are ineffective and a waste of time.

Louise Burge and her family are primary producers near Deniliquin who have suffered needlessly because of poor bureaucratic decisions and misinformed Ministers. Like many other farmers, their biggest business risk is poor government policy put together by misguided bureaucrats who do not accurately report back to Ministers and do not live their decisions. On three occasions—in 2010, 2016 and 2022—a succession of avoidable and negligent decisions caused a series of catastrophic events that led to the loss of millions of dollars for the Burge family. Excessive environmental flows and mismanagement of air space in dams caused man-made flooding that decimated their property. Stock and crop loss, fence repairs, aerial food drops for the remaining stock, and infrastructure loss all went uncompensated in claims that Louise submitted through the required procedural channels.

Louise said, "The NSW Government has simply amended the NSW Water Act in 2018 and absolved itself of any liability once compulsory agreements are signed. The department notes were to tell farmers it is not compulsory, but it is State significant development with mandated processes and limits to rights of landholders." That blows my mind. It is no wonder we are scratching our heads trying to figure out what that actually means. Louise went on to say, "The actual costs of trying to get NSW and the MDBA to listen to genuine concerns since 2010 is immeasurable, given direct consultation, submissions, days of work attending meetings ... has ruined me."

Ministers have the best of intentions when it comes to making change, but their hands are tied by the red tape created by these bureaucrats and a system that seems rigged. The power of decision-making actually lies with mismanaged and over-staffed agencies, not the Ministers in charge. One would have to agree that that is madness. There needs to be a better way. It is time that the relevant Ministers and bodies of government take a stand and finally support rural communities, not the decisions of distant bureaucrats who have absolutely no understanding of what affects us in the bush.

It is time to stop kicking issues to committees, with endless meetings and no outcomes. It is time for a solid list of rule changes to water-sharing plans that deliver positive ecological outcomes alongside socioeconomic benefits for rural communities. It is time to put an end to water buybacks. It is time for the Government to listen and act on behalf of the people who elected it. There are too many unwarranted rules and regulations that only serve to keep bureaucrats employed. I have only scratched the surface of the levels of bureaucracy that are crippling our rural communities. If the Government wants our food and fibre to continue being made in Australia, rather than imported from inferior overseas sources, it needs to get rid of the bureaucratic obstacles and let us do what we do best: Provide for the nation.

## HOUSING POLICY

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (21:00):** Recently, many policymakers have been talking about the housing theory of everything. The essence of that theory is that the lack of access to housing creates or exacerbates almost every social, economic or environmental problem currently facing the world. From escaping domestic violence to addressing climate change, all issues are driven by access to housing. As I outlined on many occasions as shadow Minister, housing shortages not only create inequality but they also limit productivity, drive poorer health outcomes and even start to impact on fertility rates, which will have a profound effect on a country with an ageing population. A shortage of housing also impacts on the wider economy. Housing is the largest cost to the household budget and, as more money is spent on housing, households are forced to forgo other goods and services, hitting businesses and jobs.

While I was the shadow Minister, I was clear that changes needed to be made so that people can access housing across all parts of our cities. I said that we could not continue to push people to live exclusively on our urban fringes, from where they are forced to commute for hours, spending less time with their families and in their communities. Good communities are built on diversity—a diversity of housing type and a diversity of people. Since coming to office, the Minns Government has pursued policy changes that are delivering more affordable housing, as well as more housing generally, across our cities. For example, recently, in Wollongong, a development was approved that will contain 145 new homes right in the heart of the CBD. Most people will think that is nothing to cry about—it is a large city. But the development will include 25 affordable homes. That increase in housing will build on the recent completion of the Northsea development nearby, which includes both social housing and market housing in the same building. It is a vertical version of a standard streetscape. There are also a number of other proposals in the pipeline around Wollongong that will contribute both market and affordable housing—different types of housing with the same front door.

The people and families who live in those homes will have access to the same amenities. Those developments are addressing a spatial and financial inequality that policies and practices that restricted housing over decades led to. The policy changes introduced by the Minns Government that are helping to deliver better housing outcomes include the infill affordable housing bonus scheme; the requirement to include affordable housing in developments in transport oriented development areas; and the expectation that proposals to the Housing Delivery Authority will include an affordable housing component. More than 100 proposals have already been made to the authority.

Further, in the last budget, the Government provided Landcom with \$400 million to develop build-to-rent housing for key workers in Sydney to live closer to their jobs. Reforms to the permissibility of low- and mid-rise housing—which were effectively banned in areas with highly restrictive rules—will result in more types of homes that work for a greater range of income levels. The Government's changes prompted knee-jerk criticisms from the Opposition and many on the crossbench, including The Greens, despite everyone agreeing that New South Wales needs more homes. But the good news is that the changes are working, and not only in Wollongong. The infill affordable housing bonus is a clear example of how smart planning incentives can drive real results. Since the chance was introduced in December 2023, nine projects have been approved. When built, those developments will provide more than 1,600 homes, of which approximately 440 will be affordable. A further 30 projects are under assessment, which, if approved, will result in more than 6,300 homes, including more than 1,700 affordable homes.

Addressing housing availability and affordability helps to address productivity. It is an economic boost, not just through the jobs created during building, but also by reducing the pressure of housing costs on family budgets. It cuts commuting time and costs, meaning that more time can be spent with family or volunteering in communities rather than being stuck in a car, train or bus and crisscrossing the city to get home. It is also a boost to businesses that are struggling to attract and retain workers, particularly in parts of the care economy, simply because they do not have access to affordable housing. While digital mobility allows many workers to work from different parts of the State, it does not work for everyone.

Restrictive planning controls that prevent more homes from being built, and that limit where affordable homes can be built, work against the interests of working men and women. They also work against the interests

of employers or potential employers. They work against everyone's desire to see action taken to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change. Over the past few years, various cities, including Auckland, New Rochelle in New York, Portland in Oregon, and Minneapolis have demonstrated that zoning changes can deliver results. The changes the Government is making are already driving the delivery of more homes. More homes are in the pipeline, which is good for the current and future residents of New South Wales. More people will have a place to call home in the communities they choose. In short, it is about building a better New South Wales.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (21:05):** The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces is exactly right. We need to plan future homes for Sydney and New South Wales. I commend the Minister for his innovative approach to providing housing solutions for people. I recently welcomed the Minister to Macarthur Gardens, where we are building an enormous number of homes. Why? Because people want to live in them. Yes, we need to preserve environmental protections. Yes, we need to provide infrastructure. However, first and foremost, people want to live in a home. That is what the Government's agenda needs to be, and that is what this Government's agenda is. That is what this Minister's agenda is. I thank the Minister for his private member's statement to clarify that point.

### BATHURST ELECTORATE EVENTS

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst) (21:06):** It gives me great pleasure to talk about a number of events that have happened across the Bathurst electorate over the month of April. As a local member, it is great to always be out and about, talking to community groups, going to events and functions, and responding to constituents on the ground in my local community. I am able to share a number of good news stories with the House. First, there is good news for members of the Eglinton District Tennis Club. I have been a major supporter of that club for many years. We were able to obtain funding from the New South Wales Government for several projects that have been successfully completed.

Those projects included recent upgrades to the surrounds of the courts, which were made possible through the Local Sport Grant Program. That allowed the club committee to press ahead with much-needed retaining walls to help stop rainwater runoff from flowing onto certain sections of the courts, as well as allowing artificial turf to be laid adjacent to the new clubhouse on an area which was previously just dirt, and which became boggy during inclement weather. That project has made a huge difference to the local community. The club also got \$28,000 towards upgrading existing lighting on four of the club's synthetic courts to LED lighting. It might only be a small club, but it does a lot to help players of all abilities. There are six synthetic courts—four with lighting—as well as four Hot Shots courts for the kids. A real breakthrough was \$160,000 for the construction of a brand-new clubhouse. It is making a huge difference in the area and has been a gamechanger for the club itself.

I acknowledge one of the very important developments that has come to fruition in the township of Blayney: the opening of six affordable homes in early April. I was delighted to join representatives from Blayney Shire Council and Housing Plus for a special event to unveil the homes, which included three two-bedroom residences and three one-bedroom residences. Those modern homes will make a huge difference to housing in the town by providing safe and supportive accommodation for up to nine tenants. They were made possible through the former Government's Community Housing Innovation Fund and the Social Housing Accelerator Fund. With a less than 1 per cent rental vacancy in Blayney, the new homes will halve the waitlist for individuals and families in the area.

That was a \$3 million project and a joint venture between all three levels of government and Housing Plus. All the houses are built for low-income tenants to live there for the longer term, with the ability to allow for modifications to be made to improve accessibility as time moves on.

The best part is that the completion of the project means people who are currently homeless or displaced will get a place to call home while being able to access reduced energy bills and build a better life. Moves are also underway for Housing Plus to expand its Brickworks complex in Baillee Street in Bathurst, which comes four years after the first stage of the Brickworks 20-unit development was completed. Again, the development is for people on low incomes, including those at risk of homelessness, victims of domestic violence, older women, people with serious medical issues and those with disabilities.

It was also wonderful to join the Mawhood family at Sunnypoint Pastoral Company in Oberon as they hosted the AngusTREK. It was all part of the lead-up to the World Angus Forum in Brisbane. The last time the forum was held in Australia was 1997. It was an opportunity to showcase the Angus cattle industry in Australia. In Oberon in the Bathurst electorate, black cattle are scattered on the hills around the local area. Over 250 delegates from around the world came to the Mawhood family's property. The family are a classic example of a business taking a product from paddock to plate, and they take great pride in employing many people from the surrounding area.

It was also a momentous occasion to celebrate Lithgow Public School providing 150 years of public education to the Lithgow community. I attended a special assembly at Lithgow Public School, where I took pleasure in presenting a special certificate congratulating everyone on reaching the incredible milestone of 150 years. The school's ongoing commitment to education, community and student growth is truly inspiring. The historic achievement of serving the community for 150 years reflects generations of dedication, learning and progress. Here is to honouring the past and continuing to build a bright future for all students and staff. I also thank principal Mark Davies for having me. I look forward to providing another update in the near future about all the great things happening in the Bathurst electorate.

### UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (21:11):** On 15 April I was invited to deliver the occasional address to students graduating from the College of Engineering, Science and Environment and the College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing at the Ourimbah campus of the University of Newcastle. As a graduate of that university, it was a great honour. If my year supervising professor Konrad Muller was still alive, he probably would have been completely surprised that the university invited me along to deliver the occasional address. I should say that Konrad Muller's instruction was a major influence on my decision to undertake a career as an engineering geologist rather than take the usual path for geologists, which is in minerals.

I graduated in 1989, and I noted in my address to the students that I really appreciated that, at the time I graduated, my education had been paid for by the state. I have appreciated that benefit ever since, as it set me up for my further career. I spoke about my professional career following graduation and indicated that, even though my occupation had changed several times and I was now a member of Parliament, the skills I had learned and the life experience of attending a university in my hometown really underpinned my career opportunities from the time I graduated.

I also noted that one of the University of Newcastle's standout features is its absolute commitment to social equity. In 2019 the university was rated number one in the *Good Universities Guide* for the delivery of social equity programs for students attempting to enter university. Equity is a distinguishing feature of the University of Newcastle. I said to the students that, for that reason alone, they should be very proud to be a graduate of the University of Newcastle. I noted the university was the first in Australia—and probably one of the first in the world—to offer alternative pathways to entering university education. For example, it was a pioneer in offering alternative pathways to obtaining a medical degree in the 1980s.

The Open Foundation course offered by the University of Newcastle is likewise a pioneering program to allow students who would not normally be able to attend university to get the skills they need. I told the students they should be proud of all those things.

The University of Newcastle has expanded to the Central Coast, which has made access to education all the stronger in our community. I note that today the university made a major announcement regarding its new Gosford campus, indicating which courses at the Ourimbah campus will transfer to Gosford. That announcement may cause some concern for staff and students currently studying and working at the Ourimbah campus, but there are opportunities to having a distributed campus in the better access to education it can provide for the Central Coast. I look forward to the further announcements to be made by the University of Newcastle about new courses to be offered on the Central Coast, both at Ourimbah and at Gosford. The university's statement noted that it has a strong intention to deliver a dentistry course on the Central Coast. I fully support that aspiration and will do all I can to make sure that happens.

I recall that the University of Newcastle started life as a campus of the University of New South Wales, operating out of Newcastle TAFE. In 1964 it was granted autonomy by the Heffron Labor Government. Since then the University of Newcastle has grown and grown, offering educational opportunities to a whole bunch of people who would not normally have the opportunity to obtain a university education, including me. I will be forever grateful for that opportunity, and I look forward to working with the University of Newcastle to provide educational opportunities to more people on the Central Coast.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (21:16):** I thank my good friend the member for The Entrance, who has campaigned and worked very hard to see the expansion of educational resources at the University of Newcastle. But I learned something more about him tonight: I never knew he studied geology. He is an amazing member. He works hard and is passionate about providing educational resources for those in his community who otherwise would not have them. I am sure his community is very grateful, and I acknowledge and thank him for that.

### CHINESE AUSTRALIAN SERVICES SOCIETY

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (21:17):** I recognise and acknowledge the outstanding services and activities of the Chinese Australian Services Society, or CASS. That excellent community organisation offers services to Chinese Australians, including children, the elderly and people living with disabilities. Over the past decade I have had the great privilege of working closely with the team at CASS, witnessing firsthand the incredible difference they make in the lives of so many individuals and families. From young children in child care to seniors in aged care, CASS is always ready to help. Its members are compassionate, committed and community driven.

Established in 1981 by a group of dedicated volunteers, CASS has grown from its humble beginnings to become one of the most respected and impactful service providers in our multicultural community. It has been active in the St George area since 2002 and has tailored programs to meet the unique needs of seniors from Chinese and other East Asian backgrounds. The team currently delivers a range of essential services, including disability support, settlement assistance, aged care, vocational training, child care and community development, reaching over 7,500 families a week across wider Sydney and Wollongong.

That is an extraordinary achievement that reflects not just the scale of their work but also the quality of the services that they offer.

The organisation's aged-care services, such as home care packages, residential care and day programs, have all played an important role in supporting elderly Chinese Australians to live with dignity and independence. At a time when social isolation among seniors in New South Wales is alarmingly high, the work of organisations such as CASS is very important. I have had the opportunity to see firsthand the difference they make each and every week to seniors in our local area by visiting their weekly Hua Kang Seniors Group, which takes place on Fridays at their facility in Peakhurst in my electorate. It has been a great pleasure to join the team for many major milestones and events, including Chinese New Year celebrations and their fortieth anniversary, which was celebrated in 2021. It is always such great fun to celebrate events like that together. I believe that is what helps CASS to stand out from other similar service providers: They understand that services are effective only when they are delivered in a way that respects the cultural backgrounds of the people they serve.

Culturally sensitive and specific aged care is so important to the wellbeing and overall quality of life of seniors from multicultural and multi-faith backgrounds. It gives them the peace of mind that their needs and heritage are not forgotten as they receive the care, love and support that suits them best. That is why the former Government was proud to support CASS. The support included \$20,000 under the Community Building Partnership grants program in 2022, which saw upgrades to their Peakhurst aged and disability day activity centre. A further \$20,000 was also provided in 2023 for additional upgrades, which has transformed the Peakhurst centre into one of the finest wellbeing hubs in the St George area. That has enabled CASS to continue to meet growing community needs, as our local area welcomes more individuals from a range of diverse cultures and nationalities.

Our multicultural society is so successful thanks to the efforts of groups like CASS who help to bridge the divide between cultures and encourage greater understanding between our many diverse community groups. I extend a special thank you to the entire leadership team, staff and all of the volunteers at CASS. I specifically recognise Professor Stephen Li, chairperson; my good friend Henry Nan Hung Pan, OAM, honorary executive director; Dr Leng Tan, emeritus chairperson; Anthony Pang, OAM, deputy chairperson and secretary; Sean Zhang, vice chairperson and treasurer; Tica Lee, vice-chairperson; Ivan Wong, vice-chairperson; Helen Ashton, vice-chairperson; Alex Lee, board of directors member; and Kiko Ko, corporate affairs officer. All of those individuals have distinguished themselves through their service with CASS and the wider Chinese community throughout New South Wales. I sincerely look forward to working closely alongside CASS into the future. I have no doubt that they will continue to provide exceptional services within our local area and beyond.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (21:22):** I thank the member for Oatley for acknowledging the good work of the Chinese Australian Services Society, which does so much in our Chinese community. I acknowledge his reference to multicultural engagement, in which the member is involved in his electorate, as are communities throughout western and south-west Sydney. Australians should be proud of our multiculturalism and how we have welcomed people to our country since before the First World War. When we think about the arguments during the recent Federal election campaign, the private member's statement of the member for Oatley reminds us of the importance of multiculturalism, and I thank him for that.

### ORANGE ELECTORATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (21:23):** I outline my four budget priorities for the Orange electorate and why that funding is necessary. First and foremost is the urgent need to restore flood-damaged critical water infrastructure across the Central West. The devastating 2022 floods left a trail of destruction, and I am grateful to the Perrottet and Minns governments for the support provided so far. However, several critical water assets remain



ineligible for existing funding streams, leaving Lachlan, Cabonne and Parkes shire councils burdened with the impossible task of replacing that essential infrastructure without financial assistance.

The former Government allocated \$145 million to rebuild similar water assets in the Northern Rivers following floods, therefore equity and fairness demands a comparable commitment for the Central West. I thank the Minister for Recovery for her recent visit to the electorate, where she inspected the flood damage firsthand. The Minister visited Lake Endeavour, where the freshwater pipeline that provides 30 per cent of the water supply for Parkes remains damaged. With drought looming, this pipeline will be essential. The estimated \$20 million needed to repair water and sewerage assets in these three shires is not only reasonable but also critical.

My second budget priority is establishing robotic-assisted surgery at Orange Health Service. This would be a transformative step for health care in western New South Wales and would bring clear benefits for patients, facilities and medical practitioners. Robotic surgery improves precision, reduces recovery times, shortens hospital stays and lowers the risk of complications. It is particularly valuable in urological, colorectal and gynaecological cancer procedures. Establishing this capability in Orange would also reduce the burden on patients forced to travel to metropolitan hospitals where they often face long waitlists and specialist shortages. Sydney currently has at least 25 robots serving a population of 5.18 million, which is a ratio of one robot per 207,000 people. The Orange medical catchment serves approximately 250,000 people, and this strongly justifies one robot. Installing this technology in Orange would significantly enhance cancer care pathways in the region and bring regional health care up to modern standards.

