

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Tuesday 27 May 2025**

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

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

### *Announcements*

#### **HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS**

**The SPEAKER (12:02):** It has been a rather eventful time for many of our communities, particularly along the east and north coasts. A number of members are not at Parliament today because they are with their communities. I acknowledge all those who have been affected by the floods, the frontline service workers, our incredible volunteer army—who are still working today—and all of the local members who are working with their communities. I also acknowledge members of the ministry, the Premier and others who have spent a lot of time in affected areas. There is a lot more to be done in this space, and I am sure we will hear some of the incredible stories that have manifested from those circumstances. It is pleasing that most members can be here today, but I wish all the best to those members who are not.

### *Members*

#### **MEMBER FOR GOSFORD**

#### **MEMBER FOR SUMMER HILL**

#### **MEMBER FOR BANKSTOWN**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome the member for Gosford, who has been missed by members of the Assembly. We are really pleased to have her back. I also acknowledge her birthday; I am not quite sure when it was.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** It was 17 May.

**The SPEAKER:** Happy birthday to the member for Gosford. The member for Summer Hill and the member for Bankstown also had birthdays during the break.

### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** I welcome to the gallery Indian actresses Sargun Mehta and Nimrat Khaira, film director Dave Sidhu, Pritesh Raniga, Shraman Jain, Gurpreet Singh and Harjinder Singh, guests of the member for Leppington. I also welcome students and staff from the Georges River College Peakhurst Campus debating team, guests of the member for Oatley. I welcome members of Fusion Pride Northern Beaches, guests of the member for Wakehurst. I welcome students from Bowral High School, guests of the member for Wollondilly. I welcome Hayley Wilkinson and Kim Hill, guests of the member for Cootamundra. I welcome Isabel Lewis, Urs Wolfensberger and Leonie Scarlet, guests of the member for Pittwater. I welcome Adam Hall from the Health Services Union, a guest of the member for Keira. Finally, I welcome members of Lake Macquarie U3A, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie. To all those I did not name specifically, welcome to Australia's first Parliament and to question time in the Legislative Assembly.

### *Members*

#### **REPRESENTATION OF MINISTERS ABSENT DURING QUESTIONS**

**Mr RON HOENIG:** On behalf of Mr Chris Minns: I advise the House that the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice will answer questions this week in the absence of the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast.

*Bills***SCREEN AND DIGITAL GAMES INDUSTRIES BILL 2025****ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2025****COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS BILL 2025****Assent**

**The SPEAKER:** I report receipt of messages from the Governor notifying Her Excellency's assent to the bills.

*Question Time***HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (12:08):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the Government's flood recovery response for households, businesses and farmers in the Hunter and on the Mid North Coast?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:08):** That is a very reasonable question from the Leader of the Opposition. I appreciate him asking it. I also appreciate the help and dedication from Opposition members from affected electorates on the Mid North Coast: the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Oxley, the member for Coffs Harbour and the member for Port Macquarie, as well as their corresponding Federal MPs—I do not know all the electorates. They have been fantastic. Their communities have been wrecked and they have been pillars of rectitude. They have worked incredibly hard, in many cases getting their hands dirty while cleaning out the businesses of complete strangers. Members should note that and give them our warm and sincere best wishes in the days ahead.

I am sure every member of this House sends our deepest condolences to the families and friends of those who have died in the Hunter and on the Mid North Coast as a result of flooding. We also send our condolences to everyone who has had their business damaged, their home inundated or their future thrown into doubt by this disaster—that would be particularly acute. We also honour the courage, dedication and life-saving professionalism of our emergency services workers and volunteers. We do not know how bad this disaster would have been without them. While we are already mourning the loss of five people who perished as a result of the floods, I assure the House that without the heroic efforts of emergency services workers, including the SES, we would have lost hundreds of lives over the past week.

There are more than 5,000 representatives from local councils, electricity utilities and emergency services on the ground at the moment. That figure includes 2,200 SES volunteers, 350 volunteers from the RFS, and people from many other government agencies and not-for-profit groups. VRA Rescue NSW is there, along with Fire and Rescue NSW. They have been involved in many things over the past week—everything from doorknocking households that were on the brink of being inundated with floodwater to executing incredibly complicated rescue operations. I inform the House that there were 800 rescue operations over that three-day period. Many of those operations involved plucking individuals from raging rivers, with rescuers put in incredible danger as they dangled from the side of a helicopter to pull an individual to safety. They went into houses that had been inundated and found people in the roof cavity. In one instance, they rescued an entire family from the floodwater. It was an incredible logistical operation. [*Extension of time*]

I acknowledge a volunteer named Josh Hurst. He is 23 years old, and last week he was due to receive the NSW SES Young Volunteer of the Year award in Sydney. At 3.30 a.m. on the day of the awards ceremony, he was asked whether he could go to Taree instead. At five o'clock he was on the road, driving up the Pacific Highway on the way to Taree. Not long after that he was piloting flood boats, helping with evacuations and rescuing people. He missed out on his award ceremony because he was one of the thousands of people who would rather put their community first. Of course, they were total strangers—he did not know who they were but felt it was his civic duty to help. His interest in doing something for the public was incredible. Josh Hurst was not alone; so many heroic people have put their own lives in danger to rescue complete strangers. Many of those volunteers are with the SES, but spontaneous volunteers have also come to assist the community.

The Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Recovery, along with me and many of our other ministerial colleagues, have been working with those groups over the past week. We know that there is a long way to go towards recovery. As the Minister for Recovery said about the Lismore floods, these recoveries have a long tail. We need to walk hand in hand with communities on the Mid North Coast and in the Upper Hunter as they repair, so that they can get back on their feet. We need to answer some substantial questions, particularly in relation to insurance and how we deal with an increasing number of natural disasters in the years ahead. But one

thing that cannot be faulted is the dedication and the heroic nature of the volunteers in New South Wales, and we thank them for it.

### HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (12:13):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on the latest information regarding the flooding emergency facing the Mid North Coast and parts of the Hunter?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:14):** I will not detain the House much longer, given that this question is similar to the previous one. The Prime Minister is on the ground on the Mid North Coast today. He is announcing further substantial grants for communities that have been impacted, particularly those that have had to evacuate. Personal hardship grants have been announced by the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, as well as disaster recovery funding. Those who are out of work can apply for income support payments via a Federal Government subsidy. The key remaining element is business support. We want to put a package on the table that gets small businesses, which are the backbone of regional economies, back on their feet.

We have not delayed that package. The nature of this emergency is such that about 7,000 homes are still isolated and completely cut off from the rest of the community. An assessment is being undertaken as we speak by Mal Lanyon and the disaster recovery agency, and we will have more to say about getting businesses back on their feet in a few days time. Again, I note the help and support of local members of Parliament. They have been exemplary on the ground in the immediate aftermath and often during the middle of the flood emergency. We thank them for their cooperation during this period, and we want to walk the road to recovery together with communities on the Mid North Coast.

### HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (12:15):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Government ensure that the Macleay, Hastings and Manning valleys each have their own recovery coordinator, rather than centralised coordination out of Sydney or the Hunter?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:15):** That logistical question has not been raised with me before. I will not automatically dismiss it, but I would need to be convinced that that was better than having a central agency run by someone with experience, like Mal Lanyon, to drive the reconstruction of the Mid North Coast. I say that for a very specific reason. As we have more natural disasters, one of the things that we need to get better at is learning the lessons from the previous ones, whether that is disaster recovery assistance, better pre-positioning for emergency services in flood-affected communities or learning the lessons from Lismore and ensuring that we have a clear hierarchy and sequence of rescue operations.

As I have reiterated many times in press conferences over the past three days, the highest priority is rescuing those at imminent risk of death. The second priority is providing food and shelter for communities that have been displaced. The third priority is reconstruction and assisting those communities to recover. We cannot put the third priority before the first. We have to explain to the public that SES personnel have an order and hierarchy for the deployment of resources. Generally speaking, there is widespread acceptance of that, but it is, perhaps, a different way of approaching disasters to the approach used in Lismore. We must acknowledge that the previous Government adopted most of those changes, and the new commissioner for the SES is doing just that.

I will look at the specific proposal put forward by the member for Coffs Harbour, but I want to make sure that no community is left behind and that someone is looking at where logistical support from the State, local and Federal governments can be deployed. I need to be convinced that it would be better to have three ports of call rather than a single entity making those decisions. I must say—and I think members would agree—that we have a lot of confidence in Mal Lanyon to get that job done.

### WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (12:17):** My question is addressed to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney. Will the Deputy Premier update the House on the importance of the Minns Labor Government's plan to invest in essential infrastructure across Western Sydney?

**Ms PRUE CAR (Londonderry—Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney) (12:18):** I thank the member for Liverpool for her important question. She is a committed advocate for essential infrastructure in her community in south-west Sydney. I have been privileged to do a lot of work with the member and her community in building essential infrastructure in Liverpool, particularly for education. One example that immediately comes to mind is bringing Liverpool Girls High School and Liverpool Boys High School together as one co-ed opportunity. That decision follows extensive local consultation.

The combined school will receive an extensive infrastructure upgrade as a result, including new classrooms, a new library, a new hall, and new sports courts and fields.

On top of that, the Government is delivering five new public preschools in the Liverpool area. Gulyangarri Public Preschool at Liverpool is the first that the Government opened. It is in a brand-new school in an area with a huge demand that was not being met through previous investments, or the lack thereof. Contracts have been awarded for the Cartwright, Heckenberg, Cecil Hills and Miller public preschools. In fact, the Government is building 51 new public preschools across the Western Sydney areas with booming populations that many of us represent.

The member's question is about essential infrastructure and, for this Government, the building of early childhood education and care facilities is essential infrastructure. It goes to the heart of getting mum and dad into the workforce as well as getting our kids off to the right start on their educational journeys, even before they start kindergarten. The Liberal-Nationals Government did not build one new public preschool in 12 years. In a unique set of circumstances whereby it racked up the largest debt handed from one government to another and lost one of our triple-A credit ratings, it did not build the public preschools that were needed. And that is before we get to the lack of school building that communities in growing areas have fought for and that many of us from booming parts of Western Sydney know about very well. In reality, it takes a special collection of parties to rack up that sort of debt, lose a credit rating, not build schools and then claim it has wonderful financial and budget management. [*Extension of time*]

That takes a unique combination of arrogance and incompetence, but everyone, including the Liberals, is coming to the conclusion that the Liberal Party is pretty unique. Despite the fiscal challenges that we face in New South Wales, the Government is getting on with the job of building the essential infrastructure that our communities in Western Sydney need. Regarding hospitals, there is the \$350 million redevelopment of Canterbury Hospital, the biggest upgrade in 26 years; the \$120 million to expand Mount Druitt and Blacktown hospitals; and, of course, in north-west Sydney we are finally building the long-awaited Rouse Hill Hospital that our communities have demanded for so long. The only money the previous Government spent was on shovels to turn the sod again during every election campaign.

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order.

**Ms PRUE CAR:** At every election campaign there were new gold shovels for the member for Kellyville to turn the sod, and that was the only investment. You heard it here first. In education, in the same community, we are investing in schools at Box Hill, Marsden Park, Castle Hill, Melonba and Jordan Springs. The Coalition kept saying we did not need investment in schools in those areas, but blind Freddy and everyone living in those communities could see we did. What did the Coalition give us? We are learning every day that the school infrastructure it gave us was what PwC advised: Build schools without any walls, like at Picton, so while kids are being taught algebra someone behind them is being taught French or Japanese. That is not going to work, and the Government is investing in essential infrastructure, including school infrastructure, in the Western Sydney areas that need it.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Badgerys Creek will come to order.

### WATER OWNERSHIP

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:23):** My question is directed to the Premier. In October last year rural New South Wales breathed a sigh of relief when a law was passed to create a water register that would stop criminals and foreign governments from secretly buying New South Wales water. But since the laws were passed last year, nothing has happened. Will the Premier tell the people of New South Wales when that register will be up and running?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:23):** I thank the member for her question and for her long-running interest in water matters across New South Wales. The bill that passed was a sensible step towards transparency and accountability in water management in New South Wales. It has traditionally been an incredibly opaque marketplace, but was radically changed as a result of the bill. Two elements required changes before it could be implemented in New South Wales because this is still a dynamic marketplace, and we do not want it to be interrupted whilst regulatory reform is introduced. The first requires the Federal Government to make changes, and I assure the House that we are urgently attempting to get the Federal water Minister to make the accompanying changes. I am not sure whether that is by regulation or legislation, but I have been advised that it is the first step. The second element is the changes in New South Wales around transparency and accountability, and this Government is attempting to make those changes. That is taking a little bit of time because, obviously, custom and practice is radically different as a result of the bill. But I have spoken to the Minister for Water, and she is

hopeful, assuming the Commonwealth Government makes the associated changes, that we can have it up and running by October.

### ORGANISED CRIME

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (12:25):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the NSW Police Force to crack down on organised crime in our communities?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (12:25):** I thank the member for Parramatta for her question. This Government's number one priority is community safety. Nothing is as important to us as making sure that our State is safe from organised crime. The violence that we see on our streets is absolutely horrific, and we will not put up with it. We will not tolerate lawless thugs with vendettas against each other putting innocent victims' lives at risk. I advise the House that Deputy Commissioner David Hudson, Detective Superintendent Jason Box and I today announced that New South Wales has set up Taskforce Falcon to tackle those horrendous crimes. It will be led by the State Crime Command, joined by the NSW Crime Commission, to oversee a number of investigations into public place shootings, arson attacks and kidnappings, dating back to December 2024.

It will consist of more than 150 officers, including detectives already assigned to various strike forces as well as new detectives. We will see 100 of the best detectives in New South Wales on this taskforce, and 40 to 50 field officers will join them. That is a boost of 90 investigating staff that will make up this proactive arm and operation for the safety of New South Wales. The taskforce will oversee 13 different strike forces currently investigating crime in New South Wales. Taskforce Falcon is modelled on Taskforce Erebus and Taskforce Magnus and will be overseen by Detective Superintendent Jason Box, one of the best in the business. We will not tolerate lawless thugs playing out their vendettas on our streets. It is sickening and barbaric when innocent people get caught up and are made to suffer. As I have said, Taskforce Falcon is modelled on Taskforce Magnus, which was set up when we saw a similar spate of shootings on our streets in 2023. [*Extension of time*]

I remind the House of the success of Taskforce Magnus at that time. It drew upon the experience of 54 detectives from specialist commands and from the field. It made 568 arrests and laid 3½ thousand charges. It executed 311 firearms prohibition orders, or FPOs, and 162 search warrants. It seized \$5.7 million worth of prohibited drugs, \$1.9 million in cash and 64 cars, as well as other proceeds of crime.

New South Wales has the best in the business when it comes to fighting crime. Our detectives in the NSW Police Force will leave no stone unturned to make sure that these crooks are caught and off our streets. As I said today—and I will say it again now—the police will go out there and ferociously hunt those crooks down. Let me tell them: You will end up in a small cell for a long time. I also say this to others: If you choose to be part of an organised gang, think twice, because either you will get caught up and end up in a morgue or, again, the New South Wales police will make sure that you end up in a cell. We will not tolerate this. We will stand with our community and make sure they feel safe. I thank the member for Parramatta for her question, her hard work and her support of the police in her local area and in New South Wales.

### HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (12:30):** My question is directed to the Premier. Given the devastation to farming and business communities on the Mid North Coast, and the Premier's previous answer, will he clarify when category C funding will be declared?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:30):** That is agricultural, business and support. I cannot give the member for Tweed a date but I assure him that we are working on it at the moment. Part of that is ensuring that we coordinate with the Commonwealth Government and that we get it right. It is not a criticism of anyone, but during the Northern Rivers emergency, despite everybody's laudable attempts to ensure that money flowed in the right direction, I do not think we or the previous Government got it exactly right. It did not help for the businesses that desperately needed help that the criteria were probably too tight in some circumstances and did not work in others. The support is imminent. It is not far away, but I do not have an announcement today. I am conscious of what community leaders, local mayors and local MPs have told me: When there is advice from the Government, the community wants it to be precise and accurate so there is no confusion. I am not trying to drag this out. As soon as we get a landing, we will announce it.

### ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER HEALTH CARE

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (21:31):** My question is addressed to the Minister of Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister please update on the Minns Labor Government's plan to make it easier for families to access ADHD health care?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:32):** I thank the member for Heathcote. We represent neighbouring electorates, and it was great to be in her electorate yesterday to talk about this important reform, which I know she strongly supports. The House may be aware—and particular regional and rural MPs will certainly be aware—that, for people and young children with an ADHD diagnosis, accessing care in terms of psychological support and diagnosis, as well as ongoing prescription medication, is a challenge. In fact, over the past two years, the Minister for Mental Health and I have heard from countless families and parents about waiting sometimes years to access those diagnostic appointments, to ensure that their children get on a path of treatment to help them grow, develop and function. Misdiagnosed, ADHD can have huge impacts on a person's schooling, particularly for a young person. We owe it to that generation to do what we can to ensure that families can access support.

With that challenge in mind, of people waiting sometimes years and paying sometimes thousands of dollars, the New South Wales Government has leant into a reform to ensure that our highly trained, skilled and valued GPs can begin to undertake that work. Over the next few months we will train up to 1,000 GPs who will be put in place to provide that ongoing medication so people do not need to find a specialist to get ongoing prescriptions for drugs to deal with an ADHD diagnosis. In addition, a smaller portion of them will be able to diagnose. That will involve additional training but, as a result, people will be able to access care closer to home. This is a seismic shift in the way we deal with ADHD, a condition that we estimate impacts around 6 per cent to 10 per cent of children and adolescents. This is an important reform. It is backed, importantly, by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners [RACGP] and Dr Rebekah Hoffman, who has been calling on the Government to do this for some time. [*Extension of time*]

I thank Rebekah and the team from the RACGP for their longstanding advocacy. I acknowledge what is perhaps their frustration that it has taken so long. It beggars belief that Opposition members would oppose this reform. But I do not understand them, whatever they say. As a health Minister, I find difficult to believe the opposition to something that is supported by the RACGP and that will ensure that men, women and children have access to a faster, cheaper and more accessible diagnosis, particularly in regional and rural communities. But that is what has happened. Many members in this place have raised this issue with me over the past two years. I assure them and their communities that making health care as accessible as possible is critical to me and this Government. Expanding the scope of practice of our healthcare professionals is critical. We are doing it in pharmacy. The Health Services Union is in the public gallery today. We are doing it with our paramedics, and now we are doing it with that most trusted of professions, our GPs. We will continue to do it.

I acknowledge the work of the Minister for Mental Health, who has been a tireless advocate for this reform. I acknowledge her longstanding work in this space. I conclude my answer with this, which I want the Opposition to think about. Yesterday I met with Neridah Armstrong. She has a child, Andrew, who has ADHD. Her quote was a simple one. She said to me that this announcement will make thousands of families across New South Wales finally seen and heard. I assure Neridah and all those families and parents that the New South Wales Labor Government sees them and hears them.

#### HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (12:37):** My question is directed to the Premier. I ask it on behalf of the member for Myall Lakes, who is not here but slogging her guts out in her electorate with her community. She is doing a wonderful job. The closure of the Farquhar Inlet has previously been identified as exacerbating flooding. In 2022 the now police Minister said, "I have read about the problem and it is therefore the State's responsibility to get this done." Will the Premier commit his Government to keeping Farquhar Inlet, which is the southern channel of the Manning Valley, permanently open?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:38):** I admit that I did not know of the Farquhar Inlet until the member for Myall Lakes and some local community representatives talked to me about it in Taree on Saturday afternoon. My understanding is that there is a longstanding, perennial issue. One senior member of the local community told me that he had been fighting for a change from the previous Government and the local council for a long time—maybe over a decade.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** Stephen Bromhead advocated for it.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** That is right. The former local member called for change. It did not come about for a long time. I have to take it on board. I do not profess to be an expert on what it would mean, but all solutions are on the table. Obviously, if we can take measures to mitigate the impact of flooding and natural disasters on local communities, I will take that on board.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (12:39):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on the New South Wales Government's response to the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council's annual *State of the Housing System* report?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (12:39):** I thank the member for Strathfield for his question and his longstanding interest in trying to address the intergenerational inequity that has been created by not only years but decades of not building enough homes in New South Wales. I do not think we can put any clearer description of what has happened. Last week the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council released its second report on the *State of the Housing System* across the country. The report identifies some structural constraints, such as the need for a bigger workforce to deliver homes, fragmented and high land costs, a lack of innovation within the construction industry, the need for further interest rate cuts and the need to increase pre-sales as some of the principal barriers to supply.

These things are slowly improving. Macroeconomic conditions are getting better and we have recently seen a small interest rate reduction. This range of measures will help encourage housing affordability, particularly housing supply. Indeed, the council chair, Susan Lloyd-Hurwitz, has reflected that measures like rezoning for greater housing around transport hubs, as has occurred in New South Wales, mean she is more optimistic than she was a year ago. In fact, she said, "It's great to have policy going in the right direction." It is also clear that the industry is responding.

We have seen increased investment in social and affordable housing because of the measures introduced by the Minns Government. These include more self-approval powers and faster rezoning assessment pathways for government agencies like Landcom and Homes NSW to get social and affordable housing delivered more quickly. Then there is our in-fill affordable housing bonus policy that offers additional building height and floor space ratio if at least 10 per cent of the building is retained as affordable housing for at least 15 years. I am pleased to report that this has produced a strong response, with more than 50 secretary's environmental assessment requirements issued, 28 environmental impact statements lodged and 11 projects approved already.

That means that, between them, 586 more affordable housing dwellings have been approved and there is the potential for more than 3,000 on the way. It is a good change and a positive change. For the first time in New South Wales' history the Minns Government has introduced inclusionary zoning around transport oriented development areas, where we have a minimum requirement for affordable housing in new developments. We have made the biggest investment in New South Wales in social housing builds, with \$6.1 billion invested in the last budget into Homes NSW to build new social housing and repair existing housing. [*Extension of time*]

We are seeing improvements in lodgement, approvals and completions. Planning approvals are now 15 per cent faster than under the former Government. We have had nearly 85,000 lodgements as of May this year, an increase of 28 per cent compared to the same period last year. In fact, lodgements this financial year have already outperformed and exceeded lodgements last financial year. There is plenty of supply coming through that pipeline. The report also indicates that if our transport oriented development and low- and mid-rise reforms are included—which they were not—in the New South Wales assessment, we could meet our housing supply share under the housing accord. The report also recognises that the Housing Delivery Authority is starting to streamline development of major projects. Let's remember that the authority was only set up in January this year but, as of last night, when I made the latest declaration, I have declared 116 proposals to be State significant development. Between them, that is more than 45,000 new homes.

There is also a range of support for renters. We have ended no-grounds evictions—well done to the Minister for Better Regulation and Fair Trading—and limited rent increases to once a year. We have allowed pets in rentals, to make it easier, and for the first time ever we will have a portable bonds scheme. These are all the sorts of recommendations around housing that the National Housing Supply and Affordability Council wants to see achieved. The chair said, "This is a crisis that is decades in the making. It is going to take a concerted effort to turn around the lack of supply." It will take time. We have more reform coming down the pipeline. I would encourage anyone who is genuinely concerned about the future of the kids in our society and the future of jobs in this city to get behind the next lot of reforms the New South Wales Government will introduce.

## HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (12:45):** My question is directed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health, representing the Minister for Mental Health. Given the scale of the natural disaster on the Mid North Coast and its impact on farming communities, will the Minister this week commit to extending funding for farmgate counsellors and frontline mental health services for farmers beyond 30 June?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (12:45):** I thank the member for Hawkesbury for her question. This issue was raised with me in this place the week before last by the member for Coffs Harbour. I have spoken to the Minister for Mental Health, as I committed to do. I state clearly that the Minister for Mental Health is working through this issue as part of the preparation of the budget. I also make clear that we are providing, as a health service, additional mental health support for those impacted by this disaster.

This is a catastrophic event for people of the Hunter and the Mid North Coast. Having seen a similar event impact my community in 1998, I know that the impacts will be long and difficult, and we will need to support those communities for a long time. After the clean-up, there is the recovery. But for farm owners and those who work on properties, in farming and in agribusiness, those impacts can be very long. Their clean-up is far greater, because they have lost stock, crops, equipment and, in many cases, their livelihood. It is not possible for them to simply go back to work when it stops raining. For those of us who are not in agribusiness and farming, to be blunt, that is a difficult thing to understand. But for communities impacted by this disaster, that is real.

I give the House an assurance that that particular program is personally important to the Minister for Mental Health. I am confident that she will continue to work through the budget process and highlight the importance of that support. As the Premier and others have stated clearly over the past week or so, we will be there for the long term. That is clear to everybody, regardless of where and how a person voted. We are not interested in that. We are interested in making sure that we can provide the support on the ground. That support will impact budgets, and that is simply too bad, because we are a government that is all about putting people before budgets, and we will do that now. But it is going to be a challenge. We are working through that particular program. We will continue to work through that program going forward. I am confident that the Minister for Mental Health understands the importance of that.

#### HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (12:48):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on the work of the State's emergency service workers and volunteers enduring the current flood events across the State, including floods on the Central Coast and the Mid North Coast, and in the Hunter?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:49):** I thank the member for The Entrance for his question. His local community is also going through flooding, and we had a phone call with him the other day about the impact. A lot has been said about what has happened over the past week or so, especially in the Hunter Valley and on the Mid North Coast. Rather than reiterate all of those points, I tell some inspiring stories about where we are as a State and who we are as a people, because we do not talk often enough about the difference that people make. The Premier talked about the impact of the floods. Over 500 millimetres of rain fell in multiple places, breaking a record that stood for well over 100 years. It fell on already-saturated grounds and swollen rivers, and the water had nowhere to go.

When I first became the Minister for Emergency Services, I said, "We want to get better at the way we respond." I am really pleased to say that Government members are doing our best to work towards that, but there will always be things that we could do better. I developed the State Disaster Mitigation Plan, with the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, which looks at what we can do better. The weather is obviously the one thing that we cannot change, but we can change its impact and the way we respond. The Premier and I spent the week on the Mid North Coast and were constantly inspired by the community, the volunteers and the emergency services. All the local MPs in that area have done and continue to do amazing work. That includes the member for Port Stephens, who I believe was isolated at one stage as well; the member for Maitland, whom I thank for her help with the roads; and, of course, a number of local MPs who are still with their communities.

I single out the member for Myall Lakes for her work and her continued personal contact, as well as the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Oxley, the member for the Upper Hunter—whose electorate was quite badly affected—and the member for Coffs Harbour. Out of 2,800-odd SES personnel, 2,200 were volunteers. Let us stop to consider that for a minute. The 2,200 volunteers from the SES left their families, communities and workplaces to support others in their time of need. They were joined by the RFS, Fire and Rescue, Marine Rescue NSW, Surf Life Saving NSW, the ambos, the police, St Johns—every single one of our agencies that wanted to make a difference to our communities. [*Extension of time*]

I said that my answer would be about the inspirational stories of people who not only put out warnings but also supported communities. We got warnings out really early in various little communities in an area where over 60,000 people were isolated at some point, even if they were not necessarily in danger. We worked together across government, whether it was Minister Jackson and the Department of Communities and Justice making sure the



evacuation centres were all right, or Minister Moriarty making sure there was a fodder after a conversation I had with the member for Oxley.

I also acknowledge the community. The spontaneous volunteering that we were inspired to see after the Lismore floods is being seen once again. I acknowledge Holly Rankin and thank her for setting up the MidCoast Community Flood Response group. I told her it was a long name. Not only can people register to volunteer on its website, but also every single person who needs help can say, "This is what help I need." The community will be there for the long run, but others from around the State who want to help are also going there to make a difference. Commissioner Mike Wassing and the SES—for whom we all wore orange last week—magnificently led the work with all of our different agencies.

I thank all the people who are still working to help communities clean up and rebuild lives. I thank all those who are providing donations, spontaneously volunteering and passing on messages of support. I could not finish without acknowledging and offering my deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives. The loss of every single life is a tragedy, and we have lost a few. We hope not to lose anyone in natural disasters, but we managed to save a lot of people through rescue efforts. I thank all those who are on the Mid North Coast and in the Hunter Valley for the work they are doing. We will stand strong together and we will get through it.

### GREAT KOALA NATIONAL PARK

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:54):** My question is directed to the Premier. Will the Premier deliver on the Government's election promise to create the Great Koala National Park, which will bring new tourism opportunities and protect habitat for almost 20 per cent of the State's wild koalas, by declaring the full 176,000 hectares of the park?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (12:54):** I thank the member for Sydney for his question. Before I answer it, I acknowledge the answer from the Minister for Emergency Services about the flood recovery effort. I have been informed by the NSW Reconstruction Authority that 10,000 cubic metres of waste has already been removed from the affected area, which is the equivalent of a thousand truckloads. We want it all removed as quickly as possible. We really appreciate the Australian Defence Force being onsite as well. When many people come into a small space, housing, logistics and transport have to be managed to make sure that everyone is not running over each other's feet. I assure the House that those are the latest figures.

I take the question from the member for Sydney very seriously. Government members made the commitment to create the Great Koala National Park at the last election and are determined to deliver it. It is not an easy policy to land. We acknowledge that the consultation between us and affected parties is extensive. Local industry, local communities, local government, environmental groups and First Nations people all have a stake in it. I acknowledge that the member for Sydney, the member for Pittwater and the member for Wakehurst recently heard firsthand from the community on the Northern Rivers and the Mid North Coast, which sounds like a fun trip to go on and a good group of people to travel with. Some may think that I am trying to drag this answer out because of the time, but I note that the Leader of the House asked the Minister for Emergency Services, "Do you think you can take the full five minutes?" The Minister for Emergency Services said, "No problem at all—I planned on taking every one of those five minutes."

We are looking at the issue very closely. We think that it is important that that change in policy take place. It is clear that the industry package will be a big part of it, and part of our negotiation has been on that particular issue. Members would appreciate that right at this moment, some of the communities in the Mid North Coast area have been hit really hard by natural disaster. I hope that does not push our timeline too far back, but we do have to take that into consideration. I know that this has been a hot topic in the House. I remember the Leader of the National Party pushing through legislation that would have watered down regulation of forestry operations impacting koala habitat. [*Extension of time*]

The member for Tweed made an extraordinary contribution to debate in the House in which he said that he had worked very hard to ensure that the former Government doubled the conservation area for koalas and established a koala hospital. But he said that if a bill was introduced to the Parliament, he would not support it, which I honestly thought was a brave contribution to that debate. The member for North Sydney has also been very vocal, as have other members of the Coalition over a prolonged period. We want to make sure that the Great Koala National Park goes ahead. We need to put a package in place that manages the competing interests on the Mid North Coast and the North Coast as well as possible. The sad truth is that koalas will become extinct in the wild by 2050 if no action is taken. They were listed as endangered in 2022, and we want to protect this most important of national icons.

## HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (12:59):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's ongoing work with Transport for NSW to support flood-impacted communities in parts of the Hunter and Mid North Coast?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (12:59):** It is great to have the member for Gosford back in the House. I start by acknowledging the tragic deaths that have occurred in recent days. My heart goes out to the families and communities impacted. I totally endorse all of the comments made by the Minister for Emergency Services and, of course, the Premier on this matter. I am speaking on this issue both as a local member and a Minister, because my community has been affected. Over the past couple of days, I have spent time in Taree, Kempsey, Port Stephens, Hinton and other communities. Seeing those local people working so hard has been really inspiring.

My voice is probably not going to make it through the next five minutes, but I will try because I want to talk about the important work that all the emergency services have been doing. In particular, I recognise Transport for NSW. As of today, more than 1,500 people from Transport—contractors and staff—are on the ground, and more than 650 road crews, partners and contractors have been working day and night to restore access to the roads. Crews have removed more than 1,500 tonnes of debris from the State network. In addition, staff have also been working on major projects to keep them safe. NSW Maritime staff have also been on the ground, helping with the rescue crews. That has been really important. They have done 196 shifts. There have been 3,700 live traffic updates. Some were minor notifications, for example, that there was water over the road, some were for lane restrictions or road closures, and some were for events like the one in Wingham yesterday, where Bight Bridge is completely gone.

I acknowledge the member for Oxley, the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Port Macquarie. I have reached out to all Federal, State and local members. A Transport for NSW staff member is up there working with councils. One thing we have been really clear on is that we want to escalate the recovery much better than we did in previous events. We have set up a natural disaster recovery and resilience team in Transport. We understand the funding issues that councils have.

**Ms Liesl Tesch:** I also received a text from the Minister and her team asking whether we needed help in the Gosford electorate, as did many of my colleagues. I am sure all members appreciate the work she is doing. I would like to hear a little bit more.

**The SPEAKER:** I will let the member for Gosford editorialise a little bit as she has been away. I thought the member might have had a mercy clause for the Minister who is obviously struggling. An additional two minutes is granted.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** What I am struggling with is nothing compared to what members and their communities are struggling with. In my community, people are really angry because there is floodwater everywhere. It is so frustrating. Those live traffic notifications are so important, and we need people to keep complying with them. When we have roads that have literally become rivers it is important for that sacrificial work to ensure that the roads go under, not people's houses. It is a difficult situation.

Returning to the money going to councils, we have more than quadrupled the pace of money going out for recoveries from the 2022 events. We will continue that work with this new event. As the Premier said, it is about saving lives, getting people to food and shelter and then starting the clean-up. In Transport for NSW we are focused on the clean-up. It will happen in the river system; it will happen on the roads. We know there is a massive amount of work to do. I thank everyone who has been involved. There have been more than 7,600 incidents and, as the Premier said, 800 flood rescues this month.

I would like to use the remainder of my time to I acknowledge and recognise the Premier. He is a very modest person and he will hate it, but he has spent days in my electorate. The Prime Minister and the Premier made three attempts to get up to Taree before they finally got there. The work the Premier has put in has made a world of difference. He has spoken to many in the community and has actively listened to their concerns. When I look back at what happened to me as a new member—when my community went underwater for 10 days—and the way I was treated, I cannot fault our Premier. All of us are leaning in. We do not care how communities vote; we are here for all people. We just want New South Wales to recover. Our hearts go out to everyone who has lost someone and to everyone who has lost something—that is hard too.

*Documents***INFORMATION PRIVACY COMMISSIONER****Reports**

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with the Government Information (Information Commissioner) Act 2009, I announce receipt of the report of the Information and Privacy Commission entitled *Report on the Operation of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009: 2023-24*, received out of session on 20 May 2025. I order that the document be printed.

**AUDITOR-GENERAL****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the following:

- (1) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Emergency relief grants*, dated 20 May 2025, received out of session and authorised to be printed.
- (2) Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Government Advertising 2023-24*, dated 27 May 2025, received out of session and authorised to be printed.

*Committees***LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****Government Response**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 3/58 of the Committee on Transport and Infrastructure entitled *Critical transport infrastructure supporting the Western Sydney International Airport and Western Sydney Aerotropolis*, dated November 2024, received out of session on 20 May 2025 and authorised to be printed.

*Documents***NSW STATE CORONER****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Coroners Act 2009, I announce receipt of the report by the NSW State Coroner entitled *Deaths in Custody/Police Operations for the year 2024*, received out of session on 21 May 2025 and authorised to be printed.

**NSW ANTI-SLAVERY COMMISSIONER****Reports**

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2018, I announce receipt of the report of the Office of the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner entitled *Managing modern slavery risks in NSW government procurement of electric vehicles – Report 1: Which Steps Are Reasonable?*, dated May 2025, received out of session on 21 May 2025 and authorised to be printed.

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

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of the report No. 3/58 of the Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health entitled *Final Report - The implementation of recommendations relating to cross-jurisdictional health reform and government consultation with remote, rural and regional communities*, dated May 2025, received out of session on 22 May 2025 and authorised to be printed.

**COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE****Government Response**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of the Government's response to report No. 1/58 of the Committee on Children and Young People entitled *2024 review of the annual reports and other matters of the Office of the*

*Advocate for Children and Young People and the Office of the Children's Guardian*, dated November 2024, received out of session on 26 May 2025 and authorised to be printed.

## LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

### Reports

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ:** As Chair: I table the report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 30/58*, dated 27 May 2025. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

## PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

### Reports

**Mr JASON LI:** As Chair: I table the report No. 4/58 of the Public Accounts Committee entitled *Assets, premises and funding of the NSW Rural Fire Service*, dated May 2025. I move:

That the report be printed.

**Motion agreed to.**

## COMMITTEE ON AGEING AND DISABILITY

### Chair

**The SPEAKER:** In accordance with standing order 282 (2), I advise the House that on 26 May 2026, the Hon. Cameron Murphy, MLC, was elected Chair of the committee.

### *Petitions*

## PETITIONS RECEIVED

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

### **Ausgrid Cable Replacement Belrose**

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to support replacing cables at Ralston Avenue, Belrose, underground instead of with above-ground poles as proposed by Ausgrid, and to advise the community of this change, presented by **Mr Matt Cross**.

### **Psychiatry Workforce**

Petition requesting that the Legislative Assembly call on the Government to work with the Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation to ensure New South Wales psychiatrists have pay parity with other States, fill vacant psychiatry roles, and create sustainable working conditions for psychiatrists, presented by **Ms Robyn Preston**.

### *Business of the House*

## BUSINESS LAPSED

**The SPEAKER:** I advise the House that in accordance with Standing Order 105, general business notices of motions (general notices) Nos 2777 to 2868, and general business orders of the day for the Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests) Bill 2024, the Roads Amendment (Wildlife Impacts) Bill 2024 and the Health Services Amendment (Hospital helipads) Bill 2024 have lapsed. I order that a message be sent informing the Legislative Council of the lapsing of the Local Government Amendment (Pecuniary Interests) Bill 2024.

[*Notices of motions given.*]

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

### *Bills*

## WORKERS COMPENSATION LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2025

### First Reading

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

## Second Reading Speech

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (14:32):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Workers Compensation Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 introduces a new, modernised legislative framework to deal with psychological injury in New South Wales workers compensation schemes. It also provides for a series of system improvements intended to enhance efficiency, streamline processes and strengthen the integrity of workers compensation across the State. The bill is part of the Government's roadmap to establish an innovative, end-to-end systems approach. This will align workers compensation, industrial relations and workplace health and safety to achieve better outcomes for the workers and employers of New South Wales.

That is why, in addition to this bill, the Government is providing \$344 million to improve workplace health, including more than 50 new workplace inspectors. The bill was informed by the final report of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice inquiry into proposed changes to liability and entitlements for psychological injury in New South Wales. We thank the committee for its report, and for canvassing the views of stakeholders. We appreciate the considered and comprehensive contributions.

The new legislative framework introduces new definitions and objective tests to determine whether a psychological injury is compensable; establishes an accelerated process for assessing psychological injury claims for excessive work demands, bullying and racial and sexual harassment; introduces a greater degree of objectivity in the application of the employer defence for work-related psychological injuries; provides a new role for the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission; ensures workers with severe psychological injuries will continue to access lifetime medical treatment and care and weekly payments until retirement; limits the duration of weekly payments for all other workers with a primary psychological injury up to 130 weeks; and gives effect to a stepped increase in permanent impairment threshold to access ongoing weekly payments, work injury damages, permanent impairment lump sums and commutations.