Thirdly, I draw attention to the pressing need for a new operating theatre at Forbes hospital. The existing theatre is over 50 years old and is no longer fit for purpose. It was used for approximately 770 procedures last year alone, which is a heavy load for a single, outdated theatre. During a visit, the Minister for Health and I both witnessed the ageing facility and heard directly from staff about the growing surgical demand. The need for a new, modern theatre at Forbes hospital is undeniable. Finally, I highlight the community's longstanding call for improved passenger rail services. Since my first term in 2016, the Orange Rail Action Group and I have pushed to extend the Bathurst Bullet to Orange. A petition gained over 10,000 signatures, which shows the strong local support for this initiative.

A seamless, daily return rail service between Orange and Sydney is more than just convenient transport; it is a lifeline for many. It helps residents access education, health care and jobs. It keeps families connected, supports local business, encourages tourism and boosts regional growth. It is a logical step in encouraging decentralisation and economic development across the Central West. The current set-up sees an empty train running between Lithgow and Bathurst at the end of each day. Stabling the train overnight in Orange would allow it to carry passengers from the very start of its journey to the very end. This makes far greater economic and practical sense. I thank the Minns Government for actively considering this proposal.

In particular, I acknowledge the Minister for Regional Transport, whose proactive engagement with the Orange community has been commendable. Under her leadership, Transport for NSW conducted a public consultation event in Orange in October last year. Last month the Minister returned to announce the release of the *Orange Passenger Rail Community Consultation Report* and \$2 million in funding to investigate stabling part of the new regional rail fleet in Orange. This is a significant and welcome first step. I appreciate the Minister's early support for this important project. The four funding requests for water infrastructure repairs, robot-assisted surgery for Orange Health Service, a new theatre for Forbes hospital and a daily return rail service to Orange are practical and necessary. They will deliver lasting benefits to the people of the Orange electorate.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (21:28):** How lucky is Orange to have Phil Donato as its local member? I say this without qualification. As many members know, I am a proud Campbelltown bloke. Before I moved there, I was born and raised in Dubbo. I was on a farm in Borenore, which is near Orange, with my late Aunt Phil and Uncle Ron.

I thank the member for Orange for his advocacy in responding to flood damage, whether it in Lachlan, Cabonne or Parkes, and his drought relief pursuits, as well as providing the advocacy for the health resources that Orange needs and deserves. He was very much a part of making sure that Orange is the hub for better health services for the Central West and Central West Slopes and Plains. I thank him for that. I also thank him for working collaboratively with the Government to make sure that his community get what they need and deserve.

#### KENDALL COMMUNITY OP SHOP

**Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie) (21:29):** I recognise the incredible efforts and longstanding commitment that the committee and volunteers of the Kendall Community Op Shop have made in our local area. The op shop was opened in 1995 by the Kendall Pool Committee as part of its fundraising activities for the construction of Kendall Swimming Pool. That followed a decision by our local Port Macquarie Hastings Council

to close the existing pool, which was located adjacent to the Camden Haven River. The pool had fallen into disrepair as a result of many flood events. The pool committee initially sold its own goods at street stalls, before moving into the old ANZ Bank building in the small town. Kendall Community Pool received its first guests in 2004, which was a highlight for this small coastal community. The pool committee initially contributed approximately \$400,000 towards the construction of the pool and subsequently a further \$410,000 towards various improvements to the pool, such as heating, shade shelters and lane markers—to mention just a few. Kendall now has the best community pool in the Port Macquarie Hastings local government area.

Between 2004 and 2009, funds raised through the sale of goods, along with Federal Government support, were used to construct the current op shop premises, which are adjacent to the community pool. In 2008 the pool committee officially changed the name to the Kendall Community OP Shop and, at the same time, amended its constitution to assist with funding the following opportunities: community development projects in the areas of community, sport and recreation, arts and culture; assisting with funding and implementation of major community projects; and providing funding for charitable purposes of up to 5 per cent of the annual profit of the op shop. I am pleased to announce that figure has now increased to 15 per cent. Since 2009, community grants have been awarded to 83 organisations, 40 charities and 14 sponsor recipients, which have all benefited from the fund distributed by the op shop. Several organisations have received multiple funding over the years, and the committee looks forward to welcoming new organisations.

This year the committee received 41 applications for funding, seeking \$484,000 from the little op shop. The committee made the decision to fund a total of \$366,000, consisting of 32 community grants, five charity grants and five sponsorships, ranging from a few hundred dollars to tens of thousands of dollars. They included Riding for the Disabled, Camden Haven Rural Fire Service, Hannam Vale Playgroup, Make a Wish Port Macquarie and the Kendall Tennis Club—to name just a few. Since 2009, funding provided to community and other groups has reached a staggering \$2.975 million, and is well and truly on track to reach \$3 million. Considering that most sales are only \$2 and \$5 ones, it is an amazing result.

All the support provided by the op shop is a direct result of the hard work and commitment of over 90 volunteers and the guidance and direction from the current committee. The committee includes the president, Robert Rule; vice-president Joan Aiken; treasurer Alan Phelps; secretary Philip Higgins; committee member Naomi Golding; op shop coordinator Gerda Ashford; and volunteers' coordinator Elaine Browning. I also thank the wonderful local community of the Camden Haven for supporting such an amazing community group, which is making a real difference to so many worthwhile community and charitable groups in the local government area. I applaud the determined and committed efforts of each and every one of the abovementioned individuals and their band of volunteers.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (21:33):** I am delighted to respond to the member for Port Macquarie. It is the first opportunity I have had in this place to congratulate the member and welcome him to the House. He gave a heartwarming private member's statement, in which he acknowledged a clearly wonderful community and people who do such good.

It is probably not my place to offer advice to those on the other side, but it is my place to commend people who do good things. There are people on the other side who do good things. Well done to them. Commending their community and representing and fighting for them will serve them well.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for what hopefully will be his final contribution for the night.

### DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (21:34):** The month of May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month, a time when we reiterate our calls: No more. Enough is enough. The statistics are sobering. In Australia, one in four women and one in eight men report having experienced violence by an intimate partner or family member since the age of 15. Last year 39 people lost their lives to domestic violence related murder. Most concerning, over the past four years, there has been an increase in domestic violence related assaults according to the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. This includes my area where two-year trends show an increase in recorded domestic related assault. It is an issue that should trouble everyone and an issue we must be united in tackling. Domestic violence does not discriminate. It affects people of all backgrounds, and it is often a secret hidden behind closed doors. This is why a light is shined on the issue every May to show a united condemnation of domestic violence.

On the weekend, in Tamworth, men and women marched from the town hall to Bicentennial Park calling for change: greater investment in primary prevention, greater investment in housing, more training for first responders, changes to bail laws and increased funding for crisis support workers. We have campaigned hard over

several years to boost domestic violence services and infrastructure in the Tamworth electorate. That work is never done, and that work must continue. Projects include things like Allawah Cottage in Gunnedah, Gunnedah Family Support refuge, Gunida Gunyah's Lilly Pilly Place refuge, the Sora Community Services Core and Cluster refuge and the Sora Community Services women and children's residence. Most of these projects are in operation now helping victims of domestic violence in their time of need.

These projects do not happen without a significant community push, and I commend all of those who have spoken up about domestic violence and how to improve the services in the Tamworth electorate. I think back to the Allawah Cottage Ball in Gunnedah. It was community fundraising at its best, showcasing the generosity of the Gunnedah community. We have also seen incredible passion and resilience among our service organisations, and I pay credit to organisations like Sora Community Services and Gunnedah Family Support for their advocacy. I acknowledge all people in the Tamworth electorate who work in domestic violence support and assistance. Their work is truly needed, valued and we commend them for supporting our communities.

I also thank our first responders who are often the front line of domestic violence response, arriving to some of the most tense and troubling scenes imaginable. Domestic violence is a scourge on our society. There can never be tolerance for violence of any kind. There must be zero tolerance. There is more work to be done to tackle the issue across New South Wales, but I know that there are so many committed, dedicated advocates and support workers in the Tamworth electorate. Again, I thank those who are committed to seeing the change that is needed. No more. No violence. Zero tolerance.

### POLITICAL VALUES

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde) (21:39):** For as long as I have been involved in politics, the words "moderate" or "centrist" have been thrown around as an insult in some circles of the Liberal Party. The argument? That only by lurching further to the right can you truly differentiate from Labor and be electorally relevant. Locally, in Ryde we have avoided that debate by staying true to our values, and never deviating from a focus on delivery. But the recent Federal election told a story that needs to be heard both locally and nationally.

While in substance both major parties left a lot to be desired in the Federal election, when it came to style the contrast could not have been clearer. While other parties sought to project kindness, my party was too often perceived as mean spirited and nasty.

Demonising those who advocate for practical solutions, compassion, respect and a politics grounded in community was always destined to fail. It reflected a world view that was disconnected from the lives of everyday Australians and led us to become a party that too often talked about voters rather than listened to them and heard about their needs. Herein lies an opportunity for New South Wales Liberals to reshape the party's future and ensure it becomes a credible alternative once again, where understanding and supporting the aspirations and experiences of people is the key focus.

New South Wales Liberals have a proud history of looking and thinking differently. The party room is young and dynamic and has a track record of delivery. We understand that young working professionals and diverse communities do not want political theatre; they want affordable housing, modern infrastructure, practical solutions on climate and energy, and a government that helps them get ahead. Federally, the party should have reconciled its traditional beliefs in markets and individual enterprise with an equally strong commitment to access to education, employment and social support. Instead, it abandoned those values entirely and adopted as its centrepiece what can only be described as a socialist nuclear plan that would have nationalised the energy grid and saddled an entire generation of young Australians with debt.

By entrenching this debate in a divisive culture war, the Liberals lost the political licence to accomplish real change. Yet change is still happening under Federal and State Labor governments that wax lyrical about renewable energy while approving and reopening coal-fired power stations. The energy debate is just one example of the cycle that undermines trust in the major parties of politics. It is clearly a poor result for the Coalition, but it is hardly a resounding endorsement of Labor, which positioned itself as the lesser evil rather than the trusted steward of our future.

The rise in support for minor parties reflected a broader loss of faith in the honesty and integrity of the major parties, but there is hope for those in the centre to start rebuilding that trust by engaging in honest policy discussions that are focused forwards. Federally, that should start by indexing income tax to ensure people retain their purchasing power in a cost-of-living crisis. In New South Wales, it should involve honest discussions about the tax levers we control and the folly of housing policies that only subsidise demand, when it is just as important to incentivise supply. Likewise, we should look at how technology can lift the standard and efficiency of public services, and support the work-life balance of parents by providing them with modern nine to five after-school options.

We should be building sustainable cities supported by infrastructure that keeps pace with housing growth and community needs. Those are not fringe concerns. They are front of mind in people's lives. When we do not prioritise them, we lose touch with the very people we are supposed to represent. We must earn the right to lead, not wait to be called upon. To those who say that approach is just like Labor's, I say look in the mirror. The irony is hard to miss. The commentary about rejecting identity politics came from the commentators most obsessed with identity labels—not personal identity but ideological and tribal identity. Centrist liberal values grounded in personal responsibility, fairness, enterprise and respect are not a departure from our tradition; they are its most vivid expressions.

My community of Ryde is one of the most diverse in the country. The people of Ryde want action on the cost of living and housing affordability. They want thoughtful investment in infrastructure and a government that helps them live well, work hard and raise a family. These are mainstream Australian priorities and they must become our priorities. If saying so makes me a target for those clinging to the political tropes of another era, so be it. What happened at the election was not a fluke. It was not the media and it was not preference deals. It was a message that we need to modernise and not polarise. The centre is a place of strength. It is where our future lies, if we are willing to claim it.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (21:44):** I could not agree more with the member for Ryde. We must put Australian workers, families and students first, before members in this House. That is exactly what the Liberal Party did not do at the Federal election. Its members are neither on the radar nor even in the sphere of understanding what matters to the people, the local families and the local workers in New South Wales. The Labor Government took free TAFE to the election. It put in place Medicare provisions to make sure people can receive health care and it has proposed to cut 20 per cent off all university student loans. The member for Ryde is correct: The Liberal Party is irrelevant.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 21:45 until  
Wednesday 14 May 2025 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

#### **WOLLONDILLY AUTHOR WINS AWARD**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Former photographer turned author, Sensei Sarhn McArthur, is recognised for her inspiring impact on teen readers around the world through her debut young adult novel, *Osu*. *Osu* has been awarded Silver in the Teen Category of the prestigious Wishing Shelf International Book Awards, which is judged by school-aged readers in the UK. Once behind the lens photographing four Australian Prime Ministers and national icons, Sarhn now leads with purpose in a karate dojo, guiding young people in emotional resilience and self-awareness. Her novel is a heartfelt extension of this work, telling the story of a 16-year-old outsider who discovers strength, belonging, and identity through martial arts. "*Osu* is about finding courage—especially when you feel like you don't fit in," Sarhn says. "To be honoured by teens themselves means everything." The novel explores themes of empowerment, friendship, and overcoming adversity. With its semi-rural Australian setting reflecting the unique Wollondilly area it's a story that truly connects. Congratulations Sarhn.

#### **SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—In April, Picton High School and Bowral High School students visited the Parliament of NSW for the Secondary Student Leadership Program, learning about democracy and leadership. They engaged with Members and Ministers before Question Time, receiving valuable advice on leadership. I was impressed with their attentiveness and interest, as we discussed topics including the role of independents in parliament, the importance of showing empathy, kindness, and compassion, and respect for others. Bowral High School and Picton High school are the two public high schools in my electorate, which are to be joined at last by a third at Wilton. This new high school is set to open its doors to students in 2027. Leadership is about making life better for others and using your voice to create change, and I was pleased to welcome the leaders of tomorrow from Bowral and Picton High Schools to the first and oldest Parliament in Australia for this opportunity. I also thank the principals and teachers of the schools for facilitating the students participation in the leadership program.

#### **DUDLEY CHESHAM SPORTS GROUND MULTIPURPOSE AMENITIES BUILDING OPENING**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—On Monday 17 March, I joined my Parliament of NSW colleague, Greg Warren MP Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney representing the NSW Premier, along with

Wollondilly Shire Mayor and Councillors to open the Dudley Chesham Sports Ground Multipurpose Amenities Building. The \$5.2 million project was funded through the NSW Government's Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program. The residents and users of this facility not only need but truly deserve this fantastic space. It was heartwarming to see kids and adults exploring the new amenities and moments like these highlight just how much this facility will bring to our community. Shoutout to the fantastic local clubs who will benefit from this Sports Ground and recreation facility, including The Oaks Tigers Rugby League Club, The Oaks Netball Club, Macarthur Astronomy Club, The Oaks Horse and Pony Club, The Oaks Vanderville Tennis Club and The Oaks Burratorang Cricket Club. A huge congratulations to Wollondilly Shire Council, the hardworking council staff, and the incredible construction teams who made this dream a reality. What an outstanding outcome for our community.

#### **DR ALYCE BARNES**

**Mr GREG PIPER (Lake Macquarie)**—I congratulate Dr Alyce Barnes, who has recently been awarded the highest civic honour, named the 2025 Lake Macquarie Ambassador. Dr Barnes is a University of Newcastle researcher who co-led the internationally acclaimed "Daughters and Dads Active and Empowered" program. This world first physical activity intervention program aims to strengthen bonds between fathers and daughters, by having them spend quality time together engaging in various physical activities and sports. The program also works to improve the social and emotional well-being of participants and has been rolled out across various venues in Lake Macquarie, including the Northern NSW Football grounds in Speers Point. Dr Barnes also spearheaded Hunter New England Health's "Physical Activity for Everyone" initiative. This program is tailored toward high school students and acknowledges the link between physical activity and improved mental health. This initiative works to integrate physical activity into the entire school environment, not just PE classes. Her passion and advocacy for the improving the health and well-being of girls and young families through physical activity, makes Dr Barnes a very worthy Ambassador for Lake Macquarie. Congratulations Alyce.

#### **MONICA CHAHOUD 2025 BANKSTOWN WOMAN OF THE YEAR**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge Monica Chahoud as the 2025 Bankstown Woman of the Year. Monica has made an outstanding contribution to our community through her long-standing involvement in the Melkite Catholic Eparchy and the Melkite Charitable Foundation. For over 15 years, she has worked to serve her community, focusing on administration, community welfare, and outreach programs that support families, migrants, and people in need. Her compassion and dedication have positively impacted countless lives. In addition to her local efforts, Monica has represented our community on national and international stages. She served as a delegate to the Fifth Plenary Council of Australia and was part of the World Meeting of Families in Rome in 2022, where she shared her insights and experiences to help shape global conversations on family and faith. Monica's work reflects a deep sense of service and commitment to helping others. She is a respected leader, a generous mentor, and a trusted figure in our community. Once again, a huge congratulations to Monica on this well-deserved recognition. We thank her for the difference she continues to make in the lives of so many.

#### **BANKSTOWN SPORTS CLUB INAUGURAL CHARITY GOLF DAY**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to acknowledge the success of Bankstown Sports Club's inaugural Charity Golf Day, which raised almost \$30,000 for the Fair Fight Foundation's SuperTee Project. Held at Bankstown Golf Club, the event brought together 24 teams for a fun and meaningful day of golf, all in support of children facing serious illness. The funds raised will go directly towards purchasing SuperTee garments, which are custom-designed medical wear that bring comfort, courage, and imagination to children at Bankstown Hospital's paediatric ward. This event is an incredible example of local community spirit, with support from club partners, sponsors, and local businesses, coming together to raise funds for a special cause. This initiative highlights the wonderful generosity of our Bankstown community, from those who made the event possible with their donations, to the teams who participated, and the incredibly generous sponsors. It's events like these that truly showcase our community spirit, where unity brings everyone together for a meaningful and special cause. Congratulations to Bankstown Sports Club and thank you for your commitment to our local community and for supporting children and families who need extra strength during challenging times.

#### **ST EUPHEMIA COLLEGE GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY 2025**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to acknowledge St Euphemia College for the celebration of 'Greek Independence Day', which was celebrated on the 24 March 2025. Greek Independence Day is an annual commemoration of the beginning of the Greek War of Independence against the Ottoman Empire in 1821. The Greek War of Independence is a significant occasion for Greek Australians and Greeks all around

the world. This historic event marks the beginning of the modern Greek state and is celebrated across the world with cultural events and religious ceremonies, representing the history and traditions of Greece. This year, St Euphemia proudly celebrated Greek Independence Day with their school community and came together for this special occasion, by marching from Martin Place to the Sydney Opera House to show their respects to their rich heritage and the brave heroes of 1821. It was a day filled with pride, unity and tradition as the students, staff and families stood together in celebration. It is wonderful to see our Greek communities coming together, particularly school communities and churches across Australia. I acknowledge St Euphemia College in my electorate of Bankstown for sharing this celebration with us.