Up until now, "psychological injury" has been left largely undefined in the workers compensation Acts. This bill introduces new definitions for psychological injuries to make sure workers and employers have certainty on what the scheme protects. Clear definitions will mean less time spent on disputes and more time on prevention. Employers and workers will know where they stand on their obligations. For a primary psychological injury to be a compensable injury, the injury must be caused by events or behaviours prescribed in the law. The relevant event that caused the injury must have a real and direct connection with employment. A real and direct connection does not necessarily mean the relevant event has to occur in the physical workplace. New evidentiary requirements will support insurers to make objective and timely decisions in relation to claims. Relevant events include but are not limited to bullying, sexual harassment and indictable criminal conduct, including threats of violence and assault.

The intent is to target workers compensation towards events and behaviours that an ordinary person would reasonably expect to cause a compensable injury. In no uncertain terms, this bill preserves compensation for PTSD caused by trauma or exposure to traumatic events. This includes a worker arriving on the scene of horrific accidents, and exposure to other traumatic events. The bill expressly covers injuries caused by the psychological impact of repeated exposure in the course of a worker's duties to the traumatic experiences of others that result from traumatic incidents. This can include a supervisor who is repeatedly exposed to the traumatic experience of others. The Government recognises that being required to perform excessive amounts of work beyond normal requirements can result in a workplace injury, so a new relevant event was created to ensure workers who suffer psychological injuries caused by excessive work demands will be able to claim compensation and receive the support they need.

The excessive work demand provision will enable compensation for injuries caused by work demands that are beyond the typical or usual expectations of a worker's role, and that are repeated, persistent and not reasonable in all the circumstances. The bill embeds objective decision-making when determining whether a relevant event has occurred to increase confidence in the schemes. The bill introduces an objective test to determine whether bullying, excessive work demands, and racial or sexual harassment have occurred. This reduces reliance on the worker's perception as to whether relevant conduct has occurred. The bill establishes definitions for bullying, sexual harassment and racial harassment and outlines the matters that must be considered when determining whether demands made of a worker are excessive work demands.

The reforms will provide employers and workers with greater certainty around what is acceptable in the workplace, and will promote objective decision-making for claims of this nature. Work stress and interpersonal conflict that is not bullying, harassment or an excessive work demand will not be compensable. Workers compensation is to protect against unexpected, unacceptable and unforeseen risk. Interpersonal conflict and work stress are typical and reasonably expected to occur on almost a daily basis in all modern workplaces. In contrast,

bullying, excessive work demands, racial harassment or sexual harassment are unacceptable in any workplace and should never be expected.

The bill amends the employer defences to psychological injury claims that were the result of reasonable management action. The amendments will provide clarity to workers and employers on when the defence applies and will introduce a greater degree of objectivity in the application of the defence. The bill defines "reasonable management action" and provides an inclusive list of actions. Employers can consider these actions, and other types of actions like them, as reasonable management actions. Together, this provides certainty to employers on their obligations and to workers on their protections.

For the defence to succeed, the employer will need to demonstrate reasonable management action being a "significant factor" to the injury instead of "predominantly caused". The existing causation test of "predominantly caused" is ill-suited to the realities of psychological injuries, because psychological injuries often have competing contributory factors to an injury that may have developed over many months or years. Whether management action was taken in a reasonable way and is reasonable in all the circumstances will become a question of fact. No compensation is payable in relation to a psychological injury if reasonable management action, or a worker's expectation or perception of reasonable management action, is a significant cause of the psychological injury.

Sometimes difficult management decisions at work can lead to a worker feeling uncomfortable and even developing a psychological injury, but management actions should not be considered bullying if they are done in a lawful and reasonable way. This is in line with the intent for the scheme to shift towards more objective decision-making. The provisions are modelled on provisions in other States, particularly Queensland and Victoria. The Government, the Treasurer and I have listened to stakeholder concerns about the effects delayed decision-making can have on workers. Accordingly, the bill establishes an accelerated process for assessing psychological injury claims for bullying, excessive work demands, racial harassment and sexual harassment. An insurer must decide whether to accept or reject a claim for a primary psychological injury for bullying, harassment or excessive work demands within six weeks, with a further 14 days allowed for an internal, arms-length review to be conducted where a liability decision is disputed.

Workers will get a decision on their claim within six weeks and have access to interim entitlement payments for up to eight weeks. They will be provided weekly payments equal to 75 per cent of pre-injury earnings, less the worker's current earnings if they are still working, and payments for reasonable and necessary medical and rehabilitation supports. They will also receive back payment of the worker's weekly entitlement at 95 per cent pre-injury average weekly earnings where a claim is accepted. Workers and employers will have mutual obligations to assist the insurer to substantiate the facts of the case within the expedited time frames. Where an insurer fails to make a decision on a claim within this time frame or the employer fails to provide sufficient information, liability will be accepted. Where an employee fails to provide information to substantiate the claim, liability will be rejected. Mutual obligations and the design of interim payments were tailored to manage the practical challenges in distinguishing conduct-based relevant events from the kinds of everyday interactions that are to be expected in the workplace. Provisional liability will still apply for the more clear-cut cases where injuries have arisen due to acts of violence or criminal conduct or to being repeatedly exposed to traumatising events.

The bill provides the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission jurisdiction to hear workers compensation disputes on whether bullying, excessive work demands, racial harassment or sexual harassment took place. In the course of determining whether the conduct took place, the Industrial Relations Commission will be empowered to consider the employer defence related to reasonable management action. Excessive work demands do not capture typical day-to-day stresses or even every psychological hazard. Those will be dealt with through changes in work health and safety laws. It captures examples where repeated and excessive requirements are made of a worker without reasonable justification. Whether bullying, excessive work demands, racial harassment, sexual harassment or reasonable management action have occurred is primarily a workplace matter. The Industrial Relations Commission will ensure the consistent application of industrial relations principles by appropriately qualified experts to make a finding.

The Personal Injury Commission will continue to have jurisdiction to examine, hear and determine all other matters under workers compensation legislation. The bill details how workers compensation schemes will interact with the new anti-bullying jurisdiction for the Industrial Relations Commission. A finding by the commission will be taken as evidence that relevant conduct occurred for the purpose of assessing eligibility for workers compensation. To avoid double payment, a worker cannot recover damages under a stop bullying order or a sexual harassment order in relation to the conduct for which the worker is receiving or has received workers compensation entitlements. The best outcome for workers does not equate to more time on the scheme, but a safe and supported exit. Experience tells us that the State's workers compensation system is failing to support workers with psychological injury to recover and return to work. We all know that. Return to work rates are lower for

psychological injury, where 51 per cent of workers return within a year, compared with physical injury, where 95 per cent return within the same time frame.

An overarching theme of the bill is the promotion of return to work. The bill recognises that recovery through work offers one of the best ways for workers to heal and maximise their lifelong social and economic opportunities by resetting whole person impairment [WPI] thresholds to ensure that the most severely injured continue to receive lifelong support and care, while creating incentives for injured workers to build capacity and social connection through the workplace. The bill limits the duration of payments for all but the most serious injuries to a maximum of 2½ years, or 130 weeks. Payments for reasonable and necessary supports will continue to be available for up to 12 months from the day weekly payments cease. This allows time for recovery where recovery is likely. We know that the longer a worker spends on the scheme, the less likely they are to return to work. Evidence from the Black Dog Institute and other experts shows that the best way for workers to recover and get back into the workplace is through early intervention.

By ceasing payments for most psychological claims after 130 weeks, the proposed reforms will target a relatively high-cost component of compensation payments that is less effective in promoting return to work and recovery. This change is supported by medical evidence. Health outcomes are three to four times worse for workers who claim compensation, with even worse health outcomes for those with a psychological injury. There is a two to three times increased risk of poor health and mental illness and a 20 per cent increase in avoidable deaths due to long-term worklessness.

The Government has listened. It will introduce this change gradually to give workers, employers and insurers the time to get used to the new environment and make sure that the right incentives are in place. The increase to the new WPI threshold will be stepped to support transition, rising from 25 per cent from October 2025 to greater than 30 per cent from 1 July 2026. The Government also proposes to allow greater access to commutations for existing claimants on the scheme who receive weekly benefits and related medical entitlements and have little or no realistic prospect of reaching the new WPI thresholds.

While not in the bill, today the Government announced that the scheme will fund wraparound support services for safer and more timely recovery for workers. Labor has spoken a lot about this both inside and outside the Parliament, particularly in opposition. I served with the member for Cessnock when he was the Opposition spokesperson on this issue. We need to look after people through early intervention, tailored, wraparound medical supports, and appropriate return to work processes that are adhered to by their employers. I will have a lot more to say on that during debate on the next bill.

Psychological treatment networks will provide safety-net treatment services and mitigate gaps in service availability for psychologists and counselling. Voluntary workplace mediation will be available to address workplace disputes and support plans for return to work. The bill will further give effect to system-wide improvements to set the right incentives for the system to promote the right behaviour, recovery and connection to work. It will address longstanding inefficiencies in the schemes and tackle fraud.

The bill will uphold the integrity of a single impairment assessment. This bill establishes a framework for workers to obtain a single principal assessment. This single principal assessment will be used to determine eligibility for weekly payments, medical expenses compensation, lump sum compensation, commutations and work injury damages. Workers will no longer be subjected to assessments to test eligibility for each compensation type separately. In the first instance, the insurer and worker should seek to agree on the assessor. If agreement cannot be reached, the State Insurance Regulatory Authority [SIRA] will appoint an assessor. Costs will not be payable to an insurer or worker for more than one permanent impairment assessment of the worker, unless it is for the purposes of disputing a permanent impairment assessment, or in circumstances where the parties agree that there appears to be an unexpected and material deterioration of more than 10 percentage points, as defined in legislation, since the original permanent impairment assessment was conducted.

The bill establishes a regulation-making power to prescribe other circumstances for a further principal assessment to deal with unforeseen and new emerging circumstances. SIRA will administer a joint single assessment process and be provided powers to impose up-front and ongoing eligibility requirements for an approved permanent impairment assessor and to maintain a public register of approved assessors. Consultation requirements will apply to place a permanent assessor on the public register. The bill will increase the financial incentives to prevent workplace injuries through the introduction of an employer excess of up to two weeks of income payments. The bill increases penalties for employers who do the wrong thing and avoid their obligations. The penalty for failing to have appropriate workers compensation insurance will be increased to better incentivise employers and to ensure the scheme collects the premiums needed to pay claims. The penalty for large employers for non-insurance will increase from 500 to 1,000 penalty units.

The bill establishes a new offence for underinsurance, which adopts the same structure as for non-insurance. The bill introduces clear tests to ensure funds are being spent on interventions that will change the trajectory of a worker's recovery for the better. Complementary to these tests, amendments will facilitate new pathways to ensure workers get the right support at the right time. The bill empowers the Independent Review Officer to efficiently allocate funds to manage and deal with complaints and disputes. It establishes a merit test for legal grants and a regulation-making power to set legal fees for the Independent Legal Assistance and Review Service. It revises the test for access to medical benefits from "reasonably necessary" to "reasonable and necessary" to ensure expenditure is directed to evidence-based and value-based care.

The bill introduces amendments to resolve longstanding inefficiencies and issues that detract from workers' and their families' experiences of the scheme by enabling eligible parties to settle lump sum death benefit liability disputes through compromised settlements; by abolishing the requirement for a work capacity decision to change a worker's pre-injury average weekly earnings; and by clarifying that employers or their representatives are not entitled to attend medical treatment or examination of the worker unless requested by the worker.

Other scheme efficiency and accountability measures will provide for indexing of compensation and other amounts in workers compensation legislation to occur on 1 April of each year, rather than biannually; amending the COVID-19 presumption to apply only for the duration of medical incapacity; transferring responsibility for the Insurers' Guarantee Fund, which manages the run-off claims of insolvent former licensed insurers, from SIRA to icare; and enabling SIRA to enter into enforceable undertakings for breaches or alleged contraventions with licensed insurers, icare, self-insurers and specialised insurers in relation to the Workers Compensation Act. These undertakings will be published on SIRA's website.

Our workers compensation system is complex, and some workers and employers have schemes specifically designed to meet the unique circumstances of their industry. For completeness, the reforms in this bill will not apply to coalminers, consistent with the Coal Industry Act 2001, except for amendments concerning the indexation of benefits, allowing disputes about liability for death benefits to be settled, the introduction of an employer excess and enabling the use of the reasonable and necessary medical treatment test. The dust diseases scheme is excluded from legislative amendments in this bill apart from amendments concerning indexation of benefits and the new test for reasonable and necessary medical treatment. Emergency services workers—police, firefighters and paramedics—and volunteers are excluded from reforms in this bill apart from the revised test for reasonable and necessary medical treatment.

This package of reforms is significant and necessary to shift the dial on worker outcomes, prevention and early intervention, and to place our workers compensation scheme on a sustainable footing. The Government will establish a tripartite review to be undertaken to monitor these changes and to help guard against unintended consequences. The review will be run by a panel of experts, with at least one expert recommended by Unions NSW, Business NSW and the New South Wales Government. Terms of reference will be determined by the Government in consultation with Unions NSW and Business NSW.

Alongside these important reforms, the Government is introducing changes to work health and safety and industrial relations laws that will deliver stronger work health and safety protections for workers in New South Wales. Preventing injuries and deaths in the workplace is a high priority for this Government. We want it to be a priority in every workplace. It will become mandatory for a person conducting a business or undertaking to comply with a code of practice approved by the responsible Minister for the purposes of the New South Wales Act. This measure will lift the standard of work health and safety management in workplaces, support innovation and shift the mindset towards tangible preventative action. To reflect these changes, the Government will be reviewing existing codes of practice to make sure they are fit for purpose.

The Government has laid the groundwork to implement broadscale reform. It has put in the necessary prevention and early intervention infrastructure. From 1 July 2025 SafeWork NSW will operate as a standalone regulator to enforce compliance and promote best practices, meaningfully engaging with workers, business and industry. On 1 July 2024 the Industrial Court of New South Wales commenced operations as a one-stop shop for industrial justice as well as work health and safety matters. The court and the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission will be independent umpires for industrial relations in New South Wales, with the power to force unions and government agencies to come together, mediate disputes and arbitrate final outcomes in pay disputes.

The Government has appointed an employer and employees to the icare board to improve workers compensation governance. It has legislated a clear statement of how icare must exercise its functions, and strengthened transparency and accountability for icare's commercial performance to the public and the Government. It has increased the NSW Treasury's scrutiny of performance and expenditure across the State's insurance and care system and required icare to achieve a 5 per cent reduction in net cost of service in 2024-25. The Government has finalised a whole-of-government return to work strategy to build enduring systems to assist



injured workers and support public sector agencies manage the return to work more effectively. As the Treasurer has said, we are not 52 different agencies; we are one government. New South Wales government agencies have a responsibility to ensure that return to work plans are adhered to. As one government, we are able to provide those support pathways to public sector workers, and to support workers in other workplaces.

We know that prevention is better than cure and understand the importance of returning to work in promoting a worker's recovery. Workers who kept in touch and connected to work recovered quicker and experienced improved health outcomes in the longer term. The Government will continue to chart the course for a New South Wales workers compensation system that is more caring, responsible and affordable. Getting people back to work faster after an injury is about not just premiums and the sustainability of the schemes but also the impact on real people. In my speech in reply, I will have more to say about the people who have worked on and contributed to this important bill. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS) BILL 2025**

### **First Reading**

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

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (15:00):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to introduce the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment (Workplace Protections) Bill 2025. When the Minns Labor Government was elected in 2023, it inherited a broken and outdated industrial relations system. For 12 years the industrial relations system in New South Wales was systematically eroded by the previous Government, leaving workers and employers worse off. New South Wales had a recruitment and retention crisis in its public sector workforce. Wages were suppressed under the unfair wages cap, and consultation between workers and employers had broken down. The Minns Labor Government was and remains committed to establishing a modern industrial relations framework for New South Wales which brings people back to the table and delivers better outcomes for workers and employers. That is why, in its first year in government, it established the Booth and Boland taskforce.

The taskforce was formed to look into more consultative bargaining and to identify opportunities to attract and retain public sector workers, delivering better public services. Its report was provided by Ms Anna Booth, who is now the Commonwealth Fair Work Ombudsman, and the Hon. Justice Roger Boland, who spent five years as the President of the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission [IRC]. I thank them and the contributors to that report. I also acknowledge my Labor Party colleagues, their branch members and, of course, the union movement for the contributions they made to these industrial relations reforms over the 12 years. We also had important contributions from legal experts, academics and businesses on the industrial relations bill the Government brought forward in 2023. The Government made a number of industrial relations changes in November 2023, and they have already been implemented, including the introduction of a mutual gains bargaining process and the re-establishment of the Industrial Court. Today we continue that important work regarding our reforms.

The bill introduces critical measures, including establishing new anti-bullying and sexual harassment jurisdictions before the Industrial Relations Commission; clarification of the commission's powers during industrial disputes; and changes to the freedom from victimisation provisions. Regarding the Work Health and Safety Act, the bill also introduces measures to strengthen work health and safety protections for workers in New South Wales. Preventing injuries and deaths in the workplace is of the utmost priority for this Government. We want it to be a priority in every workplace. Our focus on this priority is reflected in the bill. As we know, work health and safety is a shared responsibility of employers, unions, community and workers. The Government wants to see employers, unions and the regulator work together to protect workers from harm. Through these reforms, the Government aims to establish the conditions necessary to drive tripartite collaboration to prevent workplace injuries and deaths.

I now turn to the content of the bill, dealing firstly with the industrial relations component. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill deals with section 3, the objects of the Industrial Relations Act. The bill amends the current object, section 3 (f) in the Act, that deals with equal remuneration by inserting a specific reference to the achievement of gender equality in the workplace and the goal of eliminating gender-based undervaluation of work. These

proposed amendments to the objects would supplement the criteria the commission must consider under the gender-based undervaluation principle in the 2024-25 award-making principles. They are also consistent with principles in the 2024-25 *Gender Equality Budget Statement*.

It is also worth noting that the commission already has an obligation to take into account equal remuneration matters when making or reviewing awards under sections 19, 21 and 23 of the Act. With respect to gender equality, amendments will also be made to the good faith bargaining provisions in new sections 129M and 134—schedule 1 [3] and [6] respectively—to ensure that parties provide relevant information about gender equality issues for the employees concerned during bargaining negotiations. A new object will also be inserted relating to the prevention and elimination of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace. The new object is appropriate due to the proposed introduction of two new schemes within the commission's jurisdiction: One deals with anti-bullying and the other with sexual harassment matters. I will discuss those schemes in more detail later.

Disputes about returning injured workers to work are currently governed by the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998 and are dealt with by the Personal Injury Commission of New South Wales. A number of submissions made to both the Booth and Boland taskforce and the Standing Committee on Law and Justice—the consultation that the Government undertook with the unions, employers, workers, injured workers and colleagues—were about extending the Industrial Relations Commission's jurisdiction to permit it to deal with disputes about injured workers returning to work and the types of alternative duties that would be suitable to support this outcome.

Schedule 1 [2] adds a new definition to what constitutes an "industrial matter" at section 6 of the Act: the return to work for workers who have received a workplace injury. Amending section 6 in this way will permit unions to lodge a dispute under section 130 of the Act so that the commission—a more specialist workplace tribunal—can deal with the relevant matter. Importantly, these provisions will only apply to workers in the New South Wales industrial relations system public sector and local government sector. All other injured workers who have issues relating to returning to the workplace can continue to have their cases heard before the Personal Injury Commission. The commission will not have the power under the Act to compensate an employee for a workplace injury unless otherwise permitted elsewhere in the Act.

Turning to schedule 1 [4], some government agencies have made representations about providing the negotiating parties with more flexibility in circumstances where an impasse in mutual gains bargaining has been reached. Currently, in circumstances where the parties are utilising the services of a facilitator, whether or not the facilitator is the commission itself or a third party, only the facilitator can declare bargaining has been unresolved. Item [4] will amend section 129P of the Act to enable one or both of the parties, or the facilitator, to declare the mutual gains bargaining is unresolved. Following the declaration, the bargaining would enter the conciliation and arbitration process under section 130 of the Act.

Schedule 1 [5] deals with the commission's powers during an industrial dispute under section 134 of the Act. Specifically, new section 134 (2) permits the commission to make recommendations or directions to the parties during conciliation proceedings. Industrial parties have noted that, in their experience, the commission has appeared to less frequently make clear, pragmatic recommendations in the course of conciliation unless they are agreed to by both parties. This amendment makes it clear that, during disputes, recommendations or directions may be made by the commission regardless of the attitude of the industrial parties. The bill inserts a new section 134 (2A), which explicitly states that the commission may make a recommendation or direction during a dispute regardless of whether a party consents or agrees with the recommendation or direction. In addition, if a party does not comply with the recommendation or direction, then the commission must be provided with the reasons in writing to determine whether further conciliation is warranted. This is dealt with in new section 134 (2C) of the bill.

Schedule 1 [7] to the bill addresses the commission's powers during the arbitration of industrial disputes. A number of submissions noted that some of these powers are limited when the commission is attempting to resolve disputes that deal with the interpretation and application of existing conditions in industrial instruments, determinations or policies. The bill amends section 136 by authorising the commission to make an order or determination in arbitration, whether on an interim or final basis, including about the interpretation or application of an industrial instrument for the purposes of resolving the dispute. Schedule 1 [8] creates a civil penalty for contravening an order or determination made on a final basis by the commission in arbitration. The maximum civil penalty will be \$25,000.

Schedule 1 [9] inserts new chapter 3A into the Industrial Relations Act and comprises new sections 144A to 144W. The new chapter will authorise the Industrial Relations Commission to conciliate, arbitrate and make orders concerning the bullying of employees at work, at part 1 of chapter 3A, and persons sexually harassing employees, prospective employees or persons conducting a business or undertaking, at part 2 of

chapter 3A. Part 1 introduces an anti-bullying at the workplace scheme into the commission's jurisdiction. The proposal will enable an employee, as defined, who is bullied at work, to seek an order from the commission to stop and remedy the bullying.

Workplace bullying causes serious harm to workers' health and to the organisations that employ them. According to research from the Productivity and Equality Commission, bullying is estimated to cost up to \$36 billion annually in Australia. There are already a number of anti-bullying jurisdictions in Australia, including Queensland, Western Australia and, most notably, the Federal jurisdiction under the Fair Work Act. Significantly, the anti-bullying provisions within the Fair Work Act only apply to constitutional corporations, Commonwealth authorities and their employees.

The New South Wales anti-bullying scheme within the commission's remit will fill the jurisdictional gaps by providing coverage to workers in the public sector and local government sector, and workers for unincorporated entities, better known as sole traders and partnerships. Currently, the principal legislation in New South Wales regarding workplace bullying is the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, which seeks to ensure safe systems of work and thereby help to eliminate or reduce workplace bullying. However, while the Work Health and Safety Act provides general protections to workers, a process whereby individual employees may bring a complaint of bullying to a tribunal or court with powers to conciliate, arbitrate and make orders will be a preferable way to resolve individual bullying complaints.

Section 144A will extend the definition of "employee" under the part so that a worker within the meaning of the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 may apply for a stop bullying order. However, as stated earlier, it does not include a worker who may apply for a stop bullying order under the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act. Section 144C provides that an employee is "bullied at work" if an individual or group of individuals repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards the employee or a group of employees at work, and the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety. Importantly, the section also provides that if reasonable management action has been carried out in a reasonable way, then the commission must, in effect, dismiss the application.

Section 144D permits an employee who reasonably believes that they have been bullied at work, or an industrial organisation on behalf of the employee, to apply for a stop bullying order. The section also sets out procedural matters relating to applications in the event that there is more than one person affected by the bullying. Sections 144E and 144F state that the commission must try to deal with the bullying matter by conciliation in the first instance and, if this is unsuccessful, via arbitration. Section 144G provides that the commission may make a stop bullying order to remedy and prevent bullying if it is satisfied the employee has been bullied at work and there is a risk that the employee will continue to be bullied at work. The commission may make any orders it considers appropriate, including the payment of damages to the employee by way of compensation for loss or damage suffered from the bullying and a prohibition on continuing or repeating the bullying. However, the commission must not order a payment of damages of more than \$100,000. The remedies available to the commission are based on those powers currently vested with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal under the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act.

Section 144H will create a civil penalty for contravening a stop bullying order. The maximum civil penalty amount will be \$18,870 for an individual or, otherwise, \$93,900. Section 144I will prevent a person from commencing proceedings for a stop bullying order and seeking compensation where matters have been commenced concerning the same conduct under anti-discrimination laws. A person must not recover compensation under the provisions of this bill if they have already received compensation under an anti-discrimination law.

Part 2 of new chapter 3A deals with the prohibition on sexual harassment in connection with work. That part will prohibit the sexual harassment of a person in connection with the person's work and will enable a person to seek an order from the commission to remedy and prevent the sexual harassment. Sexual harassment at the workplace is already proscribed conduct under the Fair Work Act, the Federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. In the New South Wales system, the President of the Anti-Discrimination Board can investigate a sexual harassment complaint and may attempt to conciliate a resolution. In circumstances where conciliation fails, the complaint may be referred to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal for a determination. The Fair Work Act and the Sex Discrimination Act also provide a two-step process for workplace sexual harassment applications. If a complaint is not resolved via mediation, the complainant is required to take court action to continue pursuing the matter.

The bill before the House proposes to provide the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission with the jurisdiction to hear workplace sexual harassment claims and thereby permit all stages of the claim, conciliation and final determination to be dealt with at the one place. It is a one-stop shop approach, which the Government has been talking about, both in opposition and over the past two years. That is another plank of our industrial relations reform. Section 144K defines an employee as a worker within the meaning of the Work Health and

Safety Act and also makes it clear that the jurisdiction does not apply to national system employees within the meaning of the Fair Work Act. In other words, it will only apply to workers in the New South Wales industrial relations system: those in the public sector and local government sector.

Section 144L inserts a definition of "sexual harassment" which is based on the definition in the Federal Sex Discrimination Act. A person will sexually harass another person if they make an unwelcome advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person, or engage in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person, and a reasonable person would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, intimidated or humiliated. Section 144N will make it a civil penalty to sexually harass a person if the harassment occurs in connection with the person being an employee, prospective employee or person conducting a business or undertaking. The maximum civil penalty will be \$18,870 for an individual or, otherwise, \$93,900. Importantly, schedule 1 [30] to the bill inserts new section 400E, which makes it clear that an application for a civil penalty order for an alleged contravention of section 144N cannot be made unless a sexual harassment order has already been made by the commission for the same or substantially the same conduct constituting the alleged contravention.

New section 144O inserts vicarious liability provisions, but the person will be taken not to have contravened the section if they can prove they took all reasonable steps to prevent the employee or agent from doing the acts that would contravene the section. New section 144P permits the aggrieved person who alleges they have been sexually harassed in contravention of new section 144N, or an industrial organisation on the person's behalf, to apply for a sexual harassment order from the commission. The proposed section also sets out procedural matters relating to applications in the event there is more than one person affected by the sexual harassment. New section 144Q provides that an application in response to a sexual harassment must be made no later than 24 months after the alleged contravention. As with the proposed anti-bullying scheme, new sections 144R and 144S note that the commission must endeavour to deal with sexual harassment matters by conciliation in the first instance and, if this is unsuccessful, via arbitration.

New section 144T authorises the commission to make a sexual harassment order to remedy and prevent the sexual harassment if it is satisfied the aggrieved person has been sexually harassed in contravention of new section 144N. The order may apply to either, or both, of the person or persons who have contravened new section 144N and a person who has contravened new section 144N by way of new section 144O, which is the vicarious liability provision. The commission may make any orders it considers appropriate, including for the payment of damages to the aggrieved person by way of compensation for loss or damage suffered from the sexual harassment, and a prohibition on the sexual harassment continuing or repeating. However, the commission must not order a payment of damages to the aggrieved person of more than \$100,000.

New section 144U creates a civil penalty for contravening a sexual harassment order. The maximum penalty amount is \$18,870 for an individual, or otherwise \$93,900. As with the anti-bullying scheme, new section 144V will prevent a person from commencing proceedings for a sexual harassment order and from seeking compensation where matters have been commenced concerning the same conduct under anti-discrimination laws. A person must not recover compensation under the provisions of the bill if they have already received compensation under anti-discrimination law. It is proposed that the new sexual harassment and anti-bullying provisions will commence by proclamation on a later date, which is yet to be determined. This will ensure the necessary changes to JusticeLink are made and the relevant information is conveyed to participants in the New South Wales industrial relations system.

Schedule 1 [13] to [17] deal with freedom of association, freedom from victimisation and related enforcement provisions. Currently, the Industrial Relations Act provides for certain rights to be protected, including the right to freedom of association—the right to join or not to join an industrial organisation—and freedom from victimisation. Several submissions and contributions made to the Government noted that the current protections against victimisation are too narrow. Consequently, the provisions are not well used before the commission. The taskforce recommended the victimisation provisions in the Act be strengthened so that they protect workplace rights to a greater extent. The bill will amend the existing freedom of association, freedom from victimisation and associated enforcement provisions by providing a greater range of protections and associated remedies.

Schedule 1 [14] will introduce new section 209 (3), which includes activities, defined as industrial organising activities, which a member of an industrial organisation is entitled to do. These include organising or promoting lawful activities on behalf of the industrial organisation; paying a fee or charge; or seeking to be represented by an industrial organisation. Item [15] will amend section 210 by including additional matters for which an employee or prospective employee must not be victimised by an employer or industrial organisation. These additional matters include the following: engages or proposes to engage in industrial organising activities; is entitled to a benefit or claims a benefit under the Workers Compensation Act 1987 or the Workplace Injury

Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998, or in relation to other entitlements for a workplace injury; and has a characteristic that is protected from discrimination under the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977.

Schedule 1 [16] deals with enforcement matters relating to freedom from victimisation, and the current provisions at section 210 (2) of the Act will be replaced with a new provision in new section 213 (5). The amending provision will remedy the current reverse onus of proof for victimisation by introducing an objective test requiring the commission to be satisfied objectively that the alleged reason under section 210 of the Act was not a substantial and operative cause of the detrimental action. The proposed amendment is in response to the 2012 decision of the High Court of Australia in *Board of Bendigo Regional Institute of Technical and Further Education v Barclay*. That decision related to the reverse onus of proof under general protections provisions of the Commonwealth's Fair Work Act and overturned a previous decision made by the full Federal Court. Despite the decision made by the High Court, the proposed amendment clarifies that the reasoning of the majority of the full Federal Court handed down in 2011 is the preferred test when determining if the presumption has been rebutted under the Industrial Relations Act.

The small claims jurisdiction in part 2 of chapter 7 of the Industrial Relations Act deals comprehensively with the recovery of remuneration and other amounts. Presently, an industrial court, as defined, can order a maximum amount of \$20,000 to be paid to a complainant in small claims proceedings. Schedule 1 [24] to the bill will increase the maximum amount to \$100,000. This will align with the maximum claim allowed in the general division of the Local Court and with the Federal Circuit and Family Court's small claim limit for underpayments. Schedule 1 [26] to [30] to the bill deal with the consolidation of civil penalty provisions in an amended part 6 of chapter 7. This is necessary as the bill before the House introduces four new civil penalty provisions to add to the civil penalties that are currently in the Act. Consolidating the provisions in one place will make it easier for industrial relations practitioners. The new division 2 of part 6 of chapter 7 will comprise new sections 400A to 400P in the Act.

I turn now to the relationship between the Industrial Relations Act and the Police Act 1990. Schedule 1 [37] provides that a decision of the commission under certain sections of part 1 of chapter 5, which deal with principles of association, is not otherwise affected if inconsistent with the Police Act 1990 in particular circumstances. Section 405 (1) of the Industrial Relations Act currently states that an award or order of the commission does not have effect to the extent that it is inconsistent with a function under the Police Act 1990 regarding the discipline, promotion or transfer of a police officer, or in relation to police officers who are hurt on duty. Only unfair dismissals are currently exempt from this section of the Act.

A submission was provided to the Booth and Boland taskforce that raised concerns about the commission's jurisdiction to deal with some industrial matters affecting police officers, particularly in relation to the freedom from victimisation provisions. The bill before the House will ensure that the freedom of association provisions at section 209 of the Act and the freedom from victimisation provisions that relate to the right to become or not become a member of an industrial organisation, or to participate or refuse to participate in industrial action or industrial organising activities, at section 210 (a) to (d) of the Act will apply to police officers. Schedule 1 [38] and [39] provide for a number of transitional and savings provisions in relation to the proposed amendments to the Act. These include matters relating to the conciliation and arbitration of disputes; the onus of proof for victimisation proceedings; and matters relating to the small claims threshold.

Schedule 2 to the bill deals with a number of minor amendments to the Industrial Relations (General) Regulation 2020 relating to the proposed introduction of new civil penalty provisions under the anti-bullying and sexual harassment schemes. Schedule 3 to the bill provides for amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. I will now address specific aspects of the reforms. A key reform in this bill is to provide a pathway for work health and safety disputes to be dealt with by the Industrial Relations Commission. These amendments are modelled on equivalent provisions in the Queensland Work Health and Safety Act 2011, with appropriate modifications for New South Wales. The provisions enable a broad range of work health and safety matters to be dealt with by the IRC. The Industrial Relations Commission will be enabled to deal with disputes flexibly and efficiently. Generally, each party will bear their own costs for work health and safety disputes. This reform is important to ensure that there is a pathway to finality for work health and safety disputes.

The rights of entry permit holders will be expanded by the bill. Entry permit holders will now have the right to take measurements or conduct tests, and take photos and videos where it is directly relevant to the suspected contravention of the Work Health and Safety Act. This includes air monitoring. This will ensure that entry permit holders are not prevented from gathering important evidence in their inquiries. This is a very important new measure because, as members know, the Government is currently undertaking a tunnelling taskforce with a number of experts—academics, specialist agency heads and relevant unions—with respect to workers in the tunnels.

One of the biggest issues that tunnel workers and their union representatives have raised with the Government is that, in the years prior to its election, workers and health and safety representatives were intimidated and victimised. They were unable to use information like photos, videos or even their air monitors to provide the evidence of the exceedences. The Government introduced legislation on that issue a year or so ago. Those measures are important because the Government is trying to do preventative work to ensure that the laws are enforced, workplaces are compliant and tunnel workers are protected. Tunnel workers work in very dangerous environments, and the Government is trying to make sure that they do not contract dust diseases like silicosis. That measure is very important.

Unions will be included as eligible persons for a range of reviewable decisions under the Act. A union that represents a worker whose interests are affected by the decision can now seek a review of those decisions. This promotes greater accountability for decision-making under the Act, and helps ensure that the right decision is made. The bill provides that an employer must notify the regulator if the employer is issued with a provisional improvement notice by a health and safety representative. This will give SafeWork NSW improved data about where work health and safety issues are emerging, using the eyes and ears of the State's amazing health and safety representatives.

I give a huge shout-out to our health and safety representatives. They are not delegates or union officials; they are workers onsite who do the work voluntarily. I have spoken to many health and safety representatives over the years, and I used to represent health and safety representatives. They do a lot of important work. Unfortunately they do get victimised and their jobs are threatened. But they are, as we have said, the eyes and ears. I give a shout-out to all the health and safety representatives for the incredible work that they do. Last year SafeWork expanded the health and safety representatives forum, to which all members of this place are invited. We bring people from across the State to that great forum.

There are several changes to prosecutions in the bill. Prosecutions play an important role in deterring offending behaviour. The Government wants to support effective prosecution of offenders. The existing requirements for unions to bring a prosecution are being streamlined. The existing process is being replaced so that a registered employee organisation can bring proceedings for any offence under the Act after it has consulted with the regulator about its intention to bring the proceedings and the regulator has declined to bring proceedings or does not bring proceedings within 12 months of being consulted.

The bill also lifts the prohibition on a moiety for registered organisations following a successful prosecution. The current prohibition will be removed. This will allow courts to order a portion of a fine or other penalty be paid to the registered organisation prosecutor. This recognises the significant resources required to bring a successful prosecution. At present, the limitation period for prosecutions in the Work Health and Safety Act is two years. That will remain the same. However, the bill provides provision for a court to grant leave to bring proceedings outside the limitation period if it is in the interests of justice. This responds to situations in which there is delayed onset of injury or illness, such as in the case of some dust diseases, following a worker's exposure to a risk of harm.

The bill will make it mandatory for a person conducting a business or undertaking [PCBU] to comply with a code of practice approved by the Minister for the purposes of the New South Wales Act. A PCBU may depart from the code if they provide a standard of health and safety equivalent to or higher than the standard required under the code. This measure will lift the standard of work health and safety management in workplaces and supports innovation. The bill provides for enhanced notification and information sharing provisions. These relate to provisional improvement notices, confidential information and sharing of information between SafeWork NSW as the regulator and other agencies or individuals.

These provisions aim to address information gaps that exist in the Act and support SafeWork's effectiveness as a regulator. That need has been brought to my attention by the families of people who have died at work. It is devastating to lose a loved one at work. Over a long period, families have said to me that when the process of an investigation is conducted, not only are they grieving, and not only are they having to go through their day to day if they have a young family and they have to pay their rent or their mortgage; on top of that, they have to go through an investigation and share their story many times.

One of the issues that unions representing injured workers and their families have raised with me, my Government colleagues and Opposition members is the importance of information sharing and the regulator providing updated information confidentially. We understand the privacy issues. The information will be shared in a confined, measured way, but there is an obligation on the part of the Government to provide that information to people who are going through that grief, struggle and suffering. This is also really important for data sharing across government agencies. This is one of my bugbears. I am happy to talk more about that in my speech in reply. The provisions will make it much better for us to share data across agencies. That means that we can target our resources to better prevent injury.

The bill before the House delivers on the Government's commitment to continue building a better industrial relations system, which will help drive productive and efficient public sector workplaces. This in turn will benefit the workers delivering the services and ensure the citizens of New South Wales are provided with the public services they deserve. It will achieve this by establishing a new workplace bullying and sexual harassment scheme before the NSW Industrial Relations Commission, strengthening the principles of association provisions in the Industrial Relations Act and by clarifying the rights and responsibilities of the parties and the Commission's powers during bargaining for improved wages and workplace conditions.

The bill also strengthens work health and safety laws by introducing further accountability, transparency and, most importantly, preventative measures to help keep workers safe. I will add more in reply, but I thank injured workers, workers, the union movement, businesses, small businesses, NGOs and, of course, colleagues. Crossbench colleagues and others have, over the last couple of years, provided feedback through the various consultation processes. I particularly acknowledge my agencies' officials in the advisers' gallery. I thank them very much for their time, consideration and innovative ideas. And, of course, I thank my exceptional ministerial staff. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2025**

### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 14 May 2025.**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (15:39):** I lead for the Opposition on the Health Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2025. The bill has been introduced to make amendments to various pieces of legislation across the Health portfolio to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and contemporary. It also includes the tightening up of a number of administrative provisions to provide further clarity on existing legislation. The affected Acts include the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act 2007, the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009, the Health Practitioner Regulation (New South Wales) Regulation 2016, the Health Services Act 1997, the Human Tissue Act 1983, the Mental Health Act 2007 and the Private Health Facilities Act 2007.

I appreciate that a number of stakeholders had to be consulted because of the breadth of changes contained in the bill. The changes will have a material impact on how health care and health services are delivered to the people of New South Wales. I thank the organisations that engaged with the Opposition on the changes and supported them, including the Australian Medical Association, the NSW Pharmacy Guild, the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists, the Health Services Union, and Private Healthcare Australia. I also thank the Minister and his office for their direction and consultation on the bill. The Opposition supports the amendments. It is important that we review our health legislation to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and contemporary. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (15:41):** I am pleased to contribute to debate on the Health Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2025. The bill makes a range of amendments to various legislation, including the Health Services Act, the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act, the Private Health Facilities Act, the Human Tissue Act, the Mental Health Act and the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act. While some changes are minor clarifying amendments, others are necessary to ensure the smooth operation of the New South Wales health system. Some of the more substantial changes are those proposed to the Health Services Act.