#### **SUTHERLAND HOSPITAL KIOSK VOLUNTEERS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I acknowledge the enduring service and influence of volunteers of The Sutherland Hospital Kiosk following their most recent donation of medical imaging equipment. Worth almost \$340,000, it's the largest single donation ever made to the hospital from funds raised through the Kiosk in its proud 65-year history. The Kiosk has operated continuously since April 1960 under the guiding motto, "Let us hold high the lamp of service for the welfare of our hospitals," raising more than \$3.8 million to provide essential equipment for paediatrics, cardiology, obstetrics, emergency, and imaging. I recognise the efforts of the around 60 committed volunteers and the management committee: Margaret McKerihan (president), Yvonne Vallak (treasurer), Mike Batty (secretary), and members Shirley Chirgwin OAM, Dianne Batty, Helen Kerr, Robyn Brydson, Marietta Hopkins, Steve Black, and Ann Smith. Special mention to Shirley, who is an inspiration having served for 58 years, continuing the work that saw her receive an Australia Day honour in 2005. The selfless work and welcoming smiles of these volunteers, supported by hospital staff, patients, and visitors who purchase food and drinks from the Kiosk, continues to have a meaningful impact on health care in our community.

#### **VALE ALLAN METTI**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I pay tribute to Allan Metti, Life Member of Cronulla Surf Life Saving Club, who passed away recently aged 85. Allan joined the club in 1967 and gave more than five decades of devoted service. The club says Allan served on too many committees to list, including on the executive, and he remained a constant presence and inspiration to members of all generations. Allan will be fondly remembered as a gifted ski paddler and swimmer and as a fixture at Cronulla Beach from first light, often seen catching waves or swimming around Shark Island. Remarkably, Allan participated in every Shark Island Swim since its inception in 1987 until a couple of years ago, a feat matched by only one other person. All competitors were inspired when he contested his last Sunday surf race aged 85. Allan's legacy is etched in the fabric of Cronulla SLSC; his memory will live on thanks to his passion for the ocean and his club. I extend my condolences to Allan's family, including wife Jan, sons Daryn, Craig and Jason, everyone at the Cronulla club and his friends. Vale Allan - as the Club says, your legacy lives on in every wave.

#### **CRONULLA ELECTORATE JP HALF CENTURIES**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I was delighted to join my parliamentary colleagues at a special ceremony here at Parliament House last week to recognise community members who've reached the remarkable milestone of 50 years as Justices of the Peace. From my electorate of Cronulla, I was delighted to greet Kirrawee's Mike Batty PSM, Grays Point's Bob Rogers and Kurnell's June Samuel (with spouses Dianne, Evelyn and Lee) and congratulate them on their long and dedicated service as 'JPs'. The Governor appoints JPs and they play an important role in the community by witnessing statutory declarations or affidavits and certifying copies of original documents. It is a great help to be able to call on local JPs when we are preparing documents such as for passport applications, new employment, banking, superannuation, or personal legal affairs. Our community is better for people who give their time as volunteers and I acknowledge and thank Mike, Bob and June for their valuable work as JPs in NSW.

#### **30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LINDFIELD FUN RUN**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Sunday 4 May 2025, the community celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Lindfield Fun Run – a beloved community tradition that continues to inspire organised by the Ku-ring-gai Rotary Club. This year, more than 1,750 runners, walkers, and supporters took to the streets of Lindfield and Roseville, raising nearly \$70,000 for three exceptional local charities: KYDS Youth Counselling, Hornsby Ku-ring-gai Women's Shelter, and Mentoring Men. Over the past three decades, the Lindfield Fun Run has donated more than \$1.5 million to support worthy organisations in our community – a remarkable achievement. I recognise the tireless 2025 organising committee: John Aitken, Malcolm Braid, John Hepburn, Helen Jarvis, Peter Kipps, and Barry Ng whose efforts brought this milestone event to life. The Lindfield Fun Run is more than just a race and event. It's a celebration of community spirit, generosity, and shared purpose. I congratulate everyone involved and look forward to seeing the Lindfield Fun Run continue to grow and thrive in the years ahead.

### KU-RING-GAI HIGH SCHOOL YEAR 12 LEADERS 2025

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Wednesday 2 April 2025, I attended Ku-ring-gai High School in North Turramurra to meet their Year 12 leaders and share the excitement of their milestone anniversary year. In 2025, Ku-ring-gai High celebrates 60 years of providing excellence in education to our local community. Since 1965, they have educated thousands of students who are making an impact all around Australia and the world. Ku-ring-gai High abides by the motto, "Harmony in Diversity". This motto mirrors that of our local and wider Australian community. I recognise captains Carissa Murphy and Joe Crosbie-Seabourne, vice-captains Tiana Plumridge and Kalan Harding, and prefects Jamie Fullbrook, Savannah Labuschagne, Joe McLean, Niamh Tijou, Charlotte Tombs and Eva Vollmost Rivanera. Thank you for all your service, work and efforts in exercising leadership. I recognise Principal Mr. Stephen Plummer for his work leading a dedicated team of teachers and staff that help students reach their full potential. I am proud to represent Ku-ring-gai High in their 60th year in the Parliament of NSW.

### THE MANLY, WARRINGAH AND PITTWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise the Manly, Warringah and Pittwater Historical Society. They are an invaluable resource for our community since its establishment in 1924. With an impressive archive of over 12,000 items, the society continues to preserve and share the rich history of the Northern Beaches that includes the natural to the built environment, and Aboriginal to modern times. Through initiatives like its monthly newsletter, The Peninsula Historian, and regular public meetings at Curl Curl Community Centre, the society provides residents with an ongoing connection to local and broader historical stories. Additionally, the society actively participates in community events such as the Heritage Festival, History Week, and the Brookvale Show Day, while assisting the public with historical and archival enquiries. I recognise the executive Allan Burrowes, Ross Downie, Di Farina, Terry Gatward, Richard Michell and Jan Tinkler. Thank you for your continued commitment to preserving and promoting the history of the Northern Beaches and ensure that the region's stories are kept alive for future generations.

### MITCHELL CHALMERS

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Mitchell Chalmers 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. Mitch was awarded State Champion in the 2x1km Beach Run and the U15 Board Relay alongside Mitchell Chalmers and Will Munro, and placed 2nd in the 2km Beach Run. This remarkable achievement demonstrates 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 Mitch 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.

### NATHAN CROAL

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Nathan Croal 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. Nathan was awarded a gold medal for the 45-49 Single and Double Ski, silver in the 130 Ski Relay and bronze in the 130 Taplin Relay alongside Stew O'Regan and Stephen Ford. This remarkable achievement demonstrates 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 Nathan 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.

### INDI HOETZER

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Indi Hoetzer 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. Indi received 1st in the U11 Female Board Race and 3rd in the U11 Female Ironperson with Swansea-Belmont Surf Life Saving Club. This remarkable achievement demonstrates 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 Indi on your exceptional effort, you are an asset to the surf lifesaving community, and your dedication and hard work are an inspiration to us all. I look forward to your continued contributions to and excellence in the surf lifesaving.

#### **MRS MINH LAN PHAM**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise Mrs Minh Lan Pham for her long-standing service and invaluable contributions to my Cabramatta electorate and the broader multicultural community of our State. Mrs Pham arrived in Australia in 1990 with her four children, reuniting with her husband, who had resettled as a refugee after the Vietnam War. Driven by a profound sense of purpose and a deep connection to her roots, Mrs Pham has devoted herself to supporting those in need, strengthening the Vietnamese community, and preserving her cultural heritage. Mrs Pham has served in various leadership roles, including as Vice President of the Vietnamese Women's Association in NSW and the Vietnamese Language Schools in NSW. Most notably, she founded the Vietnamese Traditional Music School, which has preserved Vietnamese cultural heritage for over three decades. She also contributes to the Australian Vietnamese Women's Forum as a writer. Mrs Pham's dedication is a powerful example of how individual efforts can enrich our diverse society. I commend her lifelong service and exceptional commitment to building a strong, culturally rich community.

#### **MRS BICH PHUONG LY – VWA IN NSW**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I acknowledge Mrs Bich Phuong Ly, a valued member of the Vietnamese Women's Association [VWA] in NSW, for her dedication and consistent efforts in supporting our community. Arriving in Australia in 1984 by boat as a refugee after the Vietnam War, Mrs Ly has been a devoted family member while continually pursuing personal growth. With a passion for learning, she completed various courses at TAFE, including English, Computer Skills, Nail Technology, and Hospitality. Believing that education empowers her to better serve others, Mrs Ly embraces every opportunity to enhance her abilities, driven by a strong desire to contribute. Mrs Ly is also an active community member, always ready to help where she can. Whether supporting community functions or participating in cultural events, she is fully involved. As a passionate member of the VWA dance group, she contributes to cultural exchanges and celebrates her heritage. I commend Mrs Ly for her dedication and the inspiration she provides, and I thank her for the invaluable contributions she has made to our community.

#### **MRS NGOC CHAU PHAM**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I acknowledge Mrs Ngoc Chau Pham, a dedicated member of the Vietnamese Women's Association in NSW, for her heartfelt volunteering and invaluable contributions to my Cabramatta electorate. Mrs Pham arrived in Australia in 1998 to reunite with her husband, who had sought refuge after the Vietnam War. In many ways, Mrs Pham's story reflects the strong family values that are deeply cherished by many within her community. Over time, her commitment has grown into meaningful service, as she joins the Vietnamese Women's Association and the Vietnamese Community in Australia – NSW Chapter, where she generously offers support to others. In addition to her volunteer work, Mrs Pham has embraced the Dan Tranh, the traditional Vietnamese zither, and uses her passion for the instrument to share her heritage. Her performances at community and cultural events help bring people together to connect and appreciate the richness of Vietnamese culture and tradition. Mrs Pham's dedication serves as a powerful reminder that every contribution, no matter how small or large, can make a positive impact on our community. Her selflessness and hard work are truly commendable, and she deserves recognition for all the wonderful work she has done.

#### **HELEN MCKAY**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Helen McKay who has been coaching at the Oak Flats Swimming Club for 56 years. Helen, affectionately known as Mrs Mac to her swimmers, is not leaving entirely - just stepping out of her coaching shoes and taking a backseat. The 86-year-old arrived at the club in 1968 with her late husband Ted and their three sons and has since worked with every level of swimmers, growing the club to where it stands today. Helen and Ted had the club's main pool named after them in 2019, 11 years after his passing, to honour their decades of service. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Helen on this wonderful achievement and service to the swimming community.



**KEITH DONNELLY**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful achievement of Keith Donnelly for transforming unused hospital spaces at Shellharbour Hospital into welcoming walk-in wardrobes stocked with clothing and essentials for patients in need. Keith, who has worked in the mental health field since 2002, first launched the not-for-profit Keith's Closet in 2019 at Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney to provide dignity to those living with mental health issues. The program transformed unused hospital spaces like seclusion rooms into walk-in wardrobe stores where patients choose new and high-end second-hand clothes, undergarments, and other necessities for free through a personalised shopping experience. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Keith on this wonderful achievement.

**KOBE SIMS**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Kobe Sims, from Warilla High School, for his outstanding results at the South Coast Swimming Carnival in March 2025. Kobe was crowned the 16's boys South Coast Age Champion and is now also the proud record holder for the 50m and 100m freestyle for the South Coast. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Kobe on this wonderful achievement.

**HUNTER AND ZANDER – ALBURY PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Hunter and Zander from Albury Public School for proudly representing their school at the 2025 Riverina PSSA Golf Championship and selection trial, held Monday, May 5th, at Thurgoona Country Golf Club. Both students delivered strong performances on the day. Hunter, with a score of 98 off the stick and a nett score of 74, whilst Zander followed with a score of 118 off the stick and a nett of 82. A special mention to Hunter who not only placed first overall and but was also named the 2025 Match Stroke Champion, an outstanding achievement. As a result of their efforts, both Hunter and Zander have been selected to represent Riverina at the State Primary Golf Championships in Barooga in September. Well done to both students for this fantastic accomplishment!

**LOGAN AND ORLANDO – HOLBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge, Logan and Orlando from Holbrook Public School, who represented the school at the 2025 Riverina PSSA Golf Championships facilitated by Golf NSW Regional Manger Cade Webb. At the end of 2024, students and staff had an opportunity to engage in a two-day golf program, including a 'Lunchtime Launch it' event where students competed on a golf simulator, displaying their skills and enthusiasm for the sport. Year 5 students Logan and Orlando were identified as showing great potential for golf during and outside school hours. Through this opportunity, they were both nominated to represent the Riverina PSSA Golf Trials and the 9 Hole Championship at Thurgoona Golf Club. Logan shared his excitement about the experience with the following quote: "I liked playing Ambrose with Cade (NSW Golf) and some other students that play golf during lunchtime. I play golf Wednesdays and some Saturdays. I love playing golf for the school and exploring my talent." Well done Logan and Orlando as you continue to grow and succeed in your golfing journey.

**HOLBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOL GRIP LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to acknowledge the following three Year 6 students from Holbrook Public School: Henry, Brydie and Lucy, who recently represented the school with distinction at the GRIP Leadership Conference, held on May 5th at the Albury Entertainment Centre. Throughout the day, the students engaged in workshops exploring themes such as the responsibilities of leadership, the importance of friendship, generating innovative ideas to help others, and learning how to prioritise actions for meaningful impact. They embraced key lessons around stepping up beyond simply following rules, and the power of collaboration through conversations, shared responsibility, and most importantly fun. Henry, Brydie and Lucy actively contribute to the school and wider community. They regularly support Kindergarten buddies, volunteer their time at the Harry Jarvis Wing of Holbrook Hospital, and help deliver meals through the Meals on Wheels programs. Brydie also serves as a school prefect, and Henry proudly represents Holbrook Public School in the Riverina Rugby League team. Well done Henry, Brydie and Lucy for being outstanding ambassadors and role models for Holbrook Public School.

**FARNHAMS BUTCHERS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Approaching their eighties, Mr Kevin Farnham and Mrs Joan Farnham are still running their three butcher shops in Wallsend and Fletcher, as well as their cattle property home in Stroud. They have been in business for 43 years with no plans for retirement. The energy and commitment that Kevin and Joan have for the support of locals, small businesses and the Australian meat industry are remarkable.

They have employed many people over the years, including apprentice butchers, currently one who is a single mother with a small child doing a mature-aged apprenticeship. The Farnhams have two sons and two daughters who work in the business, ten grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren - with one more on the way. Kevin, in the trade for almost 65 years, comes to work from the farm at Stroud six days a week and Joan comes down to the shops Thursdays and Fridays, running the Lotto syndicate, visiting the staff at the three stores and keeping an eye on things. The couple has generously helped several charities, sporting clubs and their church. Thank you, Mr and Mrs Farnham, for your generous and long-standing community support.

#### **KAVIL MARTIN**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—The Sesquicentenary Year of 2025 encouraged the Wallsend Heritage Group to create celebratory events covering schools, sports, churches, photo displays and guest presenters eager to focus on Wallsend. Kavit Martin was a prime mover of these activities. For 31 years, the Wallsend Heritage Group has preserved Wallsend's coal mining and Aboriginal heritages and war service, where Kavit was Secretary, Publicity Officer, and President for the last 18 years. With a memory for names and dates, she has read numerous newspaper accounts, speaking with prominent local families, learning about generations of family trees, where people lived, changing street names, businesses and organisations. Kavit has driven most of the heritage events in Wallsend for years: the implementation of heritage plaques, local heritage walks, speaking to students, arranging a "Pioneers of Wallsend" Picnic Day in Federal Park, wording a plaque on Nelson Street "Floodsong Bridge", supplying photos to the Iron Bark Creek mural designers, the original Heritage Town Walk pamphlet, a design for a simulated rail crossing in Wallsend, the re-dedication of the War Memorial, and construction of a Memorial Garden. Thank you, Kavit, for your unwavering dedication to our local community.

#### **KHUSLEN BATMANDAKH**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—On 6 February 2025 at Newcastle City Hall, 16-year-old Merewether High School student and 2024 NSW Youth Parliament representative for Newcastle Khuslen Batmandakh was named Newcastle Young Citizen of the Year, recognised for her outstanding community leadership and dedication to improving literacy and community engagement. After learning that her Jesmond neighbourhood had one of the lowest literacy rates in Australia, Khuslen, now President of the Merewether High School Leo Club, established The Book Nook at Jesmond Central Shopping Centre at age thirteen, run solely on donations and support from volunteers to provide local families access to around 3,000 free books. Khuslen also launched 'Love from Leos' in 2023 to foster deeper connections between nursing home residents and Merewether High students through hand-written and delivered letters. Every month, more than seventy students write fifty letters with heartfelt messages of holiday wishes, stories about travel, families, school subjects, to alleviate loneliness and to foster intergenerational connections with residents experiencing social isolation. Khuslen continues to launch initiatives through her Leos Club. Congratulations, Khuslen. Community-minded, passionate and inspirational young people like you give us all hope for the future.

#### **FORBES PRESCHOOL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the great work of the Forbes Preschool, work which exceeds that of a regular early learning centre. Now under the directorship of Amy Shine, the Forbes Preschool moved to its purpose-built premises in 2016 where it provides a range of services with early-learning at its core. More a hub for community service, Forbes Preschool is striving to provide wrap-around support in the areas of allied health, with a Speech, Physio and Occupational Therapy program at the forefront. It recently hosted a pop-up immunisation clinic, hosts a regular mothers group and can provide information and guidance in other areas. Ms Shine tells me her team is always finding more partners willing to come on board. The Forbes Preschool also strives for inclusivity in its enrolment of about 150 kids and has 26 staff members on its books. Specialised services for children are often overwhelmed in the bush and a place like Forbes Preschool is ahead of its time when it comes to supporting its community. On my recent visit, I was impressed by staff's commitment to helping the families of their district grow and I thank the team for its wonderful work.