Schedule 4 to the bill amends that Act to embed in legislation a requirement for every local health district to have at least one person who identifies as an Aboriginal person on the governing board. Currently the Act requires that each local health district board must consist of between six and 13 members who have a mix of skills and expertise in matters such as health management, financial management and the provision of health services. Further, at least one member must have expertise, knowledge or experience in relation to Aboriginal health. However, there is no current requirement for one of the above members to be an Aboriginal person, although in practice almost all local health district boards have an Aboriginal member. To futureproof the legislation and ensure the voices and experiences of Aboriginal people are better represented within and across local health district decision-making, it is important that the requirement is formalised in legislation.

The bill also makes another important change to the Health Services Act by introducing a booking and cancellation charge for private providers accessing the non-emergency Patient Transport Service. The Patient Transport Service is a kind of ambulance service delivered by NSW Health for people who require transport to or from a health facility but who do not need a time-critical emergency ambulance. Although the service is operated by NSW Health, it can be booked by the public health system and private providers, including aged-care facilities

and private hospitals. There is no ability under current law for NSW Health to charge a fee to a private body that books an ambulance service on behalf of a patient, nor is there an ability to charge a cancellation fee.

As highlighted in the Minister's second reading speech, the private sector uses the Patient Transport Service to deliver private-to-private transports, which are transports that do not involve transporting a patient to or from a public health facility. It is concerning to hear the statistics that late notice and on-scene cancellations for those services are higher among private providers as compared to public providers. That has potential impacts on the overall efficiency of the Patient Transport Service and on NSW Health's ability to properly resource other transports for both public and private patients. I therefore welcome the amendment set out in schedule 4 to the bill, which will introduce the ability for the Secretary of NSW Health to charge private providers a fee for booking a patient transport service or cancelling a patient transport service within four hours of the booked arrival time or up to one hour after that time. The charges will help reduce inappropriate bookings and cancellations, minimise disruption and encourage efficient use of the Patient Transport Service.

The bill makes other important changes to NSW Health legislation. Schedule 7 to the bill makes amendments to the Private Health Facilities Act to introduce new regulation-making powers. Under the amendments, the regulations will be able to amend the usual requirements for private health facilities under the Act so that certain private health facilities can be staffed by midwives instead of nurses. In addition, the regulations could allow additional people to be appointed to the medical advisory committee for particular private health facilities. The change will facilitate the operation of midwifery-led Birthing on Country demonstration private health facilities, which are designed to deliver culturally safe care to Aboriginal women and families in New South Wales. I am pleased to inform the House that Birthing on Country is incorporated into the design of the new level 4 Eurobodalla Regional Hospital, to be opened in 2027.

The bill also makes minor changes to the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act to ensure that the official visitor provisions are consistent with similar provisions under the Mental Health Act. The current Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act requires that an official visitor who is a medical practitioner attend each visit to a treatment centre. That limitation is not reflected in the Mental Health Act, under which official visitors who are psychologists and people with other qualifications prescribed by the regulations can visit mental health facilities without needing to be accompanied by a medical practitioner. Given official visitors under those laws perform very similar functions, it is appropriate to align the types of people that can be appointed official visitors and attend visits under the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act with those in the Mental Health Act.

Further, the bill makes changes to the ante-mortem procedure provisions of the Human Tissue Act to allow the senior available next of kin to authorise someone else to provide consent on their behalf in relation to ante-mortem procedures. I agree that the change is appropriate to allow the senior available next of kin of a person to delegate their functions in relation to ante-mortem interventions in the same way that they can delegate their functions relating to organ donation. The bill also makes a few minor clarifying changes to the Human Tissue Act and the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act, which I fully support.

The amendments introduced by the bill are appropriate and necessary. The changes make clarifying and consistency edits to various legislation. The bill also makes more substantive changes, including embedding Aboriginal representation on local health district governing boards, introducing the power to charge booking and cancellation fees for the Patient Transport Service, and introducing regulation-making powers to the Private Health Facilities Act. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (15:48):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the Health Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2025. In particular, I will comment on the requirement to ensure that a person from the Aboriginal community is a member of a local health district board. The legislation will give effect to recommendation 35 of the 2022 report of the Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health inquiry into the health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. It is important that this recommendation is put into legislation. It is certainly something that concerned the Legislative Assembly Select Committee on Remote, Rural and Regional Health—which I chaired—and it formed part of recommendation 22 of our second report. The committee acknowledged that, as NSW Health said, "each regional local health district has at least one designated Aboriginal community representative role on its board", but the evidence presented to the committee was that there is no express requirement. Page 75 of the committee's second report quotes NSW Health:

The Health Services Act 1997 currently requires at least one board member to have "expertise, knowledge or experience in relation to Aboriginal health," but does not expressly require appointment of a member of the Aboriginal community.

I welcome the amendment to put that important recommendation into legislation. I thank the Minister—who I note is in the Chamber—and the Parliamentary Secretary for their work. I make the point that it has taken three years for this to come about.



**Mr Ryan Park:** Too long.

**Dr JOE McGIRR:** Yes, too long. That is why our committee made recommendation 22. It is an important consideration for the committee. I reflect on other recommendations the committee made that underpin why this is important. I acknowledge that NSW Health would have said, "We've got representatives on most or all of our local health district boards." But the fact that it has taken time suggests a lack of consideration of its importance as a symbolic and meaningful gesture for Aboriginal health. I reflect briefly on other aspects that the committee raised that highlight this, such cultural safety, workforce development and partnerships with Aboriginal community controlled health organisations. Recommendation 32 of the 2022 Portfolio Committee No. 2 report on rural health reads:

That NSW Health and the Local Health Districts improve the cultural safety of health services and facilities by engaging with Aboriginal Elders and local communities to:

- revise and incorporate local content into cultural awareness training ...
- listen to their experiences of the healthcare system ...

NSW Health reported this recommendation as completed. Our committee regards it as an area of moderate concern that has not been completed. We believe it is unclear to what extent NSW Health cultural awareness training has been informed by local communities and their experiences of the healthcare system. The committee noted that seeking guidance on what cultural safety strategies should be applied was a key aspect of this recommendation. Our report recommended that the issue of cultural safety be explored, particularly with local health services, and be given the due concern and focus it deserves.

As of June 2023, the target for the Aboriginal health-worker workforce had not been met. The target of 53 may have been achieved now, but in 2023 only 29.02 full-time equivalent positions had been filled. Clearly, there are challenges with recruitment and support and training of our Aboriginal workforce, and the select committee has made a number of recommendations to improve the scope of practice and the industrial awards to make sure we increase our Aboriginal health workforce. Finally, I make a comment on collaboration. Aboriginal community controlled health organisations are an important part of our healthcare system in rural and remote regions. They are a critical part of primary care provision and can be very successful. We have made some comments in the report about recruitment incentives that such organisations should have and that should be considered in some of the existing NSW Health incentive schemes.

Importantly, the committee detected a real concern about genuine collaboration with those organisations. Recommendation 34 of the Portfolio Committee No. 2 report addressed the issue of local health districts working in collaboration. We received evidence from NSW Health that the majority of local health districts had reviewed their partnerships with Aboriginal community controlled health organisations or "have a variation in place that provides a strong foundation for collaboration with these organisations in their region". Yet when the committee met with Aboriginal community controlled health organisations, the feedback we received on the ground was that those relationships and collaborations were not as effective as they could be. At the senior level in health organisations there was a sense that meetings were taking place and there was collaboration but, on the ground, the committee and I had concerns that perhaps this was lip-service rather than actuality. The Bulgarr Ngaru Medical Aboriginal Corporation submission states:

There is much in health department plans and vision statements about community centred and collaborative, partnership approaches. In Northern NSW there is a formal partnership agreement between the 3 AMSs, the PHN and the LHD. But in practice, our dealings with LHD management are a frequent source of disappointment and frustration. There seems a culture of arrogance, lack of listening, a propensity to make unilateral decisions that can have a significant impact on primary health care services and their clients as well as a seeming failure to understand that people live in the community not the hospital and that the PHC sector is where the great majority of health care actually occurs.

The committee has made a number of recommendations to improve that relationship. We have recommended:

That all regional Local Health Districts work with Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and Primary Health Networks, using genuine principles of co-design, to:

- conduct an assessment of needs within the district, and
- map the Aboriginal health services offered to identify unmet needs and reduce any duplication of services.

I reflect on those recommendations because the amendment to the Act to require boards to have an Aboriginal community representative is a very symbolic and significant piece of legislation. It says—and the Minister and NSW Health are saying—that it is not enough to pay lip-service to this; we need action on the ground. It is all very well to say things are being done and that meetings are taking place. But if the feedback is that change is not taking place, then we will never address issues of racism within health services or the provision of services to a people who remain a very underprivileged, under-served part of our community. Aboriginal people's life expectancy still trails our life expectancy by over a decade.

The Aboriginal community controlled health organisations do great work. The Aboriginal medical services do great work. They are often able to recruit doctors and support health staff well ahead of non-Indigenous services. But my concern is that we need to genuinely engage with and respect them. Without doing that, we will not get the health outcomes that we need. This piece of legislation is an important part of that. I thank the Minister for his work. It is a very important bill, both symbolically and in effect. I hope it will make a big difference to the outcomes for Aboriginal people in the long term.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (15:57):** I also speak in support of the Health Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2025. The bill brings together a series of targeted amendments across key health legislation. Each provision, while described as miscellaneous, addresses important areas of reform that have impacts on equity, service delivery, patient protection and flexibility for innovation in models of care. The amendments to the Health Services Act 1997 are a vital step in strengthening Aboriginal representation in our public health governance structures. By mandating that each local health district governing board must include a member who is an Aboriginal person, we are ensuring genuine representation—not just consultation—at the highest level of local health decision-making. This follows a key recommendation from the Portfolio Committee No. 2 inquiry into rural, regional and remote health outcomes.

The inclusion of Aboriginal voices in our health governance is not only a matter of representation; it is a matter of outcomes. Aboriginal people continue to face disproportionate health challenges due to intergenerational trauma, cultural barriers in health care, and systematic disadvantage. Having Aboriginal people involved in decision-making is essential to designing and delivering services that are culturally safe and appropriate.

The bill also introduces a practical but important change to allow the health secretary to charge private providers, including aged-care homes and private hospitals, booking and cancellation fees for non-emergency patient transport services. At present the service is provided by NSW Health to private facilities at no cost, despite the transfers costing the public system more than \$8 million annually. The change is not about privatising transport services or restricting access; it is about managing public resources responsibly. A high rate of late cancellations and inappropriate bookings by private providers—25 per cent more than public providers—means that taxpayers are footing the bill for inefficiencies. A modest booking fee and a higher cancellation fee will encourage a more responsible use of this service, and will free up resources for those who truly need them. Flexibility in regulation must not come at the cost of safety. This bill strikes the right balance. The reforms apply only to facilities prescribed by regulation and key safety provisions remain intact.

The bill also addresses necessary changes to the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act 2007. Specifically, it expands who may be appointed as an official visitor, bringing it into alignment with the Mental Health Act 2007. Official visitors are a vital safeguard for individuals undergoing involuntary treatment. They provide oversight, raise concerns and ensure people are treated with dignity. The current disparity between the two Acts is not justified. Aligning the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act with the Mental Health Act by allowing psychologists and other suitably qualified persons to serve as official visitors recognises the similar complexity and vulnerability experienced by those undergoing treatment for severe drug dependence. It also allows more flexibility in assembling appropriately qualified inspection teams.

The bill also makes suitable revisions to the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009, replacing the outdated term "professional services room" with "medication storage and preparation room". It is a small but meaningful update that better reflects the clinical purpose of the spaces and ensures consistency with national terminology. Finally, the bill amends the Mental Health Act 2007 to clarify that conditions can be imposed on the appointment of accredited persons, either individually or as a class. Accredited persons play a critical role in the mental health system. They assess and make determinations about the need for involuntary detention.

Clarifying the secretary's powers to impose conditions ensures that appointments can be tailored where necessary to safeguard both patient rights and professional standards. Taken together, these amendments reflect a modern, pragmatic, compassionate approach to health legislation. They are rooted in consultation with health professionals, community groups, Aboriginal organisations and advocacy stakeholders. They address longstanding inconsistencies, remove barriers to culturally appropriate care, and promote more efficient and responsible use of health resources. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (16:03):** The Greens support the Health Legislation Amendment (Miscellaneous) Bill 2025. In particular, I support the proposed change—which a number of members have addressed—to require the board of each local health district [LHD] to have at least one member who identifies as an Aboriginal person. Currently there is a requirement for at least one member to have expertise in, knowledge of or experience in Aboriginal health, but there is no requirement that they be an Aboriginal person. As we have heard, including from the member for Wagga Wagga, the proposed change is a recommendation of the Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health inquiry into rural health.

Whilst we all, including the Minister, recognise that most LHDs do have an Aboriginal person on their boards, it is critical that we recognise that making it a requirement is a significant contribution. I will not talk in detail to any of the other miscellaneous provisions in the bill. Suffice it to say The Greens are supportive of the changes. But I do want to address—as a number of members have—the importance and need to ensure the involvement, self-determination and, indeed, guidance of Aboriginal medical experts and Aboriginal community members in health responses to ensure the health of the community.

It is important for us to recognise, as the Minister did in his second reading speech, the fact that on many occasions in this place we have debated and discussed the historic and ongoing trauma and disadvantage faced by Aboriginal people in health care. As the Minister said, particularly in the context of National Reconciliation Week and the anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, the inflicted pain, trauma and suffering that government policies caused through forced child removals and assimilation have ongoing impacts on First Nations people. The failure to address the systemic and intersectional relationship between health and other government policy areas is something that we need to do much better on.

The requirement to have an Aboriginal person on the board of each LHD is critical. But we need to recognise that there are many more issues of systemic racism, discrimination and intergenerational impacts that need to be addressed. While it is critical to have a First Nations or Aboriginal person on the board of each LHD, it is critical also that LHDs are supported to be culturally safe places for First Nations people to work and access health care. Often, unfortunately, the health department and the Minister are working against existing government policies in this area. For example, concerns have been raised around the age of criminal responsibility and the high rates of incarceration of young people.

The reality is that those kinds of policies have a direct impact on the health of people in New South Wales. That health burden is then held by our local health districts and the need to address some of those intersectional disadvantages continues. The National Apology was one of the 54 recommendations of the *Bringing them home* report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families, conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission. We have heard about the significant impacts of systemic disadvantage faced by First Nations people.

We are very lucky to have Royal Prince Alfred Hospital in the electorate of Newtown, but I have heard many stories of people coming to Sydney, a long way from home, to receive treatment in that world-class hospital, but not receiving the necessary cultural support, family support, connections or social support to be able to maintain and continue on with their treatment. That is not an acceptable situation. We know that it is critical to have representation at the board level to improve health care, but it is also absolutely critical that there is a workforce that is able to support communities to be as healthy as they can and access the health care that they need. It is important to note that psychological trauma and mental health trauma are continuing to impact people as a result of current government policies, particularly in relation to the ongoing removal of children from their families. We need to address those issues.

I am speaking about wider issues in the context of this health bill because so often we see health as something that happens only when people appear at an emergency department in a crisis situation or when they need a hip replacement or something like that. But, in order to support the amazing Aboriginal people who are now going to sit on the boards of our LHDs, we need to recognise that there are existing government policies that are being implemented that are causing further harm to First Nations people, rather than the opposite. It is critical that we do more to implement all of the recommendations of the *Bringing them home* report. We need to ensure there are shifts and changes to address the intergenerational disadvantage and trauma faced by First Nations people in New South Wales.

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (16:09):** In reply: I thank all members who have contributed to the debate of this important bill. In particular, the shadow Minister and member for Vacluse, the member for Wagga Wagga, the Parliamentary Secretary for Health, the member for Mount Druitt and the member for Newtown. I also thank, deeply, from the department and the Ministry of Health, Amelia Parsonage and Gemma Broderick—two individuals who worked very hard on this and other pieces of legislation. I thank Dr Vivian Moxham- Hall and Melanie Haskew, from my office, who have been working on a range of different legislation in these first few months of sittings.

The bill makes various miscellaneous amendments to legislation across the Health portfolio, which have been described. The member for Wagga Wagga is exactly right. I have said both privately and publicly that the amendment to ensure Aboriginal representation on our boards has probably taken too long—too long for the Government that I am a part of, and too long for previous governments. This is an important piece of reform. The member for Wagga Wagga also raised a specific issue that I remain concerned about—the relationship between local health districts, Aboriginal health providers and Aboriginal medical services. That relationship is critical. In

some communities it is very strong and robust; in other communities it is not. I am looking at ways in which we can make it more explicitly clear to chief executives and general managers of hospitals that that relationship needs to improve.

It is more than just discharge summaries. It is about the way in which communities interact with each other, and the way in which those two important health services interact with each other to deliver the best possible health care. There has been, at times, a bit of "them and us", and I am going to do my utmost to break that down. In fact, when I am in regional and rural areas, it is very unusual if my itinerary does not involve going to an Aboriginal medical service, because I specifically want to look at what is happening in primary care and how that relates to acute care, and where those two can be improved. I thank the member for Wagga Wagga. I will update him on that and get his feedback about what else we can do to strengthen that relationship. It is an important, tangible issue that we need to get better at.

The bill, as has been outlined, makes changes to the official visitor provisions of the Drug and Alcohol Treatment Act to align them with the Mental Health Act. The changes recognise that official visitors under those laws have very similar functions, and functions that many of us in this place are familiar with in relation to the Official Visitors Program. It is therefore appropriate for the appointment and vital provisions under these laws to be kept consistent. I think that is something that, hopefully, we all support.

The bill amends the Health Services Act to ensure that an Aboriginal member is appointed to the governing board. That will ensure Aboriginal representation at the highest level within local health districts. I was asked today about making sure that it is a local person. We want to make sure that it is a local person, but our local health districts are large and cross a range of different Aboriginal nations. For example, the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District crosses multiple nations. We can try to make sure that we engage with those local Aboriginal groups and that there is opportunity for those groups to nominate and put someone forward. We will not be having a situation where an Aboriginal person from the eastern suburbs represents the Far West. That is not what I want. But we need to remember that our boundaries are large and often cross multiple Aboriginal nations. I want to highlight that. As I said in the crossbench brief this morning, I took that on board. I want to provide clarity about the spirit of what we are trying to do.

The bill also amends the Health Services Act to allow NSW Health to charge booking and cancellation fees to private providers that use the NSW Health non-emergency patient transport service to move patients between private premises. This change is intended—to be blunt—to encourage behaviour change. To encourage more efficient use of the service and to discourage what is happening at the moment—just in case bookings, late notice or on- scene cancellations, which is frustrating and costly to the taxpayer.

The bill also makes an important change to the Human Tissue Act to allow senior available next of kin to delegate their ability to consent to ante-mortem procedures to another person. Those ante-mortem procedures were important to the independent member for Lake Macquarie, and he fought hard for that important change. Senior available next of kin already can delegate their ability to consent to organ donation to another person. Therefore, this change brings decision-making powers for ante-mortem interventions into line with the decision-making powers already in place for organ donation. It tightens those two up, which are naturally linked in the way in which they operate.

The bill amends the Private Health Facilities Act to allow certain facilities prescribed by the regulations to be primarily staffed by midwives instead of nurses. That is an important change. It will allow the regulations to prescribe additional people who can be appointed to the medical advisory committee for certain facilities. Those changes will allow greater flexibility for the Act and regulations to support certain models of care. Finally, the bill makes minor changes to the Health Practitioner Regulation (Adoption of National Law) Act 2009, the Health Practitioner Regulation (New South Wales) Regulation and the Mental Health Act, to clarify how the legislation is intended to operate and update outdated terminology. I thank members for their contribution to this important debate, and I commend the bill to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr RYAN PARK:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

**BAIL AMENDMENT (BAN ON PRIVATE ELECTRONIC MONITORING) BILL 2025****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 7 May 2025.**

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (16:18):** I lead for the Opposition on this bill. There are currently two kinds of electronic monitoring in the New South Wales justice system—namely, public electronic monitoring and private electronic monitoring. The first electronic monitoring for bail was actually privately provided electronic monitoring ordered by the court as a condition of bail. In *R v Ebrahimi* [2015] NSWSC 335, Justice Beech-Jones, then of the NSW Supreme Court and now a justice of the High Court of Australia, at paragraph 33 noted the then concern of the Assistant Commissioner of Police for the use of untested monitoring devices in bail applications. In that case, His Honour at paragraph 34 accepted "that the electronic monitoring proposal mitigated the risk of the accused absconding." In *R v Xi* [2015] NSWSC 1575, Justice Hamill followed the decision of *R v Ebrahimi* at paragraphs 37 to 39 and ordered electronic monitoring as paragraph 13 of the conditions of bail, set out at paragraph 51 of his reasons.

Other early decisions involving private electronic monitoring for bail include *R v Salameh* [2016] NSWSC 930 and *Lin v DPP* [2017] NSWSC 312. The former Coalition Government introduced regulations in 2021 that dealt with the minimum technical requirements for private electronic monitoring devices to provide a level of statutory quality control over the minimum standards that would be required when a court ordered electronic monitoring as a condition of bail. The implied right of a court to accept and order private electronic monitoring as a condition of bail—the kind of order that courts have been making in New South Wales for more than 10 years, and even longer in *R v Medich* [2010] NSWSC 1488 under the pre-2013 Bail Act—will be taken away under new section 30A in schedule 1 [6] to the bill. Currently, section 30A of the Bail Act is in the following terms:

**30A Bail conditions requiring electronic monitoring**

If bail conditions impose a requirement for the accused person to be subject to electronic monitoring—

- (a) the bail authority must be satisfied the electronic monitoring is of a standard that at least meets any minimum standards prescribed in the regulations, and
- (b) the bail condition must require the electronic monitoring to be of a standard that at least meets any minimum standards prescribed in the regulations.

The bill will replace this section with this:

**30A Bail conditions must not require electronic monitoring other than under s 28B**

A bail condition must not require an accused person be subject to electronic monitoring other than a bail condition imposed under section 28B.

Section 28B contains provisions that were introduced last year requiring electronic monitoring for bail granted for serious domestic violence offences referred to in section 16B (1) (c1) of the Bail Act. In addition to electronic monitoring for bail, in June 2016 the former Coalition Government also introduced the Domestic Violence Electronic Monitoring program to manage DV offenders serving a community-based sentence, to assist in monitoring offender compliance with apprehended domestic violence orders. Unlike private bail monitoring, the Domestic Violence Electronic Monitoring program was conducted by the Corrective Services NSW. That program, as measured by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research [BOCSAR] in its report number 255 in May 2023, assessed in a large cohort of cases with a robust control group that electronic monitoring reduced DV reoffending by 33 per cent. That is a significant result in reducing reoffending when people know that they are being monitored.

Following the tragic death of Molly Ticehurst, allegedly by her former partner while on bail, as well as the results of the BOCSAR study, I introduced a private member's bill to require electronic monitoring for bail in high-risk domestic violence cases. The Government copied that bill and ultimately introduced legislation, which passed last year, inserting new section 28B into the Bail Act to require electronic monitoring conducted by Corrective Services NSW for bail in relation to serious DV offences. As I have said, the bill will abolish all private electronic monitoring in New South Wales.

In early 2025 Bail Safe, which had been privately monitoring persons on bail in New South Wales and Victoria, ceased operating. At the time Bail Safe's major business was in Victoria, but it was monitoring 25 persons in New South Wales. After the failure of Bail Safe, the New South Wales persons who were being monitored were transferred to another private company, Allied Universal, which is the subsidiary of a large group operating in 36 countries and monitoring 150,000 persons daily. Allied Universal has performed monitoring in New South Wales and Victoria since 2013, in South Australia since 2000 and in Western Australia since 2018. Allied Universal is the only private electronic monitoring provider for bail in New South Wales. It currently monitors

126 persons who have committed various drug, firearm, proceeds of crime, criminal group, homicide, domestic violence and other offences.

Rather than follow the path of the New South Wales Government with this bill, at the end of February 2025 the Victorian Labor Government set up an inquiry led by Liam Brown, SC, to assess the circumstances that led to the imposition of a bail condition subjecting each person to private electronic monitoring, to assess whether unacceptable risks to community safety have been properly managed after the collapse of Bail Safe, and to consider a proposal to legislate the end of the use of private companies for electronic monitoring of people on bail in Victoria. Given that the likely consequence of the bill is to allow some people to be granted bail without the protection of the community through electronic monitoring, the New South Wales Government should have investigated whether it was possible to better regulate the private electronic monitoring companies, as occurs in many countries around the world, rather than to impose an outright ban as this legislation seeks to.

Today a motion to establish an upper House inquiry was rejected by Labor and The Greens by a narrow vote of 19 to 17. I am surprised that certain Labor members in the other place did not support something that is more consistent with the presumption of innocence. The so-called concern for civil liberties that is frequently expressed by Labor MLCs seems to have been abandoned. It seems they would prefer that more people are held in remand, pending their cases being heard, than a safer release under electronic monitoring. An upper House inquiry could have investigated the type and adequacy of potential future regulation of private providers, drawing on the experience in other jurisdictions to guard against them ceasing operations, as Bail Safe did, or to properly respond to them ceasing operations. An inquiry could also investigate whether public electronic monitoring is superior to private electronic monitoring and whether it is more protective of the community if a person is granted bail. The Coalition is in favour of public electronic monitoring in youth justice, where other jurisdictions already use it. An inquiry could have investigated the effectiveness of electronic monitoring in that context.

Electronic monitoring for bail in criminal cases is needed, in addition to situations of serious domestic violence, but this legislation prevents that. An inquiry could have looked at where the focus should be for expanding electronic monitoring for bail, whether public or privately funded. Any problems with absconding under public and private electronic monitoring should also be investigated by an upper House parliamentary inquiry. The other place has missed an opportunity to further investigate the benefits of electronic monitoring to support community safety and prevent repeat offending in our justice system.

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (16:28):** I speak on behalf of the people of the Heathcote electorate and the people of New South Wales about an important piece of legislation: the Bail Amendment (Ban on Private Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2025. This legislation is a critical step towards restoring integrity, accountability and public trust in our bail system. It makes one thing very clear: Community safety must never be compromised by private arrangements or profit-driven motives. It ensures that public safety is once again firmly in public hands.

Privately arranged and funded electronic monitoring, such as the use of ankle bracelets, has operated in a grey area. Individuals on bail could nominate and pay private providers to monitor their movements, often at great personal cost and with minimal oversight from the justice system. It was a workaround that created inequality, confusion and, frankly, danger. Those who had the money could engage with private providers, who had little to no oversight by the justice system, whereas those without means were left without that option. That resulted in an inconsistent and unaccountable patchwork of supervision that did not strengthen peace of mind in our communities.

Earlier this year, the collapse of one such provider, BailSafe, made the consequences of that inconsistent system painfully clear. The system was not being managed by the Government; it was in the hands of a private business that ceased operations overnight and provided no due notice. Any accused individuals under the supervision of BailSafe were left unmonitored and uncontrolled in our communities. The collapse of BailSafe was much more than a technological failure; there was a breakdown of communication and trust.

A fundamental breakdown in communication and coordination between the Government, the courts and private monitoring companies should not be allowed to happen, especially when it is the safety and wellbeing of people in New South Wales that is put at risk. The legislation eliminates private electronic monitoring altogether, ensuring that any monitoring imposed as a bail condition is done only by Corrective Services NSW, and only for high-risk domestic violence matters. That ensures proper training, established protocols and robust oversight. The public rightly expects nothing less when it comes to protecting victims and preventing further harm.

The Government is deeply committed to protecting the peace of mind and safety of every person in New South Wales. We are not here to serve companies; we are here to serve the people. That includes the victims of domestic violence, for whom electronic monitoring is not just a legal requirement but also a lifeline. When that lifeline is handled privately and without clear oversight, it is not just frayed but also dangerous. To facilitate a

smooth transition, the bill includes a three-month period during which approximately 120 individuals currently under private monitoring will have their bail conditions reviewed by the courts. That approach balances the need for immediate action with fairness and due process.

We are not just reforming a technical process; we are rebuilding public confidence in the bail system. People deserve to know that if someone is being electronically monitored, it is not because they paid for it themselves, and that it is not being managed by a for-profit company but is being carried out by a professional, accountable and centralised government agency. This legislation is about the principles of fairness and accountability. It ensures that the monitoring of bail conditions is done transparently, professionally and with public safety at its heart, not private profits. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (16:32):** I contribute to debate in support of the Bail Amendment (Ban on Private Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2025. This reform prioritises public safety, addresses longstanding systemic weaknesses and restores confidence in our bail system. At the heart of the bill is a clear and necessary purpose: to remove the option of privately arranged and funded electronic monitoring as a bail condition. This step is an evidence-based response to serious and growing concerns about the reliability, integrity and quality of some private electronic monitoring providers in New South Wales.

Under the current Bail Act 2013, a court may impose electronic monitoring as a condition of bail if it considers it reasonably necessary to address a particular bail concern. That monitoring can be arranged and funded independently by the accused. The intent behind the provision was to provide courts with an additional tool to mitigate risk. However, it has become increasingly clear that the reality does not match the intent. Recently, we have seen alarming examples of high-profile failures where private monitoring providers have ceased operations without notice, leaving accused individuals unmonitored in the community.

Community safety must never depend on unregulated, profit-driven private arrangements. The bail system cannot rely on providers whose operations lack the transparency, oversight and consistency that government-backed systems like Corrective Services NSW [CSNSW] provide. While minimum standards for private monitoring were introduced in 2022 by the former Attorney General, the reality is that those standards have proven insufficient. We now know that some providers are using substandard technology. Some lack the ability to respond rapidly to breaches and some operate without the required safeguards. All too often, there is no real recourse when things go wrong. When private companies fall short, the consequences are borne by not just the courts or the legal system, but also victims, families and the broader community.

This bill addresses those risks head-on. Firstly, it removes the ability of bail authorities to impose a bail condition requiring private electronic monitoring. Section 29 (1) (f) and section 30A of the Bail Act—along with the associated minimum standards in the Bail Regulation 2021—will be repealed. Secondly, the bill amends section 28B and inserts a new section 30A to clarify that electronic monitoring can only be imposed under section 28B for specific domestic violence show cause offences, and only where that monitoring is conducted by CSNSW.

The bill does not impact on electronic monitoring run by CSNSW. That system continues to play an important role in monitoring individuals charged with serious domestic violence offences. Unlike private providers, CSNSW employs robust systems, high-quality equipment and trained personnel. Its operations are supported by law, embedded within the criminal justice system and subject to government oversight. That level of reliability and accountability simply cannot be matched by private firms operating for profit.

The bill also introduces sensible transitional provisions to ensure an orderly shift away from private monitoring. A three-month transition period will allow courts, prosecutors and defence counsel to review current bail conditions and, where necessary, apply for variation or revocation. During that period, private electronic monitoring conditions will remain in force as though the amendments had not yet commenced. However, if an accused person remains on such a condition at the end of the transition period, they will be deemed to be in breach of bail, and police will be required to take action to bring them before the court. That is a thoughtful and balanced approach. It does not create a cliff edge effect. It respects the rule of law. Most importantly, it ensures that the safety of our community is not compromised during the transition.

It is important to emphasise that this reform does not limit the court's power to impose strong, enforceable bail conditions. What it does is ensure that where electronic monitoring is used, it is delivered by a trusted, accountable and professional body—Corrective Services NSW—with the necessary infrastructure and experience to do the job properly. Moreover, offenders subject to electronic monitoring under sentencing or parole conditions will continue to be managed by community corrections officers. Those professionals provide a further layer of supervision and accountability, which private providers simply cannot offer.

The bill also sends a clear message that community safety is not for sale. The integrity of our bail system cannot depend on whether an accused person can afford a private monitoring service nor on whether that service meets the basic requirements of professionalism and reliability. The criminal justice system must operate on principles of equity, safety and public confidence.

The Government is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent and just bail system that serves the people of New South Wales and not the interests of unregulated commercial entities. The bill ensures that the weaknesses we have identified are properly and permanently addressed. It protects victims, supports police and prosecutors, and enhances public confidence in our justice system. The bill will strengthen community safety, uphold the rule of law and ensure that justice in New South Wales is fair, effective and secure. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (16:40):** In essence, the Bail Amendment (Ban on Private Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2025 is about one thing only: keeping the community safe by ensuring electronic monitoring is done properly and responsibly. That means no more cutting corners with private companies that cannot be trusted to do the job. We have seen what happens when monitoring is left to the private market. BailSafe Australia is a perfect example of that. With no warning or handover, it effectively left accused people unmonitored in the community. I think every one of us would agree that that is simply unacceptable. It is a clear example of what happens when essential public services and functions are outsourced, and it is exactly why this Government is committed to ending another form of risky privatisation. Safety and justice should not be for sale.

The Government was elected on a platform of ending privatisation, and the Minns Government has ended the privatisation of essential public services in its first term. But it has not been able to de-privatise some public services due to contract arrangements, and we have seen the impact of that. Healthscope going under yesterday was a perfect example, and a set of hospitals in this State now have a question mark over their future. The hardworking staff at those hospitals will make sure everyone still gets the service they deserve, but it is another example of what happens when the obsession with neoliberalism and trying to commoditise everything goes too far. Given recent events both federally and around the world, I would like to think that we have moved into a new era of correcting the overreach of neoliberalism and privatisation, and that there is most definitely a role for government when it comes to certain services, products and markets.

Nothing is more important than community safety, and when it comes to electronic monitoring, we must mandate that it is safely in the hands of government. We have heard real concerns from victims' advocates, courts and community groups. They want monitoring that is consistent, safe, backed by public oversight and not left to whoever sets up shop with the cheapest tender and a primary aim of profit. The bill responds directly to those concerns and removes the option for private electronic monitoring as a condition. From now on, monitoring will only be provided through Corrective Services NSW, and that means it will be professionally run, properly supervised and built to last.

Importantly, the Government is not changing the rules for serious domestic violence cases. Section 28B of the Bail Act will remain in place. Those individuals will still be subject to mandatory electronic monitoring by Corrective Services, which includes case management and compliance checks by trained officers. The bill draws a clear line. If someone is to be electronically monitored in this State, it will be done by a public body that knows what it is doing and not a private operator that might shut down overnight. There is also a clear transitional plan. People currently on private monitoring will have their bail conditions reviewed within three months. Courts will have time to reassess the risks, make decisions and, if needed, impose new conditions. At the end of that period, anyone who has not had their conditions updated will be brought back before the court. That is a fair and orderly approach to making this change.

This is the right move for victims, for courts and for the safety of the wider community. The bill closes a loophole that should never have been open in the first place, if we are being completely honest. I support the bill because it is consistent with the Government's broader commitment that critical services, whether in justice, health or transport, should be publicly run, publicly accountable and focused on people not private profits. Let us not forget that privatisation of these services was always a risk. We are now seeing the realisation of that risk and the tragic consequences. This Government is stepping in to fix that with the bill, which puts community safety first and brings integrity back into the system. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (16:45):** The Bail Amendment (Ban on Private Electronic Monitoring) Bill 2025 amends the Bail Act to remove the option of privately arranged and funded electronic monitoring as a bail condition. That is incredibly important. I do not believe that private electronic monitoring should ever have been contemplated or put in place in New South Wales. We saw the consequences of that a few months ago when it failed. Currently, the Bail Act allows for the imposition of electronic monitoring as a bail condition if it is considered by the bail authority as reasonably necessary to address a particular bail concern and the type of electronic monitoring is independently organised and funded.



The bill addresses longstanding concerns that the quality and reliability of some private electronic monitoring providers that monitor accused people under bail conditions are not sufficient to support community safety and wellbeing, concerns that were borne out earlier this year when BailSafe collapsed. The bill repeals sections 29 (1) (f) and 30A of the Bail Act and the minimum standards provisions in the Bail Regulation. It makes certain amendments to section 28B to clarify that the electronic monitoring under that section is managed by Corrective Services NSW only and inserts new section 30A to make it clear that the only electronic monitoring condition that can be imposed is that under section 28B.

The bill incorporates transitional provisions, including a transition period of three months during which the private electronic monitoring bail condition continues to apply with the intention that accused persons who are currently subject to such a condition will be dealt with by the court during that period; a provision deeming the accused person to be in breach of bail due to failure to comply with the bail condition if they remain subject to a private electronic monitoring condition at the end of the transition period and requiring the police to take action accordingly; and a provision outlining that the reform is a "change of circumstances" for the purposes of section 74 of the Bail Act, enabling the accused person to be dealt with by the court.

As I mentioned, a number of concerns have been expressed about the quality and reliability of some privately arranged and funded electronic monitoring providers, and those are legitimate concerns about the effectiveness of electronic monitoring and the services that some providers deliver. In recent months there have been examples of the failure of private electronic monitoring, in particular, of BailSafe, a private company that provided monitoring services in Victoria and New South Wales and ceased operations without notice to the courts or the accused persons being monitored. That affected 20 people on bail in New South Wales and eight in Victoria. It meant that those accused persons subject to electronic monitoring bail conditions were left unmonitored in the community.

BailSafe should never have been appointed to such an important role in our community. BailSafe operated out of a doorhandle factory in Melbourne. Concerns were raised about BailSafe back in the second half of 2023, even though its contract had been in place for quite some time. In July 2023 a Supreme Court of Victoria judge raised concerns about the effectiveness of the organisation to actually carry out this work. In mid-2024 the operators of BailSafe were charged with serious crimes in Victoria. That goes well beyond the concern that many have—myself included—that it is inappropriate to privatise Corrections as monitoring should be done only by the State and should never be done for profit. It should absolutely never be run for profit by criminals.

To address those concerns, the Government is taking decisive action to remove the option of privately arranged and funded electronic monitoring as a bail condition. We could have maintained that option by putting in place fit and proper person tests and making sure we never had criminals running electronic bail monitoring. But we have taken the right step in going further to make sure it is not run for profit. In New South Wales it should always be the responsibility of Corrective Services to monitor bail.

Currently, the Bail Act allows the bail authority to impose private electronic monitoring. It must be appropriate and reasonably necessary to address a bail concern. It is important, though, that it can be monitored and is monitored and, therefore, we must bring that function back within the responsibility of Corrective Services at all times. Private electronic monitoring has been independently organised and self-funded by the accused person applying for bail. That, in itself, creates a perverse incentive to seek out private monitoring companies that are run by criminals, because they are run for criminals. It is much better for them to be run by Corrective Services NSW. Its monitoring is undertaken with high-quality systems and supports, and does not carry any risk that it will cease operating without further notice.

Accused persons on bail for serious domestic violence charges who are subject to Corrective Services electronic monitoring are subject to additional requirements to comply with directions under the Bail Regulation. Offenders subject to electronic monitoring under sentencing or parole orders are also case-managed and supervised by community corrections officers. That is how monitoring should be done. While there is only a very small number of people subject to private electronic monitoring, it is incredibly important to give them the support and supervision they require to make sure they do not reoffend in that period, which, of course, is a bail condition. It goes without saying that I fully support the bill. It is an incredibly important step forward. Private electronic monitoring should never have happened. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (16:52):** In reply: I thank the members representing the electorates of Wahroonga, Heathcote, Mount Druitt, Leppington and Granville for their contributions to this debate. The Minns Labor Government is taking decisive action to ban private electronic monitoring for the purposes of bail. We do that in response to community concerns, and concerns of the Government and government agencies, about the effectiveness of private electronic monitoring and the quality and reliability of the services that some providers deliver when monitoring people charged with serious offences released on bail. The bill establishes an orderly and fair transition arrangement for people currently on bail with

private electronic monitoring conditions. The bill will be supported by operational arrangements that have been developed in consultation with courts, prosecution agencies and justice agencies.

I now address some of the matters raised by members in debate. The member for Wahrenoonga appeared to criticise the Government for a missed opportunity to improve privately funded electronic monitoring and/or to have an upper House inquiry into the bill. I take the opportunity to remind the House about the short history of privately funded electronic monitoring for bail in New South Wales. In 2021 and 2022, when I was recently appointed shadow Attorney General, the Hon. Adam Searle of the other place and I raised concerns about privately funded electronic monitoring on bail a number of times with the former Government, including with the former Attorney General, who is now the Leader of the Opposition, in the course of budget estimates. Following that, the former Government introduced minimum standards for private electronic monitoring into the Bail Regulation. But, as we have seen, that measure was not sufficient to make sure that all private electronic monitoring was suitable or sufficiently reliable to ensure the safety of our community, because it went to the integrity of the physical device and not the providers themselves.

Although section 30A of the Bail Act requires the court to be satisfied that the minimum standards are met before imposing a private electronic monitoring condition, it is clear that that has not been sufficient to eliminate the risks associated with private electronic monitoring arrangements, particularly when we consider that serious alleged offenders, like high-level drug offenders, are released into the community pursuant to privately funded electronic monitoring. Private electronic monitoring is agreed directly between the accused person and the private service provider. The Government plays no role. The Government has no oversight of the quality of service, and there are limited options when a private provider fails to meet the minimum standards that were imposed by the former Government. That could cause a risk to community safety.

As the member for Granville said, we have no vision over people in the community who are privately electronically monitored, and we must rely on the integrity and efficiency of the private company. At the moment, there is no oversight of that, and we are choosing not to pursue that oversight because it is not core government business. For example, the closure of BailSafe Australia was a stark demonstration that that risk continues, despite minimum standards in place.

Eliminating the option to impose bail conditions requiring electronic monitoring by a private provider will immediately resolve concerns about the quality and reliability of those services. It will address community safety concerns and increase the public's trust in the justice system. Community safety is this Government's paramount concern, so we are taking decisive action with the bill to ban privately funded and arranged electronic monitoring from being imposed as a condition when a person is granted bail.

The member for Wahrenoonga also criticised the bill on the basis that it could lead to greater numbers of people held on remand. The Government acknowledges that this reform may result in an increase in the remand population. Some accused persons may be refused bail because certain bail conditions, such as a risk that the accused person may abscond, can no longer be mitigated now that private electronic monitoring will not be available as a bail condition. All monitors can be ripped off. They can all be removed. None of them are fail-safe. It is ultimately up to the court to make appropriate bail decisions, taking into account the factors set out in the Bail Act and the information received from the prosecution and defence during bail proceedings. Community safety is the New South Wales Government's primary concern. If bail concerns cannot be met without privately funded electronic monitoring, then a person will be remanded in custody.

The member for Wahrenoonga also suggested that banning private electronic monitoring would affect the presumption of innocence. There is no change to the broader bail framework and no change to the presumption of innocence. The Bail Act adopts a process to allow bail authorities to assess risk against bail concerns that are set out in the Bail Act and formulate bail conditions that are adapted to addressing those risks. The bill does not change that. Where the risk is unacceptable, a bail authority must refuse bail. The community should not be expected to tolerate the risk that some people granted bail on the condition that they are electronic monitored may, in fact, be left unmonitored due to a failed private operator. The bill promotes community safety and takes strong action by changing our bail laws to end that risk once and for all. I commend the bill to the House.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Council agreeing to the Legislative Assembly's amendment.

*Public Interest Debate***HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (17:00):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Stands with the Hunter and Mid North Coast communities who have been impacted by severe flooding.
- (2) Expresses its condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of those who have lost their lives in the flooding this week.
- (3) Recognises the resilience of the Hunter and Mid North Coast communities and thanks the emergency services volunteers and workers for their courage, dedication and lifesaving professionalism.
- (4) Recognises the need for government to support the long term recovery of these communities.

Earlier in question time, I spoke about floods affecting the State. I acknowledge the presence in the House of the Leader of the Opposition and the very thoughtful question he asked in question time. The intention today is to, hopefully, present a public interest debate that all members will support. It would be hard not to agree on the subject matter of this debate. As I speak in this House, thousands of people in the Hunter and the Mid North Coast area are still undertaking the third step, which is the clean-up and wash-out of homes and businesses that have been affected by floods. I appreciate so many members being in the Chamber. When I look around, I know that every member in the Chamber has been affected in some way by natural disasters in their communities—some more so than others.

I had the privilege of spending most of last week in the Hunter and the Mid North Coast region with the Premier, Minister Washington, Minister Aitchison, the Prime Minister and Federal Minister McBain. I acknowledge other members of this House who remain with their communities. I acknowledge the member for Myall Lakes; the member for Port Macquarie, in particular; the member for Oxley; and the member for Dubbo—and I hope I have not forgotten anybody. I have said many times that when it comes to natural disasters, members of Parliament need to throw politics out the window and instead deal with incredibly important matters. It is important that people who are suffering know that we stand in solidarity with them and that we will work together to do what needs to be done.

One of the most beautiful text messages I received was from my predecessor, the member for Cootamundra, who wished me the best with all sincerity. That message was from someone who has been through this as a Minister, and I will not forget it. I thank the member for Cootamundra. A lot of members of this House are decent people. Perhaps because of what is shown on television, people do not get to see that, but there are good people in this House, who do really good work. I have spoken about the pride I felt as the Minister for Emergency Services in the way people responded to this natural disaster. I gave a special shout-out to the SES as the lead agency and I will continue to do that, and I include an acknowledgement to Commissioner Wassing. I also acknowledge Andrew "Cribby" Cribb, and I promise I will return his shoes at some stage. He lent me a pair of boots because the ones I had were too shiny, and I said, "As long as you haven't got tinea, I'm fine!"

Along the way I saw members of the SES from Bankstown and others from different parts of the State. They were supported by members of the RFS, the Volunteer Rescue Association, Fire and Rescue NSW, St John Ambulance, ambos, the police, and members of surf lifesaving. Everybody who could be there was there to assist. In the worst of times, we see the best of people and the best of us as a society. We must remember that. I will not forget—and I hope others do not need to experience it—what I felt and a different sense of anxiety that went through me when I knew what is coming: that people would be caught in floodwaters, trapped and isolated within their communities, despite all the planning that was done before that. While we tragically lost five people, we must also think about the more than 700 rescues and how much worse it could have been.

Flood rescues are not conducted in easy conditions. In some rescues, people went down from helicopters. Others went through really rough waters to try to help others in their community. There are so many inspiring stories I could mention. We know that 10,000 homes and businesses have been affected in some way. Rapid assessments are now taking place. I think we are up to about 5,500 of those and we are trying to get through. Up to 500 homes are uninhabitable. "Uninhabitable" does not mean they cannot be repaired. Some got a little bit of flooding and some got a lot. In Taree, I remember standing with the Premier, who is reasonably tall, but there was a watermark above his head.

I could speak for 20 minutes, but there are a couple of inspiring stories I really want to tell. One day we visited Hinton, which is an isolated community, to deliver some food and medical supplies. We knew that the community would be isolated by floodwaters, but they had prepared for it. In among all of that, there was the joy of the community coming together to support one another. I met a gentleman, Mr Waters, who was wearing a Bulldogs hat. He said, "You're the member for Bankstown. I'm a Bulldogs fan." We hugged it out, and that was the end of it. I promised him that I would try to get him something from the Bulldogs. If the Doggies are watching, I am going to hit you up for a jersey for Mr Waters.

I draw attention to the changes the New South Wales Government has made to ensure we support people. We got a message that someone needed chemotherapy. They had effectively run out of it and could not get more. We made it our mission to make sure they got that chemo. In an Australian first, we took the Unimog, which is a high-clearance vehicle, as far as we could. We managed to also get a drone and clipped the chemo drugs to that. We sent it across the river and watched the person come out. Those are the types of lifesaving things that can happen when we have a joint effort. Everybody working together shows the very best of what we can be as a government.

When I say "Government", I mean as a Parliament with all the communities and agencies working together, which results in spontaneous volunteering born from a community spirit. We can't buy that spirit, but we can support it and complement it. Every single one of us is inspired by the incredible stories we have seen. I will have more to say later, but I will say at this point that every single person—from the Prime Minister, the Premier and this entire Parliament—stands with the communities of the Hunter and the Mid North Coast, and we will for the long run.

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (17:07):** I begin by thanking the Minister for moving the motion. Obviously, the Opposition wholeheartedly supports the motion and I believe every member of this House would, and should, also support it. The scale of the devastation up in the Hunter and on the Mid North Coast is enormous. Yet again we have seen communities in New South Wales traumatised by natural disasters. Sadly, I think our State will get more and more of them with increased frequency and greater intensity as a result of climate change. But, hopefully, each time something similar happens, we learn from previous natural disasters and improve our response each time.

As the Minister said, the worst of events bring out the best in people. I was fortunate to spend a couple of days over the weekend up on the Mid North Coast. I heard some awful stories, but I also heard stories of great heroism and people reaching out to their fellow man and woman. My heart goes out to the families and friends of the five victims who lost their lives in the floods. I did not meet their family and friends, but I met one family in Coopernook who told me they were the family that David Knowles directed the SES to, to save from the floods around Coopernook and Moto. Sadly, David Knowles lost his life while putting the lives of others before himself. I heard stories of private citizens who, when the SES could not get there, were rescuing people around Croki. But enormous thanks goes out to volunteers in the SES, RFS, Surf Life Saving NSW and Marine Rescue NSW, who are there when we need them.

Sadly, the scope of natural disasters means that we cannot have paid workforces standing idle most of the time to suddenly respond when natural disasters happen. We rely on the goodwill of volunteers, and also their expertise in knowing what to do in the times of disaster. I acknowledge the local MPs who have been passionate advocates for their community, digging mud at the metaphorical coalface and checking in on their communities. In particular I acknowledge the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Oxley, who are up there this week, as well as the member for Coffs Harbour, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Port Stephens and the member for Maitland. They are doing what is probably the most important job in our community—not debating motions and legislation in Parliament but standing up for our local communities, particularly in a time of crisis, and making sure they are looked after.

The scale of the flood is enormous. In Sydney we are often a bit desensitised to what is happening out in the bush and up on the coast. Up to 50,000 people were isolated at one stage. I think there are still 12,000 people isolated and up to 500 homes that cannot be inhabited. That scale is enormous. Behind all of those numbers are personal stories. For example, take the North Shore Rural Fire Service across the Hastings River in Port Macquarie. Captain Kingsley Searle told me that they are a tight-knit unit. They have 50 RFS volunteers. When they were cut off from what I call the mainland for four or five days, they were "it" in terms of emergency relief and the mopping-up operation. The mud is everywhere. I have never seen so much mud. It is not like a spring clean of a house and deep cleaning the carpets for an hour or two. Each house will probably need days of work to get it repaired, clean and habitable. It has been an enormous operation.

In New South Wales we are blessed with the skill and professionalism of all of our emergency services staff. No doubt there will be lessons learnt in terms of how we can better respond, but I am so grateful for the dedication and volunteering spirit in New South Wales in times of crisis. All New South Wales residents need to

come together to look at ways that we can prevent the worst effects of natural disaster, to build up our resilience as it happens more and more. But, at the moment, the most important thing we can offer is active support—boots on the ground—and empathy and outreach to the citizens who have been so drastically affected.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (17:12):** I am very pleased to contribute to this public interest debate, which is not really a debate because I think all members are on the same side when it comes to the motion about the Hunter and Mid North Coast, moved by the Minister for Emergency Services. Without a doubt, we all believe it needs to be worked on and spoken about together as a community. In my contribution I wish to acknowledge the number of volunteers from our emergency services. They have done an incredible job over the last few weeks. The thing is that it has not just been going on over the last few weeks. I think this is now the fifth flood indication this year. We had the bushfires, which tens of thousands of volunteers worked on. We now have similar numbers helping emergency services in the flood-affected areas in the Upper Hunter and the Mid North Coast.

Let us look at some of those figures. Currently 3,500 volunteers and full-time staff of New South Wales government agencies are on the ground in the Upper Hunter and the North Coast. Of those, 2,220 are SES volunteers, which is huge. We had all kinds of issues during Lismore floods. We were trying to get volunteers and people in to help. Like the Leader of the Opposition said, we have learnt. This time we have got together to respond. More than 2,000 volunteers are there—350 RFS volunteers, 250 from Fire and Rescue, 32 from Volunteer Rescue Association NSW, 36 from St John's Ambulance NSW, 26 from Surf Life Saving NSW, and 1,600 staff and contractors from Transport for NSW. An additional 2,000 people from councils, electricity companies, telcos, and spontaneous volunteers are all on the ground coordinating. As I mentioned, hundreds of locals are also helping out any way they can.

We also have people who have come from interstate to help our communities. Personnel and resources have come from the Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. There are 165 interstate personnel deployed in field and incident management roles, and a further 76 will arrive today. Seventy personnel from the Australian Defence Force, along with a contingent from New Zealand, have also arrived today. It is incredible. That shows how our community comes together. I had the privilege of serving with the RFS at the Lismore floods and I reflect on that experience. We all know what happened there: Our good friend the member for Lismore and her husband lost everything, including her home. It was my first experience of the floods. I was stunned when I saw that the flood levels went beyond the height of the houses. There were trees on the riverbank that were higher than the double-storey houses and there was rubbish at top of those trees. That is how high the flooding was.

The mud, the stench and the devastation were incredible. Communities on the North Coast have been hit time and again, but the resilience of those communities will keep them going. Not only did we have all of the professional volunteers and full-time paid emergency staff, but thousands of people stepped up to help. If members remember, we had the dinghy flotilla.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** The tinnie army.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT:** The tinnie army. My God, what incredible people Australians are. When their colleagues and neighbours are under threat, they go forward to help. It is quite amazing. It is a credit not only to the emergency services staff but also to the neighbours and communities who stepped up to help. What also amazes me is that a lot of the people from the RFS, Fire and Rescue and St John's Ambulance who have come to help are not from the area. They are from Western Sydney, Wagga Wagga, and Dubbo. They have come from all over the State to help their fellow men and women rebuild their lives. That is the next step that is happening now. It will take many months, but I know that all members in this House, including those who are up there, are determined to make that happen. I look forward to working with all members in this House, the volunteers and our emergency services who are up there now. I thank the Minister for Emergency Services for moving the motion, and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his words.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:17):** I thank the Minister for Emergency Services for moving this motion today, reflecting on the severe flooding that is impacting the Mid North Coast and the Hunter region. It feels like it has not stopped raining on the Mid North Coast for years. Indeed, 2025 began with relentless downpours. Tropical Cyclone Alfred exacerbated those conditions, dropping hundreds of millimetres of rain across south-east Queensland and northern New South Wales, with everything running off from the already water-logged earth. Our autumn months were saturated. Week after week, children's weekend sports were cancelled, community events were postponed and outdoor activities were continually disrupted.

The ongoing disruption took an emotional toll, leaving residents feeling isolated, exhausted and anxious about what might come next. Then, about a week ago, a significant low-pressure system moved in, drenching areas from Yamba down through to the Hunter region. As rivers and creeks rose rapidly and unpredictably, power

outages intensified the risks, making it difficult for communities to prepare adequately and respond effectively. The sheer magnitude of the flood has been profound. It has been officially classified as a one-in-500 event. Over 140 flood warnings were issued, nearly 50,000 residents found themselves isolated and emergency services received more than 1,000 urgent calls for assistance. Each of those statistics represents lives deeply affected, homes inundated, memories and livelihoods damaged and a profound sense of uncertainty about the future. Tragically, five individuals also lost their lives in the floods, which is a heartbreaking reminder of nature's power and unpredictability. I extend my deepest condolences to their families, friends and communities during this difficult period. Each life lost is an immeasurable tragedy and we all mourn their passing.

For days vital infrastructure like the Pacific Highway between Coffs Harbour and Taree was impassable, isolating communities and severely hampering relief efforts. On Saturday I visited Taree with my colleague the member for Myall Lakes; the Premier; the Minister for Emergency Services; and the Minister for Roads, and the Minister for Regional Transport. We witnessed firsthand the immense devastation. Meeting with affected residents and local leaders provided a stark and sobering perspective. We then travelled to Manning Point, where residents had already begun the task of cleaning up. They face enormous challenges ahead, especially the oyster farming community.

While I acknowledge all members and Ministers involved in this tragedy, I single out the member for Myall Lakes, Tanya Thompson, who is a true community champion. Despite her deep emotional response to seeing her constituents in distress, she remains resolute and actively engaged in relief and recovery efforts. I also acknowledge the member for Oxley, Michael Kemp, whose farm and business in the Kempsey CBD sustained considerable damage. Despite those personal losses, Michael has exemplified remarkable community leadership, tirelessly working alongside residents and authorities to ensure no-one in his electorate is forgotten or left unsupported during these challenging times.

We must acknowledge with candour the long road ahead. While the immediate clean-up might take days or weeks, genuine and meaningful recovery will take years of sustained effort. There are significant issues in the insurance sector. Previously insured home owners may now find themselves without insurance, which will affect their mortgages and resale value—not to mention their peace of mind. Roads like Waterfall Way and Eastern Dorriggo Way need urgent work to make them safe. Farms and businesses across our region face daunting losses and some will have to confront the painful decision to stay or walk away altogether. Others are taking the first steps towards rebuilding their lives already. It is essential for the State and Federal governments to provide sustained and substantial support, financial assistance, infrastructure repair and, particularly, mental health services to ensure the communities and businesses can truly recover. My office has been inundated with offers of help from local businesses to donate and chip in. Sikh Volunteers Australia is helping to feed the community and people are looking out for each other. They are coming from all over to help.

I finish by acknowledging our emergency services personnel, especially the volunteers. Those brave heroes give up their time and risk their lives—often going for long periods without rest—to keep our community safe. They perform rescues, facing danger and sometimes in tragic circumstances, and they do it with a sense of camaraderie and stoic resolve. Words cannot express our gratitude to our emergency services, but our actions can. I ask people to consider volunteering—attend the open days—because their skills could help in emergencies.

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (17:22):** I thank the Minister for Emergency Services for bringing this public interest debate to the House. More importantly, I thank the Minister for his compassionate and uplifting leadership. As he said, he and the Premier spent a number of days in the Hunter with us last week. It was his birthday—and his son's eighteenth birthday—but he spent that time with us instead. The Minister and the Premier spent three days trying to get to Taree, but they were unable to go north until the third day. Their time with us was appreciated by my community.

I share the sentiments of member for Coffs Harbour because in Port Stephens, similarly, it does not feel as if it has stopped raining for a very long time. In fact, it is the second natural disaster we have experienced this year—the one in January caused 50,000 lights to go out—so it has been a long road for a lot of people already. When the rain came on Sunday night, I had not heard anything like it before. Then it kept on coming. When even more came on Thursday night, no-one could believe how much fell, despite knowing that more had fallen further north. We have been watching what has been happening with our northern and western neighbours in the Upper Hunter shire around Dungog and Gloucester, in Taree and further north whilst also managing the significant impacts experienced in Port Stephens.

As the Minister mentioned, there are still isolated communities in Hinton. They seem to be going quite well; they have regular SES supports across the river. But Wallalong and Woodville are now in their sixth day of isolation, while the residents of Osterley and Seaham were able to leave yesterday. For those communities, flooding is not uncommon but the scale of this flood has been enormous. As many members have said, it will be

a long road to recovery. Houses have been inundated in Salt Ash, Medowie, Williamtown, Lemon Tree and elsewhere. Farmers, oyster farmers and bee keepers have experience significant impacts. There has been coastal erosion and the roads are a mess. The response will be significant, and there has been a significant response in this immediate phase already. The focus for us now is with those isolated communities to ensure that they have the supports and the supplies that they need. That is an ongoing activity of the SES, as well as conducting damage assessments of properties with the RFS. We are continuing to connect those that need support to those services.

There was some good news from the Prime Minister today, who was in Taree again—he was there last week—about an increase in financial assistance for the local Port Stephens people. As other members have said, I recognise, on behalf of my community, the hardworking members of the NSW SES Port Stephens and Tomaree units and all the SES members who came from elsewhere to support my community. I know some of the members of the Port Stephens unit went further north as well. I got messages from Mick and Dean stating that one day they were in Hinton, the next day in Taree and the day after that in Salt Ash. I think they have been on duty seven days in a row so far. Those members put in an extraordinary effort.

The NSW Rural Fire Service and the NSW Police Force have also played a critical role, as have NSW Ambulance and Fire and Rescue NSW. I also give a shout out to the Port Stephens and MidCoast councils and their mayors, Leah Anderson and Claire Pontin. They have done an enormous amount of work and we will be supporting them in their recovery efforts, particularly to fix the smashed roads. There is obviously a lot of work to do. I also thank NSW SES Northern Zone Commander Chief Superintendent Andrew Cribb and Hunter Police District Superintendent Wayne Humphrey. As a community, we have come together, but we have a long road ahead. As a government, we will walk with our community and I will continue to work with everyone on the ground. I ask everyone who needs help to reach out. We will work with everyone and we will walk the road together.

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed) (17:27):** It is with a great deal of pride that I make a contribution to this important debate, and I thank the Minister for Emergency Services for bringing it to the House. The Hunter and Mid North Coast floods are amazing events. In my time in this Parliament, I have experienced seven flood events, and they continue to get worse. I hate to say it, but it is a time for both sides of politics to come together and work as one. That does not happen very often. I thank the Premier, the Minister for Roads and other Ministers for visiting the affected areas. I acknowledge my colleagues the member for Myall Lakes and the member for Oxley because I know what it is like. In 2022 the member for Ballina, the member for Lismore, and I experienced similar events in our electorates. I praise the NSW SES. It does an enormously difficult job, time and time again, as does VRA Rescue NSW and the Rural Fire Service, and all the others previously mentioned. Volunteering is a major issue.

There are some things I would like to point out. This is not a slow process. Along with Mal Lanyon from the Reconstruction Authority, we are still waiting to fix things from the 2022 flood. There are still issues outstanding there. We have had another event and another event since then. A number of speakers spoke about the mud. Let me give you a bit of a clue with the mud: The mud will set like concrete within a few days of hard sunshine. You have to break it up and get rid of it. After the 2022 flood, I got a reprimand from the Environment Protection Authority because we were turfing the mud back into the river. They said, "It's toxic. You can't do that. You can get fined." I said, "Well, it came from the river and I'm going to put it back there, because we have nowhere else to bloody put the stuff." It is important.

We also know from experience that when houses are flooded, within three or four days they are unliveable because of the mould. The mould will go right through the plasterboard and the ceiling and create a health hazard. Insurance is another issue, as the member for Coffs Harbour mentioned. A lot of those houses cannot get flood insurance. For mortgage insurance, housing insurance is required. If people cannot get that, I do not know what the banks are going to do with it.

All the money we spend on flood recovery is worthwhile. I do not doubt that. However, from my experience of seven flood events I know that we spend very little on retaining walls or dams or mitigation. We spend a lot on repairing houses, repairing roads and repairing sewage plants. But it is the future. Climate change is here. These things will happen again. I really hope, for the good people of the Mid North Coast and the Hunter, that the weather events do not repeat as they have on the Far North Coast, where one flood event is followed by another in six months and perhaps another one before the end of the year.

The emotional drain of dealing with a flood is another issue. An amount of mental stress and self-harm goes along with this situation. I have seen people come in to the recovery centres and re-live their whole story. They then go over to the Service NSW staff, who do a fabulous job, and they have to do the whole thing again. Having to do so time after time, people get emotional and there are inconsistencies. For our farmers, I asked a question today about category C, which relates to assistance provided to agricultural communities during natural disasters. In our neck of the woods, farmers lost all their plant cane for next season, so there will not be a crop

next season. There will not be a soya bean. It will be two or three years before they have another crop. The oyster producers in Port Stephens and Myall Lakes are going to lose a lot of their stock and it will take a hell of a long time to recover from that. The slowness of recovery and dealing with the Federal and State governments affects the emotion of the people.

I applaud every member of this place who has visited the grounds up there and tried to give some comfort to those people. That is what they need. They need someone to put an arm around them and give them a hug and say, "We are going to do our best and we are not going to leave you." They really appreciate it. To everyone involved, from the members in this room to the volunteers out on the ground, thank you on behalf of the community. We are watching, but it is a long road. As I said, it has been five years since the 2022 flood, and there are still issues. I know that the member for Lismore and the member for Ballina still have flood-related issues in their respective communities. I commend the Minister for bringing the public interest debate to the House.

**Ms TAMARA SMITH (Ballina) (17:32):** I contribute to the public interest debate on behalf of The Greens. I thank the Minister for Emergency Services for this public interest debate. On behalf of my community I offer my sincere and deepest condolences to the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives in this flood event on the Mid North Coast and in the Hunter region. I am connected to one of those people who passed away—a mother in the prime of her life—and it is incredibly sad. People in my community felt guilty, to be frank, because it beggared belief—and I know the member for Tweed understands—that it was happening on the most beautiful, sunny winter days. Hordes of volunteers from our communities went south as soon as this event was on the horizon. I echo the sentiments of my colleagues on both sides of the House in recognising the repeated incredible bravery of our volunteers and combat agencies. I acknowledge my colleagues, all of the affected MPs, and particularly those who are not here today. I know that the Premier will make sure they have an opportunity to speak in this place—perhaps in a public interest debate or in some other way—in order to mark what has happened to their communities.

The flood levels in Taree have surpassed those of 1929. When community members hear the words "one-in-500-year flood", it is very hard for them to wrap their head around it. Colonisers have been here for 237 years. For community members, that means, in other words, "completely unprecedented in living memory". Very quickly, the climate science community directly attributed this flood to human-induced climate change. Some people in the media have asked, "How is that even possible?" But the science has been there for a very long time. That is what the science is telling us. We have all the data.

I absolutely empathised with Deputy Commissioner Peter Thurtell when he said the impact of this weather event has been unimaginable. The impact is unimaginable until you are in it. Unfortunately, for those of us in the Northern Rivers in particular, it is all too imaginable. We all have post-traumatic stress every time there is heavy rain. I was very moved by the words of the Minister for Families and Communities when she spoke about hearing that rain, because it is incredibly frightening once you have lived through these events.

Now is not the time to belabour the point about climate change, but it is incredibly important to note that the good work the Reconstruction Authority is doing around adaptation cannot come soon enough. The Greens encourage the Government to continue to invest in adaptation because, as others have said, we cannot keep acting surprised or saying the same things. We have to prepare. Queensland is doing a very good job of showing us how to do that. I know that the right people are there. I particularly give a shout-out to the member for Lismore, who is embedded up there. I believe there could be no-one better on the ground supporting those communities.

As the member for Tweed said, this is a very long road. I reflect on the work of the former Premier Dominic Perrottet and his Ministers—in particular, Minister Steph Cooke, the former Minister for Emergency Services and Resilience, and the former Minister for Flood Recovery—because they were incredible. As Premier he set the tone that I know the current Leader of the Opposition continues to set, which is one of compassion and people first. I add that the people of the Cabbage Tree Island community are still homeless three years on. Things are progressing, but their island disappeared under 17 metres of water. An entire community was inundated. We have to get very real and have these conversations in an ongoing fashion. On behalf of my community, I thank all of the volunteers. Our hearts go out to everyone who has been affected. We commend the Premier on his compassion and continued support. We will be here because, unfortunately, it will be a very long road.

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (17:38):** By leave: I wish to make a brief contribution. I thank the Minister for allowing this very important topic to be considered by the House. The electorate of Clarence is sadly—and I do say sadly—the electorate that has been most often declared a natural disaster area in New South Wales. I also wish to acknowledge in the House the incredible work displayed in the last seven or eight days by emergency services personnel, both paid staff and volunteers. Our State is stronger and better because of their dedication to our community. Whether they have travelled 50 or 500 kilometres, we all sleep easier at night knowing that they have the community's back. I am sure all members agree that every one of them is a hero.



I acknowledge the work of the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Oxley, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Upper Hunter and the member for Coffs Harbour. In particular, I acknowledge the member for Maitland and Minister for Roads, who has been in pretty much constant contact with me over the past couple of days. I acknowledge also the member for Port Stephens, whose community has also been affected. The Minister for Emergency Services and other members have acknowledged the tragic loss of five lives. During the emergency in my electorate there was a shining light. At 9.20 p.m. on the Wednesday night, a 49-year-old man from Nymboida was reported as missing. When that message came through, we expected the worst. I spoke to the rescue squads that searched for him for two days and two nights about the pure relief of the family and the people on the ground when he was found alive—safe, but cold and hungry—12 kilometres downstream from where he went missing. It was remarkable.

Speaking from experience, the road ahead for the affected families will be tough. We should acknowledge that. There is no way that my community has recovered from previous floods. I also acknowledge the member for Tweed, the member for Lismore and the member for Ballina, who collectively suffered greatly in the 2022 floods. In the Clarence electorate some people are still sleeping in pod villages, which is not ideal. The enormity of the situation facing the Government and members of this place cannot be understated. The task is huge, and it will take every one of us and the best of this Parliament to ensure that every person is taken care of.

The TV cameras will go and it will no longer be front-page news. That is a guarantee. But the horror will not go away for the affected people in our communities. The grief will turn to anger. It did in my electorate after the 2022 floods and it will in this flood event as well. However, there are some positive vibes because the Premier, the Minister and every member of this House will continue to ensure that the community is not forgotten on the road to recovery. After all, if we cannot do that for our State and our people, what are we doing in this place. I thank the Minister for bringing this motion to the House.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:43):** By leave: I thank the Minister for bringing this important motion to the House. I thank also the Premier and the ministerial team, who have done a wonderful job guiding us through this natural disaster. The community really appreciates the work that the Government has done, in coordination with the Opposition. It has made us all feel like we are one team trying to help the community through what has been a pretty tough occasion for us all. I acknowledge the tragic fatalities. My heart goes out to the families, who must be really hurting now. An incredible number of volunteers are responding. It is sort of ironic that these floods started during National Volunteer Week and Wear it Orange Wednesday. So many volunteers are out working and helping our communities.

I thank the SES, Fire and Rescue, the RFS, police and all our frontline services. They have been tremendous. I acknowledge all the MPs who have been affected and have worked hard. In particular, I acknowledge the member for Oxley, the member for Port Macquarie and the member for Myall Lakes. The work they are doing in their communities is truly tremendous. They are dealing with really hard circumstances and helping people who have lost everything. There is nothing tougher as a local community leader than carrying the emotions of everyone on your shoulders. I wish them all well. I thank them for their work. I say go forth and be strong. We will do anything we can to help.

Some of the scenes in Taree and Wingham have been incredible. The clean-up involved with the amount of soil is just huge. A lot of that soil came from Gloucester. Some properties have lost four or five acres. It is not a foot drop; it is a three-metre drop down to the river, where an entire bank has gone. It is all heading down to Taree and Wingham, I am afraid to say. We saw some great work locally, starting with the SES. I dropped the kids at school and went to help out other flooded communities because I thought my home would be right. The SES drove my kids home in the Unimog, which was a great adventure for them. I apologise to the SES because they got a thorough interrogation from my wife about safety and everything like that. They did it tough before they even started that trip. However, it was all done safely.

I took the kids with me when I went to the evacuation centre in Dungog. They provided a lot of entertainment for the elderly folk there, who really enjoyed hearing about their adventures in the Unimog. Although the elderly community had been dragged out of their homes in the middle of the night, at about 11.30 p.m., there was a good feeling at the centre. Unfortunately, Dungog was hit really hard by floods 10 years ago. That is another anniversary that we are coming close to. Of course, that memory is still fresh—these things go on for a long time. I was pleased to see the community in good spirits, but it was traumatic all the same. The local Clarence Town RFS did a tremendous amount of work around the town, checking on everyone and helping people out when they needed it. That was absolutely terrific. I saw a couple of the SES guys up at Gloucester, who were working really hard.

I feel for all the communities that are still isolated because infrastructure has been washed out and the like. Some of the SES guys have slept at the station for days on end while working and helping out, despite the fact that some their own businesses have been filled with water. They helped out a lot. The work continues now. A hay

run, organised by the Denmam Lions Club, is going from Denmam up to Taree. They are helping out. The recovery will be a long, hard road. In this place and at all levels of government, we need to work really hard to get everyone back on their feet.

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra) (17:48):** By leave: I acknowledge and support the people of the Hunter and the Mid North Coast who are once again enduring the devastation of flooding. I thank the Minister for Emergency Services for bringing this important issue to the attention of the House. When I left the Emergency Services and Flood Recovery portfolios behind in 2023, I honestly hoped that the devastation and events of 2022 would never be experienced by another community, another family, another agency and certainly not another Minister. As I have said to the Minister privately but am happy to say again in this House, I am very grateful that he took on the portfolio after I left it and I thank him for his leadership. The same extends to Minister Saffin as well.

Many families across the Hunter and Mid North Coast are now facing the heartbreaking task of cleaning out their homes, salvaging what they can and navigating the long, uncertain road to recovery. For some, this is the third or fourth flood in just a few years. That kind of repeated trauma is not just exhausting; it is debilitating. It leaves deep scars that linger long after the waters recede. Once again we have seen communities rise to the challenge, fighting floodwaters, helping neighbours and stepping into the breach wherever it is needed. I acknowledge the work of our emergency services, whether it is the SES, the RFS, Fire and Rescue, the police, Ambulance NSW, the Volunteer Rescue Association, Surf Life Saving or Marine Rescue. They really are amazing. They are the reason not only that lives are saved but that hope remains.

Often the smaller communities, the tiny villages and the outlying rural areas are the hardest hit. In those places the flood is not just physical; it is existential. A single washed-out road can isolate a whole town. The flooding of one property may represent the loss of a vital service or the displacement of a key community figure. Those places often have no local supermarket or petrol station and, therefore, have very few backup resources. In my experience, recovery is slower and support arrives later, but the strength of the community is immense. I urge the House to recognise that small does not mean insignificant, and their recovery must not be treated as such.

I walked in the shoes of Ministers Dib and Saffin in 2022, and I acknowledge the members who have already made contributions drawing on their experiences as local members. I will never forget how closely the member for Clarence, the member for Ballina, the member for Tweed, Minister Saffin and I worked together at that time. They were extraordinary times, walking through the homes of people who had been flood affected, standing beside farmers in submerged paddocks and meeting farming families who had lost everything. I will never forget the pain in their eyes, but also the fierce determination to rebuild.

Those floods taught me many things. While no Government can prevent a natural disaster, we can change how we prepare for them, how we support communities through them and how we walk alongside them through the recovery process. Amongst other things, that means investing in local infrastructure that holds up under pressure. It means making floodplain mapping and early warning systems more accurate and more accessible. It means listening to the lived experiences of those on the ground, not just during the floods but also in the months and years that follow, because recovery does not end when the media leaves.

In fact, that is actually when the real work of recovery begins—when the adrenaline wears off and the exhaustion sets in, when families start to realise what they have really lost, not just in terms of property but also in terms of certainty, stability and security. We owe it to every person who is affected by flooding, wherever they are, to ensure that the recovery is not just rapid but also fair. I thank the Minister for bringing this motion to the House. It is a significant one and, I am sure, one of many that we will debate in the times ahead.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (17:53):** In reply: Over the past hour or so we have seen the very best of our Parliament, and what we can be when we bring our compassion to the fore. I wrote something in response to what every single member said but, given the limited time, I might not get a chance to comment on all of them. I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the members representing the electorates of Prospect, Coffs Harbour, Port Stephens, Tweed, Ballina, Clarence, Upper Hunter and Cootamundra. I particularly thank the member for Cootamundra for her kind words. We have a really special relationship. It is always about continuous improvement, and we continuously improve.

The Leader of the Opposition called on us to give the very best of ourselves in politics and to make sure that we walk that journey. That sentiment was shared by everyone, and that will certainly be the case. We have paid tribute to the SES and all the other emergency services. We have paid tribute to the community. As many people who have had that lived experience have said, when the visitors and the cameras go away, that does not mean it is over. That is when it really gets hard, because it is two weeks later that it really hits people, when they are sitting in their room and saying, "I still don't have everything that I need".

We have given an assurance that we will continue working with the communities. We started a State Disaster Mitigation Plan, we did the pre-planning and we made sure we had everybody there, but it does continue. We also recognise that different communities need different solutions to get back on their feet. The worst thing that can happen is for someone who owns a business or a property to decide they cannot do it anymore and they have to up and leave. We need those communities to remain strong and to know that we are there for them.

Many members also talked about the spontaneous volunteers. I acknowledged her in question time but I again acknowledge Holly Rankine, a local who has set up a spontaneous volunteering group. About 600 people just decided to turn up. I joked that it had the world's longest name—it is called the MidCoast Flood Community Response. People can visit the website to get all the help they need. It speaks to the spirit that we have all talked about today—the spirit of being there. So many people are playing so many roles and will never get a mention, but they are lifting one another up.

We are making sure there is financial and emotional support out there. Most importantly, we are making sure that everybody works together to ensure that no request goes unheard, unnoticed or unfulfilled. It will take time but we will always be there. We keep hearing a quote that best sums it up: "In the worst of times, we see the best of people." Together we can walk this journey, and we have to walk the journey together, no matter who we are. I commend the motion and thank all the members who contributed to debate.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **AUSTRAL CITY BEARS JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE CLUB**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (17:57):** I give a huge congratulations to the Austral City Bears Junior Rugby League Club, which did not pull any hamstrings when it recently celebrated Mother's Day in style. On Sunday 11 May the club hosted its first junior round of the year at Craik Park and marked the occasion with something truly special—a women in league round. The day was all about celebrating the incredible women who make the game what it is—the players, mums, sisters, coaches, trainers and tireless volunteers behind the scenes. To top it off, the club partnered with Breast Cancer Network Australia, with every dollar raised going towards its vital work supporting people at risk or diagnosed, along with their supporters. Craik Park was a sea of pink, with jerseys, socks, decorations and plenty of heart. Alongside some great junior footy, the atmosphere was buzzing with raffles, guessing competitions, delicious cake stalls and a Mother's Day photo booth that kept the smiles rolling all day. The day showed the huge strength, spirit and community behind the game. I give a huge thanks to everyone at the Austral City Bears. Go the Bears!

#### **BONDI ICEBERGS**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (17:58):** I celebrate the opening of the ninety-sixth season at Bondi Icebergs. May marks the beginning of the winter swimming season, and this year also marks 30 years of female swimmers at Icebergs. Many were worried after unprecedented swells caused so much damage back in April. However, the club has rebounded quickly, and that is a testament to its supportive members and board of directors, as well as the leadership shown by President Lynne Fitzsimons. I hope everyone enjoyed the cold plunge and wish them all the very best for this season.