#### **DOUG MICHALK**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, the spirit of generosity shown in bush communities, especially at grass roots level, never ceases to amaze me. Parkes farmer and miner Doug Michalk is an example of that spirit, with the simple act of a haircut the catalyst for raising over \$18,500 for the local CanAssist and Beyond Blue branches. Doug's haircut was heavy duty, according to a report in the local press he hadn't had one since 2017 and was sporting dreadlocks that reached well down his back before hairdresser Sally Hoy wrangled them, eventually shaving it all off. That job alone raised \$4325 for Beyond Blue and \$4360 for CanAssist while an accompanying auction, supported by the local business community, added another \$9780 to the funds. Doug's eyebrows didn't escape, with his mates adding \$600 to see them shaved off. Doug's dad Peter, who had been assisted by CanAssist, also joined in with a headshave. Rural communities are doing it tough at the moment but

when the call goes out, people rally to help those who need it. A crowd of almost 400 people attended Doug's event which speaks volumes for the people of Parkes and district. Well done Doug.

#### **FREYA BLACKWOOD**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I rise to recognise and congratulate Freya Blackwood, an exceptionally talented author and illustrator based in Orange, for her ongoing contribution to Australian children's literature. Freya's beautiful and emotive illustrations have touched the hearts of readers young and old, both nationally and internationally. Most recently, Freya has been shortlisted in the 2025 Children's Book Council of Australia [CBCA] Picture Book of the Year category for not one, but two works – Afloat, written by Maxine Beneba Clarke, and The Garden of Broken Things, which Freya authored and illustrated. These nominations are a testament to her artistry, storytelling and creative insight. Freya has a long and decorated career in children's publishing. In 2010, she was awarded the prestigious UK Kate Greenaway Medal for her illustrations in Harry & Hopper. In 2015, she made history by winning three CBCA Book of the Year Awards in a single year – an extraordinary achievement. Freya Blackwood's work continues to enrich the imaginations of children, educators and families, and she is a source of immense pride to the Orange community. I commend Freya on her outstanding achievements and thank her for her ongoing contribution to Australian arts and literature.

#### **MS CHALLENGE BATTLE OF THE PADDLES**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Two passionate pickleball players, Cherylene Lee and Tana Macqueen, are proving that sport has the power to do so much more than just bring people together on the court. Driven by compassion and a deep desire to give back, Cherylene and Tana have transformed their love for pickleball into something extraordinary with the MS Challenge Battle of the Paddles. This charity tournament, at the Kempsey Pickleball Club, is raising funds and awareness for Multiple Sclerosis, an invisible illness affecting over 33,000 Australians. With all proceeds going to MS Australia and MS Plus, Cherylene and Tana are showing us how community-driven initiatives can make a real difference. What began as a love for the sport has become something far more meaningful. It's about inclusivity, connection, and showing that staying active is possible for everyone, regardless of life's challenges. The event includes raffles and a silent auction, with entry fees going directly to support people living with MS. Cherylene and Tana's efforts remind us of the strength and heart of our Mid North Coast community. Well done!

#### **MACKSVILLE FOODWORKS RECOGNITION**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Named the Network Champion at the Australian United Retailers conference in Adelaide, Mathew Ward, the Store Manager of Macksville Foodworks, is making a mark in the industry. Mathew received the recognition for his exceptional leadership, strong community connections, and his contribution to driving positive change within the Foodworks network. Mathew's dedication to the Macksville community and to the broader retail industry is truly commendable and deserves to be celebrated. It's also fantastic to see Macksville Foodworks achieving national success across its departments. The in-store Butchery received the Foodworks National Meat Department Award, while the Dairy/Freezer section was recognised with the Foodworks National Dairy/Freezer Department Award. These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work, investment, and commitment to excellence that Mathew and his team bring every day. Mathew's ongoing leadership has not only strengthened the local store but has also helped elevate Macksville's presence on the national stage. His efforts continue to make a real difference to our local economy and community spirit. Congratulations to Mathew Ward and the entire Macksville Foodworks team!

#### **LOCAL BUSINESS CELEBRATES 30 YEARS**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—After 30 years of serving the Kempsey community, Just Lingerie has become more than just a store, it's a symbol of local resilience, care, and commitment. I want to warmly congratulate Vivian Kyle on this incredible milestone and thank her for everything she's given to our region. Running a small business is never easy, especially when faced with floods, fires, and a global pandemic. But Vivian's story is one of perseverance and loyalty, showing what's possible when you put your heart into your community. Through all the challenges, she's stayed true to the people of Kempsey, providing not just quality products, but a level of personalised service you simply won't find in the big cities. In regional towns like ours, it's this personal care that makes all the difference. Vivian knows her customers by name. She offers fittings before and after hours for women recovering from breast cancer. She welcomes returning holidaymakers with a familiar face and a friendly chat. That's the kind of service that builds trust and keeps people coming back. Congratulations to Vivian and the team at Just Lingerie!

#### **LE PETIT BALLET NORTHBRIDGE**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—It was a joy to attend the opening of Le Petit Ballet's new studio in Northbridge and commend Laura Parrot, the studio's founder and director, for her dedication to nurturing a space

where young dancers can engage in a joyful learning journey. Originally from Canberra, Miss Laura has become a valued part of the Northbridge community, building a studio from the ground up with care, vision and an unwavering commitment to her students. Le Petit Ballet has grown into a much-loved local hub, thanks to the trust of local families and the talent and passion of its teaching team. Speaking with parents at the opening, it's clear that Miss Laura's studio offers more than just dance lessons. It fosters confidence, creativity and connection with every child who walks through its doors. Small businesses like Le Petit Ballet bring so much to our neighbourhoods. I'm proud to have this wonderful studio in Northbridge and excited to see it continue to grow. Congratulations to Miss Laura and the whole team on this well-deserved milestone.

#### **VALE DEE STREET**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—Dee Street was a dedicated community advocate, former Willoughby Councillor and long time Castlecrag resident whose passing in February 2025 marks the loss of a true local leader. For over more than five decades, Dee was deeply involved in our community, whether it be heritage protection, sustainable planning or the preservation of Castlecrag's unique character. She was a Life Member of the Castlecrag Progress Association and the Castlecrag Conservation Society, a recognition of her tireless efforts to safeguard the suburb she loved. Known for her principled advocacy and deep local knowledge, Dee was never afraid to stand up for what she believed was in the best interests of the community, bringing intelligence, integrity and heart to every issue she tackled. Her presence, persistence and contribution helped shape Castlecrag into the place it is today. Dee leaves behind a legacy of community service and grassroots leadership. She will be remembered with deep respect and gratitude by all who had the privilege of working alongside her. Vale Dee Street.

#### **50TH ANNIVERSARY OF VARIETY**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—This year marks the 50th anniversary of Variety, the Children's Charity — a remarkable organisation based in Artarmon in the Willoughby electorate. Since 1975, Variety has provided critical support to children who are sick, disadvantaged or living with disability, helping them overcome barriers and realise their potential. Through grants, equipment, services and unforgettable experiences, Variety ensures that every child has the opportunity to participate fully in life. Their work has brought hope and dignity to thousands of families across New South Wales and beyond. I was pleased to join many supporters, volunteers and community leaders at a reception at Government House hosted by the NSW Governor to celebrate this important milestone. The event highlighted the dedication of all who have contributed to Variety's success — from tireless staff and volunteers to generous donors and partners. Congratulations to Variety on 50 years of life-changing impact. Variety's enduring commitment to our children continues to strengthen our community and inspire countless children to achieve dreams once thought out of reach.

#### **KILLCARE/WAGSTAFF RURAL FIRE BRIGADE 70TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It was a pleasure to recently join members of the NSW Rural Fire Service on the Central Coast to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Killcare/Wagstaff Rural Fire Brigade. RFS Assistant Commissioner Viki Campbell, brigade members, and special guests gathered at the station—on the very site where the original brigade building stood in 1958—to honour seven decades of outstanding community service. From its humble beginnings in 1955 as the South Brisbane Water Brigade, the Killcare/Wagstaff Brigade has grown to 54 dedicated members. These volunteers not only help prepare the community for bushfire seasons but also respond to emergencies, both locally and beyond. With a proud history of service, a station upgrade in 2003, and a more than twofold growth in membership over the last 20 years, the brigade remains at the forefront of volunteering on the Coast. Thank you to the family, friends, employers, and colleagues who support these volunteers. Your encouragement is vital to their work. To all past and present brigade members—your professionalism and commitment do not go unnoticed. Here's to another 70 years of protecting the community...and to more of that award-winning relish!

#### **CENTRAL COAST HANDWEAVERS, SPINNERS AND TEXTILE ARTS GUILD**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—A heartfelt thank you to Betty and all the talented members of the Central Coast Handweavers, Spinners and Textile Arts Guild for once again inviting me to help judge their colourful and cosy annual beanie competition at the Central Coast Regional Show. It was an absolute delight to join Melissa and Nemeesha from Coast Shelter in selecting the winners—though with so many beautifully handcrafted entries, the decision wasn't easy! Each beanie is not only a creative expression of skill and care, but also a meaningful contribution to our community, with all entries generously donated to Coast Shelter to help keep clients warm this winter. The Guild continues to provide a vibrant and welcoming space where members of all ages can connect through weaving, spinning, knitting, crochet, felting and more. Their work is a testament to the power of creativity, community, and compassion. Thank you once again to all involved for your generosity and dedication.

### NSW YOUTH WEEK 2025

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—The 9th April 2025 to 17th April 2025 marked NSW Youth Week 2025. It provided an opportunity to celebrate every young person's unique strengths and recognise the outstanding achievements across a wide variety of fields of our current and future leaders and decision makers. The theme for Youth Week 2025 is We are the future, and the future is now! I commend all young people in my electorate of Badgerys Creek who took part in celebrating the week, through the many events that were held. I wish all young people in my electorate the very best as they keep pursuing their dreams.

### ORAN PARK HOTEL

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate Momento Hospitality and key project partners Archbiosis Architects and Versatile Construction on the official opening of the Oran Park Hotel. I'm thrilled that the Oran Park community and visitors to the area can enjoy this high quality and family-friendly destination that fosters connections and boosts the local economy. This 7,500 metre square venue enhances the vibrancy of our region and benefits the lifestyles of locals and visitors to the area. The venue spans 3 levels and has 7 bars, an all-day bistro, a central open-air atrium, pizzeria, bottle shop and an Asian-inspired rooftop bar. It's fitting that the hotel showcases and incorporates a part of Oran Park's motorsport history and heritage, with a hand-painted racing mural in the sports bar. I commend the team at Oran Park Hotel for their amazing achievement and wish them the very best as they serve our community and visitors alike.

### WESTERN SYDNEY WANDERERS

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend the Western Sydney Wanderers for an outstanding 2024/2025 A-League Season, in which they finished 4th on the ladder and qualified for the Elimination Final. Unfortunately, the season came to an end, when Melbourne Victory defeated the Wanderers 2-1 in an Elimination Final held at Commbank Stadium on 10 May 2025. The Wanderers battled well, having given away an early lead, equalising to tie the score at 1-1. However, the Victory's 42nd minute goal to take a 2-1 lead proved to be the winning goal. I recognise the hard work and talent of all the Wanderers and thank them for bringing joy to the many thousands of supporters throughout the season, including the passionate fans in my electorate of Badgerys Creek. I wish the club even greater success for next season.

### BARRY CUMPSTAY'S ROCK-SOLID YEARS OF SERVICE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—In the villages of Northern Rivers there are many community halls, each with its own character. But there is only one Hanging Rock Hall. In 1984 the Wadeville community hall burnt down. And out of the ashes of that loss the beautiful Hanging Rock Hall was created. Set amongst gum trees, beside the village oval, Hanging Rock Hall has been built on Crown Land by the local community, using local bush rock (because rocks don't burn). It is a beautiful venue and a remarkable community story. And Barry Cumpstay is a big part of that story. Barry, a Master Builder, was fundamental to the construction of the hall, managing volunteer workers and providing tools, knowledge and skills and overseeing quality control. He has been involved as a volunteer on this project for more than 35 years. On top of that, Barry has been volunteering as Statutory Land manager at Hanging Rock Hall reserve for more than 20 years. This month he is being recognised by Crown Lands for his dedicated service and I want to add my congratulations to Barry as well. Hanging Rock Hall is now listed as a Kyogle Shire Heritage Building.

### PRIMEX FIELD DAYS SUPPORTING FARMING SINCE 1985

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—More than 30,000 people, including an estimated 10,000 primary producers, are expected to attend Primex Field Days in the Beef Capital of Casino from this Thursday to Saturday. Primex Owner-Director Bruce Wright regularly keeps me up to date with how he is constantly refining and improving this key business and networking event for the Northern Rivers and Australian farming sectors. I commend Bruce and The Northern Rivers Times on their special feature, Norco Primex 'Our future in Farming', and am very much looking forward to attending this year's event. I was pleased to learn that Primex Field Days is launching the North Coast Young Aggies Group, representing a new era for emerging agricultural leaders. This initiative is being developed in collaboration with several youth organisations and advocacy groups dedicated to supporting young people in agriculture. The goal is to provide an inclusive space where emerging voice in the agri-sector can connect, learn and be heard – from students and early-career professionals to young entrepreneurs and aspiring farmers. This is the beauty of Primex Field Days; not only is it an important economic driver but Bruce and his team put back into our local communities.

### TRIBUTE TO THE LATE BRUCE SMITH, LISMORE CITY SES UNIT

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—I join NSW State Emergency Services Lismore City Unit in paying tribute to a most valued member, the late Bruce Smith. The unit posted on Facebook: "It is with heavy heart, deep respect and fond memories that we announce the passing of Bruce Smith, a cherished member of the Lismore City SES Unit. "Bruce began his journey with the NSW SES in 1977 at Tamworth Regional Council Unit before joining the Lismore City Unit in the 1990s. In 2009, he moved back to Tamworth, before returning to Lismore in 2018. "Bruce was an integral part of our Flood Intelligence Team, often studying each flood and weather event in detail and providing a wealth of information to our team, helping to keep our communities safe in many weather events. "Bruce was well respected in the Lismore community and within NSW SES. He was a true gentleman and a dedicated volunteer who selflessly gave up his time for others, including long nights studying weather and flood data." Vale Bruce Smith, a true gentleman and man of goodwill. Thanks for your wonderful service to community. My deepest sympathy to family, friends and colleagues.

### RIVERSTONE RAZORBACKS JRLC

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone)**—Congratulations to the Riverstone Razorbacks as they kick off their incredible 110th year! This significant milestone underscores the club's deep connection to the Riverstone community. Established in 1915, the Razorbacks have been part of the town's journey, evolving as Riverstone's population grew from 981 at its founding to over 16,000 today. Participants in the first Rugby league game played in Australia; the club holds a special place in the town's history, sharing space with key landmarks such as the first telephone exchange and the cenotaph in the town centre. Originally known as the Riverstone Junior Rugby League Club, or the Riverstone Butchers, the club was renamed the Riverstone Razorbacks in 2000, marking an important chapter in its story. The Razorbacks' long-standing success is due to the dedication of many, including Des Cartwright, Ron Bates, Basil Andrews, Charlie Harris, Frank Crowley, Bobby Parkes, Eric Gunton, Geoff Binks, Eric and Barry Crouch, Alan Drayton, Eric Martin, Johnny Judge, Bill Denman, Bill McNamara, and, not least of which, current President Phil Koberler. This club has become a home for people of all backgrounds, uniting them through the shared spirit of sport. Congrats and good luck for the 2025 season.

### EASTER PET PHOTO COMPETITION - ALICE WEI

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the creativity and community spirit shown by Ryde residents who participated in this year's Easter Pets and Teddies Photo Competition. It was a joyful celebration of our local families and their furry friends, with photos showcasing everything from costumed teddies to Easter-themed pets. I pay special tribute to Alice Wei for their delightful submission featuring their dog, Bob, surrounded by Easter eggs. Alice wrote, "Bob has a beautiful personality and is well loved. He has a heart-warming smile" - and I must say, the photo was as heart-warming as described. The competition brought smiles to many faces across the Ryde Electorate. I thank all participants for helping spread Easter cheer. Community-led initiatives like this strengthen the ties that bind our suburbs and bring people together in light-hearted celebration. Thank you again, Alice, for your outstanding contribution, and thank you to everyone who made this year's Easter competition such a success.

### EASTER PET PHOTO COMPETITION - CAMILLA GAINSFORD

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in celebrating the creativity and community spirit shown in the Ryde Electorate Easter Pets and Teddies Photo Competition. The competition brought together families, children, and pet lovers across Ryde through a fun and festive display of Easter cheer. Among the many delightful entries, I want to thank Camilla Gainsford for their imaginative submission - a photo of their dog dressed as a hot cross bun, complete with themed background. As Camilla rightly said, "We're trying to be original - I bet this is the skinniest hot cross bun you've ever seen!" It was a clever and endearing take on the Easter theme that certainly made us smile. I thank Camilla for participating and helping make the competition such a success. Community events like this remind us of the joy and creativity that thrive in Ryde. I look forward to seeing even more participation in future years. Thank you again to all who entered. And thank you, Camilla, for your terrific contribution.

### EASTER PET PHOTO COMPETITION - CAROLYN GLEN

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the Ryde Electorate's 2024 Easter Pets and Teddies Photo Competition. This light-hearted initiative brought out the best of our community's creativity and affection for their furry and fluffy companions. I want to especially thank Carolyn Glen for their wonderful submission. Their photo of Henry, a bright-eyed border collie, donning a pair of bunny ears beside a stuffed rabbit, was a delightful standout. At just 18 months old, Henry's eagerness to learn and love of cuddles make him a cherished member of the Ryde community. Carolyn described him best - "simply the

best" - and I wholeheartedly agree. Competitions like these are more than just a bit of seasonal fun; they help foster the sense of connection and joy that makes Ryde such a special place to live. Thank you again to Carolyn and all who participated in helping make this initiative a success. Let's continue finding ways to celebrate the unique characters, two-legged and four-legged alike, that make our community what it is.

### **SENIORS WEEK**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Meals on Wheels co-ordinator, Kerry Kostrubic, Destini Hardy from Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council, and staff at Adina care organised an event with year 8 students from Cootamundra High School to recognise Seniors Week. This year's Seniors Week theme was "A time to Shine." A cohort of over 20 students attended Adina Care and spent the morning with residents. Rhonda Douglas, Acting Co-ordinator from Cootamundra Meals on Wheels, orchestrated activities for the students and seniors to participate in, and by all accounts, the interaction was a great success. The students also joined seniors in the social support group, playing games, colouring, and chatting. They played bocce, quoits, and bingo. Cootamundra and its surrounding areas have many older people who don't have family living nearby. Events like the Seniors' Week activities help them realise their contribution to our community is valued. The students commented positively on their participation with the seniors in the activities, recognising that independence, inclusion, diversity, and person-centred activities to create opportunities to enrich lives are essential, no matter what age you are.