#### **MARSDEN ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (17:59):** History was made last week as Australia's first ever kho kho ground was unveiled in the heart of Liverpool at Marsden Road Public School! Kho kho is a traditional Indian sport that combines speed, strategy and teamwork. Played between two teams, one chases while the other dodges on a rectangular field. Chasers can tag teammates by saying "kho!" to switch roles. It is fast, energetic and all about quick thinking. Marsden Road leads the way in so many different areas, and now it is raising the bar once again. Becoming the official home ground of kho kho is another reflection of how the school has one eye on the future under the leadership of Principal Manisha Gazula. I joined the Marsden Road community for an exhibition kho kho match with team Australia last Friday to test out the new field. Although it was a wet day, the students and special guests from the Department of Education and the Indian consulate had an absolute ball. I look forward to the day when Liverpool produces homegrown kho kho stars.

#### **BALL IN THE HALL EVENT**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (18:00):** I recognise the community of Upper Horton on the success of the recent Ball in the Hall event. Funds raised during this black tie event went directly to support the local pony club, with the night comprising of dinner, entertainment and a charity auction, with all those

attending digging deep to support the cause. I congratulate all involved in this initiative on their foresight and can-do attitude by giving back to their local club and showing that while Upper Horton is a small community, it has a huge heart. I thank pony club committee members Ben and Kate Green, Victoria Corcoran, Rachel Caskey, and Brianna Mack for their tireless efforts in staging the ball. I also thank Duncans Bus Services for transporting guests, the Imperial Hotel Motel Bingara for catering, the entertainers One Fun Band, auctioneer Riley Gibson and the many sponsors who generously donated items for the auction. I commend the community for getting together and raising much-needed funds for their local pony club. The community spirit in Upper Horton is indeed inspirational.

#### **FREDERICK NAYLOR**

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills) (18:01):** I acknowledge and congratulate Mr Frederick Naylor of Georges Hall on his extraordinary milestone of 50 years of service as a justice of the peace. For half a century Mr Naylor has selflessly served the people of New South Wales. He has provided vital witnessing and certification of documents and supported members of my community with integrity, humility and dedication. His enduring commitment reflects the very best of civic responsibility and public spirit. Justice of the peace volunteers like Mr Naylor play a quiet but crucial role in our legal and civic systems, and their service deserves recognition and deep appreciation. Reaching this 50-year milestone is a remarkable achievement and a testament to Mr Naylor's steadfast commitment to the people of my community. On behalf of the Parliament of New South Wales, I extend my sincere gratitude to Mr Naylor and congratulate him on this outstanding contribution to public service.

#### **NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (18:02):** In National Volunteer Week I shine a spotlight on the unsung heroes of our local communities. From the Rural Fire Service to surf lifesaving clubs, P&C groups to sports clubs and everything in between, volunteers are crucial to Pittwater. Volunteers are the heart of my community and they give so much, but I also acknowledge the value they get from volunteering. Volunteers in my community often tell me about the joy they get from the service they provide to their local community. This shows the power of volunteering to foster connection and meaning in life. I reflect on a story about a surf lifesaver who patrolled a local beach for many years. After a terrible accident his club mates came together to support him through surgery, rehab and continued home visits. This support helped him get down to the beach again, where he continues to volunteer. I hope that all volunteers get value from what they give, not just every day but also in times of need.

#### **MAX NEAL**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault) (18:03):** I congratulate Max Neal, a year 11 student at Whitebridge High School, on his outstanding achievement in the WorldSkills information and digital technology competition. After winning the competition across all regions, Max will proudly represent New South Wales at the national finals in Brisbane later this year. Max's success is a testament to his talent, hard work and problem-solving skills. As a senior prefect, he also demonstrates strong leadership and a commitment to his school community. His dedication both in and out of the classroom reflects the values of excellence and perseverance. The WorldSkills competition is designed to test students' ability to tackle real-world challenges using advanced information and communication technologies, and Max has clearly risen to the task. I wish him the very best in Brisbane. The whole community is behind him.

#### **ABBOTSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:04):** I extend my warmest congratulations to Abbotsford Public School on the remarkable occasion of its 100th birthday. Since its founding in 1925, Abbotsford Public School has been a cornerstone of the community, dedicated to educating generations of young locals. The school prides itself on being an innovative and inclusive learning space where lifelong learners are supported in a safe, happy and welcoming environment. On 30 May and 31 May, Abbotsford Public School will hold a celebration for its 100 years of learning, leading and legacy. I look forward to joining the school community and thank the staff, students and P&C for all of their time and hard work organising the celebrations. I also acknowledge all the current and previous Abbotsford Public School staff, led by Principal Chris Johnson, as well as current and past families for their commitment to this great school and to our wonderful young people. Happy birthday, Abbotsford Public School.

#### **SALVATION ARMY VILLAWOOD**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:05):** I recognise the remarkable work of the Salvation Army at the community centre at 7 Urana Street in Villawood. This suburb is witnessing a powerful transformation thanks to the unwavering commitment of Lawrence Besant and his team. For more than 10 years the Salvation Army has

run a vibrant community hub that gives residents a place to connect. Through initiatives like its food program and the community garden, the Salvation Army fosters a sense of belonging that overcomes isolation and allows a true community spirit to flourish. I commend the Outreach Coordinator Lawrence Besant, Salvation Army staff member Hilda Shamoun, and volunteers Louisa Henry and Brenda Martin. I appreciate their tireless efforts instigating change in this corner of Western Sydney.

#### **NANA GLEN COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM**

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:06):** The Nana Glen Community Emergency Response Team [CERT] comprises dedicated clinical volunteers who are the first line of emergency care across the Orara Valley. Part of the NSW Ambulance volunteer program, CERTs manage critical incidents while an ambulance is en route, often making a life-saving difference in the minutes that count the most. The Nana Glen team are boosting their skills with the donation of new training equipment. Two advanced CPR manikins, valued at \$5,200, were funded by the residents of Nana Glen and Coramba, while the Coffs Harbour and District Motorcycle Restorers Club donated a \$530 training defibrillator. Nana Glen CERT members Jodie Williams and Barry Butler spoke recently of the community's generosity. They said, "This equipment is not just training gear; it's an investment in saving lives." I applaud the Nana Glen Community Emergency Response Team for their life-saving work on the Coffs Coast.

#### **TRIBUTE TO ARTHUR THOMAS BURTON**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:07):** Today I acknowledge with deep respect 93-year-old Arthur Thomas Burton, known fondly to many as Tom, who passed away peacefully surrounded by his beloved partner, Dina Gavin, and family. Tom proudly served our country as a leading air mechanic, weapons, aboard HMAS *Melbourne* in 1965 and with distinction in the Royal Australian Navy Helicopter Flight Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. His service as a Vietnam veteran stands as a powerful legacy of courage, duty and sacrifice. A proud and familiar face in the Riverstone community, Tom was a committed member of the Riverstone-Schofields RSL Sub-Branch. He will be remembered not only for his military service, but also for the kindness, humour and generosity he shared so freely. Tom was a cherished partner, grandfather, great-grandfather and a true friend to all who had the privilege to know him. His presence, warmth and spirit will be missed deeply across my community. Vale, Tom. Lest we forget.

#### **NATIONAL SORRY DAY**

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (18:08):** On Monday 26 May I had the honour of attending Liverpool City Council's National Sorry Day event at the Liverpool Regional Museum. The event marked an important occasion to reflect on the ongoing impact of the Stolen Generations and lost generations of First Nations people and to reaffirm a collective commitment to reconciliation. The ceremony included a heartfelt acknowledgement of country, powerful speeches and moving cultural performances that honoured the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. A symbolic flag-raising ceremony was held to signify continued respect, unity and recognition. It was wonderful to see representatives from the Gandangara and Tharawal Local Aboriginal Land councils in attendance, standing proudly with community members and local leaders. I commend Liverpool City Council for organising such a respectful and significant event. National Sorry Day is a solemn reminder of our history.

#### **BILLY ISAACS**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:09):** I congratulate 12-year-old Billy Isaacs of Lisarow on a world-record-breaking achievement over the weekend. He is the youngest person to complete 100 miles, or 160 kilometres, in just 24 hours, all in the name of raising money for Central Coast Kids in Need. On 24 May at 10.00 a.m., Billy began his run at Mingara Athletics Track. That run was 400 laps around the track, testing his endurance, physical strength and mental stamina. Billy was determined to prove to everyone over the course of his training and the event that not only was he "Billt Different", as the event was named, but that he was made different. He certainly lived up to expectations. The support for Billy over the two days was sensational and was not limited to members of the community. Off-duty paramedics, nurses and first aid responders volunteered their time to ensure Billy's safety and wellbeing. I give a big shout-out to St John Ambulance volunteers, who are always present and available. I am sure members join me in congratulating Billy on his achievement.

#### **LESLEY BLACKSHAW**

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (18:10):** I recognise Lesley Blackshaw, who has devoted an extraordinary 49 years of service to Wade high school in Griffith. Lesley is a highly valued member of staff, known for her unwavering care and her strong rapport with students and their families. Her quiet support and compassion have earned her deep respect within the school community. She is always there for those who need her, offering guidance, kindness and a listening ear. Beyond the classroom, Lesley has been a longstanding and

committed member of the school's P&C, contributing countless hours to support and improve the school for students and staff alike. Lesley's dedication, humility and loyalty have left a lasting mark on Wade high school. I have no hesitation in commending her for her phenomenal contribution to education and to the lives of so many young people over nearly five decades of remarkable service.

#### **CARLOS DUQUE**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:11):** According to Carlos Duque, all a person needs to break a world record is an issue they care about, a lot of determination and a lawnmower. Carlos and his orange-moustachioed lawnmower, Victa, have been a regular fixture at local Parkruns and even the City2Surf, spreading the message that it is okay not to be okay. In 2012 Carlos became a Mo Bro, growing out his moustache each year for Movember to raise money and awareness for men's mental health. His latest challenge has been to break the world record for the farthest distance pushing a lawn mower in 24 hours. At 7.00 p.m. on 30 November 2024, Carlos started up his moustachioed lawnmower at Bar Beach, with no plans on stopping for 24 hours. By 7.00 p.m. on 1 December, Carlos had run 161.81 kilometres, smashing the previous record. I congratulate Carlos. He is a champion of men's mental health and a champion of our local community.

#### **NORTHERN SYDNEY DISTRICT COUNCIL OF P&C ASSOCIATIONS**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (18:12):** The Northern Sydney District Council of P&C Associations plays a vital role in representing the collective voice of parents and carers across our public school communities. As the peak body for local P&C associations, the district council plays a key role in strengthening public education by supporting volunteers, advocating for school needs and working collaboratively with government and education stakeholders. Its work ensures the lived experience of families is better heard at each level of the decision-making process. The council brings together representatives from dozens of local schools, providing a valuable forum to share knowledge, address challenges and support each other in their common goal of delivering the best possible outcomes for students. My sincere thanks go to President David Hope and the whole of the dedicated executive, delegates and volunteers who give their time so generously to this important work. Their contribution helps to shape not only the future of individual schools but also the broader direction of public education in our region. I commend the Northern Sydney District Council of P&Cs for its commitment, collaboration and advocacy on behalf of schools, students and parents.

#### **NEXT GENERATION KINDERGARTEN**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (18:13):** Recently I had the opportunity to visit Next Generation Kindergarten in Punchbowl, located in the Bankstown electorate. It was a pleasure to tour the centre and witness firsthand the caring and engaging environment they provide for children. I was particularly impressed by the variety of Indigenous artworks and the acknowledgement of country displayed, clearly showing the respect and love for our Indigenous community. The enthusiasm of the educators and the evident joy among the children was truly heartwarming to see. The team's dedication to nurturing young minds is commendable. I was honoured to open the brand-new art room, which the centre named the "JD Art Room". The centre offers a variety of arts and crafts for the children, and it is decorated with a plethora of colours and beautiful artworks. More importantly, the centre is a place where children feel safe, supported and excited to learn and grow. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the team for warmly welcoming me. I look forward to my next visit and wish them continued success in the wonderful service they provide to families as they nurture minds in the community.

#### **WALLABADAH THE WAY IT WAS FESTIVAL**

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (18:14):** I congratulate the Wallabadah community, which recently held a wonderful event: The Way It Was. The festival was held at the old Wallabadah racecourse and showcased some amazing exhibits, giving an insight into the way rural communities farmed and lived in days gone by. The festival had yard dog trials, heavy horses, farriers and blacksmithing, celebrating history and keeping traditions alive. It was a great event for local families, and one that I have no doubt will continue to grow. I commend the Wallabadah community and event organisers Melanie Jenkins, Tim Mackie and other committee members for hosting that outstanding event. I encourage everyone to make the trip next year and have a real look at "The Way It Was". See you in Wallabadah.

#### **CAMDEN AND DISTRICT NETBALL ASSOCIATION DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ROUND**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:15):** Domestic violence is one of the biggest issues not only in the Camden community but also, unfortunately, across the State and country. That is why it is so crucial to spread awareness and to support amazing initiatives that aim to reduce and stamp out this issue in our community. Camden and District Netball Association did that when it hosted the domestic violence awareness round on Saturday 24 May. The round raised funds that went directly to the SayNo2DV Camden Wollondilly Domestic

Violence Committee. That is such a great idea—put forward by members of our community—for a cause that is just as good. Hopefully many sporting clubs and organisations in general can follow in the footsteps of the Camden and District Netball Association to play an important role in purging the community of domestic violence once and for all.

#### **RIDING FOR THE DISABLED ASSOCIATION WAGGA WAGGA**

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:16):** Last Saturday, I was delighted to attend the 50-year celebrations of the Riding for the Disabled Association [RDA] Wagga Wagga. Founded by Jenny Davis, whose husband, Colin, was emcee on the night, RDA has changed countless lives. Learning to ride does wonders for the confidence and skills of people with disability. Volunteers have personal moments when the interaction between horse and client delivers important change in a person's life. I was privileged to hear of those moments from Maureen Turner, the centre's first coach, and Kay de La Rue. I also met James Cam, whose 250-kilometre trek for the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award is just one outstanding example of the centre's success. Among the marvellous volunteers is the winner of the Pearl Batchelor Award, Heather Baker, who has been helping for 47 years. I also thank current executives Dawn Haddon, Lizzie Macquarie and Roberta Bailey. Bev Amery was to give an address, but was unable to attend at the last minute. Recent life member Michelle Eastwood gave an inspiring address on the night. RDA Wagga Wagga is an extraordinary organisation that pioneered true inclusiveness. I congratulate and thank all the volunteers, families, participants and—of course—the horses.

#### **SIDNEY BARTLE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (18:17):** I acknowledge the incredible achievement of Sidney Bartle from Corpus Christi Catholic High School, who has been crowned the 2025 National Champion in the under-15s women's hammer throw. Sidney travelled to Perth to compete in the Australian Junior (Under Age) Athletics Championships, held from 4 to 8 April 2025, as a representative member of the Athletics NSW team. The hammer throw was held on the Sunday of the championships, and Sidney delivered a commanding throw on her first attempt, which was the winning throw at 49.32 metres. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate Sidney on that wonderful achievement.

#### **MOSMAN ELECTORATE VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (18:18):** Last week we celebrated National Volunteer Week, which is a time to recognise the incredible individuals who selflessly give their time to make a real difference in our communities. In Mosman, we are lucky to have more than 270 registered volunteers who contribute to a wide range of services, from community care to preserving our beautiful natural environment. The Volunteers Afternoon Tea, hosted by Mosman Council, celebrated the dedication of volunteers who have reached significant milestones, with some individuals giving more than 25 years of service. A special mention goes to Robyn Beardsell, whose 26 years of volunteering at the Mosman Art Gallery has enriched the cultural life of our community. Robyn's story is a shining example of the rewards that volunteering brings, both personally and to the broader community. Vin Patanamadathil, who has volunteered with transport services and leads the newly established Men's Walking Group, also spoke at the event. His story reminds us of how vital social connections are for wellbeing and happiness. I thank all of Mosman's volunteers, whether they have been involved for years or are just starting out. Their commitment and generosity help strengthen the fabric of our community every day.

#### **ST NARSAI ASSYRIAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (18:19):** On Tuesday 20 May I was delighted to address teachers, students and leaders from our wonderful Assyrian Australian community and celebrate the opening of the new sport and performing arts centre at St Narsai Assyrian Christian College. Established in 2006, St Narsai fosters Christian values, academic excellence, faith and lifelong learning in 700 students across years 7 to 12. Featuring two high-performance basketball courts, new classrooms and a state-of-the-art fitness space, the centre is purpose built for our students and is also a great indoor venue for our broader Western Sydney community to enjoy. I am proud to see this amazing college thrive, and I am so pleased the centre has been dedicated to His Eminence Mar Meelis Zaia, AM, Archbishop of the Assyrian Church of the East in Australia, in recognition of his many years of devoted service. I congratulate to Aaron Boyd, CEO, Assyrian Christian Schools, Principal Edwar Dinkha and the entire St Narsai college community on this wonderful achievement.

#### **BILL WEARN**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:20):** I acknowledge Bill Wearn of Holbrook as he marks a significant milestone in his tenth Ride for Country Kids, a special journey that has become a cherished family tradition over three generations. For Bill, this ride is more than just a physical challenge; it is both a tribute and an opportunity to give back. Riding alongside his brothers and nephews, Mr Wearn will cover 380 kilometres through Bourke, Cobar and Narromine, continuing his support for Fraser's Friends, a team formed a decade ago

to champion the health and wellbeing of children in rural and remote communities. Bill's dedication is deeply personal. In 2012 his family suffered the tragic loss of his beloved son Fraser, who died in a farming accident at the age of nine. Mr Wearn's grandparents, Walter and Polly Wearn, were visionaries in children's health and played an important role in the funding of Royal Far West, which for decades supported country children's access to vital health services. I thank the Wearn family members for their continued commitment to keep on pedalling and to inspire others through their efforts.

### BACK TO GUILDFORD FESTIVAL

**Ms JULIA FINN (Granville) (18:21):** Guildford is back. On 24 May I had the pleasure of attending the Back to Guildford Festival with Mayor of Cumberland Ola Ahmed, Federal member for Blaxland the Hon. Jason Clare, councillors and about 15,000 people. Back to Guildford showcased the best of life in Guildford. I acknowledge the local businesses who participated and the performers who displayed the amazing local talent. Western Sydney is so fortunate to have, including Arabian Tunes, who are based in Guildford. A year ago the New South Wales Government directly funded the Back to Guildford Festival, bringing it back for the first time in over a decade. This year I thank Mayor Ola Harman and Cumberland City Council for ensuring this great festival happened. Events such as these require hard work and dedication. As Western Sydney continues to grow, events like the Back to Guildford Festival are crucial in creating a sense of community. I welcome the Labor Government's commitment to Guildford residents with the \$350,000 Community Improvement District grant to Cumberland City Council to continue to build a better Guildford. I thank all the festival organisers, volunteers and stallholders.

### LAPS FOR LIFE HAWKESBURY

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:22):** I acknowledge a team of three amazing schoolgirls from Hawkesbury who recently participated in the Laps for Life initiative. Gemma King, Mackenzie Auld and Delaney Grima swam hundreds of laps together raising money for youth mental health. Identified as Young Lives Lost in the Hawkesbury, the team worked together to raise awareness and funds to support suicide prevention and mental health services for young Australians. The month-long campaign resulted in the trio raising more than \$7,000. Looking forward, the girls are hopeful to improve on that result in March 2026 with support from local businesses and fellow mental health advocates in the community. I thank Gemma, Mackenzie and Delaney and congratulate them on their achievement. Their advocacy and efforts are truly inspiring. Hawkesbury is very lucky to have such selfless and caring individuals within the community.

### AUSTRALIAN-VIETNAMESE YOUTH ORCHESTRA

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta) (18:23):** I congratulate the Australian-Vietnamese Youth Orchestra on its establishment and the success of its first concert, *Melodies of Remembrance*, held at Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre on 17 May 2025. Founded on the belief in the power of music to connect generations, communities and cultures, the concert featured talented musicians from junior and senior schools with many diverse cultural backgrounds. The orchestra delivered captivating performances, playing Vietnamese songs through Western classical instruments in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of Vietnamese refugee settlement in Australia. The collaboration between the Australian-Vietnamese Youth Orchestra and the BlueScope Youth Orchestra from the Illawarra region was beautifully performed by this diverse group of young musicians. It symbolised unity and served as a vibrant reflection of Australia's multicultural society. I thank Maihuyen Tran and the Australian-Vietnamese Youth Orchestra for the kind invitation and wish them continued success.

### ETHNIC COMMUNITIES' COUNCIL

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:24):** I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the Ethnic Communities' Council [ECC] of New South Wales on reaching the incredible milestone of 50 years of service. The ECC recently marked the occasion with their fiftieth annual gala dinner, which I had the privilege of attending alongside a number of my parliamentary colleagues. I have worked closely with the ECC in my time as Minister and now shadow Minister for Multiculturalism and can confidently say that it is one of the best in the business. For five decades the ECC has helped individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse communities by working closely with policymakers and lobbying for important change. That has made a real difference to ethnic communities right across our State. I acknowledge a number of former board members, including Jack Passaris, OAM; Tony Pun, OAM; Ian Lacey, AM; Tasha Vanos, OAM; Edna McGill, OAM; and many others. I also thank the CEO, Mary Karras, her outstanding team, and the chair, Peter Doukas, for their fantastic efforts over many years. Congratulations again to the Ethnic Communities' Council of New South Wales on 50 remarkable years.

### TRIBUTE TO PAT JENKINS

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:25):** I was saddened to hear of the recent passing of Pat Jenkins, a much-loved member of Hurlstone Park Wanderers Football Club. Pat was a tireless volunteer and canteen lady.



She was one part of the Pat and Rod team that gave countless hours of support to this fantastic local club. Pat will be fondly remembered by many members of the Wanderers club as the friendly face in the canteens at Beaman Park and Ewen Park. She was incredibly committed to her role at the club and was known by players and supporters for her generosity and goodwill. In 2016 Pat and her husband, Rod, were recognised for their long service with a volunteer recognition honour from Football Canterbury. An incredibly sprightly octogenarian, Pat continued to volunteer with the Hurlstone Park Wanderers after Rod passed away and through her own health ups and downs. Pat will be missed by the whole club community and by her loving children and grandchildren who had a love of football instilled in them by Pat and Rod. I thank Pat for her enormous contribution to our community. Vale, Pat Jenkins.

### **LISAROW OURIMBAH CRICKET CLUB**

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:26):** On Saturday 17 May I attended Lisarow Ourimbah Cricket Club's presentation night at Ourimbah Lisarow RSL Club and celebrated the great achievements of its members in the 2024-25 season. I am always impressed by the talent of our cricket clubs across the Central Coast. I congratulate all award winners on the night but make particular mention of the following: Spencer Jones was awarded the Darren Lucas Memorial Colt of the Year Award for the under-21s player of the year, Nathan Crutcher was awarded the Bruce "Tappy" Davies Commitment to Training Award, Maxine Babinski was awarded the Russell Starr Best and Fairest Award, Ryan Fenning was the Club Player's Player and Eugene Simpson was the Club Person of the Year. Eugene was awarded the club's highest honour not only for this year but for 45 years of commitment to the club. People like Eugene deserve the praise of the community. I thank the club for its invitation to this special event.

### *Private Members' Statements*

### **RENTAL LAWS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill) (18:27):** I speak on behalf of renters, who deserve the same security, dignity and stability in their housing as any home owner. For too long renters have been treated as second-class citizens in our housing system, vulnerable to sudden evictions, unpredictable rent hikes and opaque leasing practices. Today I am proud to say that, under the Minns Labor Government, we are turning the tide. On 19 May new rental laws came into effect delivering the most significant improvements to renters' rights in more than a decade. Those reforms are not just legal changes; they represent a lifeline for families, young people and essential workers who have been struggling to keep a roof over their heads.

Those critical changes end no-grounds evictions, ensuring renters can no longer be removed from their homes without a valid reason. They cap rent increases to once per year, providing predictability for household budgets. They make it easier for renters to keep pets, because the Government recognises that pets are part of the family. They ban secret rent bidding, promoting transparency and fairness in the rental market. They introduce fee-free methods to pay rent, reducing unnecessary financial burdens. They prohibit fees for background checks and eliminate hidden costs in the rental application process. They also introduce portable rental bonds, which allow renters to transfer from one property to another while easing the cost of moving homes.

Those are practical changes that will ease the pressure on renters and restore a basic sense of fairness to the rental market. They could not be more urgent for my part of the inner west. Nearly half of the people in my electorate rent their homes. These are families raising kids. They are older Australians ageing in their homes. They are students trying to stay close to the places they learn and work. They are frontline workers who are critical for delivering services for our community every day. These people are increasingly being pushed out. Housing affordability has become the number one issue for so many people in my community. I hear from parents who fear that their adult children will not be able to afford to live anywhere near where they grew up.

I speak to teachers, ambos, nurses and hospitality workers who simply cannot afford to live near their places of work. They cannot live near our schools or hospitals for the jobs we need them to do. It is not just young people starting out. Across Australia, people are renting for longer—not just for a few years longer, but for decades longer. Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that around 31 per cent of households now rent. The proportion of renters has been increasing across all age groups. This shift is driven by rising house prices, insecure work and the lack of affordable housing. It is changing the face of our cities and suburbs. It demands a fundamental rethink of how we treat renters in our housing system.

These reforms are about levelling the playing field. They are about fairness and accountability. They are about giving people who rent the stability they need to build a life, raise a family and grow old in their communities. The Government recognises that renters deserve better. That is why we have dedicated \$8.4 million to establish the Rental Taskforce. It will ensure that we are investigating serious breaches of rental law and that the rules, including the new rules, are enforced. These reforms were built through listening. We have really

listened to the voices of renters across the State. We know that reforming rental law is only part of the solution, and we also need more affordable homes overall.

The Government is investing \$5 billion to build 8,400 new social and affordable homes. It is unlocking surplus government land to help construct the homes we need. These are homes designed for the people who need them most, including children and women fleeing domestic violence, essential workers and low-income families that have been locked out of the housing market for too long. The message from my community is clear: Renting is no longer a stepping stone. Our housing system must reflect that this is a long-term reality for nearly a third of all households in New South Wales. A home is more than a roof and four walls. I am deeply proud to be part of a Government that understands this and that works every day to make rent more fair, secure and sustainable. There is more to do, but this is a strong foundation towards a fairer and more inclusive housing future.

### **OATLEY ELECTORATE BUS SERVICES**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley) (18:32):** I speak tonight on an issue that continues to frustrate and disadvantage residents across my community—the ongoing decline of local bus services. Despite promises from this Government and Transport for NSW, there has been no meaningful improvement to services in nearly two years. In fact, things have gone from bad to worse since the handover to U-Go Mobility in 2023. The local bus network has been plagued by delay, dysfunction and disarray, particularly in region 10. This contract, which was awarded on the advice of Transport for NSW, has delivered nothing but disappointment. It stands in stark contrast to the reliable, community-focused service once provided by the Punchbowl Bus Company, which is an outstanding organisation that proudly serviced our area for more than 76 years. Many in this Chamber, including the Premier, will remember just how reliable that service was.

Buses used to run on time. Residents could rely on public transport to get to work, school, medical appointments and social outings without second-guessing whether or not the bus would show up. That sense of reliability is now a distant memory. Since U-Go Mobility took over, I have received hundreds of complaints from frustrated residents, including complaints from seniors left stranded at the bus stop and parents whose children were abandoned when entire school services were cancelled without warning. Commuters have been forced off buses mid-route in unfamiliar suburbs with no help or direction. This is more than just poor service. It is unacceptable. It is, frankly, a disgrace.

Buses are running late every day and are skipping stops. In some cases, they are heading in the completely wrong direction. We are not only seeing operational failure but also a complete breakdown in public confidence. My office has raised these concerns with Transport for NSW and the Minister for Transport time and time again. We always receive the same generic response claiming that services are improving and stabilising. Let me be very clear that this is not the case on the ground in my electorate. Data might show graphs going in the right direction, but they do not show the missed medical appointments, the stress of a parent trying to get their child to school on time or the daily stress and anxiety felt by people simply trying to get from point A to point B.

I will share an example from one of my constituents whose adult son lives with Down syndrome. He relies on the bus to travel to appointments and activities. Buses are often delayed or cancelled, leaving him confused, distressed and emotionally shaken. On one occasion he was forced off the bus in the middle of South Hurstville and told to walk the rest of the way in the summer heat. This is unfair, unjust and uncaring of someone with a disability. It is not just a logistical failure—it is a moral failure. Transport for NSW has a duty of care to every person who relies on public transport, especially the most vulnerable. My office has raised this case with the Minister many times, and each time the response has been more spin with no solutions.

Furthermore, I have long advocated for a dedicated bus service to Aquinas Catholic College, Menai, in my electorate. This is a practical and community-supported proposal that has been ignored time and again. This is about more than fixing what is broken. It is about building a transport system that meets the needs of our community, not only in theory but also in practice. The Minister must take responsibility. Labor is in Government and has the power to act. It has the authority to fix this mess immediately, but instead we get delay, denial and avoidance of responsibility.

Nothing has changed despite repeated complaints from my office, local residents and others across the region. Services remain slow, unreliable and inconsistent. They cause stress, inconvenience and even danger. I thank the many residents who have contacted me. Their voices matter, and their concerns are valid. I will continue to fight alongside them until this is resolved. I will not stop raising these failures until our bus services return to the standard that our community expects and deserves. I will continue to escalate every complaint about U-Go Mobility to the Minister until real and lasting change is delivered. I look forward to the response from the member for Blacktown.

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:37):** I know that the member for Oatley generally speaks very passionately for his community. He works with dedication, as we all do in this House. The only aspect that I want to raise is about the Punchbowl Bus Company which, as the member for Oatley identified, provided a good service to the community for many years. It has been replaced by U-Go Mobility. That contract started on the 1 July 2023, which means that there were lots of discussions and tender processes before July 2023. It was actually the former Liberal Minister for Transport that signed the contract. The member for Oatley says he does not like spin and that his community lacks support. Maybe he should first apologise to his electorate for signing the wrong contract without doing the due diligence.

### THE ENTRANCE TOWNSHIP

**Mr DAVID MEHAN (The Entrance) (18:38):** The Entrance township is one of the oldest suburbs on the Central Coast. It has always been a tourist destination. As one of our oldest suburbs, its renewal is a challenge for our community. It has the character of an old tourist destination about it, and it requires constant renewal to upgrade and maintain the amenities in the area. A key part of the challenge is the population make-up of The Entrance township. My community needs to understand that 40 per cent of the homes in the township are mainly empty. They are holiday homes that are only used during holiday periods. As a consequence, there is little economic activity derived from those empty homes outside of holiday periods.

We also have 12 very large vacant parcels of land in The Entrance township. Ten of those have development applications [DAs] approved. The approvals on one of them date back to 2014, but no construction has occurred on any of them. If the developments that had been approved for those sites had proceeded, we would have had 424 more homes filled with people potentially generating economic activity in The Entrance. But that has been denied to us by a lack of building of those developments. The other two large sites where DAs have been denied by the planning authorities had the potential to deliver 400-plus homes in The Entrance township. Economic activity in The Entrance township outside of holiday periods is much lower than it is during holiday periods. That creates challenges for the viability and maintenance of businesses in the area outside holiday periods.

People should consider some of the positive development that is part of the renewal of The Entrance, which should be applauded and encouraged. Recently we redeveloped the Picnic Point playground. It was enlarged with money that I was able to obtain under the Local Small Commitments Allocation program as an election promise. That great new playground at Picnic Point encourages people to come to the area. I applaud the redevelopments that have been undertaken by the Lakes Hotel, The Entrance hotel and the Greens bowling club. In my view, these recent redevelopments and renewals have enhanced the amenity of the area and made The Entrance a real attraction for people across the Central Coast.

I applaud the work of council to ensure that empty shopfronts are maintained and wrapped to ensure that people are not looking into an empty shop. I also applaud council for constructing and maintaining street furniture around the area to improve community amenity overall. I acknowledge the work done by The Entrance Public School under Principal David Stitt. We have redeveloped the playground of the school. I was happy to help that redevelopment with a Community Building Partnership grant. I congratulate Dave and the staff at The Entrance Public School for embracing the new pedagogy for primary school education delivery, which has been championed by the new Labor Government. The school's results have ramped up impressively and is a testament to their hard work.

A whole bunch of businesses in The Entrance township are worth a visit, even outside of the holiday period: Ken's Humble Pie Shop, Eurobean Cafe and Bar, and Toast and Co—which is where I usually have lunch when I am in the office. There is more to be done, though. Those 12 empty sites need to be developed. In my view, there is more we can do to hold those property owners to account and to get building done. We need to prioritise the community need for housing over the right to profit of private property owners. I look forward to working with the Government to do that.

### COFFS HARBOUR ELECTORATE ACHIEVERS

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (18:43):** The Coffs Coast has plenty of great news and successes to share. Its community members continue to shine brightly with exceptional achievements across many aspects of local life. I congratulate them on their dedication, their passion and on paving the way for others. Outstanding contributions to our community were recognised by the Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour, which has bestowed its Pride of Workmanship awards on employees who work across a diverse range of industries. The Pride of Workmanship program, launched by Rotary in 1975, was created to recognise and reward local employees who display outstanding qualities in terms of approach, attitude and dedication to their jobs and workplace.

The recipients represented prominent Coffs Coast organisations, including Shearwater Lodge, Cafe Treeo, Park Beach Butchery, Coffs Coast Wildlife Sanctuary, Orara High School, the Lakes Village, Bray Street

Butchery and Coffs Haven Residential Care Service. The award recipients, who were all smiles at the presentation, included Kenji Arendalh, Shane Hailes, Stefan Markgraaff, Natalie Watson, Allan Watson, Leah White, Happy Chin Tial, Taylah Snell and Sarah O'Reilly. The awards were presented by the president of the Coffs Harbour Chamber of Commerce, Ray Smith, who praised the employers for their participation in the awards. Mr Smith said:

There was a real feeling of warmth and appreciation in the room. Without employees, we have no business. Without businesses, our economy stops. It is important that we pause and take the opportunity to recognise those people who make our local businesses thrive.

Vocational services director at the Rotary Club of Coffs Harbour, Ted Bailey, remarked on the importance of the awards for the recipients. Mr Bailey said:

Our award recipients are often quiet achievers. A highlight of this program is that it allows employers to openly acknowledge these individuals and share their reasons for the nomination. It was wonderful to see the employees and employers come together at our awards dinner, along with many family members.

Elsewhere on the Coffs Coast, the Woolgoolga Gallery exhibition *Eclectic Selection* is turning heads. It showcases a group of artists who came together to create a fresh, artistic vibe. The exhibition features work that is as varied as the artists themselves, encompassing art from ceramics and sculpture to the expressionistic, to those which are filled with light and meaning or are simply fun. Featured artists include Robyn Appleby, Susana Hickinbotham, Harriet Bystrom, Anna Vanko, Roz Stone and Jai Waters. The Woolgoolga Gallery printmakers are in a class of their own and include Annie Olive, Alycia Stanley, Barb Newby, Karen Thio and Margie Hawtin. The exhibition is open until 15 June and can be viewed daily from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at 73 Turon Parade, Woolgoolga. The gallery also offers a variety of classes, workshops and social groups to suit all levels of creativity.

I turn to the importance of education and commend all schools in the Coffs Harbour electorate for their commitment to their students. The entire school community at Toormina High School is celebrating its remarkable HSC results for 2024. The school solidified its position among the top 20 schools in the State for improved outcomes in bands 4, 5 and 6 over the past seven years. This reflects the hard work and dedication of the students, staff and the supportive community that surrounds the school. The students have demonstrated exceptional commitment to their studies, resulting in a significant increase in high-level achievements.

The consistent improvement in HSC results showcases Toormina High School's educational programs and its pursuit of excellence. I congratulate the students on their perseverance and commend the teachers for their support and guidance on the students' academic journeys. The school's goal is to build an ethical and effective community with trust and inclusion at its heart. It aims to prepare students for the future by providing a supportive learning community where students are encouraged to strive for excellence in scholarship, personal development and citizenship. Lastly, I pay tribute to the Coffs Coast community as a whole for what we continue to achieve together to make our part of the world the very best it can be.

### NEWCASTLE ELECTORATE RAINFALL

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle) (18:48):** As the second half of 2025 approaches, one cannot help but notice it has been a very wet year for Newcastle and all of coastal New South Wales. The Bureau of Meteorology estimates the average yearly rainfall in Newcastle to be 1,124 millimetres. Since 1 January 2025 we have had 840 millimetres—or 75 per cent of our average rainfall—with most of the year still ahead. In just five months, the community has seen two official natural disaster declarations in Newcastle: the storms in January and the heavy rainfall event of last week. We saw double the average rainfall for the month of January, and last Monday 19 May we saw almost the average May rainfall in just one day.

The Bureau of Meteorology recorded almost 300 millimetres of rain in Newcastle in last week's weather event, though some areas of my electorate experienced more than that. My community and I are grateful that we were not hit as hard as other areas of New South Wales. My thoughts are with the flood-affected families and communities across the wider Hunter and Mid North Coast. While Newcastle has weathered worse storms—in fact, next week will mark the eighteenth anniversary of the devastating Pasha Bulker floods—the consistent battering of rain it has received this year is having a notable impact on the community. With all that rain, my community has become very familiar with flash flooding. We know where to expect water on the road in heavy rainfall. I thank everyone who drove patiently and did not drive through floodwaters.

While we predominantly experienced flash flooding that drained as quickly as it flooded, there is still damage left behind. The natural disaster declaration will support council in patching potholes and fixing other damage to public assets. There was also mass flooding in parks, sporting grounds and other grassy areas. Despite a sunny weekend, many of those grounds are still flooded. We are looking at potentially another week of weekend sport not going ahead. It comes after a shortened sports season in 2024, when 94 per cent of rain in June fell on Friday, Saturday or Sunday, leaving teams to either damage fields by playing in the mud or cancel every week.

Weekend sport plays an important role for Aussie kids. It is a time to exercise, learn new skills and socialise with friends, and wet weather limits that.

I am proud of the Novocastrian resilience demonstrated at this time. While many households across my electorate were impacted by flooding, I commend the residents at Hexham, who are often hit the worst, for their resilience. In the aftermath of floods, water from the Hunter River and other river systems moves downstream, bringing debris with it. Newcastle Harbour has been inundated with branches and mud in the past few days. We have also seen other things wash up, including a dead cow. Dead wildlife and animals are a great health concern and often-overlooked impact of floods. I advise my whole community to stay away from the debris and to postpone fishing in the harbour until Hunter Water has deemed it safe again.

Last week's disaster coincided with Wear Orange Wednesday, or WOW Day, when we recognise the courage and commitment of NSW SES volunteers and thank them for their help in emergencies. WOW Day is an apt title, because if there is one word to describe the efforts of SES volunteers in the past week, it is "wow". Newcastle SES has responded to 333 incidents since 18 May, with 245 of those being storm related, 95 being flood related and three being flood rescues, saving Novocastrians carried away in the water. Volunteers have been active every day bar Sunday, when they were afforded a well-deserved break. I cannot commend the Newcastle SES volunteers highly enough.

I extend that commendation to all volunteers across the State. They are all heroes. I thank them for their service to the people of New South Wales. There is no denying that we have seen an increase in heavy rainfall and east coast lows this year that are more severe and damaging. Climate scientists have found that the New South Wales coast is getting wetter, and we are experiencing that firsthand. Last week we lost five people and countless farm animals and wildlife; we should have lost zero. The New South Wales Government is committed to addressing climate change and global warming, and building a stronger and more resilient New South Wales. It is imperative that we continue to work together, with a whole-of-government and whole-of-community approach to support communities to build a future where not only are Newcastle and New South Wales resilient but they also truly thrive, no matter what the weather brings.