### **YOUNG HIGH SCHOOL CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—It was a celebration 100 years in the making as Young High School marked a century of providing education to the region. On April 7, 2025, the school community came together in front of the very courthouse building that started it all to commemorate this extraordinary milestone. The day was filled with reflections on the school's history, beginning with the handover of the courthouse to the Department of Education in 1925, which marked the beginning of Young High School. Key speakers highlighted the lasting impact the school had on generations of students and the wider community. A special moment during the ceremony was the recognition of 98-year-old former student Mrs Lesley Watson, who was presented with her Intermediate Certificate. Mrs Watson shared heartfelt memories of her schooling days, offering a poignant reflection on the school's long history to a large and appreciative audience. Her story is a reminder of how far the school has come since its humble beginnings. This centenary is a testament to the dedication of students, staff, and the community. I extend my congratulations to Young High School and look forward to the next century of success and growth.

### **JUNEE YOUTH PROGRAM JUST OUTSTANDING**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Congratulations to the Junee Youth Program for its outstanding achievements and unwavering commitment to the youth in the community. Junee Youth Council's exceptional efforts in supporting and empowering young people, through their Youth Program, continues to make a significant impact on the lives of Junee's youth. Through a variety of engaging activities, mentorship opportunities, and skill-building workshops, the Junee Youth Program has provided a safe and supportive environment where young individuals can thrive and develop their talents. The program's success is a direct result of the dedication and passion of its team, volunteers, and local partners who work tirelessly to create positive experiences and opportunities for the younger generation. By addressing the unique needs of youth in the community, the program plays a crucial role in fostering personal growth, resilience, and leadership skills. The community is proud of the program's accomplishments and looks forward to seeing the continued success and growth of this invaluable initiative. Congratulations to the entire team behind the Junee Youth Program – your dedication is truly inspiring.

### **STARS OF ARMIDALE**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Armidale community and Cancer Council of NSW for staging an entertaining Stars of Armidale Dance for Cancer, which I had the pleasure of attending and judging. The event is bi-annual gala fundraiser, providing vital support services to those suffering cancer. I congratulate all involved in this event, especially the coordinator Sarah Mayo-McCowen, with this evening comprising performances from very talented individuals, including locals: John Harris and Kim Drury; Melanie Filios and William Cooper-Filios; Darren and Marsha Schaefer; Hailey Cameron and Phil Sandars; Oliver Olds and Ruby Williams; Robert Grant and Mikayla Watson; Amber Wighman and Eilish Francis. There was a crowd of 280 in attendance, with over \$78,000 raised through the generosity of others, through local business donations and sponsorship, raffles, auction, along with donations each of the dancers achieved for the cause. Thankyou to fellow judges, Jenny McFayden and Kay Endres, MC Charlotte Williams, Visitors from Dreams photography, entertainers Disco Divas and Ex Services Club for providing the venue. I commend all involved on their hard work, selflessly giving of their time to ensure the event was a winner. Funds raised are a valuable legacy gifted to others and our electorate thanks you.

### APJ LAW MARKS 150 YEARS

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise APJ Law of Armidale and Glen Innes on celebrating their 150th anniversary of providing legal services to the people of the New England. Over this time the firm has grown, adapted and remained committed to serving its local communities and today it is one of the largest legal firms in the region. I congratulate past and current partners on this impressive achievement, including Anne Pardy, Glen Kee, Sara Clark, Emalie Hurcum, Bruin Hutchings and Sandra Gully. I congratulate Solicitors: Etoline Galbraith, Georgia Mathews, Matthew Morrison; Special Counsel Brett Saunders; Chief Financial Officer Gavin Mettam; and support staff: Jennifer Lane, Kellie Biddle, Kim Blacker, Vicki Chandler, Linda Doran, Laura Elliott, Molly Garth, Tayla Hanes, Jennie Houllis, Melissa Ping Kee and Renee Roberts for this support and contribution to this strong and dependable local business. I commend APJ Law on their outstanding longevity, which is a testament to their professional excellence and enduring commitment to their clients and local communities. This is a great success story and well-deserved recognition to both past and present members of the firm.

### RECOGNITION OF MAVERICK NOAKES

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Maverick Noakes on being recognised in State Parliament for his outstanding contribution to the Moree community, being the worthy recipient of the prestigious Tom Harvey Award, provided and presented by the Australian Youth Trust, along with the NSW Attorney General. I congratulate Maverick on this impressive accomplishment, being recognised for his strong sense of community, responsibility and leadership. Maverick has been a fine ambassador for his school, Moree Secondary College [MSC] and students alike, through his various leadership roles: being a member of the Student Representative Council; Junior Aboriginal Education Consultative Group; and his school's Sustainability Council. Additionally, Maverick ably represented MSC at a state level, at the Student Voice Council (known as DOVES) in 2023. I commend Maverick on his dedication to his school and to his hometown of Moree. Thank you to the principal and staff at MSC, Clontarf Academy and parents Michael and Karren, for enabling Maverick to take up valuable opportunities. Maverick is an inspiration to his peers and the wider community, with such attributes putting Maverick in good stead for a life held dream of politics and I am sure he will have every success in Parliament.

### IRONMAN AUSTRALIA 2025

**Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to recognise the iconic Ironman Australia Event, that was held in Port Macquarie on Sunday 4 May 2025. We have been hosting this gruelling triathlon since 2006 and it has become a legendary event, which sees competitors and their families, friends and supporters flock to Port Macquarie in their thousands. This year, we welcomed athletes from around the world to take up a modified triathlon challenge, with the swim leg abandoned, due to poor water quality. The event consisted of a 180km cycle leg and finished with a punishing 42 km run. A band of 2,800 eager competitors registered for the event, who were cheered on by over 10,000 supporters. The town swelled to accommodate these welcomed visitors and even-though the weather was grey, business owners wore smiles as \$9 million dollars was injected into the local economy. If the full-distance triathlon looked a bit daunting, there is the 'Ironman 70.3' or the 'Ironkids' event, which is a run-only event held for children aged between 7-13 years. Absolutely everyone was catered for in our pristine coastal town, where the community came together to support the event and welcome competitors. Congratulations to all involved.

### VALE JOHN VIPOND

**Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to pay tribute to a cornerstone of the surf lifesaving community in the Camden Haven, Mr John Vipond. John passed away on May 3rd, 2025, at the age of 92 and is being remembered by his colleagues and friends at the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club. John was known as a man who loved the surf and the sea, whilst looking out for others' safety. He often said that 'the salt water and sand get in your blood, and you can't wash it out'. John became involved in Surf Life Saving in the 1950's, when he earned his bronze medallion at Queenscliff, on Sydney's Northern Beaches. John and his wife Judy moved to the area in the late 1960's and it wasn't long before John joined the Camden Haven crew and started his years of devotion to the club. In 2023, John was named a Life Governor of the Camden Haven Surf Life Saving Club, which was a first for the club. This was to recognise John's 70 years in Surf Life Saving, which is a truly remarkable achievement. John tirelessly served the club, holding multiple leadership. Vale – John Vipond.

### HASTINGS NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

**Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to recognise the incredible and tireless work performed for our community by 'Hastings Neighbourhood Services'. The level of overreaching care provided by this incredible organisation is inspiring. We have centres at Port Macquarie, Lake Cathie and Wauchope.



I commend Area Manager, Leesa-Rae Harrison and her Team. Every action, no matter how small, has the power to create a ripple effect. We see this every day in NCC's – whether it's volunteering, passing on knowledge or a skill, having a conversation, making a referral, or simply reaching out to someone in need - every small action adds up to something big, helping to build a stronger, more resilient and connected community, sending waves of meaningful change that extends far beyond our local neighbourhoods. A neighbourhood centre is a place where people from all walks of life can come together in safety to socialise, learn, gain support, garden, access resources and create community connection. Centres rely heavily on volunteer involvement, donations, small grants and fundraising. In Neighbourhood Centres Week, I recognise the vital work of organisations such as this. I stand with gratitude to acknowledge and applaud not only the work, but the results.

#### ERIN JAMES

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—It's a pleasure to celebrate the achievements of Erin James, an exceptional talent from Eleebana whose journey in the performing arts has taken her across Australia's most iconic stages. Erin's love for performing began early, starting with tap dancing lessons as a young child. In the 1990s, she joined Newcastle's Young People's Theatre, where she began to refine her craft. Since then, Erin has forged a remarkable career both onstage and behind the scenes, with credits including *Les Misérables*, *Cabaret*, *CATS* and *Little Women*. This year, we're proud to welcome Erin back to the Hunter as she directs the Very Popular Theatre Company's production of *Mamma Mia!* at the Civic Theatre. Her return is not only a homecoming but a celebration of local talent making waves on the national stage. Erin's story is a wonderful reminder of how early experiences in local theatre can shape lifelong careers and inspire the next generation of performers. Her journey shows just how much potential lies within our communities. We are incredibly fortunate to have artists like Erin enriching the cultural life of our region, and we wish her every success in this next exciting chapter.

#### DAVID THOMAS

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—Congratulations to David Thomas from New Lambton Junior Football Club, Club Champion runner-up in the Northern NSW Female Football Week Awards. As Vice President of the club, David has been a passionate and proactive advocate for gender equality in football. Recognising the need for greater female representation, he established the club's Female Football Consultative Committee, creating a dedicated space for women and girls to share their ideas, raise concerns, and play an active role in shaping the club's direction. David's efforts have gone beyond policy. He has played a key role in securing vital grant funding to upgrade change room facilities, making them more accessible and inclusive for female players. He also helped launch a female football festival, which has become a celebrated event promoting participation, visibility, and a strong sense of community among female athletes. Through his leadership and genuine commitment, David is helping to foster an environment where girls and women feel empowered, respected, and welcomed in the sport. We are incredibly fortunate to have community leaders like David who are not only passionate about football but are working hard to make the game stronger, fairer, and more inclusive for everyone.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE WEEK

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—This week is Neighbourhood Centre Week, a great opportunity to recognise the important role community centres play in bringing people together and supporting those who need a hand. Here in Charlestown, we are lucky to have The Place: Charlestown Community Centre right in the heart of our community. It is a welcoming, inclusive space where people of all ages and backgrounds can come together to learn, connect, and feel supported. Community drop-in centres like The Place do so much more than just offer programs. They help people feel seen, heard, and part of something. Whether it is a workshop, a playgroup, a community event, or something active, The Place helps build connection and reduce isolation. It is places like this that make our neighbourhoods stronger, more connected, and more vibrant. The Place brings people together and helps create the kind of community where everyone feels welcome. I would like to thank the amazing team of staff, volunteers and supporters who help make The Place such a valued part of life in Charlestown. Your work truly makes a difference, and we are so grateful to have you in our community.

#### SHIRLEE MAXWELL

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—A huge congratulations to local dietitian Shirlee Maxwell for being recognised at this year's prestigious NSW Health Excellence in Allied Health Awards. Having supervised over 400 dietetic students and new graduate dietitians in her role as a clinical educator at the John Hunter Hospital, Shirlee has gone above and beyond to support the students in their professional development. As such, Shirlee

was recognised as this year's Allied Health Educator of the Year for her dedication to fostering the next generation of dietitians in the Hunter. Shirlee's passion for innovation, collaboration, and student success continues to enrich the field of dietetics, and I thank her for her commitment to our community.

#### **BRIAN SUTERS AM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Vale Brian Suters AM, one of Newcastle's most respected and recognisable architects. Brian was educated locally at Hamilton Primary School and Newcastle Boys High School before going on to attain a Bachelor of Architecture from UNSW with a University Medal. After that he returned to Newcastle with a vision. He worked on some of our most famous buildings including the refurbishment of City Hall, the Civic Theatre, and the Civic Playhouse. But it is his genius behind the former City Administration Centre, now a 5-star hotel, that he is remembered for. His work has not gone unrecognised. In 2004, he was appointed as a Member of the Order of Australia for his significant service to architecture and in 2022 he was named a Freeman of the City of Newcastle. Thank you Brian for your contribution to our beautiful city skyline. Your legacy will live on in Newcastle for decades to come.

#### **COURTNEY NOVAK**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to Courtney Novak, a leader in the local arts sector, on being awarded the Museums & Galleries NSW Fellowship Award. This fellowship will sponsor Ms Novak through a two-week professional development program to expand her skills as an artistic director. This is a fantastic opportunity to network and access national and international cultural resources. Ms Novak is the Deputy Director at Maitland Regional Art Gallery, leading the education and learning teams to increase visibility of the gallery. She has also previously been the Artistic Director at The Lock-Up in my electorate. Congratulations Courtney, I hope the fellowship goes well and you can offer even more support and expertise to our local arts community.

#### **COOKS RIVER CROQUET CLUB – FLETCHER SHARPE INVITATIONAL FOR U/35S**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Congratulations to the Cooks River Croquet Club for hosting the Fletcher Sharpe Invitational for Under 35s over the recent Anzac Day long weekend. This tournament is invitation only and brings together 20 elite players from across the world, including Australia, England, New Zealand and Egypt, to play for one of the largest prize purses in international croquet. Led by the world's number one golf and association croquet player Robert Fletcher, and former Australian women's champion Alison Sharpe, this event is one of the most enriching of its kind in the world. This event showcases the challenging and unique sport of croquet and was this year live streamed to the world, all from our local Cooks River Croquet Club. Congratulations to all the team at Cooks River Croquet Club, in particular President Stephen Burns, Vice President Georgina Carnegie, Alison Sharpe, Robert Fletcher and all the team behind this wonderful event.

#### **SAM THOMAS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Sam Thomas of Dubbo who was recently awarded the Max Bailey Encouragement Award at the 2025 Australian Livestock and Property Agents Association [ALPA] National Young Auctioneers Competition held at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Sam has agency in his blood. Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who are agents in Dubbo, he is proudly continuing the family tradition. His journey began with a part time role in the business Nutrien Milling Thomas after school, and once he was offered a full-time position, he hasn't looked back. In preparation for the competition, Sam had the benefit of regular practice at the Dubbo sales each week. However, it was the opportunity to sell at stud sales with Nutrien that proved vital in building his skills and confidence. I had the opportunity to catch up with Sam after the competition, where he admitted he had been nervous, but watching him in action, you'd never have known it! He did himself, his family, and the industry proud. Congratulations Sam! It is fantastic to see such talent and capability emerging in the future of the livestock industry.

#### **SOPHIE CARGILL**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge Sophie Cargill of Dubbo who has been awarded runner up in the Young Woman competition at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. This Competition plays a significant role in the development of rural women and their communities. It offers an opportunity to become an ambassador for rural communities and show societies while showcasing the vibrant and dynamic nature of rural living. Sophie is an impressive young woman with a deep passion for enhancing the quality of life for individuals living in regional NSW. She works as a physiotherapist at the Dubbo Base Hospital, where she supports patients in improving their mobility and helps them regain the independence needed to return home. Sophie developed an interest in the Royal Agricultural Show Young Woman Competition from a young age, attending the Braidwood Show in her hometown and the Sydney Royal Easter annually. She has been a wonderful role model and advocate for the program as she progressed through each stage, from being awarded

Dubbo Show Society Young Woman to representing Dubbo at the Sydney Royal Easter Show finals. Congratulations on this incredible achievement Sophie. We are very lucky to have you representing our region!

#### **MARIE CORNISH**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker..... I would like to acknowledge one of Wellington's most well-known volunteers, Marie Cornish OAM, who has been awarded a Cricket NSW Community Distinguished Service Award. The community Distinguished Service Award is a new initiative by Cricket NSW, recognising individuals with at least twenty-five years of dedicated service to community cricket. Well, known within both the cricket and local community Marie is extremely deserving of this recognition having dedicated over forty years to the sport she is so deeply passionate about. While she is a dual Women's World Cup winner and former Australian Vice-Captain, Marie has never forgotten her roots. Over the years she has served as Western Region Secretary and Western Zone Female Coordinator, coached at a representative level, and dedicated countless hours to volunteering and administrative work. Volunteers like Marie, consistently give their time and energy, playing a vital role in the sports success over the years. Congratulations on this recognition Marie! Thank you for your incredible dedication and commitment. Your passion ensures that others continue to have the opportunity to enjoy the sport of Cricket, from grass roots to representative levels.

#### **MANLY INFLATABLE BOAT RACE 2025**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr SPEAKER, I recognise the fantastic success of this year's Manly Inflatable Boat Race, which raised over \$30,000 for two incredible causes – Australia's first young adults hospice, AYAH, based right here in Manly, and leading cancer research charity Tour de Cure. This iconic and uniquely Manly event would not be possible without the passion and leadership of founder and organiser Denver Bevan. Denver's dedication to bringing the race back in 2025 after a hiatus, and to making it a vehicle for meaningful impact, deserves our deepest thanks. I'd also like to thank Northern Beaches Mayor Sue Heins for attending and lending her support to this much-loved community event. A special thank you to the many generous sponsors and partners, including Four Pines Brewing Company, Pulu at Freshwater, and Manly Open Air Cinemas. Key event partners The Boathouse Shelly Beach, Budgy Smuggler and OnlineProjects also played a vital role in the event's success. The Manly Inflatable Boat Race continues to reflect the community spirit and generosity that makes Manly so special. Congratulations to all involved on a brilliant day that combined fun, purpose, and support for two life-changing causes.

#### **THE MANLY SCENIC FUN RUN AND WALK 2025**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I congratulate and thank the Rotary Club of Manly for another outstanding Manly Scenic Fun Run & Walk. This year's event raised over \$90,000 - an extraordinary achievement that reflects the heart of our community. Since 2010, this event has raised more than \$1.75 million for local charities. It is entirely volunteer run by Rotary members who cover their own administrative costs, ensuring transparency and accountability in every dollar raised. Of course, none of this possible without the support from local businesses, including the Manly Skiff Club, Harbord Diggers, Optus, Coles Local, Blackmore Foundation, Hotel Steyne, Manly Pacific, Blackmores Group and Kennards Hire. Special mention must also go to Mike Simpson, with this year marking his final year as Event Director. The annual success of the Manly Fun Run and Walk is a reflection of Rotary's motto, Service Above Self – which is truly on display here in Manly. I extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who ran, walked, fundraised, or volunteered. Your efforts have helped to shape a stronger, kinder and more connected community. Bring on the Manly Fun Run and Walk 2026!

#### **NSW SES - MANLY UNIT**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—I rise to recognise the outstanding work of the Manly SES Unit during recent storms and severe weather across the Northern Beaches. Their response - whether clearing fallen trees, repairing damaged roofs, or providing real-time emergency support - has been nothing short of exceptional. The Manly Unit's commitment extends beyond emergencies. From visiting local schools like NBSC Freshwater Senior Campus to promote community safety, to offering practical guidance on flood preparedness, evacuation, and recovery, they are a constant and trusted presence in our local area. This week, as we mark Wear Orange to Work Day, I want to especially acknowledge the dedicated volunteers from the Manly community who give their time and expertise in service of others. On behalf of a grateful community, I extend a big thank you to the Manly SES Unit for always showing up when it matters most.