### HOMELESSNESS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga) (18:53):** I speak about an issue that is both hidden and, at the same time, starkly in view for anyone to see. That issue is homelessness, and it applies to people in the regions as well as in the cities. It applies to men and women, young and old. All too often, it flies under the radar for the rest of us. The homelessness that we can see—people sleeping on benches, under bridges, in tents or on cardboard boxes—has been recently documented in the annual street count, which, in 2025, recorded 2,192 people sleeping rough in New South Wales. In Wagga Wagga alone, there were 13 rough sleepers, which is an alarming increase from six in 2024. That figure does not include the unknown number who missed the count, and it does not include the many others whose homelessness is hidden. Those people are living in cars, couch surfing with friends, camping in tents or squatting in abandoned buildings that may be rotting or unsafe but are still better than the open air.

The 2021 census documented 122,494 people experiencing homelessness. In Wagga, the Edel Quinn Shelter does a fine job of providing temporary accommodation to those without homes. The shelter, run by the St Vincent de Paul Society, has 16 rooms, which are full on any given night, but that's just scratching the surface. Every day, the shelter helps more than 100 unseen homeless or home-insecure people with food, advice, connection to services or even just a friendly ear.

Support agencies have case officers—too few of them—who go to camping reserves, rough-sleeping spots and other places where the homeless gather. Caseworkers help by connecting people with services, arranging accommodation, acting as go-betweens and interpreting assistance channels, which can be baffling for those with illness, disability or literacy challenges. I thank those caseworkers for their dedication and hard work. I note that they get results. For example, take Jack—which is not his real name—who was released from custody with no home to go to and found himself in precarious temporary accommodation. Fortunately, Jack got excellent support from the Government's Link2home service, which is a 24/7 life-changer for people in housing crisis. He eventually found a job at a shopping centre, secured a home and regained his driver's licence. He now works as a drug and alcohol peer support worker, using his own lived experience to help others. Jack's story took a positive turn, but without the help he received, he may not have turned that corner.

Now consider Joan—also a pseudonym—a mother of two who became homeless because of troubles within her family. Joan and her son were soon living on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River until they were able to be placed in temporary accommodation solutions. With a weekly rental bill of \$500-plus in a caravan park, her situation remained uncertain and unsustainable. Thankfully, with the help of a caseworker, Joan found a

permanent home, in which she takes great pride, and has hope for the future. Again, a caseworker made the difference.

Part of the solution for Jack, Joan and others like them is to fund support services so that they can employ enough caseworkers to help those in need. I urge the Government to step up with that funding on a long-term basis. We must also ensure there is an adequate supply of low-cost housing. The redevelopment of the Tolland Estate in Wagga is one example of governments and agencies working together to meet a need, and the more than 500 new homes that the project will deliver will prove life-changing for some of the occupants. That is a good start, but it is not enough. While I welcome the services and programs provided by the Government, they are not enough either.

We must investigate new models for low-income housing, including cluster living arrangements where appropriate, and be mindful that housing will still be out of reach for many. We need to prevent homelessness through better health and mental healthcare services, expanded support programs and, importantly, an increased supply of housing options. Until we can win the battle of prevention, we must give our agencies the tools and the people they need to win the war of mitigation. For every person like Jack or Joan, there are many more who are slipping through the cracks. The action we take now could make a world of difference. If we do it right, the number of rough sleepers found in the street count will fall, and the thousands who seek help behind the scenes will have new opportunities in life. If we can provide the funding, support services, homes and innovative thinking that the problem requires, we will go a long way towards delivering housing for the present and hope for the future. That will change lives and society for the better.

#### **CAMDEN HOSPITAL PALLIATIVE CARE UNIT**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:58):** Palliative care is a vital service that the Camden community excels at, helping people to live their lives as fully and as comfortably as possible when diagnosed with a terminal illness. Ensuring that they can do so within the comfort of their own community, surrounded by family, is of the utmost importance. I am incredibly proud to have a service like that in my local area and, more importantly, our local hospital. Camden is home to a beautiful, flourishing service that currently extends to 10 palliative care beds but has the capacity and demand for an upgrade.

Camden Hospital has tailored its services over time to more accurately meet the needs of those who use it. That includes developing the incredible palliative care services. I know how much that compassion and care mean to our community. When Camden Hospital looked like it may lose its palliative care service, local hero Melissa Deves took to Facebook, rallying over 5,500 members of the Camden community to join her cause in protecting that vital health care. Melissa was a palliative care patient herself, and she passed away surrounded by friends and family in 2024 in the place she had fought so hard to keep.

The Keep Palliative Care in Camden Facebook page is filled with comments from people sharing their experiences with the service. Julie recently spoke of her cousin, who passed away at Camden palliative care and was well looked after. Terry described the staff as "very kind" when his wife passed this February. Barbara wrote about how important the service was in giving her partner a dignified send-off, writing how she "sat every day with him till he was no more". Camden palliative care holds a very special place in the hearts of the people of Camden. For anyone who has visited the Palliative Care Unit at Camden Hospital, the access to the private gardens off the rooms on the ground floor and the views offered from the first floor are something quite extraordinary. It is an incredibly peaceful place for people to spend their last weeks or days.

Palliative care is very unusual, and there are different types of palliative care. Some people may be in palliative care for years and require regular trips to their local hospital for treatment. But everybody is aware of palliative care. It is our last place to be. Palliative care nurses go above and beyond to be incredible carers for our community members so that they can live their final days. We will not lose that service in Camden, but it is obvious that the demand for it is growing. That is why I call on the Minns Labor Government to fund an upgrade for our much-loved service so that we can keep delivering compassionate care to the most important members of our community, while keeping them with us in our community in Camden.

#### **ITALIAN DUAL CITIZENSHIP**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (19:02):** I talk about an issue affecting many in my local community. Recent changes by the Italian Government to Italian citizenship eligibility for Australians with Italian heritage have created much angst within my community. I believe I am currently the only woman in the Legislative Assembly with an Italian background, so I feel a tremendous responsibility to raise this matter in Parliament. According to the 2021 census, the Drummoyne electorate has almost 14,000 people who identify as having Italian heritage, the highest concentration of all 93 seats in the New South Wales Parliament. More than 5,000 households speak the language at home and over 3,400 people were born in Italy.

The influence of Italian culture and traditions has greatly shaped our community. Like many in my community, I am so proud of my culture and my family's story of sacrifice to come to Australia, in the hope and opportunity of a better life for their children and grandchildren. I am the beneficiary of that migrant story, as the granddaughter of Italian migrants, and that is the collective story of our community that we will carry for generations. Our parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents did not necessarily want to leave their homeland but did so because they had few choices. They kissed their families goodbye, not knowing if they would ever see them again or return to their birthplace, and set off to Australia. Many did not have material possessions, but they all had hope. When they came here, they brought their culture with them. As a multicultural society we have benefitted from those traditions, many of which are still observed today, like Ferragosto, Italian Republic Day, chestnut roasting, Sauce Day, olive making—the list goes on.

The rich history of the Italian community in Australia starts from the early Italian migrants who arrived in the mid-nineteenth century and continues to the present day. Italian Australians have made significant contributions to our country's cultural, social and economic fabric. Just two years ago I gave my inaugural speech in this place, when I spoke about the Italian migrants like my grandfather. He tiled iconic buildings across Sydney, including the Queen Victoria Building. The post-World War II Italian migrants, in particular, worked labour-intensive jobs such as cutting sugar cane in Far North Queensland, like my grandfather, or working on the Snowy Hydro. They worked on massive infrastructure projects and helped build this country into the place it is today. There is no doubt the Italian community has played a vital role in shaping Australia's identity, from the food we eat to the festivals we celebrate.

For our Italian community members in Australia, dual identity as Italian Australians has allowed them to maintain strong ties to their heritage while embracing Australia. The ability to access Italian citizenship has been a cornerstone of their identity for members of my local community. It has allowed them to stay connected to their roots, culture and heritage. For many Italian Australians, dual citizenship is not just a legal status but also a symbol of their belonging to two nations. The Australian Government allows and recognises dual citizenship because it recognises the importance of linking back to one's ancestral home.

Recent changes to Italian citizenship laws have caused confusion and upset within my community. The introduction of new requirements and restrictions has made it more challenging for Italian Australians to access that citizenship. Many feel like the door has been shut in their faces, and their connection to their heritage has been eroded. I commend those in our Italian community who are playing an important role in advocating and fighting against those changes. I recognise Italian Senator Francesco Giacobbe, who has been a vocal representative of the Australian Italian community. On Saturday an article published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* was one of the most read articles over the weekend, further reinforcing how important this issue is for my community. I also acknowledge Andrea Acciai and Luigi Di Martino, who were both interviewed in the article and are strong voices for the Italian community. Andrea said that citizenship should be about "building a bridge, not a wall". I feel that sums it up best.

I urge the Italian Government to reconsider those changes and find a solution that balances the needs of the Italian State with the importance that citizenship holds for Italian Australians. Our community's heritage and identity are worth preserving, and dual citizenship is a vital part of that. I know many young Australians who are trying to research their family history and want to learn more about their Italian roots. Italian citizenship allows them to feel connected to the generations that came before. I ask the Italian Government to work with us to ensure that Italian Australians can continue to celebrate their identity and maintain their connection to their roots. Our culture, heritage and community are worth fighting for.

#### ELLIE EATHER

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (19:07):** It is with great pride that I acknowledge and celebrate an outstanding young woman in my electorate, Ellie Eather. Ellie is a remarkable individual whose dedication, perseverance and passion for both her community and her personal growth have set a shining example for all of us. Tonight we especially acknowledge her as the first young woman in over 20 years to represent the Dapto Agricultural and Horticultural Society at the prestigious Sydney Royal Easter Show as part of the NSW Young Woman Competition.

Ellie's journey is nothing short of inspiring. Born and raised in Shellharbour, she has spent her life immersed in the beauty of the South Coast, shaping her into the passionate and driven individual she is today. Her early education at Stella Maris Catholic Primary School and her years at St Mary Star of the Sea College in Wollongong set a strong academic foundation. She demonstrated excellence throughout her schooling, earning academic honours for four consecutive years. She excelled in her HSC, particularly in music, in which she received a prestigious ENCORE nomination.

Ellie's passion for the marine world led her to pursue a Bachelor of Marine Science at the University of Wollongong. She balances her studies with a demanding part-time job as a dockmaster assistant at Shell Cove marina, where she is entrusted with great responsibility in a busy, labour-intensive environment. Her love for the ocean extends beyond work and study. She is a qualified open-water scuba diver, frequently exploring the breathtaking underwater landscapes of Bass Point Reserve and encountering incredible marine life, including the majestic grey nurse sharks at Bushrangers Bay. Beyond her academic and professional pursuits, Ellie has shown an unwavering commitment to environmental conservation. Her volunteer work with Landcare installing nesting boxes for feathertail and sugar gliders affected by the devastating 2019 bushfires and 2020 floods is a testament to her deep respect for the natural world. In addition, she has dedicated six years to volunteering with Twinnies Pelican and Seabird Rescue, helping to protect and rehabilitate some of our most precious coastal wildlife.

Ellie's adventurous spirit is evident from her participation in the Young Endeavour program, when she braved the challenges of an 11-day sailing voyage from Brisbane to Sydney. Facing high seas, harsh weather, and physical and mental exhaustion, she proved her resilience and courage. Today, she proudly serves as an ambassador for the Young Endeavour program, inspiring others to step outside their comfort zones to embrace new challenges. Ellie's artistic talents are equally impressive. A gifted musician, she has been singing and playing guitar for years. She has performed in numerous school productions, community events, and cisteddfods, and even graced the stage of The Voice Australia in 2024. More recently, she entered the local gig scene, sharing her love of music with audiences and continuing to grow as a performer.

Ellie embodies kindness, integrity and fairness in all she does. These values, along with her dedication to personal and community growth, make her an exemplary representative of the Dapto Agricultural and Horticultural Society. Her selection as a State Finalist for Young Woman of the Year at the Royal Easter Show was a historic achievement—one that recognises not just her individual successes, but also the strength and potential of young women in regional communities. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I congratulate Ellie on her achievements and wish her the very best in her future endeavours.

### SUSTAINABLE AVIATION FUEL

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (19:11):** As the shadow Minister for Tourism, I know the importance of backing strategies that grow the tourism sector while also promoting the State's assets. New South Wales is fortunate to have some of Australia's greatest assets. We have Australia's best city, some of our best beaches, our best national parks, and our best and most vibrant regional towns and cities, which is why, time and again, New South Wales continues to dominate and set benchmarks when it comes to international visitor expenditure. We host over a third of all international visitor nights and the industry is incredibly important to our State's economy, vibrancy and wellbeing.

In 2024 New South Wales recorded its highest-ever visitor expenditure with both domestic and international travellers spending more than \$53 billion, according to Tourism Research Australia. Tourism is so important to our State's economy, which is why the industry continues to improve, continues to come up with ways to take the industry forward, and aligns with global expectations. One of the most significant challenges to tourism has been the impact of the global aviation industry. It is the gateway to our State.

It is estimated that around 2 to 3 per cent of global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are caused by air travel, and in a world where people worldwide are looking at ways to cut back, the industry is responding. Sustainable aviation fuel—a product that has the potential to cut up to 80 per cent of emissions—is the future. It is driving down the environmental impact of aviation and helping to meet carbon reduction and environment, safety and health demands of the global market. The NSW Visitor Economy Strategy identifies the development of sustainable aviation fuel in New South Wales as a key priority for the State because we need to continue to do everything we can to pull every lever to bring people to our State and keep our visitor economy thriving.

That is why it was a welcome step when nearly two million litres of unblended sustainable aviation fuel recently arrived in Sydney, heralding an exciting development for the industry. The fuel could power the equivalent of 900 flights from Sydney to Auckland, reducing emissions on those flights by 3,400 tonnes, which is the equivalent to the annual emissions of 800 cars. The delivery demonstrates the capability of Sydney airport's infrastructure to handle sustainable aviation fuel—a future industry that could one day contribute \$13 billion to the economy and support nearly 13,000 jobs in the supply chain. It is an outstanding development and an exciting one for the future of Sydney and New South Wales. The world has demanded that progress, and New South Wales and Sydney are meeting that challenge head-on.

I commend all involved in the continuing development of the sustainable aviation fuel industry. I particularly note the work of Sydney Airport, Qantas and Ampol in delivering this record fuel load, and the Tourism Association for ensuring that the strategy continues to stay on the radar to drive tourism in New South Wales.



## CENTRAL COAST MARINERS WOMENS A-LEAGUE

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyang—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (19:14):** The Central Coast Mariners Women's A-League team are the 2025 champions. What a momentous occasion! For the first time in club history, the Mariners lifted the A-League Women's trophy following a hard-fought and unforgettable grand final victory over Melbourne Victory. This historic win is more than just a title. It is a testament to the vision, leadership and courage of a team that believed they could make history—and did. At the heart of this incredible achievement is head coach Emily Husband. Since her appointment in 2023, she has led with purpose and passion. Drawing on her success in the National Premier Leagues and her strong developmental ethos, she instilled a belief in this squad that nothing was beyond their reach. Coach Husband built a side defined by unity, resilience and skill—and now her name will be forever etched in Mariners folklore as the coach who guided this team to its first-ever championship.

The Mariners entered the finals series as underdogs, but they thrived on that role. They defeated Canberra United in the elimination final, then stunned the previously unbeaten Melbourne City across two gripping semifinals. Then came the grand final. In front of a roaring crowd at AAMI Park in Melbourne, the Mariners held their nerve and finally outplayed the Melbourne Victory team in a penalty shootout. The 22-year-old Isabel Gomez was first to score, moments into the second half. In the eightieth minute, Melbourne's Claudia Bunge then scored the equaliser with a header from a corner. This led to extra time followed by a penalty shootout. Amazingly, 16-year-old Tiana Fuller stepped up to take the Mariners first penalty, and scored—brushing off the pressure. She told me on Friday night that she was a little nervous, but for a 16-year-old to lead with the first penalty was absolutely amazing.

The Mariners prevailed in the penalty shootout 5-4. Captain Taren King lifted the trophy high, surrounded by teammates who had given everything for the badge. The victory was made possible by a squad of warriors. Captain and defender Taren King's leadership anchored the back line. Taren had come back from an anterior cruciate ligament injury. She had missed last season and most of the current season, but returned just in time for the finals. Also instrumental in achieving victory were Jessika Nash, Sarah Rowe and my favourite, Annabel Martin, who is calm and commanding in defence. Isabel Gomez, who has been selected to play with the Matildas, bossed the midfield and scored the decisive goal in the semifinal and then in the final. Taylor Ray and Bianca Galic provided strength and creativity in the middle of the park. Brooke Nunn, Peta Trimis, Annaleise Rassmussen and Jade Pennock were dynamic attackers who rose to the occasion, and goalkeeper Sarah Langman's saves in the dying minutes of the grand final preserved the win. The squad also had Shay Evans, Blake Hughes, Teresa Morrissey, Greta Kraszula and Tess Quilligan.

Everyone played their part. Every substitute, every staff member and every supporter contributed to this triumph. This is a victory for the Central Coast—for the fans who believed, for the young girls watching in the stands, on screens and dreaming of their own football journey. It is also a victory for women's sport across Australia because it shows that even in small regional areas, teams can achieve if they have belief and passion. What the Mariners achieved is not just winning a football match—it is an inspiration for our region. It is writing a new chapter in club history and showing what is possible when belief meets hard work. I thank head coach Emily Husband, the players and the entire Mariners family for the joy, the inspiration and the glory. They have made history, and our community could not be prouder. Long live the champions. Go Mariners!

## WATER MANAGEMENT

**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (19:19):** Today I talk about regulated water sharing plans on the Murray and Murrumbidgee River systems, and why current water sharing plans should be extended until the Murray-Darling Basin plan review is completed in 2026. Water sharing plans are extremely complex, so I will do my best to make this as exciting and sexy as I can. Basically, each river system has its own water sharing plan. Those plans are how the Government and its agencies divvy up the water in a particular river system. In other words, who gets what and how much. For example, that water could be used for irrigation, or for urban, stock, domestic or cultural use, or it could be for the environment. Water sharing plans also contain provisions for the environmental management of water. In reality, they prioritise water for the environment for the protection and maintenance of rivers and ecosystems.

All those complex provisions and rules are skewed in favour of the environment, and not irrigated agriculture. That does immense damage to irrigation communities. Water sharing plans are meant to optimise the use of available water resource; estimate our needs; and improve our social, economic and environmental outlook. That makes sense, right? However, none of those considerations are being met—only environmental ones. There is no accounting for economic objectives, and the rules are killing irrigated agriculture and communities. I have explained what water sharing plans are, what they are meant to do, and who or what gets the water. Even though it has all those objectives and rules, the New South Wales Government does not even know how much water it

has. Its crafty accounting is the reason it is so hard to find. As I like to say, if the Government cannot find and measure it, then it definitely cannot manage it.

I move to the accounting methods the Government uses to identify its water holdings. There are too many, and none of them arrive at the same figure. There are so many definitions of what the holdings actually are and the ambiguous ways government-held water licences can be used or allocated that, astonishingly, not even the Government knows exactly what it has. I have researched the smoke-and-mirrors magic show of the water sharing plan, and I have been through all available records on the Government websites. I find it absolutely gobsmacking that it is not only impossible to account for the water it has, but also to accurately find and define it. The Government is hiding behind the bureaucrats to avoid any accountability, transparency, management, reporting or responsibility.

The Government needs to shine a light on our most precious natural resource if it wants farmers to keep farming and putting food on our tables, and rural communities to flourish. We know what the alternative is: inferior, cheap, imported food; higher prices for what is left of Aussie-grown products; rural livelihoods destroyed; and rural lives reluctantly relocated to the city. We need to extend the water sharing plan review to coincide with the revised Murray-Darling Basin plan. We need to take a deep breath and wait for the outcomes of those two reviews, look at their recommendations and how they can complement each other, and work in the best interests of both the community and the environment. Then and only then can we move forward. We need to hit the pause button. If we do not, the bureaucrats will run the asylum. Irrigated agriculture and the communities it supports will be the social and economic casualties this country cannot afford.

#### ST JOHN AMBULANCE NSW

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (19:23):** Through bushfires, floods, cyclones and even the COVID-19 pandemic, St John Ambulance NSW has been there for our community. From the New South Wales State Emergency Operations Centre, to local divisions in the Prospect electorate, to the brave volunteers of the Maitland and Lismore divisions battling floods and cyclones, St John Ambulance NSW is always there, responding with life-saving health care when and where we need it. On 21 May 2025 the floods across the Mid North Coast and central Hunter regions were declared a natural disaster. In response to some of the worst flooding those areas have seen in living memory, our emergency services rallied to deliver rescue and relief efforts. In the Prospect electorate, I am immensely proud of the extraordinary volunteers of the Blacktown division of St John Ambulance NSW, and of the wider St John network, who have been deployed to assist.

At the request of the New South Wales State Emergency Operations Centre, St John Ambulance NSW was deployed to support NSW Health and the Department of Communities and Justice in the affected areas and evacuation centres. Immediately, two volunteer members stood up as liaison officers for the 24-hour emergency operations centre. Medical response teams were rapidly deployed to Tuncurry, Taree and Kempsey. As of 2.00 p.m. yesterday, St John Ambulance NSW reported the deployment of 24 volunteers to a total of seven locations with over 646 hours in the field. That includes deployments to Taree, Wingham, Tuncurry, Harrington, Kempsey, Gillieston Heights and The Entrance. A further 12 members were also deployed to establish the St John's Incident Management Team from Macquarie Park. St John volunteers have been on the phones ready to talk and counsel people in distress, providing a 24/7 clinical advisory line. One of the key services an anxious and traumatised community needs is someone with whom they can discuss their trauma. St John personnel are trained in mental health, first aid and ensuring people feel safe and heard.

Further, St John Ambulance NSW deployed personnel to provide medical support on the ground. They are manning evacuation centres and coordinating logistics for communities in need. In Harrington, a community isolated by floodwaters, St John also conducted door-to-door welfare checks with a registered nurse. As a result of those efforts, St John Ambulance NSW has treated some 92 patients and assisted eight hospital transports throughout the floods. Together with the State's key emergency services, St John Ambulance NSW remains on standby for daily briefings with NSW Health Services Functional Area teams. The impact of St John Ambulance NSW cannot be overstated. The medical reserve of St John Ambulance NSW continues to prove essential to our State's resilience and recovery. Last year alone, St John Ambulance NSW attended some 2,932 events, provided over 141,000 hours of direct community impact, treated 9,809 patients, provided over 275,000 volunteer hours of care, and trained 47,000 people with life-saving first aid skills.

In the Prospect electorate, St John Ambulance NSW is a foundation of our community volunteering. St John volunteers supported our Prospect electorate and wider New South Wales community during the Black Summer bushfires; during the recent tropical Cyclone Alfred, where they had deployments to Lismore, Evans Head, Kingscliff, Ballina and Mullumbimby; and again now during the devastating flooding on the Mid North Coast and central Hunter region. St John Ambulance NSW truly exemplifies what we can accomplish with professionalism, community and compassion. Whether it be advanced clinical management, first responder teams or a mobile emergency response, St John volunteers are there. I thank our hardworking healthcare professionals

at St John Ambulance NSW, and all our emergency services throughout New South Wales. As our State rallies to support flood-affected communities, it is a testament to the strength of our St John Ambulance NSW volunteers and our emergency management in New South Wales. I thank the House.

#### NORTH SYDNEY COUNCIL

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore) (19:28):** I speak about a significant victory for the residents and businesses of North Sydney, which highlights the power of community action and the importance of transparent governance. Just last month, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal [IPART] formally rejected North Sydney Council's application for an 87.05 per cent rate hike over two years, which included a 95.7 per cent hike in minimum rates for residential properties and a 95.8 per cent increase for businesses. The decision was a direct response to widespread community opposition and a failure by the council to justify such a substantial financial burden on its constituents.

The proposed rate hikes were met with immediate and overwhelming resistance from the community. Residents expressed their deep concerns to me about the council's financial mismanagement, particularly regarding what is currently the \$122 million redevelopment of the North Sydney Olympic Pool—no-one knows what that final figure will blow out to—which has significantly impacted the council's finances. The timing of the rate increase proposal during a period of economic uncertainty and rising living costs further exacerbated public discontent.

I submitted a detailed report to IPART that included more than 2,000 heartfelt stories and comments from local residents. They were real people sharing their fears, frustrations and deep concerns about how the rate rise would affect their lives. IPART ultimately received about 1,100 formal submissions and more than 6,000 survey responses, many of which came directly from the community engagement I facilitated. The overwhelming wave of opposition and genuine feedback was impossible to ignore. It laid bare not just the dissatisfaction but a profound sense of betrayal and hardship felt by many. It sent a clear and undeniable message that the community demands accountability, transparency and financial responsibility from its local government.

IPART identified several critical issues with the council's proposal in its assessment. It found that the council had a lack of financial justification for the rate hikes, stating that it had not adequately demonstrated the need for such a substantial increase and that the proposed increases were disproportionate to the financial challenges presented. IPART also found that there was inadequate community consultation and deemed the consultation process conducted by the council insufficient. It highlighted that the community was not provided with adequate information or time to respond to the proposed changes, undermining the principle of participatory governance. IPART also cited affordability concerns, expressing that the proposed rate increases would impose an unreasonable financial burden on vulnerable households and small businesses, particularly during a cost-of-living crisis.

As a result of its findings, IPART determined that the council could only increase its general income by the rate peg of 4 per cent for the upcoming financial year. That decision effectively nullified the council's proposed rate hikes and mandated that the council take a more measured approach to revenue generation. It was a clear directive to the council to reassess its financial strategies and engage more effectively with its community. IPART also advised the council to review its financial strategy to ensure sustainability and transparency, consider alternatives to rate increases such as cost-cutting measures and efficiency improvements, enhance community engagement to rebuild trust and ensure that future decisions reflect the needs and concerns of residents. But IPART did not need to tell council that because if it had listened to the community, it would have heard their cries loud and clear.

The council acknowledged IPART's decision and has committed to revising its financial plans in response. However, the path forward remains challenging, as the council must now address its financial shortfalls without resorting to disproportionate rate increases. While the outcome is a victory for the residents of North Sydney, it also serves as a cautionary tale for local governments. The rejection of the council's proposal underscores the necessity for responsible financial management, transparent decision-making and genuine community consultation.

As the elected State representative, I will continue to advocate for the interests of the North Sydney community. I will work diligently to ensure that the concerns of the residents are heard and addressed in all matters of local governance. The rejection of the proposed rate hike is a testament, in particular, to community action and the importance of accountable leadership. I would like to name the thousands of people who came forward but I am unable to in the time that I have. However, I acknowledge the three councillors that came together to fight the rate hike: Councillor Jessica Keen, Councillor Efi Carr and Councillor James Spenceley. When residents work together, they can effect change. Let this be a message to every level of government: When the community unites,

and when their voices are loud and relentless, they can overcome even the most daunting decisions. Our community deserves better, and I am proud to have played a part in ensuring that justice prevailed.

### WYONG ELECTORATE FLOODS

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast) (19:33):** As has been spoken about in this House, the Mid North Coast, the Hunter and the Central Coast have been subject to severe flooding over the past week. I extend my heartfelt condolences to the families of the five people who lost their lives during the latest crisis. My electorate, Wyong, was not hit as badly as parts of the Hunter and Mid North Coast. However, many members in my community were confronted by flood, which has happened too many times—seven times, I think—in the past five years. Our residents are becoming more resilient and more prepared but that does not alleviate the anxiety they experience every time there is news of an east coast low forming off the coast. After the massive rains on Thursday night and Friday, we went from a moderate flood level towards a major flood level. That means that in places like Chittaway Point, Tacoma South and in the valleys—in particular Yarramalong, Dooralong and parts of Jilliby—people could be cut off and homes risk being inundated. The major flood level of the lake is 1.6 metres, and the prediction was 1.5 metres. It ended up getting to 1.4 metres so it was very close to that major flood level.

There has been a lot of damage to roads, so I ask all residents to continue to make sure they drive carefully. There are lots of new potholes, in addition to existing ones, which can damage to car tyres and also make driving in some areas particularly risky. Some of the floodwater is still receding, so we will not know the full extent of the damage until that water has totally receded. I particularly pay tribute to Matt LeClerc, the SES commander for our area. I spoke to Matt every morning to get an update on where things are and to find out what he and his team were doing to assist residents in their flood mitigation preparations. He and his team were extremely active. They have worked since the last few floods to put networks in place so that the messages they put out are circulated quickly across the community. One really effective network is in Chittaway Point, established by Graham Hankin and his team. There is an email chain going that keeps all parties informed and makes sure everyone is okay. Chittaway Point is one of the first areas off Geoffrey Road that gets cut off, and even though houses do not necessarily get inundated with water, properties certainly do, so their residents can become trapped there.

One great blessing this time was that we did not lose power. When there are floodwaters and power is lost, refrigerators and freezers stop operating. But, more importantly, the sewer stops operating, which creates a whole range of health hazards. There were some sewer problems in isolated areas, but they were not as serious as they have been before. Central Coast Council staff worked really hard. They cop a lot of criticism from people who say that they do not do enough, but they opened The Entrance Channel earlier than they had before, which meant that water left the lakes at a fairly rapid rate. The Manly Hydraulics Laboratory flood intelligence tool showed that the water depth for the Tuggerah lakes went up very steeply, but also went down very steeply. Although we will never really know, the fact that the channel was opened early may have meant that many hundreds of houses did not get affected by floodwater. I commend the staff at Central Coast Council. They are listening and trying to improve their flood response. But our community remains anxious. People talk about whether climate change is real but we do know that the weather is becoming more severe. As a government and as a community, we have to be better prepared and more responsive.

### FERAL PIGS

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (19:38):** This evening I address a growing concern in my electorate, and indeed right across regional New South Wales, and that is the proliferation of feral pigs, which are starting to cause some real damage. Current estimates are that there are in excess of 100 million feral pigs in Australia. In my electorate we have had a run of good seasons. That has been great for our farming communities, and for communities in general, but those good seasons have seen the population of feral pigs explode. A local vet in Moree told me that one sow, on average, will have two litters of 10 to 12 surviving piglets every year. When we extrapolate that across 100 million feral pigs in the country, we start to get an idea of the size of the problem we are looking at.

Feral pigs are causing absolute carnage and destruction of the natural environment and native vegetation, particularly the forb layer. They are causing devastation and destruction of livestock such as lambs and calves. Friends at Bingara sent me a photograph they took a few weeks ago of a calf that had been killed by a pack of pigs. Similarly, lambs and calves are hit hard by pigs who eat them and cause devastation right across our livestock herds. Pigs will get into crops, particularly chickpeas, fava beans, cereals and cotton. They will eat those crops, sleep and root around in them and cause huge damage. When harvest gets busy and farmers cannot get into their own storage, they use silo bags to store wheat and grain. When the silo bags are full, they are an absolute magnet for feral pigs. They are attracted to the bags and cause all sorts of damage. One of the real concerns we have is

biosecurity because of the diseases that the pigs carry. They host numerous diseases and parasites, which puts at risk not only the domestic pig industry but also the wider livestock industries.

From a more personal perspective, feral pigs also cause absolute carnage on the roads. I do a lot of travelling in my electorate. Last week I did about 2,000 kays. The number of pigs I see on the roads is getting out of hand. A friend of mine from Armidale was travelling to Moree on Saturday morning to attend our picnic races and collected three pigs on a back road between Bundarra and Bingara. There is no phone service there, so he sat there for a number of hours waiting for someone to come along. His car is a write-off. The estimates are that, unless we cull around 80 per cent of these feral animals per annum, we will not get on top of the problem. It really is a significant concern. The current control measures are aerial shooting, baiting and trapping. I have been up in a chopper while aerial shooting was happening. Some of the people shooting out of those helicopters are incredible, but they literally cannot hold the rifle long enough to get all the pigs. We are losing the battle just because of the sheer numbers of these vermin right across our landscape.

We need an increase in funding and local, targeted campaigns. There is no point in New South Wales looking at a total approach across the board. We need targeted local campaigns because once the shooters come through, and the baiting and trapping comes through, the pig populations breed back up faster than any of us can handle. We need to have a conversation in this place about the damage that these animals are causing to our natural and native landscape and to our productive agricultural industries. I believe that if we had targeted approaches to managing these vermin then perhaps, slowly but surely, we could get on top of the problem. It is a funny topic to talk about in a private member's statement, but it really is troubling. These animals are causing a huge amount of damage in my patch of regional New South Wales.

#### **WILLOUGHBY ELECTORATE PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby) (19:43):** I rise today on behalf of the many frustrated commuters across Willoughby who are fed up with the chaos gripping our public transport system. Sydney's train and bus systems are effectively in crisis. Industrial action has plagued the rail network for far too long. That action remains unresolved, threatening indeed to re-emerge in July. It is a system that lacks any resilience. One incident—just one—can bring the entire network to its knees. It is hardly the first time; it certainly will not be the last. Our bus network, meanwhile, suffers from daily cancellations caused by a shortage of buses. This represents the failure of the Minns Labor Government to deliver the basic services that the people of a major city such as Sydney deserve and expect.

On 20 May a single problem with the overhead wire near Strathfield triggered a complete system-wide meltdown of the Sydney Trains network. Trains were delayed or cancelled, effectively, for two days. Millions of people were stranded—appointments missed, students late, small businesses left unable to open without staff. And what was the Government's response? A single fare-free day. On a Monday, no less—a day when many people happen to work from home. At best, it was a symbolic gesture that did little to make up for the significant disruption caused. Why not Tuesdays or Wednesdays, the days that were actually affected? Frankly, this Government seems more focused on appearances than action.

Sure enough, they have now commissioned yet another review. That is true to form. This is a government that loves reviews. It avoids responsibility by announcing inquiries, only to let the findings gather dust on a shelf as has, apparently, happened to its first review into the Sydney rail system. When the Minns Labor Government came to office, it trumpeted a so-called Rail Repair Plan. Yet today, the T1 North Shore line in my neck of the woods—one of Sydney's busiest—runs with just 80 per cent on-time performance. That is well below that which was experienced by my community during the Coalition Government, I need to point out. Compare that to the Sydney Metro, where on-time performance is consistently around 99 per cent. That is the stark difference between the two systems. It shows what a modern, well-planned piece of infrastructure can do. Sure enough, the metro was there to rescue train commuters last week. It is a proud legacy of the Liberals and Nationals.

Since the city extension opened in August last year, the metro has carried more than 40 million passengers. Commuters have voted with their feet. It is safe, fast, clean and can be relied upon. It is so popular, in fact, that services at stations like Crows Nest in my electorate are experiencing overcrowding. But we planned for this. The Coalition did futureproof the metro, designing it to be able to be scaled. Metros can run every two minutes instead of the current every four. Lengths can be increased from six to eight carriages, but that requires proactive planning and investment, which should start now. That is why I have called on the Government to begin procurement for more metro trains so that capacity can be increased.

With the Minns Government pushing its transport oriented development agenda, and encouraging tens of thousands of new homes around stations, it is critical that we plan now to meet future demand. We cannot afford to wait until the system is overwhelmed. The time to act is now. Yet, what does this Government do? It is cancelling metro projects. It has scrapped two metro business cases and is slamming the door shut on future

expansion. Labor cannot keep opening Coalition projects forever. Eventually, they will need to have some ideas of their own. And what about the broader rail network? Where is the investment? Where is the vision? This is a government that simply has no plan for the future of Sydney's public transport.

The problems do not end with trains. Let's talk about our bus network. Every day, across the North Shore and northern beaches, buses are cancelled. Timetables are a fiction. Commuters are left stranded, in the dark about when the next bus will turn up. People are fed up. They are over it. This Government says it has a plan to address the bus driver shortage, but that plan seems to be delayed again and again. More people are waiting and being left behind. This level of public transport service is simply not good enough for Sydney, and it is certainly not good enough for the people of Willoughby. Our community deserves better. We need and want public transport that works. This is a basic functionality for a global city such as Sydney. People need to know that the public transport system will be there for them. Right now, it is not.

The contrast could not be clearer. Under the former Coalition Government, we delivered the metro, we invested in new lines, we expanded capacity. We had a vision for Sydney's public transport future. This Labor Government cancels, delays and reviews, and does not govern with any ambition. To the commuters across Willoughby who write to me on a daily basis, who have had enough of missed buses and delayed trains, I say I hear you, and I will continue to fight for a system that works, for investment in infrastructure, and for a vision that delivers for us both now and into the future. We deserve nothing less.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:48):** I cannot let the comments of the member for Willoughby go without a response. More than a decade's worth of lack of maintenance and investment in public transport has landed us in this position.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The member for Blue Mountains will be heard in silence.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE:** Who can forget one of the former transport Ministers who ordered, off the shelf, a new intercity fleet from South Korea that did not fit the tracks in the Blue Mountains? We are still having to carve-out work on the Blue Mountains line to make sure that those trains can be delivered. I acknowledge that many communities are hurting, but more than a decade of a lack of maintenance and investment has landed us here. I refute the comments made by the member for Willoughby.

#### STATE EMERGENCY SERVICE

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (19:49):** I express my great gratitude and admiration for the NSW State Emergency Service and the remarkable work that SES volunteers and personnel have done in the face of recent extreme weather events across our State. In the past month, communities—particularly those in the Central Coast, Hunter and, of course, Mid North Coast regions—have endured intense flooding. Homes have been destroyed, businesses and livestock have been lost, roads have been washed away and families have been displaced. Yet, through it all, two things remain constant: first, the strength of Australian communities and, second, the unwavering presence and professionalism of our SES volunteers. Those individuals do not seek the spotlight and do not ask for recognition, but their actions speak volumes. On behalf of the Winston Hills electorate, I give them the recognition that they deserve.

Close to home, I pay particular tribute to the SES units of Blacktown, Parramatta and the Hills. Those units have been instrumental in not only responding to the emergencies in their own immediate areas but also deploying support crews to the flood-affected regions. The volunteers have become a symbol of hope, reassurance and resilience in times of crisis. They have rescued people stranded by rising waters, cleared fallen trees and roads, and secured damaged homes after storms.

In my time as a member of this place, I have had the honour of joining our local SES volunteers on training days to witness firsthand their commitment to excellence and their constant state of preparedness. One area that has stood out to me is their storm-recovery training, which includes rigorous testing of their physical abilities, resilience and sharp decision-making. It reminds me that what the public sees when volunteers arrive at the scene is only the tip of the iceberg. Behind every emergency is an enormous amount of preparation, coordination and sacrifice. I have also had the pleasure of attending numerous ceremonial events that recognise long service and years of dedication, where I often hear stories of individual heroic and selfless acts.

Emergencies can hit any community at any time, and that is why it is essential to acknowledge the cooperative spirit between all of our emergency services. During the recent floods, the coordination between the SES, the New South Wales police, NSW Ambulance and Fire and Rescue has been extraordinary. That seamless collaboration ensures not only faster responses but also safer outcomes for both those who are affected and those who are risking their lives to help.

I acknowledge the often-overlooked work of the NSW Reconstruction Authority, which is taking on an early embedded role under the direction of Mal Lanyon. I am sure that this early interaction will greatly assist in a smoother and quicker recovery. I also mention the SES headquarters team and the role that they play behind the scenes in logistics, resource management and communication. They keep the wheels turning, organising the crews where they are needed, getting the equipment and vehicles to the right location, and ensuring that community recovery plans are enacted quickly and effectively. Without them, the entire emergency response would falter.