#### **YAMBA BUCCANEERS 50TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—My congratulations go to the Yamba Buccaneers Rugby Club, who have entered their 50th year of rugby. Yamba Rugby Club started in 1975 when Doug Anderson, Kev Durkin and Bob Clark decided they would enter a team in the Far North Coast Rugby Union Competitions. In 1982, Yamba won their first premiership with coach Steve Miller. In 1983, Mark Burns chose the name

'Buccaneers' for the club and the newly named crew became finalists that year. In 1985 the club started playing in First Grade. Junior rugby was first established with an under 18's team coached by Doug Anderson. Andy McLennan, later replaced by Andrew Bennett, established junior rugby on a Friday night. Junior rugby in Yamba successfully produced talented players such as Wallabies Kane Douglas, Jed Holloway and Conor Young. Today in 2025, there are 10 junior teams. The 50-year celebrations bring with them an exhibition at the Old Kirk Yamba Museum, plus a special 50th anniversary dinner. Winning Senior Premierships in 1982, 2004, 2010 and 2018, the Yamba Buccaneers have had some fantastic seasons. Congratulations on 50 years, and my best wishes for many more successful years ahead.

#### **LORNA SNEESBY**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to recognise Lorna Sneesby of Maclean for her outstanding commitment and lifelong dedication to the Maclean community. Lorna is a devoted volunteer and cherished community member who has consistently demonstrated her passion for serving others. For 13 years, she has played an invaluable role at the Maclean Salvation Army Op Shop, devoting two days per week—and more recently one day—to managing donated books and ensuring a steady contribution to Rotary. Her hard work and meticulous attention to detail have not gone unnoticed by the Army Majors. In addition, Lorna has been an enthusiastic volunteer at the Anglicare Op Shop for 15 years, brightening every interaction with her cheerful demeanour and engaging warmly with customers. Beyond her op shop work, Lorna has been a cleaner at the Sisters of Mercy in Maclean for 35 years and, together with her husband Keith, has maintained the music area and church grounds for 10 years. Furthermore, Lorna has selflessly co-parented her grandson for the past seven years, actively supporting his education and sporting interests. Her unwavering spirit and commitment to service make her a true pillar of our community.

#### **PETER LYNCH**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I recognise and honour the outstanding contribution of Mr Peter Lynch from Grafton, who has retired after an extraordinary 60 years in the building industry. Peter began his career on 23 August 1964 with E.R. Gofton, officially starting his apprenticeship in 1965. From those early days, Peter forged a reputation for quality craftsmanship, hard work and integrity—values that would define his remarkable career. In 1979, he established his own business, P.J. Lynch Building, which later became Peter J Lynch Pty Ltd, trading as Lynch Constructions. Over six decades, Peter worked on more than 300 projects across the Clarence Valley and beyond, leaving a lasting legacy in homes, public buildings and treasured heritage sites. One of his greatest passions was heritage restoration. Many of our region's historic buildings stand as a testament to his skill and dedication. Equally impressive is his commitment to mentoring the next generation—Peter trained and employed more than 20 apprentices over the course of his career. On Saturday, Peter's family, friends and colleagues gathered to celebrate his incredible journey. On behalf of the local community, I thank Peter for his decades of service and wish him and his wife, Chris a happy retirement.

#### **BELLINGEN ENVIRONMENT CENTRE**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I would like to recognise and acknowledge the Bellingen Environment Centre for their crucial advocacy for the environment in NSW and their commitment to advocating for the protection and establishment of the proposed Great Koala National Park. Bellingen Environment Centre, established in 1989, has advocated tirelessly for the protection of the environment in NSW. Most recently, they have been a key voice in calling for the establishment of the Great Koala National Park, and an end to native forest logging which threatens koalas and other native species wherever it occurs. I thank the Bellingen Environment Centre for their ongoing commitment to standing up for the environment and for our threatened species at every opportunity.

#### **PICTURE PERFECT**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—For proof that our future is in good hands thanks to the vision and ingenuity of our young people, look no further than Koorringal High School's Sarah Wiggins who is leading the way for science, the environment and tourism in Wagga Wagga. As part of her major year 12 design and technology project, the 17-year-old created innovative metal brackets on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River to help visitors record the changing faces of the waterway. 3-D printed and plasma-cut from steel, the brackets are used to hold phones so visitors to the river can collect fixed-point images that document environmental changes as a regular record of the river's life. Uploaded to social media with a Wagga hashtag, these citizen-scientist photos double as tourism promotion for Wagga. Congratulations to Sarah and her family for making this great idea a reality and thank you to her teacher, Austin Teakel, and principal Helen Schmetzer for their support and leadership. I look forward to hearing about Sarah's future as an engineer and to seeing ongoing images that will help to preserve our river's ecology and remind tourists that Wagga is a great place to visit. Well done to all involved.

### JIM SIMPSON

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—When he was just a boy of eight, Lake Albert's Jim Simpson followed in his father's footsteps and joined Wagga Wagga's Lake Albert Fire Brigade. Now, 72 years later, after a lifetime of service to the brigade and his community, Mr Simpson has been recognised in a remarkable way – with his home fire station now carrying his name. Surrounded by friends and family, Mr Simpson recently learned the Lake Albert station would be named the Jim Simpson Fire Station. It was an unexpected honour for the 80-year-old whose long family history with local firefighting stretches right back to 1905 when his father and grandfather created the Lake Albert brigade. The honour is more than well-deserved for Mr Simpson, who has spent decades protecting his community and living by his personal motto, "If it's to be, it's up to me." He has thanked his many firefighting colleagues over the years, including Merv Cook and the current brigade captain, Matt Billingham, for their support and dedication. Mr Simpson still enjoys helping his community and will continue to support his brigade while ever his knowledge and experience is needed. What a fantastic effort! Congratulations, Jim, and thank you for your service.

### SHOPFRONT VIP MORNING TEA

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to commend Shopfront Arts Co-op, who recently hosted a VIP Morning Tea at their site in Carlton. I must say, this organisation is doing some fantastic work in our community. The team this year is also celebrating their 50th anniversary, which is a phenomenal effort by any standard, let alone an organisation of this calibre. Shopfront has been a major contributor to the local arts scene over the years, working with young, up-and-coming artists to develop their skills and find their voice through performance, visual arts and digital media. They have supported thousands of local artists over the last 50 years, guiding them towards their true creative passions and helping them to hone in on their skills. I would like to thank the staff and board of directors, including Chair Lesley Hitchens AM, Board Director Pratha Nagpal, CEO Natalie Rose and Director, Philanthropy and Partnerships, Cathy Nisbet for making this organisation what it is today. I will continue to support our local arts scene by working with groups such as Shopfront Arts Co-Op well into the future.

### THE FAMILY CO. OPENS NEW HUB IN HURSTVILLE

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to congratulate the team from The Family Co., who recently opened up a brand-new hub in Hurstville, which is set to serve the wider St George area. This fantastic organisation supports young people, women, children and families who are struggling, including individuals who are facing or are at risk of family and domestic violence. The Family Co offers a wide range of services to promote their vision, including family services, domestic violence support, Aboriginal support services, group programs and so much more. This new hub will be a welcomed addition to our community and I have no doubt that it will make a real difference in the lives of many across the St George area. I would like to congratulate Chief Executive of The Family Co., Ashleigh Daines, as well as the entire team who contributed to this opening. I am sure that the support services offered here will help those in need to feel safe and supported. I look forward to working alongside The Family Co. over the coming years and wish them all the very best with the new opening!

### VISIT TO SHARE HURSTVILLE

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I recently had the opportunity to catch up with the team from SHARE Inc, a local not-for-profit that provides exercise classes to people who are over 50 in our community. It was a pleasure to meet with CEO, Adrian Prakash and President, Barbara Ward, at their office in Hurstville, discussing their upcoming vision and goals for 2025, as well as how the organisation has continued to grow and evolve to meet the needs of the community. Currently, SHARE offers a number of affordable exercise classes to seniors in our community. Some of their oldest participants are over 90 years old! In addition to fitness programs, SHARE also offer educational sessions, including fall prevention workshops and guidance on reducing the risk of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. SHARE helps local seniors stay active and healthy, both spiritually and mentally. Through their work, they are directly tackling social isolation and loneliness, giving individuals a space to make new friends whilst getting fit. Once again, I congratulate Adrian, Barbara and their team on their great work over the years and I look forward to working alongside them well into the future.

### BAPS FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS AND COLOURS

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On March 15, I had the immense privilege of joining the Festival of Flowers and Colours at the BAPS Swaminarayan Hindu Mandir and Cultural Precinct in Kemps Creek—a breathtaking space dedicated to faith, culture, and community. Hosted by BAPS Australia, a valued partner of Multicultural NSW, this year's celebration was particularly special, marking the visit of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, whose presence brings an atmosphere of peace and spiritual harmony. The festival burst with colour, joy and unity, as volunteers, community members, and fellow MPs — Warren Kirby, Charishma

Kaliyanda and John Fulbrook — came together to celebrate Holi, a cherished tradition of renewal. A heartfelt thank you to BAPS Australia for the warm hospitality and for creating such an uplifting space where faith and celebration bring people together in a deep sense of belonging.

#### **CHALDEAN DIOCESE DINNER NIGHT**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I had the esteemed honour of attending a special Chaldean Diocese Dinner with the Premier and my colleagues on March 16. The event celebrated the remarkable contributions of Chaldean business owners, professionals, and experts. Their faith and dedication have not only led to personal success but have also played a vital role in strengthening our community and enhancing services in the region. With their generosity, knowledge, and expertise, these individuals have helped drive progress, create opportunities, and lay the foundation for a more promising future for generations to come. Their achievements are a testament to the power of hard work and unwavering faith, which continue to inspire and uplift the community. Hosted by Archbishop Mar Amel Nona, the evening was a profound reminder of how faith and professional excellence go hand in hand in building a stronger, more prosperous society. Congratulations to all who were honoured—it is through your dedication that the Chaldean community thrives.

#### **RAMADAN SHOPPING FESTIVAL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—I was delighted to attend this year's Ramadan Shopping Festival which took place on 22 March at the Michael Clarke Recreation Centre in Carnes Hill, bringing together small businesses and the community for a night of celebration and culture. Organised by the Association for Community Development, a registered not-for-profit, the festival was first launched during the COVID pandemic to support small businesses. It has since grown into a major annual event, providing a vibrant platform for entrepreneurs, particularly women-led businesses, to showcase fashion, jewellery, gifts, and more. Not only was the festival a brilliant display of mehndi, food and clothing stalls to stock up on a few gifts for Eid, it was a wonderful evening for everyone to come together during the Holy Month of Ramadan. As we gathered in the spirit of giving and togetherness, I congratulate Ali and the Association for Community Development for their efforts in making this festival a continued success.

#### **REVESBY PUBLIC SCHOOL HARMONY DAY**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I commend the students, staff, and leadership of Revesby Public School for their outstanding celebration of Harmony Day and for fostering an inclusive, respectful, and supportive school community. Revesby Public School is a vibrant example of the multicultural spirit that defines our state. Under the dedicated leadership of Principal Narelle Nies, the school continues to be a place where every student is welcomed, valued, and encouraged to thrive - regardless of background or ability. This year's Harmony Day celebration embraced the theme "Everyone Belongs", bringing together students, families, and teachers in a joyful recognition of cultural diversity. Through art, music, and storytelling, students reflected on the importance of unity and respect - values that are lived every day in the school's classrooms and playgrounds. I thank Principal Nies and the entire Revesby Public School community for their unwavering commitment to equity and inclusion. Their example reminds us that schools do more than educate - they shape the leaders of tomorrow, build bridges between communities, and help create a more compassionate future.

#### **TONY HEESON**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the extraordinary record of volunteer work of Tony Heeson, the Northern NSW Zone Co-ordinator for the Men's Shed since 2017. Tony's tireless advocacy for the creation and promotion of Men's Sheds as key factors in men's health and wellbeing is only one of his dynamic support roles across a range of community enterprises. He has also been a tremendous supporter of rugby union in the region, as president of the Mullumbimby club, founder of the Bangalow club and president of the Far North Coast Rugby Union Club for many years. He was also secretary and president of the Bangalow Lions Club and was a Byron Shire Councillor from 2008-2014. Tony's focus for the past eight years has been the expansion of Men's Sheds across the state, and it is for his drive and perseverance in this undertaking that has earned him a 2025 NSW Seniors Local Achievements Award. I was delighted to be able to meet Tony and his family and to present him personally with the Award. It was a privilege to meet such a community stalwart and outstanding champion for men's health.

#### **HILDA MORGAN**

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina)**—Today I recognise the extraordinary record of volunteer work of Hilda (Anne) Morgan, a recent winner of the NSW Seniors Local Achievement Awards. For 50 years Anne has given back to the communities in which she lived. She has been a tireless 'Lions Lady', working on barbecues to raise funds for local and international projects, selling raffle tickets and Lions Christmas cakes and puddings alike. She has also been an indefatigable worker in the Northern Rivers Animal Services [NRAS] Op Shop in Ballina for the

past three years, filling any vacancy as needed, from managing the shop to cashier and bookkeeper. She is well known for her loyalty, confidentiality and ability to get along with everyone. Despite nearing 85, Anne has no plans of giving up her volunteer work, either with the Lions or NRAS, and has even proved willing to take on extra duties. Her commitment to the community and to animals is selfless and unwavering. I was delighted to be able to meet Anne and present her personally with the NSW Seniors Local Achievement Awards. It was an honour to meet and thank Anne for her tireless service to our community.

#### **ASHLEY GREENHALGH**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement is to acknowledge Marrangaroo local Ashley Greenhalgh for her outstanding service and dedication to her community as part of the Marrangaroo Rural Fire Service. Firefighter Ashley Greenhalgh was among the first emergency services to arrive to a horrific motor vehicle accident on 29 December 2023 where five vehicles collided on the Great Western Highway, and multiple occupants were trapped or deceased. Firefighter Greenhalgh cared for and comforted injured family members including a five-year-old boy with special needs. She treated the boy's multiple facial and bodily injuries and then cradled him while awaiting the arrival and availability of paramedics for three hours, in view of the accident where the boy's father had passed away, and with limited resources. When paramedics became available, Firefighter Greenhalgh continued to soothe the boy, enabling the paramedics to triage and treat him before transferring him to hospital. Firefighter Greenhalgh's quick actions and compassion provided the utmost level of care in a very difficult situation. Her actions were recognised across all emergency service agencies and with a Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation. On behalf of the families involved and the greater Lithgow community, I thank Ashley for her service.

#### **ADAM SHARWOOD**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement is to acknowledge Adam Sharwood for his outstanding service and dedication to his community as part of the Marrangaroo Rural Fire Service. Brigade Captain Adam Sharwood was among the first emergency services to arrive to a horrific motor vehicle accident on 29 December 2023 where five vehicles collided on the Great Western Highway, and multiple occupants were trapped or deceased. With limited initial resources, Captain Sharwood helped injured persons, relaying critical information to paramedics and ambulance personnel upon their arrival and communicated with incoming RFS crews to prepare them for the scene they were entering. Captain Sharwood played an integral role in the response to a large-scale incident that Lithgow had never experienced before. But his work didn't stop there as he ensured the welfare of his brigade members in the following days and weeks checking in with them and managing his team's exposure to the traumatic event. The leadership Brigade Captain Adam Sharwood displayed when presented with a confronting and challenging scene made him a most worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation. On behalf of the families involved and the greater Lithgow community, I thank Adam for his service.

#### **OWEN SHARWOOD**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—This statement is to acknowledge Owen Sharwood for his outstanding service and dedication to his community as part of the Chifley Lithgow Rural Fire Service. Group Captain Sharwood was among the first emergency services to arrive to a horrific motor vehicle accident on 29 December 2023 where five vehicles collided on the Great Western Highway, and multiple occupants were trapped or deceased. Group Captain Sharwood's coordinated efforts to providing direction and guidance to firefighters on the ground and manage his team's exposure to the trauma are to be acknowledged and highly commended. Despite a difficult situation, he ensured the welfare of all members throughout the incident was prioritised without impacting the response to the injured. Group Captain Sharwood played an integral role in the response to a large-scale incident that Lithgow had never experienced before. He became a voice for the injured relaying critical health information and the reason many survived. The leadership Group Captain Owen Sharwood displayed when presented with a confronting and challenging scene made him a most worthy recipient of the Commissioner's Certificate of Commendation. On behalf of the families involved and the greater Lithgow community, I thank Owen for his service.

#### **CARDINAL FREEMAN HAS 41 NEW UNITS COMING!**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—I am excited to report that 41 new apartments for seniors are coming to Cardinal Freeman Village in Ashfield. I recently got to visit Cardinal Freeman to see them break ground on this project, as well as catch up with Gisele Mesnage and her beautiful guide dog Nyota, to have a look at one of many new and improved pedestrian crossings popping up all over Summer Hill! This is exactly the kind of safe and inclusive housing that we need in the inner west. These new apartments will give retirees more options to downsize and join a community that has no shortage of spirit and fun events! To go along with the 41 new independent living units, a new basement parking garage and an external landscaped courtyard are also set to be completed.

These new additions will complement the existing building and have been designed to fit within the masterplan for the whole village to make Cardinal Freeman and the Inner West the best place for retirees. Thank you, Ian West and the members of the Cardinal Freeman Residents' Committee, for welcoming me to share this exciting moment with you all!

### **JAMBEROO RFS**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—The upcoming FUKERS Fundraising Concert at Jamberoo School of Arts Hall on Saturday 24th May 2025 from 7pm promises live music, singing, dancing, food, drinks, and a chance to throw your support behind Jamberoo RFS. I acknowledge Jamberoo RFS Captain Hannah McNerney who leads from the front. Whether it's on the fireground or in our community. Support her team by booking your tickets to the FUKERS fundraising concert and help keep Jamberoo RFS ready for anything. Paul Taylor and the FUKERS are donating their time and talent, and every ticket sold will help Jamberoo RFS stay equipped and ready for whatever challenges come next. Last year, Jamberoo RFS answered 180 call outs across our region. Fires, floods, car crashes, rescues, you name it, they were there. Rain or shine, day or night, these local legends are first on the scene, bringing calm, skills and courage. These tools can be the difference between saving a life or losing a property. Every dollar raised genuinely helps our RFS volunteers do their job better. Bring your friends, your neighbours, your family, and show our local Jamberoo RFS they are not standing alone.