SES volunteers do more than show up in times of crisis; they are entrenched in our communities year round. Local units such as those in Blacktown, Parramatta and the Hills run awareness programs in schools and organisations, often speaking to young people about floods and storm safety, and teaching them the value of being prepared. Through their outreach efforts, they not only respond to emergencies but also prevent their damage. By instilling that knowledge early in life, they are shaping a generation that understands risk, respects nature and knows how to act in times of uncertainty. It is important to remember that the SES is a largely volunteer-based organisation made up of everyday people. They are tradies, public servants, retirees and students who choose to give their time for the greater good. The SES volunteers demonstrate the great community spirit that lives amongst our community.

As the member for Winston Hills, I publicly express my heartfelt thanks to every volunteer SES worker and every emergency services worker who has given their time and risked their safety in recent weeks. I thank the Hills, Blacktown, Parramatta SES units for their dedication, professionalism and courage. I also thank the broader emergency services family for reminding us what it means to serve our community. Let us never take for granted the Orange Army in our midst. Let us continue to support them not only with words but also through funding, equipment, training and, most importantly, respect.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (19:54):** I echo the gratitude expressed by the member for Winston Hills. This week is a time to acknowledge the mighty SES, the VRA, the RFS and the other volunteer organisations that swing in to support communities across this great State and across the country whenever there is any kind of disaster. This week those volunteers were ably aided by Fire and Rescue crews, police, ambulance crews and, as the member for Winston Hills pointed out, the excellent NSW Reconstruction Authority, led by Mal Lanyon. I have had quite a bit to do with Mal in the Blue Mountains. He assisted the community of Megalong Valley when the road slipped away during weather events. Councils and communities have stepped in to work alongside those agencies. It is important for all of us to thank them at every opportunity.

### INFLUENZA VACCINATION

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse) (19:55):** Influenza, or the flu, is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. The flu is a serious illness and can affect anyone at any age. The most vulnerable groups are the young, the elderly and anyone who may be immunocompromised. As of 17 May this year, we have already had over 31,000 cases of influenza in New South Wales, with more than 3,500 reported cases in my local area in the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District. It is important to realise that those are only the notifiable cases. We know the real number is much higher. It is very easy for us to be complacent about influenza. It is easy for us to think it is just a common cold. It is not.

One of the most important things people can do this flu season is to get vaccinated to protect themselves and their loved ones. The *Australian Respiratory Surveillance Report* found that those vaccinated were 62 per cent less likely to attend a GP practice and 56 per cent less likely to be hospitalised. Over the past few years in New South Wales, there has been a decline in the number of people getting vaccinated against the flu. In 2024, flu vaccination rates in New South Wales declined by 4.9 per cent. They were also lower in 2023, declining across all age groups by 4.9 percentage points to 9.9 percentage points.

*The NSW Annual Immunisation Coverage Report 2023* stated that a combination of acceptance and access factors have likely contributed to the declines. Adult vaccination remains clearly suboptimal. Further exploration of those issues is needed to inform measures to optimise equitable and timely vaccination coverage and disease prevention across the life course. The decline is a worrying trend. A bad flu season puts pressure on our emergency departments and our GPs. The NSW Productivity and Equality Commission estimates that each year New South Wales loses eight million work hours and up to 4,000 healthy life years, with more than 7,000 hospitalisations and almost 120,000 GP consultations during the flu season.

In 2022 the Coalition offered a blitz of free flu vaccines to everyone in New South Wales. Vaccine coverage increased across all age groups in 2022 compared with 2021 by 7.6 percentage points to 10.5 percentage points, depending on the age range. This year the Opposition called on the Government to again offer a free flu vaccine blitz to combat declining vaccination rates, save lives and ease pressure on our stretched hospitals. The data from the winter flu season overseas is damning. The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined that at least 216 children died of influenza this season. It is the highest severity season for all age groups since 2017.

However, the Minister for Health said that a free flu vaccine cannot be offered due to fiscal constraints. The New South Wales Government is measuring the cost of action but failing to measure the cost of inaction. The Productivity and Equality Commission estimates that for each additional person under 65 who is vaccinated, \$210 is delivered to the State in net benefits.

In 2022 the blitz was estimated to cost between \$20 million and \$25 million. Free flu vaccines are not the only answer but are part of an overall strategy to tackle vaccine hesitancy and misinformation and to turn around declining vaccination rates. What is vitally important is to remember that everyone aged six months and over is recommended to get an annual flu vaccine. These are free for under-5s and over-65s, and available at pharmacies or at the GP. I pay credit to the Government for its recent announcement around under-2s being able to get their flu jab free at pharmacies. We must remember that influenza is not the common cold. It can be serious, it can affect anyone of any age, and the best thing we can do this season is get vaccinated.

### HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOODS

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (19:59):** I start by acknowledging the recent devastating floods that the New South Wales Mid North Coast and Hunter have experienced. The ferocity of this natural disaster took its toll on communities, and impact from the tragic loss of five lives can never be underestimated. I pay my respects to the families and friends who grieve for such great loss. They will remember this time in their life forever as it pushes them in a direction they never expected. During the public interest debate today, members of the House were united in recognising the efforts of and support from volunteers, emergency service crews, community organisations and those members of Parliament who are still in their electorates, helping their people to get through what is impossible to fathom.

The volunteers and SES teams faced such dangerous times with one focus: to minimise the impact and save lives. It is truly commendable and an invaluable service to society. Some parts of the flooded areas were at a level never seen before. A one-in-500-year flood level is astonishing. Hawkesbury has experienced nine floods in the past five years. Members spoke in this House today of the strife, anxiety and fear that locals faced this time, and it brought it all back to me. When people have lived through disasters, their emotions resurface. The challenge is knowing just how to manage it, and for many it is a real struggle. We must spare a thought for those who have gone through either a first flood or multiple floods. The clean-up that they face is a constant reminder that the precious possessions they once owned are now trashed, disrespected and destroyed.

A flood carries with it river contents, from sand to filthy mud, uprooted trees, sewerage and debris, and leaves behind mould that festers and grows in the weeks to follow. I met with members of the insurance industry to talk about rising home insurance premiums for households living on a flood plain. In Hawkesbury, people could be paying more than \$30,000 per year. Most residents cannot afford that fee, so they take the risk and go uninsured. The feedback I have received from many people is that there should be a new, "clean-up after a natural disaster" policy that has an affordable annual premium for a payout that will provide enough money for people to get back into a property safely and then the owner can deal with the make good themselves.

The power of wild floodwater will ravage homes, businesses, farms, livestock, schools, hospitals, playing fields, rail tracks, bridges and roads. In Hawkesbury, we lost an entire road and bridge—Greens Road at Lower Portland had to be rebuilt. It took 2½ years to complete, and during that time of closure, locals went through horrific times. A daily journey to school would usually take 10 minutes, but when the road was destroyed that trip became 45 minutes one-way on a rugged fire trail. I saw one local woman lose her job, half her body weight and her sanity. I say this because the locals impacted by these recent floods have such a long journey to travel. I have seen it throughout the nine floods in five years in Hawkesbury. We need to be prepared for the mental health fallout, the pain and suffering, and the despair and sadness that many will experience. That is all the more reason that this Government should consider the mental health support that will be needed, as well as the rebuilding of infrastructure that will be far more obvious.

I think we need to take a look at building codes in low-lying areas. Why are we building houses on concrete slabs in these locations? Why are we not stipulating that homes in higher risk areas should be elevated to ensure that, when waters run through properties, it does not destroy the living space? Impacted councils should be looking at their development control plans and shifting their focus. I invite the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to consider sustainable construction in potentially impacted areas. Surely, if we release new land in areas not far from waterways, we need to reconsider the way we build. There are lessons to learn from these disasters that create a better place to live, work and play. I thank everyone who is assisting with this latest clean-up. I hope they never underestimate the goodwill that they create.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:05 until  
Wednesday 28 May 2025 at 10:00.**



*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**ZEKE COUGHLIN**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I recognise Zeke Coughlin of Cronulla on being selected to represent Australia in the U12 Baseball World Cup in Taiwan. Zeke's pitching was a key part of Australia winning through to the World Cup by taking out its Oceania qualification event in Guam, finishing with a win over the home team in the final. Zeke and his teammates will play the opening game of the World Cup on 25 July against the world's fourth ranked team Mexico, as they compete in a tough group including the world's top two sides Japan and Chinese Taipei. The Cronulla Sharks Baseball Club was thrilled to share the news of Zeke's selection: "This is an extraordinary achievement and a true testament to Zeke's talent, dedication and love for the game. From our fields here in Cronulla to the world stage, Zeke's journey is an inspiration to our entire baseball community." I join the Sharks in congratulating Zeke on being chosen to wear the green and gold at a World Cup and send him the best wishes for the competition. We will be cheering you on from the Shire Zeke!

**CRONULLA TRIATHLON CLUB'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY SUCCESS**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate the Cronulla Triathlon Club on its 40th anniversary that it is celebrating in style with remarkable season results. The recent 2025 NSW Tri Club Championships in Forster saw Cronulla's team of 55 in fine form across the age groups to win both the Division 1 and junior titles. This is the first time in a decade that Cronulla has won the top division, which the club says is a truly special achievement. In the juniors, the young Cronulla competitors continued where they left off last year to win their second successive crown. The club's success at the Championships capped off an impressive season that saw it win the prestigious Sydney Triathlon Premier League interclub series. The club is also celebrating the announcement by NSW Triathlon that the hardworking Cronulla member Adam Hummerston was named Volunteer of the Year from amongst all clubs across the state. I acknowledge the efforts of the Cronulla Triathlon Club's members for continuing the proud history of Australia's oldest triathlon club with an outstanding 40th anniversary season and wish them continued success and enjoyment in the years ahead.

**CRONULLA SAILING CLUB 90TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I was glad to join Cronulla Sailing Club as it celebrated its 90th anniversary on Saturday 17 May. There was a day of events to highlight its rich history, featuring a three-hour on-water celebration of all fleets before the festivities celebrated the people that have shaped the club with its legends sharing some of the stories of nine decades of local sailing and socialising. The Club's origins were in 1934 when the Port Hacking V.J. Amateur Sailing Club began racing on Gunnamatta Bay, which later merged with the Cronulla V.S. Sailing Club to form the Cronulla Sailing Club in 1963. In 1991 the Club merged with Port Hacking Ocean Yacht club and for the first time Port Hacking had a club catering for all classes of yachts and sailors aged from 8 to 80 years. The clubhouse and facilities on Gunnamatta Bay today are a far cry from the early days when the dinghies were kept in private boat sheds around the Bay. I congratulate the board, committee and all members on 90 years of contributing to life in the Shire and wish everyone at the Club "Fair winds and following seas".

**DAVIDSON HIGH SCHOOL YEAR 12 LEADERS 2025**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise Davidson High School's Year 12 leadership team for 2025. Thank you for your service and commitment to a wonderful and vibrant school community. Established 1972, Davidson High School's motto is "academic, creative, innovative, sustainable" – words and actions that students can take with them long after graduating from school. I recognise school captains Addison Davie and Diego Andrade; school vice-captains India Barlow, Ashley Grant, Emily Spratling and Matthew Vane; and prefects Mishy Dabinet, Sarah Gates, Grace Gray, Sari O'Sullivan, Mia Pook, Kate Strain, Phoebe Sutton and Lola Topham. Thank you for exercising leadership to better the experience of all the students, teachers and staff at Davidson High School. I recognise Principal David Rule for his ongoing dedication to public education by leading a team of devoted teachers and staff that help students reach their potential. I am very proud to represent Davidson High School in the Parliament of NSW.

**DR PAUL WHITING OAM**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise the service of Dr Paul Whiting OAM to the Ku-ring-gai Male Choir. The Ku-ring-gai Male Choir was established in 1946 by returned servicemen that purpose and friendship through singing. In December 2024, Paul received a plaque to commemorate his more than 25 years of service to the choir. In this time, Paul has been an invaluable asset and contributed his skills as choir's music

director and conductor. I want to sincerely thank Paul for his dedication and sharing his passion for music with our wider community. I wish him every success in his retirement from the choir. It is an honour to represent people like Paul in the Parliament of NSW that dedicate their time to make our community a more inclusive place.

#### **OXFORD FALLS GRAMMAR SCHOOL YEAR 12 LEADERS 2025**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—I recognise Oxford Falls Grammar School's Year 12 leadership team for 2025. Thank you for your service and commitment to a wonderful and vibrant school community. Established 1984, Oxford Falls Grammar School's motto is "For Greatness. For Excellence. For Christ." These are more than words – they are goals that students can take with them long after graduating from school. I recognise School Captains Saba Hinton and Joshua Bowry; Vice Captains Sofia Buono and Thomas Percival; and Prefects Lucy Cox, Samuel Borrow, Kelly Hall, Oscar Burke, Tahli Kiddle, Joshua Fitzgerald, Sienna Norek, Benson Mowbray, Claire Schomann, Sebastian Scott, Liberty Wells and Samuel Tillotson. I recognise Music Captains Lara Taylor and Jessica Brown; Dance Captains Kirsten Berry, Lucy Cox and Natalie Edelson; Drama Captains Sofia Buono and Benson Mowbray; and Languages Ambassador Claire Schomann. I recognise House Captains, from Bennelong Matilda Graham, Tim Charlton, Ruby Davies and Tyler Sheehan; from Bradfield Mika Olsson-Veal, Oscar Burke, Maia Olsson-Veal and Samuel Tillotson; from Mackellar Sophie Hutchings, Sebastian Scott, Zoe Arcus and Maya Whittard; from Warringah Estelle Walsh, Jamison Eyre, Elise Simpson and Michael Welch. Thank you for all that you do in exercising leadership.

#### **THOMAS HALL**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Thomas Hall 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. Tom placed 3rd in the U19 Ski Race and was awarded State Champion in the U19 Double Ski and U19 Mixed Double Ski alongside Sam Murphy and Katy Rees. This remarkable achievement demonstrates is a testament to their exceptional skill, determination, and relentless commitment to excellence in surf lifesaving. It reflects not only the high level of performance but also the value of discipline and perseverance that are so integral to the surf lifesaving community. Congratulations Tom 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.

#### **WILL GRIFFITHS**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Will Griffiths 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. Will was awarded State Champion in U17 2x1km Beach Run, placed 2nd in the U19 Mixed Beach Relay and received a bronze medal in U17 Mixed Beach Relay alongside Cambell Connolly, Emi Leadbeater, and Phoebe Doran. This remarkable achievement demonstrates is a testament to their exceptional skill, determination, and relentless commitment to excellence in surf lifesaving. It reflects not only the high level of performance but also the value of discipline and perseverance that are so integral to the surf lifesaving community. Congratulations Will 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.

#### **TYE WORELL**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Tye Worell 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. Tye was awarded State Champion in the U19 2x1km Beach Run alongside Issac Boag. This remarkable achievement demonstrates is a testament to their exceptional skill, determination, and relentless commitment to excellence in surf lifesaving. It reflects not only the high level of performance but also the value of discipline and perseverance that are so integral to the surf lifesaving community. Congratulations Tye 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.

#### **RON AND MARGARET GODSMAN**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Ron and Margaret Godsmann, from Blackbutt, for receiving an Honourable Mention at the Shellharbour City Council's Good Neighbour of the Year Awards 2025. For over two decades, the Good Neighbour Awards have recognised the unsung heroes of Shellharbour, part of Relationship Australia's National Neighbour Day celebrations, held each year on the last Sunday of March. These awards highlight the immense value of kindness and community connections that make our neighbourhoods so special. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Ron and Margaret on this wonderful achievement.

#### **NATHAN AND ALLY CAMPBELL**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Nathan and Ally Campbell, from Flinders, for receiving an Honourable Mention at the Shellharbour City Council's Good Neighbour of the Year Awards 2025. For over two decades, the Good Neighbour Awards have recognised the unsung heroes of Shellharbour, part of Relationship Australia's National Neighbour Day celebrations, held each year on the last Sunday of March. These awards highlight the immense value of kindness and community connections that make our neighbourhoods so special. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Nathan and Ally on this wonderful achievement.

#### **MAIYA HEWITT**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Maiya Hewitt, from Shellharbour Anglican College, on taking out 1st place in the Under 17's 400m hurdles at the Australian Athletics Nationals in Perth, with a personal best time of 59.28 and a new competition record. Maiya also leapt her way to 2nd place in the U17 long jump, with a fantastic jump of 5.65m. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to congratulate Maiya on this wonderful sporting achievement.

#### **MRS HOANG LOAN NGUYEN - VWA**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise Mrs Hoang Loan Nguyen for her dedicated service to our local community and her helpful nature in assisting others. Mrs Nguyen arrived in Australia in 2006, reuniting with her family. Despite being busy with family life, she always felt a strong need to contribute and be a useful member of the community. This led her to join the Vietnamese Women's Association [VWA], where she has found joy and fulfilment in helping others. Mrs Nguyen is a vital part of the VWA, assisting with operational work and providing invaluable support to members, especially new ones, making them feel welcome and at home. Her commitment also extends to the broader contributions within our local community including the Vietnamese community. Her efforts and continuous desire to contribute are truly commendable. I thank Mrs Nguyen for all the wonderful work she has been doing for our community.

#### **MRS NGOC HA TRAN - VWA**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise Mrs Ngoc Ha Tran for her dedicated service to our local community through the Vietnamese Women's Association in NSW [VWA]. Mrs Tran arrived in Australia in 1991 from Vietnam to reunite with her family. She worked hard to build a new life, taking on various jobs, including more than 20 years at Concord Hospital. Despite her busy work schedule and family commitments, Mrs Tran remains an active member of her community, driven by a desire to give back. She has become more involved in community service after joining the VWA, where she wholeheartedly supports those in need and contributes to commemorative and cultural events. Her efforts are often behind the scenes, such as arranging, tidying, and decorating, but all are essential to making these events operate and complete successfully. In addition to her supporting work, Mrs Tran is a valued member of the VWA's dancing group, performing at community events and helping bring people together through cultural expression and social activities. I commend Mrs Tran for her quiet dedication and thank her for all the invaluable contributions she has made to our community.

#### **MRS WENDY HUYNH**

**Mr TRI VO (Cabramatta)**—I recognise Mrs Wendy Huynh for her continued efforts and dedicated service in supporting the well-being of members of our local community. Mrs Huynh arrived in Australia in 1986 to reunite with her family. Bringing with her tailoring skills gained in Vietnam, she worked with the Smith Family, contributing to clothing donation initiatives and charitable fundraising. Demonstrating a lifelong commitment to personal growth, Mrs Huynh pursued further education through TAFE and other institutions, acquiring skills in office administration, accounting, and computing. Her pursuit of learning has never been solely for herself; Mrs Huynh is passionate about empowering others and sharing knowledge to help them gain

independence wherever possible. Mrs Huynh is also a passionate dancer who uses dance not only as a form of expression but as a tool to uplift others. She teaches dance to community members with the aim of enhancing social connection and improving both mental and physical health. Through her classes, she also raises funds for charitable causes in Australia and Vietnam. I thank Mrs Huynh for her consistent dedication and for her valuable contributions to our community.

### **2025 GRAFTON DANCE EISTEDDFOD**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Grafton's 71st Annual Dance Eisteddfod was held over eight days from the 12th of April to the 19th of April with over 1,300 dazzling performances all carefully observed by visiting Adjudicator, Ms Jane Pearson from Brisbane. All dancing styles were included, as troupes from 13 dance studios from the Clarence Valley, Mid North Coast and Northern NSW performed from classical ballet, contemporary, lyrical, jazz, tap, hip-hop, Irish soft shoe and song and dance. Almost 200 soloists performed and most competed in several sections with some popular sections having up to 25 entrants. Many routines were well practiced, while others called for improvised dances to music heard just a minute before taking to the stage. Long standing supporter Grafton Toyota were again proud sponsor and awarded a generous \$500 scholarship for the Most Promising Ballet Student, aged 12 years and over. Grafton Rotary Club were in attendance, on Sunday, and held a BBQ stall for breakfast and lunch with tasty sausage sandwiches and bacon and egg rolls on offer. Congratulations to Grafton Dance Eisteddfod for holding another successful event and a big congratulations to the talented ballet dancers and their dedicated teachers. Well done.

### **CONGRATULATIONS CASEY ARMFIELD-STEVENSON**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations to Casey Armfield-Stevens who recently had the honour of designing the annual Indigenous jersey for the Sydney Roosters, dedicated to her uncle Kevin Stevens. Casey's father Terry, and Uncle Kevin both played for the Sydney Roosters making this an extra meaningful opportunity. The artwork, created to honour Kevin, speaks volumes about the deep connection between culture, family and identity. Casey's design themes revolve around 'Family' and 'Home, a place of belonging.' Casey's work includes representations of special local places, family, Kevin and Terry's brotherly bond and not only honours her uncle's legacy but also celebrates the broader Indigenous community by sharing a message that carries beyond the football field. It's a special honour to bring both personal meaning and artistic talent to such a visible platform. This jersey will be worn with pride carrying a story of unity, strength, and home. Congratulations once again, Casey – your art is making a lasting impact, and we are all incredibly proud of you. May this be the first of many opportunities to share your voice with the world.

### **EMPOWERHER ACADEMY**

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to offer my congratulations to EmpowerHer Academy in Yamba, on celebrating a successful first month in business. During the first month, the new female sports academy has engaged 353 participants in programs and held 8 free clinics and 6 holiday clinics. Founded by Emma Little, who has a Health Sciences degree and experience in adaptive recreation and high-performance sport, the academy aims to empower female athletes in the Clarence Valley. Ms Little is the former General Manager for Netball NSW and has worked with the Olympic teams preparing for Paris 2024 and Italy 2026. Ms Little's vision is to provide opportunities for girls and women in rural areas to participate in sport, build self-esteem, and progress through structured pathways to level up. EmpowerHer Academy offers inclusive grassroots programs, structured training, and elite coaching to help women thrive in professional, representative and community level sports. Ms Little is also looking to start education programs in local sporting clubs to increase female participation. EmpowerHer Academy is committed to revolutionising women's sports in the Clarence Valley, creating a strong foundation for future athletes to succeed. Well done Ms Little and I wish you all the best.

### **KIM MAHONEY**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Kim Mahoney. Ms Mahoney is an exceptional and valued volunteer at Goulburn's Riding for the Disabled Association [RDA], which provides equine assisted activities for individuals with disabilities to develop and enhance their abilities. Ms Mahoney demonstrates her innate qualities of caring and compassion in her role as RDA (NSW) Assistant Coach and Committee member involving herself in all RDA sessions. Ms Mahoney is also an integral member of the Horse Care Training Committee where she attends horse training sessions, farrier visits, dental appointments, training for mounted games, dressage, musical rides, and chiropractor days. Ms Mahoney works collaboratively with the current Coach and unmissably supports and demonstrates the mission and values of Riding Develops Abilities. Her charismatic and captivating presence in the arena is well acknowledged and respected by participants and horses alike. Ms Mahoney is undeniably an absolute asset to Goulburn RDA. I thank Ms Mahoney for her extraordinary commitment to this highly valued program.

**MILES PITT-LANCASTER**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Miles Pitt-Lancaster. Miles was recently nominated and announced the winner of the 2025 Australia Day Award, Crookwell Young Citizen of the Year in the Upper Lachlan Shire. Miles has been recognised for demonstrating leadership qualities within the school and wider community. Miles has been promoting young people to join the Australian Army Cadets, which supports participants to contribute to engage in community activities, whilst championing the interest of young people to develop an interest in defence force career pathways. I congratulate Miles on his award and recognise his contribution as a role model for his peers and the leadership roles that he undertakes within his school and the Crookwell community.

**MS RUTH DOGETT**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise Ms Ruth Doggett. Ms Doggett was recently nominated as a finalist for the 2025 Australia Day Award, Citizen of the Year in Goulburn Mulwaree. Ms Doggett has demonstrated her community spirited passion through the roles that she undertakes as the Liaison Officer and President of Can Assist for Goulburn and Districts. The group was formed in 2010 to support individuals and families in the local community who have cancer, assisting with costs related to treatments. Whilst only being a small group they organise ten to twelve fundraising events annually, with funds going directly to individuals and families, thus far assisting four hundred and ninety-three families, an amazing effort. Ms Doggett is also a member of the Goulburn Quilters Group who donate quilts to the oncology unit for patients. I congratulate Ms Doggett on her nomination and thank her for her selfless contributions within the community, recognising the significant impact that these services have to those needing this support.

**STRONG PILATES**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I'd like to recognise local business owners Jake Harris and Lily Barnett of STRONG Pilates Warners Bay for their outstanding contribution to our community. A few weeks ago, Jake and Lily hosted a free outdoor pilates and breathwork event at Dixon Park Beach, which brought together more than 750 people, even in rainy weather. The morning began with a calming breathwork session followed by an energising pilates class, all with the goal of making pilates more accessible and inclusive for everyone. This event was a powerful reminder of the positive role local businesses play in building stronger, healthier communities. It was not just about exercise, but about creating a space where people could connect, support one another and enjoy the beautiful place we call home. Jake, Lily and the team at STRONG Pilates Warners Bay continue to lead by example, using their platform to promote wellbeing and bring people together. Their efforts show just how important local business can be in fostering community spirit and resilience. Thank you for your generosity, your leadership and for reminding us of the strength we find when we come together.

**LYNETTE PEAK**

**Ms JODIE HARRISON (Charlestown—Minister for Women, Minister for Seniors, and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault)**—I want to take a moment to acknowledge the incredible generosity of Lynette Peak, a local woman whose kindness and community spirit truly deserve recognition. Lynette recently packed and donated 12 bags for the Share the Dignity It's in the Bag Christmas drive—well ahead of the official campaign. Her donation included four bags for women, four for teens, and four for mums and bubs, each thoughtfully filled with essential items to support women and families doing it tough. These bags will be distributed in the lead-up to Christmas to ensure that no woman goes without basic necessities during what can be an incredibly difficult time of year. Lynette's early contribution is not only generous but a powerful reminder of the compassion that lives within our community. She has set a beautiful example for others and shown how one person's actions can bring comfort and dignity to many. I sincerely thank Lynette for her thoughtfulness, and for leading the way in making Christmas a little brighter for those who need it most. Her efforts reflect the very best of our community and the spirit of giving that defines this important campaign.

**SECONDARY STUDENT LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I thank students from Emmaus Catholic College, Oran Park High School, Macarthur Anglican College, St Clair High School and St Narsai Assyrian Christian College for visiting NSW Parliament House and partaking in the Secondary Student Leadership Program on Wednesday 19 March 2025. It was a pleasure to meet and speak with the students to share my experiences as a Member of Parliament as the students develop their knowledge of constitutional and parliamentary processes. I was delighted to see the enthusiasm of the students to their learning and trust that they gained a lot from the experience. I thank the staff from the schools and parliamentary staff for their important role in the program. I encourage the students to continue their pursuit of knowledge and wish them the very best in their academic studies.

### ST NARSAI ASSYRIAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate the St Narsai Assyrian Christian College community on the grand opening of their Sport & Performing Arts Centre. The St Narsai Assyrian Christian College community and the Assyrian community is renowned for pursuing excellence in a variety of distinguished fields, including in sport and performing arts. I have no doubt that current and future students of St Narsai Assyrian Christian College will use the hall in pursuing their dreams. I commend and congratulate His Eminence Mar Meelis Zaia AM and his fellow religious leaders, as well as Principal Dinkha and his fellow staff members who worked towards achieving this new Sport & Performing Arts Centre. I recognise their strong commitment to their students and to the wider community. I wish all students at St Narsai Assyrian Christian College the very best in their schooling journey as they continue their pursuit of excellence.

### HORSLEY PARK COMMUNITY SOCIAL GROUP & FRIENDS

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I thank and commend the Horsley Park Community Social Group & Friends for their extraordinary commitment and work in supporting local ventures and various charities. The group recently took part in the Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea Fundraiser, a yearly initiative the group dedicates its time and effort to in order to raise funds in support of research, prevention and support services for those affected by cancer. Josephine Borg and Theresa Quattromani are integral to the group and broader community's efforts to support charitable initiatives and they are joined by other incredible people in the local community who dedicate themselves to these vital initiatives. I thank everyone in my electorate of Badgerys Creek who supported the Cancer Council's Biggest Morning Tea Fundraiser across numerous events and I extend my thanks to all who support other amazing charitable initiatives.

### FREE SPIRIT TATTOO

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I rise to give a big shout out to Free Spirit Tattoo, a local Manly business whose generosity recently brought joy and meaning to a patient at the Adolescent and Young Adult Hospice, known as AYAH. Thanks to their support, a young patient's lifelong dream of getting a tattoo was fulfilled - a simple act that meant the world to them and their family. For those who visit AYAH, moments like these are transformative. It's not just about treatment and medical care, it's about creating lived experiences. What may seem like a small gesture to some is, for others, a deeply personal and life-changing experience. I thank the team at Free Spirit Tattoo for their generosity. They embody the very best of the Manly community.

### MANLY COVE LAUNCH CLUB CELEBRATES 75 YEARS

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Manly Cove Launch Club on their 75th anniversary - a fantastic milestone for a truly historic local institution. The club was granted a tenancy at will over the platform off Fisherman's Rock on 1 June 1950, marking the beginning of something enduring and special. For 75 years, the Manly Cove Launch Club has proudly stood as a cornerstone of our coastal community, built on a shared love for all things boating, and steered by the values of camaraderie, service, and dedication to the area we are so fortunate to call home. With community at the heart of everything they do, the Club has forged a proud legacy and continues to boast strong membership numbers. Thank you for your ongoing contribution, and here's to many more years ahead.

### BOWERBIRD RECYCLING

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—It's wonderful to see the Gosford electorate grow every day and I am always impressed with the new initiatives created by our beautiful community. Tonight, I would like to congratulate Bowerbird Recycling for opening its doors to our community early this year. Bowerbird Recycling is a boutique recycle shop in Gosford Plaza and it was put together by a group of passionate women who simply want to help women and children in need on the Central Coast. All profit generated from the shop goes directly to the mothers and children, who are struggling. The shop is new, yet, attracting a lot of attentions from locals due to the fashionable clothes and high-quality homewares donated to the boutique. With the strong values of helping, creating, and restoring, Bowerbird has been a place of connection, right in the heart of the community. Since opening, this fabulous boutique has received unwavering support from our community and recently, the shop has displayed some gorgeous homemade knitting items made with love from locals as well. I thank Bowerbird founders and our community members who have been involved and support this fantastic initiative.

### CENTRAL COAST DISABLED SURFERS ASSOCIATION

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—Earlier this year, the Central Coast Branch of the Disabled Surfers Association celebrated their 20th anniversary at Ettalong Diggers. Volunteers, surfers and their families and carers, were joined by many of the associations sponsors to enjoy a night of celebration. For the past 20 years, the Disabled Surfers have been a volunteer run organisation that has enabled people of all ages and abilities to take

park in the amazing sport of surfing. With their long-held mantra "Putting Smiles on Dials", the Central Coast branch has continued to host events at Umina Beach and Toowoona Bay with the full support of the local surf clubs. On the first Saturday of each month during the warmer period, volunteers are down at the beach to provide a safe and fun environment for people to get in the water and experience surfing. While April was their last event for the season, we can't wait for the warmer weather to return so people can get back into ocean and enjoy a surf. Thank you to Central Coast Disabled Surfers Association for your work ensuring that everyone in our community can enjoy the joy of our ocean.

### **MUMMA BALL**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—With great excitement, I would like to applaud Central Coast Council for organising the Mumma Ball program. Basketball has a special place in my heart, and I'm thrilled to share this program tonight. Mumma Ball is a 6-week basketball program which encourages busy mums to be active physically and socially. This program is a wonderful initiative to help our local mums get back to playing sports and improve their health, both physically and mentally. Joining this program, mums are offered a fabulous pink basketball and a free t-shirt. On top of that, after every fun session, there is refreshments provided, which allows mums to stay and connect. That's just fantastic! Mumma Ball is part of Girls in the Game initiative, which is dedicated to creating safe, welcoming spaces where females of all ages and backgrounds can participate, develop skills and experience. Mumma Ball really is a wholesome experience for our local mums. Mothers do so much for their families and community, and I am really pleased to see such a wonderful initiative from our Council dedicated to our wonderful mums.

### **MAITLAND PICKERS STAR FOR COUNTRY**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—Congratulations to three Maitland Pickers players on their outstanding performances in the recent NSW Rugby League Country v City clash held at Jubilee Stadium at Kogarah. Picker's Chad O'Donnell, Matt Soper-Lawler and James Bradley proudly pulled on the Country jersey and played key roles in their team's 26–14 win over City. Chad contributed significantly with three conversions and a penalty goal, showing composure and skill under pressure. Matt also added points with a successful conversion and worked hard in both attack and defence. James played a solid, consistent role, helping to anchor the team throughout the match. This game is one of the most anticipated events on the NSW Rugby League calendar, and to see three Maitland players contribute so strongly at this level is a testament to the strength of our local club pathways and coaching. I congratulate Chad, Matt and James not just for their performances on the field, but for the pride and professionalism with which they represent our region.

### **REILLY MITCHISON**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—12-year-old Ashtonfield resident Reilly Mitchison is an incredibly talented and passionate rising star in Maitland's performing arts community. A Year 7 student at the Hunter School of Performing Arts, Reilly is already making waves on some of our region's biggest stages. Last year, he enchanted audiences at the Civic Theatre in the lead role of Michael Banks in *Mary Poppins*—an experience he still calls one of his favourite roles. More recently, he starred in *Dot and the Kangaroo Junior* at the Civic Playhouse and is now preparing to step into the beloved role of Olaf in *Frozen* this July. Reilly's talent and commitment have not gone unnoticed. He and classmate Conway Oakhill-Saarenpaa are set to make school history as the first Year 7 students to land lead roles in the school's production of *Grease* later this year. A proud member of Hunter Drama since age 10, Reilly thanks his teachers and mentors for inspiring and shaping his love for performance. With a bright future ahead, Reilly's joy, humour and dedication are already leaving a lasting impression on our local arts scene. Bravo, Reilly!

### **GUY'S KARATE SCHOOL'S INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS**

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—Congratulations for the outstanding achievements of Guy's Karate School, based right here in our local community, whose students recently returned from Sri Lanka with an impressive haul of medals from the inaugural Asian International Karate Championships. Led by Chief Instructor Lindsay Guy, the team competed against 400 athletes in challenging conditions, including power outages and stifling heat. Despite these obstacles, they delivered remarkable performances on the international stage. Lindsay himself claimed two gold medals—one in kata and another in sparring in the advanced veteran category. His son, Lachlan Guy, also shone, winning gold in the advanced open point sparring and placing second in kata behind a competitor from Japan. Teenager Caleb Buckland competed strongly in both the 14–15 and 16–17 kata divisions, securing two silver medals in highly competitive fields. First-time international competitor James Fry proudly earned a bronze in the beginners to intermediate veteran category. I commend the entire team for their dedication, discipline and sportsmanship. Congratulations to Lindsay, Lachlan, Caleb and James—you've done us all proud on the world stage.

**NSW SES METRO ZONE 2025 AWARDS – ELIAS HABIB**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On 10 May 2025, the NSW State Emergency Service [SES] held the Metro Zone 2025 Awards to honour the incredible contributions of volunteers across the Metropolitan Sydney. These awards serve as a reminder of the tireless dedication and bravery shown by SES members in protecting our communities during times of need. I would like to acknowledge and congratulate Elias Habib from the Bankstown Unit, who received a Commissioner's Unit Citation for his role in the rescue of a flood victim at McGrath's Hill on 6 April 2024. This recognition highlights Elias' exceptional courage and commitment to the safety of others during a challenging and potentially life-threatening situation. Elias' award is a testament not only to his individual efforts but also to the strength and professionalism of the entire SES team. The work of volunteers like Elias often goes unseen, yet it is vital to the wellbeing and resilience of our communities. The Bankstown community is grateful for Elias' dedicated service. Congratulations on this well-earned recognition – your actions have made a profound difference and embody the true spirit of community care.

**ST CHARBEL'S COLLEGE – UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARDS – FEATURING EMMA HASSARATI**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to extend my warm congratulations to Emma Hassarati from St Charbel's College, the recipient of the 2024 Year 10 Academic Excellence Award. Each year, the University of Sydney celebrates exceptional Year 10 students through its Year 10 Academic Excellence Awards, recognising those who have demonstrated outstanding academic achievements. This award not only celebrates individual success but also aims to inspire students to pursue further academic goals. Emma's dedication, academic excellence and commitment to her studies have earned her this prestigious recognition. Her achievements not only reflect her own hard work but also the support and encouragement she receives from her teachers and the school community. Congratulations to Emma on this outstanding achievement. This recognition is well-deserved, and we are excited to see what the future holds for her as she continues to excel academically. This incredible dedication and success are sure to inspire others within the school community and the wider community to pursue their studies with the same dedication and passion. Good luck Emma and every success as you continue in your academic journey!

**NSW SES METRO ZONE 2025 AWARDS – EMMA PLUNKETT**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—On 10 May 2025, the NSW State Emergency Service [SES] held the Metro Zone 2025 Awards to honour the incredible contributions of volunteers across the Metropolitan Sydney. These awards serve as a reminder of the tireless dedication and bravery shown by SES members in protecting our communities during times of need. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Emma Plunkett from the Bankstown Unit, who was honoured with a Commissioner's Unit Citation. This prestigious recognition was awarded for her role in the rescue of a flood victim at McGrath's Hill on 6 April 2024 – a courageous and selfless act that truly exemplifies the spirit of SES. Emma's commitment to serving the community, often in dangerous and unpredictable conditions, is nothing short of inspiring. Her actions on that day highlight the bravery, skill and teamwork that SES volunteers bring to every emergency. We are incredibly proud and lucky to have dedicated individuals like Emma within our Bankstown SES. Her recognition is well deserved, and we thank her – and all SES volunteers – for their vital work they do in keeping our communities safe. Congratulations again Emma.

**FRIENDSHIP DAY**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—The Stuarts Point and District Garden Club hosted a "Friendship Day" that perfectly captured the spirit of connection, generosity, and local pride. The event brought together garden clubs from across the district, including South West Rocks, Talarm, and Nambucca Valley, all proudly affiliated with Garden Clubs of Australia and united under their fitting motto: Friendship Through Gardening. The day began with a wander through the beautiful gardens surrounding the Hot Myrtle Kitchen at Grassy Head, nestled on the eastern side of Yarrahapinni Mountain. This local gem not only provided a scenic backdrop but also served up a memorable luncheon that showcased our region's culinary talent. Events like this strengthen the social fabric of our communities and remind us of the value in slowing down, coming together, and supporting local. Attendees enjoyed generous raffle prizes, most sourced locally, followed by a visit to a neighbouring property with breathtaking coastal views and inspiring garden design. The day wrapped up with the ever-popular trading table and a classic country afternoon tea. I commend all involved for championing community spirit, and I thank our garden clubs for nurturing plants and people.