### **SALVATION ARMY KIAMA**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises the the Salvation Army shop in Terralong Street in Kiama which sadly closed its doors on Saturday 3rd May 2025. Not only was this a sad occasion for our local Kiama community but also for local Kiama Salvation Army dedicated community volunteers like Michelle Wiltshire. Michelle is now contemplating what volunteering to do next, without a great deal of travel involved. The Salvation Army shop was a very popular spot for many local residents in Kiama. I would also acknowledge Ian Wiltshire and his wife Michelle who will also shortly celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary which will be a very special milestone for them both.

### **SLOW DOUGH BAKERY KIAMA**

**Mr GARETH WARD (Kiama)**—Today the Parliament of New South Wales recognises Slow Dough Bakery located in Bong Bong Street, Kiama. This local bakery with the Snail of Approval is proof that food made slowly, shared generously, and sourced thoughtfully still has a place and a devoted following. A huge congratulations and well done to Richard and Lucy King and the entire staff members. They simply wanted to share their growing sourdough skills during lockdown, first in Melbourne, then by leaving loaves on the doorsteps of neighbours in Gerringong. What began as a friendly gesture has since blossomed into Slow Dough Bakery, a 3-day-a-week operation with a five-day baking process, a rotating menu and loyal customers. From trading excess pumpkins and basil with neighbours to building partnerships with local food producers like The Pines and the Passion Project, Richard and Lucy's bakery is more than a place to buy bread. It is a model of circular economy, grounded in a belief that great food should nourish people, place and purpose. That ethos has been recognised with a Snail of Approval from Slow Food Saddleback, an international movement that champions good, clean and fair food.

### **MOSMAN PUBLIC SCHOOL'S SWIMMING SUCCESS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to congratulate the students, staff and community of Mosman Public School on an outstanding start to the sporting year through their School, Zone, and Regional Swimming Carnivals. The school's Swimming Carnival brought together students in a wonderful display of participation, team spirit, and sportsmanship. From racing in the pool to cheering in the stands, students gave it their all. My thanks to Assistant Principal Stephanie De Palo, the dedicated staff, and all the parent helpers who made the day possible. Your support is invaluable and deeply appreciated. Congratulations to the 25 students who represented Mosman Public School at the North Shore Zone Swimming Carnival on March 14. These students competed with pride, with many achieving strong results. Special recognition goes to Lily C, Charlotte W, Leo K, Isla C, Freya D, Charlotte T, Claire H, Maddie Z, Lauren R, and Gabriella F, whose strong performances helped lead their relay teams and individual events. A further congratulations to Charlotte W, Leo K, and Isla C, who progressed to the Sydney North Swimming Carnival on April 1 at Sydney Olympic Park Aquatic Centre—an achievement they should be very proud of. Congratulations to you all.

### **CELEBRATING THE MUSEUM OF TINY ART IN CREMORNE**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I wish to commend Amanda Fox, a local high school art teacher and mother of twins, for her innovative creation, the Museum of Tiny Art (MOTA), located on Reed Street in Cremorne. Established during her maternity leave, MOTA is a miniature art gallery that showcases the works of contemporary female artists. Each week, Amanda curates a new exhibition, complete with tiny figurine



"visitors" who appear to admire the masterpieces. This unique initiative has transformed a quiet street into a vibrant cultural landmark. The gallery's innovative approach has garnered attention from renowned Australian artist Del Kathryn Barton, who became the first featured artist. Amanda's dedication to promoting art and fostering community engagement through MOTA is truly commendable. I encourage everyone to visit MOTA and experience this delightful fusion of art and community spirit. Thank you to Amanda for bringing such creativity and joy to our neighbourhood.

#### **WENONA SCHOOL'S AVA TAKES MAJOR STEP TOWARD OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—Congratulations to Ava, a Year 12 student from Wenona School, on officially meeting the Olympic minimum standard for Ski Mountaineering. This remarkable achievement follows a season of intense training and competition across Australia, Chile, and Europe. Ava's dedication, resilience, and passion for her sport have paved the way for her continued journey toward Winter Olympic qualification. Wenona School has been a proud supporter of Ava's athletic journey, and her success is a reflection of not only her individual determination but also the strength of the school's commitment to developing young athletes. Ava's achievement is an inspiration to all students, showcasing the power of perseverance and the pursuit of excellence. We all look forward to watching her progress as she takes on the next chapter of her journey toward the Winter Olympics. Congratulations, Ava—you've made your school and community incredibly proud!

#### **SCOUTS NSW - 1ST CARLINGFORD SCOUT GROUP**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—One of the strongest community organizations in the Epping Electorate is the 1st Carlingford Scout Group – a group dedicated to cultivating leadership, resilience, and personal development in Carlingford's young people. I recently attended the 1st Carlingford Annual Reports Presentation. This was an opportunity to meet the Scouts, organisers, and parents. During the event, Kerica Drummond, Yi-Chi Li, and Robert Kearle were awarded Wood Beads, a prestigious recognition for completing advanced leadership training. All three award winners are deserving of recognition and congratulations for their dedication to Scouts. I commend the 1st Carlingford Scout Group for their contributions over the past year. Their work has supported the development of young people in Carlingford and positively impacted the wider community. I also congratulate Group President Ms. Leonie Plummer, for her commitment. Her leadership and efforts have made a difference in Carlingford and the wider Epping community.

#### **SCOUTS NSW - EPPING SCOUT GROUP**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—I acknowledge the Epping Scout Group for its commitment to developing the next generation of leaders in the Epping community. It was a pleasure to attend the Epping Scout Group's Annual Report Presentation in April and see firsthand the strength and spirit of this organisation. Formed in 1915, Epping Scouts is one of the oldest continuously running Scout groups in Australia and remains a vibrant part of our community. With all five Scouting sections represented, from Joeys through to Rovers, the group offers young people a place to grow, learn, and connect. At the presentation, I congratulated parents for choosing Scouts for their children. In an age of constant technological change, these young people are gaining the practical skills, confidence, and resilience that will set them up for life. Whether it's hiking, camping, or water sports at their own boatshed, the activities on offer help shape well-rounded individuals who give back to their community. Congratulations to Epping Scouts on another successful year. I look forward to seeing all that 2025 will bring for this outstanding group.

#### **PETER BUCKLEY - 25 YEARS OF SERVICE TO EPPING SCOUTS**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—Epping Scouts is a community organization that provides children with valuable opportunities to develop skills and connect with others. I would especially like to acknowledge Peter Buckley for his 25 years of dedicated service to Epping Scouts. As a Scouts NSW Leader and committed volunteer, Peter has played a crucial role in supporting young people in the area. In an era of rapid technological change, the skills these children are learning will serve them throughout their lives, regardless of what the future holds. Through his mentorship, Peter has fostered an environment that empowers young people to grow and succeed. To dedicate oneself to Epping Scouts for a quarter of a century is a commitment that should be emulated and celebrated in our society. I extend my sincere gratitude to Peter for his exceptional contribution over the past 25 years, and to Epping Scouts for another successful year.

#### **SOLARIS PAPER**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Tuesday 15th April 2025, I was pleased to meet with line workers and tour the Solaris Paper factory in Pemulwuy. Solaris Paper is an Australian operated and managed company, and their state-of-the-art manufacturing site has operated in the Prospect Electorate since 2010. With globally recognisable brands such as Sorbent Professional, Livi and Handee Ultra, Solaris Paper manufactures and distributes an astonishing 4.8 billion rolls of toilet and tissue paper every year. Bringing together smart,

sustainable products with global scale and superior service, Solaris Paper is an industry leader that Western Sydney and New South Wales are proud to claim. While on the tour, I was delighted to meet with long-time local workers. I am proud to see such historic and vital businesses thrive in our local Prospect Electorate, with honest work, skills training and career progression. My heartfelt thanks go out to Alan Donnelly, Solaris Paper Production Manager, as well as Anna Dinh, CFMEU Manufacturing Division NSW District Organiser for coordinating the tour. I look forward to seeing Solaris Paper continue to provide meaningful employment and local manufacturing capability in Prospect Electorate for years to come.

#### **LOSCAM AUSTRALIA PTY LTD**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Tuesday 15th April 2025, I was pleased to meet with line workers and tour the Loscam Australia Pty Ltd manufacturing site in Wetherill Park. Founded in Australia in the 1940s, Loscam has been an integral part of the manufacturing and industry in Prospect Electorate. Producing wooden and plastic pallets, cages, fresh produce crates and other solutions, Loscam is a vital part of our New South Wales economy, delivering a wide range of goods to factories, stores and into our homes. The multinational company operates in 12 regions throughout the Asia Pacific, delivering high-quality, innovative, environmentally sustainable and fit-for-purpose solutions across these regions. While on the tour, I was delighted to meet with long-time local workers. I am proud to see such historic and vital businesses thrive in our local Prospect Electorate, with honest work, skills training and career progression. My heartfelt thanks go out to Michael Roth and Shane McGeechan from Loscam, as well as Anna Dinh, CFMEU Manufacturing Division NSW District Organiser for coordinating the tour. I look forward to seeing Loscam continue to provide employment and local manufacturing capability in Prospect Electorate for years to come.

#### **VIETNAMESE COMMUNITY IN AUSTRALIA**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Wednesday 7th May, I was pleased to join Vietnamese community leaders, families, Parliamentary colleagues and distinguished guests to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnamese refugee community's settlement in Australia, with a commemorative dinner held at the Parliament of New South Wales. 50 years ago, hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese refugees fled from their homeland, escaping the violent end of the Vietnam War. Many arrived on Australian shores and have since enriched our New South Wales community, with a strong determination to succeed and vibrant culture to share. Today, more than 334,000 Australians are of Vietnamese descent, and with over 320,000 Vietnamese speakers in Australia, Vietnamese is the fourth most widely spoken language in the country. In the five decades since the initial refugee arrivals, our Vietnamese Australians have made a remarkable contribution to our inclusive multicultural society. I am proud that our Vietnamese-Australian community call Prospect Electorate and Western Sydney home. My congratulations go out to Thang Ha, President, Vietnamese Community in Australia, NSW Chapter, for hosting a truly memorable event. Thank you to all our wonderful Vietnamese Australians for your tremendous courage, resilience and community spirit, marking the occasion with gratitude and reflection.

#### **KATHRYN MARTIN**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—Congratulations and thank you to Kathryn Martin for her service to the Maitland Family Support organisation at Woodberry. Kathryn had a massive impact in her three years as Manager, supporting the families of Woodberry. Kathryn's passion and dedication for the community was no better exemplified than her advocacy to retain community pre-school services late last year. Kathryn co-ordinated everything from wardrobe extravaganzas, free food assistance, community craft and connect events, and worked with service delivery organisations from across the Hunter to support the community. Kathryn also supported the community through the January storms, pivoting to provide food and practical supports for families during the extended period of no power to the community along with other resilience services. Kathryn will be dearly missed by the Woodberry community, and I thank her for her years of service. Thank you and good luck in your new role Kathryn.

#### **MAITLAND SIKHS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—Congratulations to the Maitland Sikh's for their dedicated support with the provision of free food to the Woodberry Community. Every week, the group provide hundreds of hot vegetarian meals to the public. They can regularly be seen on the sidelines of local sports fields during the weekends or providing free meals from their base at the Woodberry League Club oval, every Tuesday afternoon. The delicious meals include kidney beans curry, fresh vegetables and fried rice, pumpkin or potato curry, vegetarian pasta and the ever-popular donuts. All produce is sourced locally, often donated, and cooked and served by a dedicated group of volunteers. This is such a gracious contribution to the ongoing well-being of the community, especially in this cost-of-living crisis where so many are struggling on a daily basis. It is a wonderful example of people helping each other with no expectation of reward. On behalf of our community, thank you Maitland Sikh's for your efforts and generosity.

**MIMI WILSON**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—Congratulations to Mrs Remedios "Mimi" Wilson, who will be retiring in June after dedicating 40 years of nursing and caring for the residents of Maitland and surrounding communities. Mimi arrived in Australia from the Philippines in the early 1980s, having trained as a nurse overseas. She began her work here as a surgical nurse and went on to become a highly respected wound care specialist. Mimi's colleagues regard her as a shining example of clinical excellence and compassionate care. She has played a vital role in mentoring and guiding generations of nurses, doctors, and medical students at Maitland Hospital - shaping the future of public health in the Hunter. Recently, Mimi's friends, family and long-time colleagues gathered to celebrate her long list of career achievements. Mimi recently stepped back from work to care for her family in the Philippines. Mimi leaves behind a legacy of care that will not be forgotten, thank you Mimi.

**OLMC - "COOLING THE SCHOOLS" TREE PLANTING PROGRAM**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I'd like to take a moment to recognize OLMC Parramatta for taking such a forward-thinking approach to addressing climate change. By joining Greening Australia's Cooling the Schools tree planting program, the school is giving its grounds a much-needed makeover - one that's not just about aesthetics, but about creating cooler, greener and more vibrant spaces for students to enjoy. This initiative is more than just planting trees - it's about teaching students the importance of native trees and the role they play in supporting biodiversity, improving urban cooling and connecting with First Nations cultural practices. It is inspiring to see OLMC embrace sustainability and give students the opportunity to learn and grow in an environment that's rich in both knowledge and nature. With support from School Infrastructure NSW and the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, this project is a real win for the school community. Students will now be enjoying the shade of these trees, whether they're reading under their canopy or playing outside. What a fantastic way to foster both education and a love for the environment, ensuring a greener tomorrow. Keep up the amazing work, OLMC – you're leading the way!

**DAYOUB**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to Patty Esber-Dayoub on receiving an award that recognises her phenomenal teaching legacy at the Maronite College of the Holy Family in Harris Park. Mrs Esber-Dayoub's exceptional commitment to teaching Legal Studies has seen her students consistently achieve excellent results, with ten of her students achieving a Band 6 last year. Her accomplishments were deservedly recognised by the Maronite Catholic Society on Friday, the 29th of March at a function attended by the Premier, The Hon. Chris Minns MP. Mrs Esber-Dayoub is a former student of Maronite College of the Holy Family. Her dedication and ambition for her students has been a gift to the community for the 25 years she has been teaching. While empowering her legal studies students to achieve extraordinary results, she also serves as the schools HSIE KLA coordinator, carrying out multiple roles with distinction. I sincerely thank Patty Esber-Dayoub for her dedication to fostering the potential of her students over many, many years. I look forward to learning more about her students' continually improving results and to following the achievements of her former students as they step out of school life into the wider world.

**MILI LEE RETIREMENT**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—It's with a mix of deep appreciation and a touch of sadness that I want to acknowledge a truly significant moment for Mili Lee, the wonderful Parish Manager at St Patrick's Cathedral in Parramatta who recently marked the completion of over sixteen years of dedicated service. From all accounts, Mili is a firm favourite around the Parish, and the thought of her leaving tugs at many heartstrings. She has always been the first to step up, leading, serving and supporting her parish community. Mili will be truly missed. Parishioners will miss seeing her at all the events and in the many ways she's contributed. Mili, as you look ahead to what's next, I really hope it brings you all the best. Speaking as an outsider the sentiment expressed to me from the whole St Patrick's Cathedral family, I want to say thank you, for your incredible service and the warmth you've shared with parishioners and visitors for close to two decades. From the joyful carols to the quiet moments of Mass, you've created such special feelings and memories that have touched many and will stay with them for a long time to come.

**GARRY FERGUSON**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to sincerely acknowledge Mr Garry Ferguson for his outstanding contributions to improving sustainability across our community. Garry was recently recognised at the 2025 Drummoyne Electorate Local Seniors Awards for the environmental initiatives that he drives. Garry, and his wife Jennifer have launched a recycling program to collect used coffee grounds from local cafes and clubs and use them as an alternative fertiliser. Over the past two years, they have collected, and diverted from landfill

more than 18 tonnes of coffee grounds. Garry has been a wonderful advocate for improving sustainability, often at his own cost and in his own time. His passion has encouraged many members of our community, myself included to think innovatively and to embrace this environmentally friendly fertiliser in their own homes. Beyond his environmental efforts, Garry represents the Concord Rotary Club at the Concord markets every fortnight. Where visitors can collect free fertiliser. His commitment and his passion for this service is truly commendable. I sincerely thank Garry for his work, and I wish both him and Jennifer all the very best. It has been a delight getting to know him and I am pleased to recognise him in the Parliament today.

#### **FIVE DOCK RSL SUB-BRANCH**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the Five Dock RSL Sub-Branch for its Anzac Day Service held on 13 April at the Five Dock War Memorial at Five Dock Park. This year's Anzac Sunday Service commemorated the 80th anniversary of the end of WWII on 2 September 1945. The Five Dock community has a deeply rooted connection with the Anzac spirit and this service was a touching tribute to brave servicemen and women who have served and given their lives for our freedom. I sincerely thank Five Dock RSL Sub-branch President Robert Ridge and all members of the Sub-Branch for their work in our community supporting veterans. Robert is a leader in our community who is dedicated to preserving the Anzac legacy and honouring those who served our country. At the service we were privileged to be joined by Patron Barry Walsh, Reverend Trevor Young, Commander Jeff Milward, local veterans and the NSW Police Band. On behalf of our community, I thank the Five Dock RSL Sub-branch for holding this Anzac Day Service and I am grateful for the opportunity to join them in commemoration. Lest we forget.

#### **CITYWIDE LPI FIVE DOCK**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the grand opening of Citywide LPI in Five Dock. Citywide officially opened its doors to the Five Dock branch at Great North Road on 10 April 2025. The new firm specialises in lending, property and insurance, providing mortgage services to the community. I sincerely congratulate Principal Laila Debes on this exciting milestone. Opening a new business is a challenging, and rewarding experience that takes vision and resilience. I recently met Laila following the opening of Citywide Five Dock. I was delighted to meet her and her staff and to welcome them to our community. I extend my sincere congratulations to Laila, her daughter Antoinette and all staff at Citywide Five Dock. I wish them all the very best.

#### **SCULPTURE IN THE GARDEN**

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast)**—Every two years in April, the Wollongong Botanic Garden hosts Sculpture in the Garden, an event that brings creativity and beauty to the electorate of Keira. This event enriches our community by encouraging creativity, showcasing local and national artists, and providing an inspiring outdoor experience for residents and visitors alike. I would like to acknowledge Wollongong City Council and the Wollongong Botanic Garden for passionately supporting the arts and celebrating the incredible talent and dedication of the participating artists. Congratulations to Dr Virginia Keft a proud Muruwarri women for being awarded the People's Choice Award, with her sculpture Nuwa Ganda (Look up). Other notable mentions of amazing artists within the Keira community, Mr Danny Ivanovski and Ms Bianca Hester. I am excited for these opportunities in the region that foster creativity and provide spaces for artist to exhibit their work which supports their growth and I look forward to the inspiration they will bring.

#### **JUSTICE OF THE PEACE 50 YEAR'S SERVICE**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I acknowledge the outstanding effort of Justices of the Peace from the Miranda electorate being honoured for 50 years' service to the New South Wales community. For context, 50 years ago Darwin was ravaged by Cyclone Tracy, ABBA won Eurovision and 'The Way We Were' was at the top of the charts. Since then, Kenneth Fleeton of Taren Point and John Martin of Sylvania have played an important part in the legal system by helping hundreds of people at key moments in their lives. They provide their services on a voluntary basis, witnessing affidavits and statutory declarations, and certifying original documents so that members of our community may buy a property, access superannuation or apply for a passport. I was incredibly pleased to attend a ceremony to celebrate our Justices of the Peace marking their Golden Jubilee of service in Parliament House and meet their supportive wives Frances Fleeton and Anne Martin. Kenneth and John's commitment to provide this invaluable service embodies the spirit of volunteering which has always been at the heart of our Shire. I thank Kenneth and John for their dedication to our community over half a century.

#### **CLAIRE BAKER**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Year 10 student Claire Baker of Sylvania High School on her 2024 Canal to Creek third prize winning artwork titled 'Convergence in the Curve'. The Canal to Creek

Prize, which is run by Transurban, invites high school students in years 7 to 10 to create their own artwork, inspired by the 21 signature pieces that form the 'Canal to Creek' between St Peters and Beverley Hills. The theme for the Canal to Creek Prize was 'Connections' and asked students to consider connections to earth, culture, history, movement, and environment. Claire's entry offers reflections in a jug of water. Her artwork explores life's serendipitous crossroads and the profound growth and perspective they offer. Claire uses the jug's reflective surface as a metaphor for introspection and the realisation that our connections are not linear but rather a web of intertwined threads. Through her piece, Claire is thoughtfully inviting contemplation by the audience of their own connections and the shape of their web of intertwined threads. I congratulate Claire on her success at the Canal to Creek prize and extend my best wishes for her future artistic endeavours.

#### **SAMANTHA GRAY**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Year 10 student Samantha Gray of Sylvania High School on her 2024 Canal to Creek second prize winning artwork titled 'Wi-fi to the soul'. The Canal to Creek Prize, which is run by Transurban, invites high school students in year 7 to 10 to create their own artwork, inspired by the 21 signature pieces that form the 'Canal to Creek' between St Peters and Beverley Hills. The theme for the Canal to Creek Prize was 'Connections' and asked students to consider connections to earth, culture, history, movement, and environment. Inspired by the impact of smartphones on our youth, Samantha's entry 'Wi-Fi to the soul' portrays the reflection a phone on a close-up iris. Samantha uses the reflection in the eye to serve as a metaphor for how these devices have become an inextricable part of youths perception and interaction with the world. Through her piece, Samantha is thoughtfully inviting contemplation by the audience about what young people are missing out through digital absorption which often leads to isolation and distraction. I congratulate Samantha on her success at the Canal to Creek prize and extend my best wishes for her future artistic endeavours.

#### **JASMINE AND HAYDEN GREEN**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise the outstanding achievements of Jasmine and Hayden Green. It gives me great pride to acknowledge their recent success in the show ring, where they had the privilege of exhibiting Summit Temptress T39 in the Limousin judging at the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Summit Temptress - distinguished by her striking coat, sound structure, and excellent maternal traits - stood out in the highly competitive field and ultimately claimed the title of Supreme Exhibit. These achievements went beyond just the Sydney show, being also named Supreme Interbreed Exhibit at the Royal Canberra Show and went on to take out Supreme Exhibit at the National Junior Show in 2023. Closer to home, she impressed once again at the Crookwell Show, where she was awarded Supreme Animal Exhibit - beating out a diverse field of livestock. I warmly congratulate Jasmine and Hayden on these remarkable accomplishments and successful careers. Their ability to raise and manage such high calibre stock is a testament to their knowledge. They are a credit to the agricultural community and to our region.

#### **DARRELL LAW**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Station Officer Darrell Law for his remarkable service to Fire and Rescue NSW. Mr Law began his firefighting career as a young recruit at 001 Station - City of Sydney, driven by a strong ambition to serve and protect. He went on to hold positions at Blacktown, Parramatta, Guildford, and Fairfield stations, gaining rescue qualifications and earning promotion to Station Officer. Seeking a quieter life, Mr Law and his family relocated to Goulburn, where he has proudly served as Station Officer for the past twenty years. During that time, he and his crew have responded to countless emergencies and rescue operations, earning deep respect and gratitude from the community. After thirty-eight years of service, Mr Law is now preparing for a well-earned retirement. He leaves behind a legacy of professionalism, leadership, and commitment that will be remembered by colleagues and the Goulburn community alike. Thank you, Station Officer Law, for your outstanding dedication and service.

#### **GOULBURN HANDWEAVERS AND SPINNERS**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Goulburn Handweavers and Spinners. Utilising wool, alpaca, mohair, silk, and other fibres, to create spun knitted, woven, or crocheted garments and items, the Goulburn Handweavers and Spinners are truly remarkable craft persons. The group proudly celebrated their 50th Anniversary on the 10th of May, with a two-day Exhibition and Sale event, The 50 Golden Years, celebrating their history, craft and the pure skill and talents of the many members. Since joining in the early 1980s, long-time member Carol Divall has been a dedicated part of the group. She had the honour of opening the exhibition, which featured a fashion parade showcasing styles through the decades, along with displays highlighting the group's history and evolution. Recognising Goulburn's rich history as the wool capital, these meticulously crafted pieces are a true tribute to the group's longevity and dedication. I warmly congratulate all members for their outstanding craftsmanship and enduring contribution to the Goulburn Handweavers and Spinners.

**MICHELE (BID) JOHNSTON**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Michele, or as she is more affectionately known Bid, began her career at Wilcannia Hospital 30 years ago as a Hospital Assistant. Throughout her time at the hospital, Bid worked within the laundry and as a cleaner, roles pivotal to the health service. Maintaining the cleanliness of the historic 1879 Wilcannia Hospital is no small feat. Bid also cleans the short-term accommodation provided for visiting doctors and nurses. Always willing to lend a hand, bid steps into the kitchen to assist the cook during busy times and helps nursing staff with long-term patients, including running errands to the shop and Post Office. Alongside her late mother, Jean, she has been an active member of the Hospital Auxiliary, contributing to fundraising events, catering jobs, and raffles. She is also a keen gardener. Those who know Bid say she always has a friendly word for everyone she meets and is a beloved community member. Her unwavering commitment and positive spirit have made a lasting impact on all who have had the pleasure of working with her. Congratulations on reaching the milestone of 30 years of dedicated service to Wilcannia Hospital and the broader community.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE WEEK**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—In recognition of Neighbourhood Centre Week, I'd like to bring to the attention of the house the important work of two powerhouse local organisations, the Glebe Youth Service and Together 2. Both of these organisations reflect the crucial role that neighbourhood centres play in our communities, bringing people together to provide social support, access essential services, and an environment where everyone gets treated with respect. In their respective work, both organisations have positively impacted the lives of countless individuals, in big and in small ways. These safe spaces are vital resources, especially for those members of our community who are isolated or doing it tough. I am so grateful to be able to take this opportunity to give a huge thank you to the staff and volunteers who make both the Glebe Youth Service and Together 2 so special. I give particular thanks to Steven Lowrie, the CEO of Together 2 and Mitra Gusheh, CEO of the Glebe Youth Service. You and your impressive teams of wonderful people represent the very best of our community.

**ANDREW WEST**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today, I would like to acknowledge Andrew West for his outstanding service to the Orange Grove Public School community, where he is regarded not only as a devoted volunteer but also as a valued friend to all. Each Friday, Andrew generously dedicates his time and energy to supporting the Orange Grove school community. Whether he is tending to the garden, assisting the administration team, or engaging with students through games of handball during recess and lunch, Andrew's contributions leave a lasting and positive impact. He brings genuine care, unwavering commitment, and a strong sense of pride to everything he does. Andrew is an integral part of the school's spirit and culture. His presence is cherished by students, staff, and the broader school community. On behalf of everyone at Orange Grove Public School, I extend my heartfelt thanks to Andrew for his continued dedication and meaningful contributions to the Orange Grove community.

**FESTIVAL OF FEMALE FOOTBALL AT LEICHHARDT OVAL**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—I'd like to recognise the recent Festival of Female Football held at Leichhardt Oval. This well-loved community event was created by Balmain & District Football Club and Leichhardt Saints Football Club in celebration and support of the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup, and has become bigger and better with each year. This year, the event featured teams from all the football clubs in the Inner West and was the largest activation in NSW for Female Football Week, which is recognised and celebrated nationally. This event is part of the broader Female Football Week initiative, which champions women's involvement in all areas of the game from playing to leading. The Festival of Female Football is a shining example of what's possible when community, passion, and purpose come together. Players lit up the field with their enthusiasm and skill throughout the day, while families and spectators enjoyed the face painting and other activities, along with the vibrant atmosphere. A heartfelt thank you goes to the driving forces behind the day—Donna Youngman, Kay Harris, De Dotson, Maisie Tanner, Matthew Bowen and Paul Avery.

**LUCY TURNER**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—Lucy Turner is a remarkable athlete from Avalon Public School who recently represented NSW at the 2024 Athletics National Championship. Lucy has shown an extraordinary level of dedication since the very beginning of her athletic journey. She has committed herself with an unwavering focus, often sacrificing her time and energy to hone her skills. It is this continuous pursuit of improvement that has propelled her to represent our state at the highest level. Lucy placed third overall in the Tetrathlon event which is a huge achievement. This event is a gruelling four sport feat that pushes young athletes to their physical limit. Her achievements at this competition have earned her the Premiers State Representative Award which symbolises the hard work, sacrifices and relentless spirit that Lucy has poured into the sport. It's also a testament to her support

system, including Avalon Public School. We are lucky to have such a talented athletic competitor in Pittwater. I would like to congratulate Lucy on her sporting achievements and wish her all the very best for future events.

### **GOOD CITIZENS**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—Good Citizens Eyewear is tackling our plastic crisis one pair of glasses at a time. The innovative idea to turn single use plastic bottles into stylish eyewear was born at their kitchen table in Sydney. Together with their sons, Nik and Jocelyne Robinson endured 2500 failed attempts over 752 days, persevering to create fantastic eyewear. Since launching, Good Citizens have become the most awarded eyewear brand in Australia. They were given an exclusive window in Selfridges London next to Prada and voted one of the Top 20 Coolest Retailers in Australia. Good Citizens also give back to our community, they are currently working with a team to develop a new education curriculum for sustainable manufacturing for the NSW Government. This excellent program will ensure that the next generation of innovators can learn sustainable practices while expanding their skills. Good Citizens' singular focus in education is to prove that circular, local manufacturing outperforms offshore production - not just in sustainability, but in long-term economic and social value. I would like to thank Good Citizens for their hard work, commitment to sustainability and providing such innovative eyewear to us all.

### **PENINSULA SENIORS TOY RECYCLERS**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—Members at the Peninsula Seniors Toy Recyclers are leading the war on waste by giving toys a new life. Toys are donated to the centre where they undergo a process of rejuvenation, including repair, cleaning and redesign. The refurbished toys are then supplied to charities that support families and children, helping to reduce landfill and provide a sense of joy to others. Initially started by some retirees, the group has repaired thousands of toys over the years and has built a reputation for being a community hub for those looking to do good in our Pittwater community. The group has been servicing the Pittwater community for over 50 years and has many long-term volunteers. The President of the group, Terry Cook, has been with the centre for over 25 years. He enjoys creating a sense of community within the group, organising regular morning teas, which includes a tradition where visiting Members of Parliament must provide a sticky bun. I would like to thank the volunteers of Peninsula Seniors Toy Recyclers for finding such an innovative solution to our waste problem and for providing valuable toys to those in need.

### **CAROLE WALTON 2025 NSW SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I congratulate Carole Walton of Castle Hill, who was on 9 May 2025 presented with a NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Award. For the past eight years, Carole has been a committed parishioner and dedicated volunteer with the St Vincent de Paul conference at St Bernadette's Catholic Church, supporting vulnerable families across our community. Each year, Carole leads the parish's Christmas Hamper Drive, coordinating the collection, packing and delivery of hundreds of hampers filled with food and essential household items. In 2024, she oversaw the distribution of a record-breaking 580 hampers-setting a record as the largest drive in the parish's history. Carole acknowledges the generous support of students, staff and families from St Bernadette's Primary, Tangara School for Girls, Oakhill College, Gilroy Catholic College, and Redfield College, whose enthusiasm makes the initiative possible. Carole's humility, warmth and tireless service reflect the highest ideals of community spirit. Through leadership and steadfast compassion, she continues to uplift those around her and bring people together in service of others. I am proud to recognise Carole Walton's exceptional service and congratulate her on this well-deserved honour.

### **CHERYL HILL 2025 NSW SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I congratulate Cheryl Hill of Castle Hill, who was on 9 May 2025 presented with a NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Award. Cheryl is the President of the Castle Hill & District RSL sub-Branch and has made an outstanding contribution to veteran support and community service. Under Cheryl's leadership, the sub-Branch Auxiliary has seen a 41 per cent growth in membership. In 2024 alone, she contributed more than 980 volunteer hours—equivalent to 24 full-time work weeks—and helped raise over \$16,800, a 28 per cent increase from the previous year. Her commitment spans commemorative events, veteran welfare, governance, and broader community engagement. Whether coordinating the 50th Anniversary Dinner, supporting widows, or assisting with pension and wellbeing matters, Cheryl's brings warmth, professionalism, and tireless energy to all she does. Her impact has extended beyond the veteran community to enrich the broader Castle Hill region. Cheryl's dedication, initiative and leadership exemplify the spirit of the Seniors Festival Local Achievement Awards. I am proud to acknowledge her exceptional service and congratulate her on this well-deserved recognition.

**DENNIS SOMEREN 2025 SENIORS LOCAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I congratulate Dennis van Someren who was on 9 May 2025 presented with a NSW Seniors Festival Local Achievement Award. Dennis is a committed community advocate whose work has significantly impacted the lives of vulnerable women and families across the Hills. He is a founding member of The Hills Transitional Housing Project, an initiative supporting women—particularly older women—at risk of homelessness due to domestic violence or financial hardship. After his experience volunteering at Parramatta Mission, Dennis recognised the growing crises of homelessness and has worked tirelessly to secure transitional housing in partnership with Wesley Mission. Beyond housing, Dennis volunteers with Shine for Kids, mentoring and transporting children to visit their parents in custody. He also brings music and joy to aged care residents each week and continues to serve at Parramatta Mission every Wednesday morning. A longstanding member of the Kenthurst Rotary Club, Dennis is widely admired for this compassion, humility, and pragmatic leadership. His determined advocacy has delivered meaningful support to some of our community's most vulnerable. I am proud to acknowledge Dennis's extraordinary service and congratulate him on this well-deserved recognition.

**VALLEY INDUSTRIES**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I recently had the opportunity to visit Valley Industries and spend time with their staff and participants across a range of services including the Timber factory, Secure Documents, Valley Bees, Valley Linen, Accommodation and Respite, and the Valley Skills day program. It was a privilege to meet so many supported employees and see firsthand the valuable work being done to empower people living with disability. The participants shared their stories and skills with pride, and it was clear that the programs at Valley Industries are creating meaningful opportunities for learning, independence, and contribution to the local community. Thank you to CEO David Isbel, Executive Manager Katrina Ryan and the entire team for the warm welcome and for the important work you do in our region.

**SUE AND STEWART TAIT**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Stewart and Sue Tait who organised a charity golf day, hosted by Tallwoods Country Club to raise awareness of skin cancer and raise funds for the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. Following Stewart's own experience with both prostate and skin cancer and wanting to give back to the facility that provided his care, Stewart used the event to encourage conversations around sun safety -especially in regional areas. Guests heard from Professor Carsten Palme, head of surgical services at the Lifehouse, who shared insights into cancer prevention and treatment. A silent auction also took place, with signed sporting memorabilia and even a part share in a racehorse up for grabs. Although unfortunately the golf was washed out, I'm glad the luncheon still went ahead. I thank Stewart and Sue for using their personal journey to support others and for helping bring this important issue to the community.

**FORSTER TUNCURRY RSL SUB-BRANCH**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise the Forster Tuncurry RSL Sub-Branch for their role in bringing our community together on ANZAC Day. At the break of dawn, hundreds gathered at Lone Pine Memorial Park in Tuncurry for a moving service led by the Sub-Branch. The crowd stood in quiet reflection as prayers were read, wreaths were laid, and The Last Post was played. President Cecil Miller spoke of the ANZAC Spirit and its enduring place in our national identity. Later that morning, thousands lined Manning Street for the ANZAC Day march. Despite overcast skies, the turnout was strong - locals, visitors, school students, Scouts, Guides and veterans, including two from World War II, all took part. The parade was led by members of the 28 Army Cadet Unit from Taree. The efforts of the Forster Tuncurry RSL Sub-Branch help ensure the spirit of ANZAC lives on through our younger generations. I thank them for their work in preserving this important tradition in the Myall Lakes.

**MICHELLE ARMSTRONG BROOKLYN FC COMMUNITY RECOGNITION STATEMENT**

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)**—I rise to recognise and commend Michelle Armstrong, a remarkable community volunteer and the driving force behind the Brooklyn Football Club. Michelle began her journey with the club as equipment manager—often a behind-the-scenes role, but one that requires patience, precision, and dedication. Yet, Michelle's commitment didn't stop there. She took it upon herself to re-launch the club's canteen, transforming it from a modest operation into a reliable and vital source of revenue. Her initiative has made a lasting impact, helping the club grow and better serve its players and supporters. Beyond her official roles, Michelle has been a constant source of support for committee members and volunteers alike. She leads not for recognition, but out of a genuine love for her club and community. Her efforts have gone above and beyond, setting a standard of dedication and care that few can match. The Brooklyn Football Club is stronger today because



of Michelle's tireless work and unwavering belief in the power of local sport. I thank Michelle Armstrong for her outstanding service and for the energy and heart she continues to bring to the Hornsby community.

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