### LOCAL WOMAN'S FINAL ACT OF GENEROSITY

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Since Cyclone Alfred, the Bellingen community has endured relentless rainfall. Roads being closed, paddocks flooded, and the recent heartbreaking cancellation of the 2025 Bellingen Show. Deemed unsafe due to saturated ground, the showground simply couldn't host the beloved event this year. But Bellingen is a resilient town. For 144 years, the Show has stood as a proud symbol of rural life and community spirit, and that spirit continues, rain or shine. The Bellinger River Agricultural Society, powered by volunteers since 1881, is ensuring the tradition lives on in other ways. Agriculture students at Bellingen High will still parade their cattle, judged by the Show's Chief Cattle Steward. The All Age Colouring Competition also continues, with entries displayed at Sweet Bellingen. Most notably, the two-day SustainaBellingen Showcase will now take place at Memorial Hall. Though the main event is cancelled, the heart of the Show beats strong. Once again, Bellingen proves that when nature throws its worst, this community responds with its best, determined, united, and proud. Well done to all for continuing on!

### FUNDS FOR A CURE

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—The Macksville Ex-Services Club was transformed by an extraordinary display of unity, empathy, and youth-driven purpose. What unfolded wasn't just a fundraiser, it was a powerful statement of hope. More than 20 brave teenagers, many still wearing their school uniforms, stepped forward to shave their heads, not for applause or a like on Instagram, but to stand in solidarity with those affected by brain cancer. Their efforts have raised nearly \$5,000 for the Mark Hughes Foundation, supporting vital research into one of Australia's most underfunded and aggressive diseases. This remarkable campaign was launched by Macksville Youth for Change, a student-led group founded by Hamish Scott, Caitlin Laird, and Charlie Doherty. What started as a classroom debate quickly grew into a heartfelt commitment to help others, highlighting how brain cancer can strike anyone including children and even newborns, without any reason or warning. The teens have now raised awareness, inspired others, and reminded us of all of the incredible power young people hold when they choose to lead with compassion. The difference these individuals have made is amazing and I commend all involved.

### WOLLONDILLY SCHOOLS ANZAC CEREMONIES

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—The ANZAC tradition was honoured by the students, teachers, school staff and family members at primary and high schools across the Wollondilly electorate. Buxton Public School held a moving ANZAC Day ceremony on Wednesday 20th April at the school. This service was an opportunity for the Buxton school community to come together in remembrance of those who have served and sacrificed for our country. Picton High School held their ANZAC Day Service on Wednesday 20th April at the school and I acknowledge the students and teachers for the respectful way they marked this solemn and important occasion. I was honoured to attend the Thirlmere Public School ANZAC service. I can't express how proud I am to have schools like Thirlmere Public School in our electorate. The respect, kindness, and sense of community I witnessed in today's ANZAC Day service—led entirely by students—was incredibly moving. The service and the unveiling of the ANZAC Dedication Garden was a true credit to the young people, their teachers, and the entire school community.

### THE OAKS HISTORICAL SOCIETY AGM

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—For many years now, I have been a proud patron of the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum, home of The Oaks Historical Society. It was a full house at the AGM 2025, and a true reflection of the passion and dedication that so many volunteers and committee members bring to this incredible organisation. A special thank you to Debbie, the outgoing Treasurer, for all your years of hard work and contribution. I really enjoyed the shared supper provided at the AGM; it was a lovely way to connect. If you haven't yet visited, I encourage you to stop by the Centre at 43 Edward Street, The Oaks. The service the Historical group provides to our community in running the centre is outstanding—and all for the modest entry fee of just \$3. They're open every weekend and public holiday from 10am to 3pm. It's well worth the trip.

### WOLLONDILLY WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Congratulations to the Wollondilly residents who have celebrated milestone wedding anniversaries this year. Congratulations to Jack and Judith O'Brien of Tahmoor on your 60th Anniversary on 30th January. Congratulations also to John and June Bado of Bowral who share the same anniversary 30th January, who also celebrated 60 years of marriage this year. Another 60th anniversary was marked by Norman and Carol Robertson of Silverdale on the 27th February. Peter and Betty Bray of Burradoo celebrated their 60th Anniversary on 13th March, congratulations. Best wishes for many more happy years Ian and Mary Woolfe of Hill Top after your 60th Anniversary on 17th April. Congratulations also to Peter and Barbara

Anne Tyas of Bowral for your 60th Anniversary on 24th April. I am delighted to recognise the commitment and love shared by Peter and Judith White of Burradoo who celebrated their 60th Anniversary on 20th May.

#### **MICHAELA LOUKAS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate and commend Michaela Loukas for receiving the "Ministry of Health Achievement in Health Award". The award is part of the 7NEWS Young Achiever Awards and recognises the incredible work and talent of young people in our community. Michaela, a Kingsgrove resident and student at Marist Catholic College Penshurst, is nothing short of a medical technology trailblazer, transcending age and gender to become an inspiring figure in STEM for young people, especially young girls, across the country. At 15, Michaela co-developed a robotic melanoma screening prototype for rural communities and now, at 17, is developing a model to revolutionise breast cancer diagnostics. Such achievements at a young age are evidence of Michaela's incredible hard work, passion and talent, and she truly deserved the Achievement in Health Award. I again would like to congratulate Michaela for winning the Achievement in Health Award and thank her for her contributions to health technology.

#### **BEVERLY HILLS STUDENTS MEMORIAL TO THE ANZACS**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to take the time to recognise Beverly Hills Girls High School for their tribute to the ANZACs. Students recently honoured the legacy of the ANZACs by creating the ANZAC deck, a colourful mural on the school grounds. The artwork features two soldier silhouettes—one playing the bugle and the other in a slouch hat with head bowed—standing guard over the mural in remembrance of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in WW1 and later conflicts. The bugle symbolises the Last Post, reflecting the enduring ANZAC spirit. Furthermore, the red poppies, the first flowers to bloom on the battlefields of France, Belgium, and Germany, serve as a powerful symbol of remembrance. The Ode is also inscribed, reinforcing our vow: "We will remember them." This moving tribute ensures that the ANZAC legacy lives on, and I thank Beverly Hills Girls High School for their dedication to honouring our history.

#### **LESLIE AND NITA HARVEY'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to congratulate Mr Leslie Harvey and Mrs Nita Harvey on their remarkable 70th wedding anniversary. Married at St Andrews Church of England, Strathfield, on 2 April 1955, they built a loving home in the St George area, shaped by their shared love for jazz, travel, animals, and native plants. Nita, a talented photographer, enjoyed a successful career at MBF Health Insurance, where she was known as the friendly Rockdale supervisor in the 1990s. A dedicated volunteer at the Cat Protection Society since the 1950s, she played a key role in its growth, retiring as President after many years of service. Leslie and Nita have been valued members of their community, supporting their son Evan's sporting clubs in the 1970s and 80s. Both worked tirelessly throughout their lives, contributing in meaningful ways until retirement. Their 70-year journey together is truly inspiring, and on behalf of the St George Community, I wish them continued joy and happiness.

#### **THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN MARRICKVILLE AND ASHFIELD'S SES VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Thank you to the many volunteers and staff from the Marrickville and Ashfield SES units, who, along with many other volunteers from across the state, gave up their time, left their families and headed north to help those affected by the recent flooding on the mid-north coast. Over a dozen local SES volunteers, along with the essential boat and vehicle have been deployed to both the Central Coast and Taree to assist the local communities during this devastating event. They have performed countless rescues and assisted in backfilling for local SES units. While several members of the teams remain in the north of the state, those in Sydney are forming teams to assist in local storm response in Inner West Sydney as the storms head south. We are incredibly grateful to the Marrickville and Ashfield SES volunteers, tirelessly led by commanders Liam Hogan and Sharon Buckley. I thank them for their ongoing dedication and selfless service to those in need in our State, and for their ongoing commitment to our local community whenever we are in need.

#### **MARRICKVILLE SUNDAY SESSION**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Congratulations to all the local businesses involved in putting on the inaugural Marrickville Sunday Session on 13 April. We are so fortunate to have such a diverse group of dedicated locals who go above and beyond to deliver events like this. Coordinated by local favourite Jose Akon from Pepitos, along with local brewers, distillers, and Illawarra Rd businesses, as well as Inner West Council, the amazing energy and positive atmosphere is a fantastic reminder of why we all love to call the inner west home. The chance to perform karaoke in front of an enthusiastic crowd was a big hit. An amazingly diverse list of songs was prepared, and singers of all ages joined in the fun. The inner west is famous for our world class breweries, and they were on full display showcasing their locally brewed and crafted drinks. Everyone was able to explore the fantastic

selection of local restaurants along Illawarra Road. Congratulations to Jose, Councillor Mat Howard and Michael Daly from Inner West Council and everyone who worked so hard to put on this great event!

#### **ACKNOWLEDGING THE EZZELINO'S LEGACY**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to acknowledge the remarkable legacy of Ezzelinos restaurant in Neutral Bay. For over 40 years, since 1982, this family-run establishment has been built on the hard work and passion of its founders. For decades, the legendary Mr. and Mrs. Ezzelino poured their hearts into serving our community tirelessly, creating Ezzelinos as a truly welcoming haven where generations have gathered. Now, after such dedicated service, they, along with their daughter Aly, her husband Oz – the talented chef – and the rest of the family, have decided it's time for a well-deserved break from the kitchen. Thank you to Aly, Oz and their team for their years of dedicated service and the countless friendships they have forged within our community. Their commitment has truly enriched the fabric of our community. I want to extend my best wishes to their family friends, and trusted team members, Christine and Christian, who have been entrusted to carry forward the Ezzelinos tradition. We wish them luck as they continue to build upon this strong foundation and to serve our community. Thank you, Oz and Aly, for the incredible memories and warmth you have brought to Neutral Bay for over four decades.

#### **WENONA AND YOUTH OFF THE STREETS UNITE THROUGH SPORT**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to commend the remarkable initiative and community spirit demonstrated by Wenona School and Youth Off The Streets in hosting the inaugural Wenona–Youth Off The Streets Sports Gala. This vibrant event brought together 67 Wenona Youth Alliance members and students from seven Youth Off The Streets schools in a day filled with sport, camaraderie, and mutual respect. From ultimate frisbee and netball to football, vortex relays, and a spirited tug-of-war, the gala was a powerful celebration of inclusivity, resilience, and the unifying power of sport. The genesis of this partnership—a challenge issued by Youth Off The Streets CEO Judy Barraclough during a Year 11 Renaissance Studies class—speaks volumes about the creativity and commitment of both organisations to meaningful service and youth empowerment. Events like these strengthen the social fabric of our communities and offer young people a platform to engage, learn, and lead. I applaud Wenona School, Youth Off The Streets, and all involved for their dedication to fostering empathy, leadership, and a true sense of belonging.

#### **HONOURING OUR VOLUNTEERS**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I want to honour and thank the incredible volunteers across the North Shore electorate as we celebrated National Volunteer Week 2025 last week. This year's theme, "Connecting Communities", highlights the powerful role volunteers play in bringing people together and strengthening the bonds in our communities. Every day, volunteers across the North Shore dedicate their time, skills and compassion to supporting others. Whether behind the scenes or on the frontlines, their efforts truly connect and uplift our community. From delivering meals to supporting those in crisis, our local volunteers show extraordinary dedication. I want to acknowledge the efforts of Meals on Wheels, whose volunteers provide vital daily support to our elderly; the NSW SES volunteers, who respond selflessly in times of emergency, the team at Lifeline Harbour to Hawkesbury Sydney, who offer 24/7 support for people in distress and all the P&Cs, sporting clubs, environment groups, and community organisations whose volunteers may not be named here – thank you. Your contribution, no matter how big or small, is deeply valued. You are the quiet force connecting and uplifting our community every day.

#### **GREG MILLAN**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Advocate, trainer, social worker and a founder in the development of a coordinated men's and gay men's health sector in Australia, Gregory Royce Millan, passed away quietly at his Waratah home on 2 May 2025, aged 72. Greg was instrumental in the formation of the Coalition of Men's Organisations and later the Australian Men's Health Forum, his involvement stretching back to the first National Men's Health Gathering in Melbourne in 1995, a milestone event sparking a national conversation about the unique health challenges faced by men and boys. Greg was central to the development of a co-ordinated men's health sector. He served more years on the AMHF Board than any other individual, including significant periods as President and Vice President. In 2017, when AMHF transitioned into a Commonwealth-funded peak body, Greg was one of nine board members who guided the organisation through its evolution. In recognition of Greg's profound impact, AMHF has announced the creation of a new national award in his honour. Greg, you have left a wonderful legacy – of time given freely, knowledge and wisdom - and you will be missed by many.

#### **LACHLAN WETHERALL**

**Ms SONIA HORNERY (Wallsend)**—Lachlan Wetherall began researching Lambton's local history in January 2015 when he moved there. At about the same time, "The Local" newspaper had space for a monthly

history column, to which Lachlan agreed to submit some items. Now, some ten years later, his column is going strong and he has established himself as a well-respected Newcastle historian. Author of around 125 articles, with an attention to detail, Lachlan often begins with an old photograph from which he explores newspaper items, historical maps, aerial photos and current locality photos. Centred around Lambton, Lachlan's research has also extended to Waratah, New Lambton, Hillsborough, Adamstown and Broadmeadow. Lachlan's work on the shanty town "Hollywood" at Jesmond was referenced in the Planning Documents for the Newcastle Inner City Bypass currently under construction. He has completed two other major works using his skill with Geographical Information Systems [GIS], "indexing" historical land sale advertisements onto a Google Map and allowing people to potentially find their house block when it was for sale as vacant land. Similarly, Lachlan has "mapped" historical aerial photos onto a Google Map. Thank you, Lachlan, for your important contributions to our community.

#### RENEE STACKMAN

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Canteen Manager at Wallsend Public School, Renee Stackman, who has worked at the school for many years, has been awarded a DET Executive Director's Excellence Award at the SASS and Community Awards 2025. Much-loved and hardworking volunteer Renee, who has also held the role of Secretary of the Wallsend Public School P&C Association, received a Regional North Excellence Award for her long-standing association with the school, for going above and beyond and setting a high standard in her role as Canteen Manager. Renee has been the inspiration behind contributions to the school's special days like Book Week, where her team provides enticing (but healthy) canteen treats. She puts so much thought into these special days and her friendly, positive interaction with the students demonstrates the NSW Department of Education's values of excellence, service, trust and accountability in everything that she does. Thank you, Renee, for your whole-hearted community service and for working tirelessly to ensure that the Wallsend Public School students have the very best each and every day.

#### TRIBUTE TO RETIRING LISMORE PAEDIATRICIAN DR CHRIS INGALL OAM

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—I wish to add my congratulations and sincere thanks to the highly respected Lismore paediatrician Dr Chris Ingall OAM, who retired last month. There was an outpouring of lovely testimonials on Facebook from local families for Chris, who has saved lives and improved the health outcomes for so many babies, children and teenagers across the Northern Rivers region during a long medical career. His motivation for starting the Our Kids charity, and later the Our House accommodation project which I helped secure funding for when I was Page MP, is worth repeating: "We started Our Kids ... and the idea came because there were two needs; there was a need in the community for people who had children with chronic illness who were fundraising and so on top of managing their child's disease, they were having to go out and try and get money and that was a big strain on them. "We weren't able to purchase any capital gear for the hospital, there was no money in the system for paediatrics so for those two reasons I thought we better start doing something and Our Kids was established in 2001."

#### NIMBIN POET DAVID HALLETT WINS NATIONAL RECOGNITION

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—Congratulations to Nimbin's living treasure, performance poet David Hallett, on taking out the Blue The Shearer Award for best original poem at this year's National Folk Fest held in Canberra last month. This prestigious award was for his poem 'Girt by Sea' and was judged best original poem from three poet's breakfasts, amid 60 other strong performances. The Blue The Shearer Award is in addition to his 2019 Reciter of the Year Award, also won at the National. He is a two-time winner of the Poetry Olympics at the Sydney Writers Festival in the nineties. David has given so much to the Australian poetry scene and to the cultural life of Nimbin and the wider Northern Rivers region for many decades. As an artist, he has developed an innovative, accessible, entertaining and original form of spoken word performance. His stewardship of two of Australia's longest running spoken word events – Lismore's 'Live Poets!' and Byron Bay's 'Writers at the Rails' – has been outstanding. He is a regular on the festival circuit, and was a member of the popular performance troupe, the 'Stand Up Poets' with S Sorrensen, Christine Strelan, David Heilpern and Shana Gelin.

#### RICHMOND RIVER HIGH CAMPUS FIRE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—Along with many in the Lismore community I was heartbroken in March when I saw images of the historic Richmond River High School buildings engulfed in flames. Although this school site was no longer in use, it was distressing to see the destruction of these heritage buildings that held so many memories for so many Lismore people and Northies. Ex-students, teachers and community members took to social media. School Principal Luke Woodward said on Facebook: "We are truly uplifted by the outpouring of support and the

ongoing sharing of priceless memories. "The loss we feel is immense, but the spirit of Richmond River High school lives on in each of us. Each memory, every photo and every word is a testament to the enduring power of our community. In times like this it's vital that we continue to take care of ourselves and each other." The Richmond River High Campus had survived floods over the years, but after the 2022 disaster the site was declared unsalvageable. The good news is that preparations are underway for the building of a new school out of flood, in North Lismore. This is a strong and resilient school community.

#### **MILL HILL CENTRE CAFE OPEN**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—We would like to acknowledge the opening of The Dining & Co. Café at the newly restored Boot Factory and Mill Hill Centre in Bondi Junction. The Boot Factory, built in 1892, is one of the last remaining examples of Victorian industrial architecture in Waverley. Following extensive restoration by Waverley Council, the space now hosts The Dining & Co., known for its seasonal meals and specialty coffee. Visitors can also enjoy the Council's pop-up library inside the Boot Factory, making it a perfect spot to appreciate this vibrant blend of history and community life. Thank you to everyone involved in bringing new life to this important community space.

#### **THE HON. ERNIE PAGE OAM**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—We would like to acknowledge the unveiling of a memorial plaque at the Waverley Cemetery lookout, honouring the late Hon. Ernie Page OAM. Mr. Page's esteemed career began in the early 1960s as a Waverley Councillor, which then he served as Mayor. He was the Member for Coogee from 1981 to 2003, including five years as NSW Minister for Local Government. His enduring contributions, such as the establishment of Waverley Library and the creation of the Bondi to Coogee Coastal Walk, have left a lasting impact on our community. This plaque serves as a tribute to his remarkable legacy and dedication to the Eastern Suburbs.

#### **SATURDAY CIRCLE**

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee)**—We would like to acknowledge Randwick City Council for the return of The Saturday Circle, a monthly gathering where community members can learn skills to repair and reuse everyday items, fostering sustainability and environmental stewardship. This month features a special open day for the new Sydney Library of Things, a not-for-profit service that allows residents to borrow a variety of household items, promoting a culture of sharing and reducing waste. These initiatives empower individuals to develop practical skills, support environmental conservation, and strengthen community bonds. Thank you to everyone involved in making our community more sustainable and connected.

#### **GAIL COPPING**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to add my tribute to the many circulating for much-loved Orange resident Gail Copping, who lost her battle with cancer in May. During her 67 years, Gail, or 'Twiggy' as she was known, carved out a reputation as a caring and tenacious advocate for her community. Unashamedly working class, Gail proved herself dedicated, empathetic and always willing to stand up for what she believed was right. That dedication was recognised in 2007 when she was named the Orange electorate's Woman of the Year. In true Twiggy-style, she asked for the award to be presented in her home town, bypassing the trappings of trip to Sydney. Gail also earned the title of Orange's unofficial councillor, standing twice but being narrowly defeated. That didn't stop her from advocating for a better deal for tenants when it came to the upkeep of NSW Housing properties. Gail also joined forces with former Member for Calare, the late Peter Andren, to ensure there was a public pay phone presence in Glenroi with the growing prevalence of mobile phones threatening their existence. I pass on my condolences to Gail's family. She will be missed.

#### **GREGORY GUNN**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—After an extraordinary effort serving his community for 35 years as the Member of Parliament's representative on the Forbes Council Roads and Traffic Committee, Gregory Gunn has stepped down from his volunteer role. It is people like Mr Gunn who are the backbone of small country towns such as Forbes, and his dedication to his role on the traffic committee for that length of time is to be commended. This service was in parallel to Mr Gunn running a successful business. Volunteering on a Roads and Traffic Committee can be a challenging role, responding to competing interests, and to think Mr Gunn has made this a priority for his community for more than three decades is admirable. During his tenure Mr Gunn has seen many innovations introduced into the city of Forbes' traffic plan including the construction of roundabouts and installation of traffic lights, to improve the overall traffic flow in the town. Mr Gunn remains humble, telling me what a privilege it has been to work alongside other dedicated citizens for the betterment of Forbes. He should feel proud of his enormous contribution to his community and I thank him for it.

### KINROSS WOLAROI SCHOOL 50TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—The pursuit of academic excellence passes a major milestone in Orange this year with Kinross Wolaroi School celebrating its 50th anniversary – although this is only the second chapter of this amazing institution. It was back in 1975 Kinross School, formerly Presbyterian Ladies College Orange, amalgamated with Wolaroi College, a Methodist school for boys, to form the independent co-educational KWS, building on the tradition and values of both established campuses to create something extraordinary. Significantly, the amalgamation enabled the introduction of a senior school, furthering the subject choice. That forward thinking has continued since the amalgamation with KWS steadily expanding its academic sphere with progressive educational programs, housed in facilities that continue to be developed and updated. Apart from academic merit, KWS students are also afforded wonderful opportunities on the sporting stage while its cadet, music and cultural programs are also outstanding. KWS's service to the rural communities of the Central West is also critical, offering families in remote areas an alternative to a metropolitan school, with agricultural values. Mr Speaker, I congratulate Kinross Wolaroi School on its half-century of academic excellence and look forward to seeing what its future brings.

### MURPHY XI – THE KING'S SCHOOL

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—I acknowledge Murphy Xi, a Year 12 student from The King's School in the Epping electorate, for his outstanding achievement in the Lawrence Campbell Oratory Competition – the state's most prestigious and challenging public speaking event for school students. Each year, one student from each GPS and CAS school is selected to compete, with participants required to deliver an eight-minute speech on an unseen topic, having only fifteen minutes to prepare. Murphy was awarded third place in this year's competition, following his third-place finish in 2024, making him the first student from The King's School to place in the top three in two consecutive years. His performance reflects not only his exceptional oratory talent but also his poise and clarity under pressure. Murphy's success builds on his strong engagement with the school's public speaking and debating programs. He is recognised by his peers and teachers for his critical thinking, eloquence, and commitment to continuous improvement. His achievements contribute to a proud tradition of excellence at The King's School and serve as an inspiration to younger students. I commend Murphy Xi on this significant accomplishment and look forward to his continued contributions to public discourse.

### KEN FITZGERALD

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—The preservation of early cinema is essential to safeguarding our cultural heritage and historical legacy. In my electorate of Epping, Ken Fitzgerald of Epping Baptist Church plays a vital role in this mission. Through his voluntary work maintaining the church's Christie Theatre Organ, Ken brings great joy to the local community, especially seniors who enjoy the sessions. He is also a dedicated supporter of the annual Messiah performance, a cherished event in the area. This year, Ken will collaborate with the Film Heritage Academy and Australia's Silent Film Festival to mark the 130th anniversary of the invention of film. The program, featuring live keyboard accompaniment, will take place in the coming months in Epping. I commend Ken Fitzgerald for his significant contributions to preserving the history of silent cinema. I also acknowledge the Film Heritage Academy and Australia's Silent Film Festival for their ongoing commitment to protecting our cinematic heritage.

### EPPING FC – WOMEN'S WEEK 2025

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—Celebrating women in sport is an opportunity to acknowledge their contributions, strengthen participation, and ensure their role in the game is both visible and valued. Women's Week 2025 at Epping Football Club reflects this commitment. I was able to visit West Epping Park on May 4th 2025 to see the many women and girls who are essential to the life of the club and to Epping's wider sporting community. The day featured a range of family-friendly activities, including face painting, hair braiding, inflatable soccer games, raffles, and a showcase of women's matches. I commend Epping Football Club and Alison Lloyd for organizing this initiative and for once again uniting the Epping community in support of an inclusive and vibrant local sporting culture.

### EID AL FITR & NOWRUZ CELEBRATION

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—What a joy it was to join the Afghan Fajar Association for their Eid Al Fitr and Nowruz celebration at Campbelltown Civic Hall on April 11. The evening was a powerful reminder of how culture brings us together—it was filled with colour, warmth, and the unmistakable spirit of community. We gathered not just to mark two significant traditions, but to share in something much deeper: a celebration of renewal, gratitude and belonging. From the traditional foods to the laughter of children enjoying face painting and henna, every moment was a reflection of the rich cultural fabric that makes our community stronger. The stories shared and the speeches delivered reminded us of the importance of unity and mutual respect.

I was honoured to be part of the celebrations, and I thank everyone who made it so special. These are the moments that deepen our connection—and keep our community thriving.

#### **MAR YOSIP COMMUNITY HALL & CENTRE**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On Monday 14 April, I had the privilege of joining my colleagues Anne Stanley MP and Chris Bowen MP to announce a major \$5 million re-election commitment to invest in delivering the new Mar Yosip Community Hall and Centre in my electorate. On behalf of His Eminence Mar Meelis Zaia AM and the Assyrian Church of the East, I was honoured to take part in this special moment. This funding is more than bricks and mortar—it's a commitment to the future of the Assyrian community in Leppington. The new centre will be a place of spiritual strength, cultural pride, and vital community services for generations to come. As our community continues to grow, this support ensures that we have the infrastructure to grow with it. I'm proud to stand with a government that recognises the importance of cultural inclusion and invests in spaces in Western Sydney that bring people together.

#### **CLOSING CEREMONY NEXTGEN OLYMPIAD**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington)**—On 16 April, I had the great pleasure of attending the Closing Ceremony of the second NextGen Olympiad at Amity College Prestons—a truly inspiring international event that brought together over 100 bright young minds from 15 countries. This dynamic competition gave students from primary through high school the chance to test their skills in Mathematics, Science, and English, while also engaging in cultural exchange, university visits, and deep conversations about global challenges. NextGen is more than just an academic contest—it's a celebration of curiosity, collaboration, and global citizenship. By aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the Olympiad encourages students to think critically, act ethically, and lead with purpose. From exploring Aboriginal culture to forging lifelong friendships, these young leaders have taken part in a transformative experience that will shape not only their future but the future of their communities. Events like NextGen show us the power of education to connect, inspire and prepare the next generation to build a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world.

#### **BARBARA (BARB) TURNER**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—Congratulations to Barbara Turner on being awarded the 2025 Nursing and Midwifery Leadership Award for the Far West Local Health District. This prestigious award honours a nurse or midwife who demonstrates exceptional leadership across clinical care, management, education, or research. Barbara exemplifies all these qualities and more. A highly respected member of the Menindee community, Barbara has been a source of inspiration for countless nurses, encouraging them to broaden and diversify their careers. With over 30 years of experience in health care, she is also a qualified Nurse Practitioner. Barbara began her journey as a Registered Nurse at the Broken Hill and District Hospital. She is also a Midwife and holds a Certificate in Child and Family Health Nursing, a Bachelor of Social Science (Welfare), a Graduate Certificate in Advanced Practice (Rural and Remote), a Graduate Certificate in Diabetes Management and Education, and a Master of Nursing (Nurse Practitioner). Her passion for remote health and dedication to improving access to services in rural and remote communities is truly commendable. Congratulations Barb – well-deserved recognition!

#### **MR RAY GARDOLL**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon)**—I had the privilege of attending the reburial ceremony of Sergeant John Everett Lumley on Wednesday, 21 May 2025. Sergeant Lumley, a dedicated NSW Police officer and Boer War veteran, passed away in 1919 at the age of 39 while stationed in Tibooburra. Until recently, his final resting place in the Broken Hill Cemetery was marked only by a modest patch of gravel. This meaningful tribute was made possible through the tireless efforts of Ray Gardoll and the Back to Barrier organisation, which is committed to honouring the service of sworn police officers and administrative staff who have contributed to the safety and security of the Barrier Police Command. The organisation also plays a vital role in remembering those who have fallen and those who came before. Mr Gardoll, a retired police officer, leads Back to Barrier and continues fostering connections among former police personnel who served in the region, ensuring their legacy is preserved and respected. It is thanks to people like Ray that we are reminded of the importance of remembrance—not just for those who made the ultimate sacrifice, but for all who served with dedication and integrity.

#### **SHOSHANNA GRIFFIN - THURGOONA – NSW HIDDEN TREASURES HONOUR ROLL 2024**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Shoshanna Griffin from Thurgoona, who has been nominated and added to the NSW Hidden Treasures Honour Roll 2024. This recognition celebrates the voluntary contributions of women across NSW, and Shoshanna now joins over 1,300 women who have been honoured since the Honour Roll began in 2010. A passionate advocate for community theatre, Shoshanna has been a driving force in promoting arts and culture in the Albury-Wodonga region. She is the founder of the Amateur

Performance in Theatre [APT] Awards, an initiative that shines a spotlight on the often-overlooked contributions of volunteers. As a founding member of The Other Theatre Company, she has played a key role in producing the much-loved Shakespeare in the Gardens at the Albury Botanic Gardens, an event that continues to bring our community together. With over 14 years of dedicated volunteer service and continued generous contributions of more than 10 hours each week, Shoshanna has helped build a vibrant rural theatre community. Well done Shoshanna. Your efforts strengthens social bonds and cultural pride, making you a true treasure, and worthy of this honour.

#### **CODY HUSSEY'S TRUCKIN LIFE!**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Cody Hussey, a Year 8 student at Xavier Catholic College in Albury, for his incredible accomplishment in the world of trucking craftsmanship. Cody's incredible project, well-crafted Mack Super-Liner, painted in striking yellow with a dark blue chassis and equipped with all Aussie extracts, has earned him a well-deserved recognition by being featured in the Truckin Life magazine - a leading publication dedicated to the trucking industry. The project took Cody, 506 days to complete, highlighting his dedication and exceptional attention to detail. Cody, this is a remarkable accomplishment and a well-deserved recognition. Congratulations!

#### **ANN APPLEBY EAST ALBURY – NSW HIDDEN TREASURES HONOUR ROLL 2024 – T2T**

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury)**—I would like to congratulate Ann Appleby from East Albury, who has been nominated and added to the NSW Hidden Treasures Honour Roll 2024, for her voluntary work, joining over 1,300 women who have been honoured since 2010 for their valuable contributions to NSW regional and rural communities. Ann is a shining star of our Transport to Treatment [T2T] service in Albury, the busiest hub in NSW. With three vehicles on the road every weekday and over 83,000 km driven this year alone, the success of this important service is built on the dedication of exceptional volunteers like Ann. Ann goes above and beyond every single day. She brings not only reliability and compassion to her passengers, but also foresight and initiative to every aspect of the service. From organising vehicle transitions and managing inventory to setting up tech systems and lockboxes, Ann does it all, often before anyone even asks. I thank Ann for her empathy, problem-solving mindset, and commitment, and for being the heart and hands of T2T Albury.

#### **MICK CARTER**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Congratulations to Mick Carter who was a recent nominee in the Coaching Excellence Award at the Bathurst District Sport and Recreation Council Annual Sports Awards. In 2024 Mick coached the U15's Panthers team to their 4th Premiership. The team were undefeated premiers and this is an outstanding achievement that the Panthers Club has never seen before. Mick was awarded Life Membership of Panthers and he continues to be the Junior President, U18's Coach, Group 10 JRL Coach as well as the Coaching Coordinator for all Junior teams. Mick has secured significant history on behalf of Bathurst Panthers JRL taking 5 premierships in the 2024 season along with the most representative players ever produced as a Club. Panthers had 59 Group 10 JRL players representing at greater wester State trials, Sydney Roosters Development Pathways, Western Rams male and female pathways, NSW under 16's and the Penrith Panthers Harold Matthews selections. It takes the highest level of commitment and dedication to achieve such outcomes, and I congratulate Mick Carter who was ultimately presented and recognised with the Coaching Excellence Award – a most worthy recipient.

#### **GEMMA STAPELTON**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Gemma was recently announced as a nominee in the June Darke Refereeing/Umpiring Distinction (Junior) Award held as part of the recent Bathurst District Sport and Recreation Council Annual Sports Awards. Gemma has contributed to her sport through refereeing at the U15 and U18 State Championships and Master State Championships in Hockey and she was subsequently selected to referee the final at the Masters State Championships. At a local level Gemma also referees in both Juniors and Seniors at all levels and she has clearly demonstrated a very worthy level of commitment and dedication to her sport. Following her nomination Gemma was ultimately recognised with this Award and she is to be congratulated on her outstanding contribution and the recognition she has been given for her outstanding achievements.

#### **CHRISTOPHER COOMBES**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Congratulations to Christopher Coombes who was a nominee in the Coaching Excellence Award at the recent Bathurst District Sport and Recreation Council Annual Sports Awards. Within the Rugby League sporting arena Christopher has made an outstanding contribution to his sport as a volunteer, a trainer and as a coach over a period of some seven years. Through his guidance and as a role model both on and off the field, Chris played a vital role in coaching the U16 Panthers team over four years to ultimately win the Group 10 JRL Championships. Christopher has also been a coach for the Group 10 JRL programs and has seen the results of his endeavours through his players representing Panthers at higher levels of the code. To be



recognised as someone who strives to go above and beyond by his peers, who is an inspiration to many, I congratulate Christopher on his achievements and commitment to Rugby League and on the recognition given through this nomination.

#### **EXCELLENCE IN YOUTH AWARDS – ADITI GUPTA**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to extend my congratulations to Aditi Gupta, who was recognised with a Youth Future Educator of the Year – Excellence in Youth Award at the 2025 Rotary Youth Excellence Awards, presented by the Rotary Club of Castle Hill. Aditi is a passionate and proactive young leader whose commitment to service and community is both inspiring and impactful. Within her school and beyond, she has consistently demonstrated initiative, empathy, and a strong sense of civic responsibility. One of the highlights of her service was the Cook4Good excursion, a project she spearheaded to provide meaningful support to those in need—creating an experience that left a lasting impression on both participants and beneficiaries. Aditi is also a dedicated member of the Cadets program, where she continues to show discipline, teamwork, and leadership under pressure. Her inclusive and motivating leadership style empowers those around her, inspiring fellow students to step up, uplift others, take initiative, and contribute to the greater good. I am proud to recognise Aditi's achievements and congratulate her on this well-deserved honour.

#### **EXCELLENCE IN YOUTH AWARDS – DANIEL CARTER**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to extend my congratulations to Daniel Carter, who was recognised with a Youth Sportsman of the Year – Excellence in Youth Award at the 2025 Rotary Youth Excellence Awards, presented by the Rotary Club of Castle Hill. Daniel's achievements in swimming are nothing short of remarkable. He is the 2025 National Champion in both the 5km and 7.5km Open Water Swimming events, awarded at the Swimming Australia National Championships in Busselton, WA. His dedication to his sport has seen him selected for Swimming Australia's national training squad 'Flippers', a testament to his skill and commitment. Beyond his personal achievements, Daniel is a leader within his community. As Club Captain at The Hills Swimming and Lifesaving Club, he mentors and supports younger swimmers, volunteering his time at Friday night club races. He also serves as Sports Captain at his school, where he continues to be a positive influence and role model. Daniel's commitment to excellence, leadership, and community service is truly inspiring. I am proud to recognise his achievements and congratulate him on this well-deserved award.

#### **EXCELLENCE IN YOUTH AWARDS – ELYSSA TEDESCO**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I wish to extend my congratulations to Elyssa Tedesco, who was recognised with a Youth Volunteer of the Year – Excellence in Youth Award at the 2025 Rotary Youth Excellence Awards, presented by the Rotary Club of Castle Hill. Elyssa is a School Captain at Castle Hill High School and an exceptional young leader with a strong sense of community. She leads the Castle Hill High School Relay for Life Team, coordinating over 50 students and raising more than \$20,000 for the Cancer Council through community events. Her commitment is evident in the way she has inspired her peers—recruiting more than 50 senior students to join her for the 24-hour event, with fundraising efforts that include bake sales, BBQs, raffles, and hair-shaving challenges. Elyssa embodies the spirit of Rotary's values—service above self, leadership through action, and a commitment to creating lasting change. Her tireless efforts in support of cancer research and support services have not only raised vital funds but also inspired her community. I am proud to recognise Elyssa's outstanding leadership, dedication, and passion for making a difference, and I congratulate her on this well-deserved award.

#### **OUT OF THE SQUARE MEDIA**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Ryan Williams and Emmerson Maclean from Out Of The Square Media are two young Newcastle creatives, with amazing videography and user experience skills that have been noticed on an international level. The pair were selected as finalists for the Cairns Hatchlings competition, a program run by Cairns Crocodiles, the Asia-Pacific's premier creative festival, to help build the careers of emerging talent. Williams and Maclean created a film to raise awareness of reef monitoring and conservation in response to a brief to get people involved in The Great Reef Census. They devised a 'Click to Save' campaign to make it simple to get involved, paired beautiful visuals of our coral reefs. The team at OOTS were one of just two finalists selected for the Video Award. Congratulations to you both on this fantastic achievement. I can't wait to see your next project.

#### **NEWCASTLE DRAGONBOAT TEAM**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHORP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to the Dragonhunters on a successful run at the 2025 AusChamps national dragon boating competition, bringing a stack of medals back to Newcastle, most notably silver medals! On Day 1 the team came second in the Senior A Open and Women 20's 500m. Day 2 they backed that up with silvers in the Senior A Open and Women 20's 200m races. On Day 3, the Senior A Women's

2km turn team took home another silver, but also came back from behind to overtake two boats and shave 10 seconds off their state time just two weeks before. Day 3 also saw the Open's 2km turn team come fifth in the country. Congratulations to everyone that got involved, you're all champions in my book!

#### **NEWCASTLE PRIVATE HOSPITAL**

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—I want to congratulate all of the nurses, doctors, and midwives at Newcastle Private Hospital that delivered four sets of twins in just four days from April 28 to May 1. In Australia, around 1 in 70 births are twins. Having four sets of twins born in four days in the same hospital is practically unheard of. Three sets of boys and one set of girls made for four very excited mums. I congratulate all the families and I hope you are all happy and healthy. These bubs came just in time for International Day of the Midwife on May 5. What a way to show off how amazing our midwives are in Newcastle, across the state, and across the world. The midwifery team at Newcastle Private Hospital are phenomenal and do such incredible work. Well done!

#### **BREAKFAST CLUB AT HANNAN'S ROAD PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—I would like to once again congratulate the Lions Club of Lugarno, who have recently started a brand-new 'Breakfast Club' for children at Hannan's Road Public School. Each Wednesday and Friday morning, the Lugarno Lions Club provides free breakfasts to all students at the school, which has a population of just over 100 children. With food generously supplied by Foodbank, this program ensures that children begin their school day with a nutritious meal. Moreover, the Breakfast Club offers a rotating menu, which includes fresh fruit and cold drinks, ensuring that those with dietary restrictions are not excluded from the program. I would like to thank the President of the Lugarno Lions, Mike Butler, as well as the team of volunteers who show up week in and week out to feed the kids at Hannan's Road Public School. I would also like to thank Woolworths Riverwood and the Crateful Group for their generous contributions to this cause, as well as the two non-Lion volunteers, Dorrette Williams and Julia Farrow, for their assistance. I wish the Lugarno Lions every success in this venture.

#### **EUROPEAN BASKETBALL GIANTS VISIT ST GEORGE BASKETBALL**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to recognise a proud moment for the St George Basketball Association, which recently welcomed one of the giants of European basketball to our local courts. On Tuesday night, May 13, Vassilis Parthenopoulos, CEO and President of Panathinaikos AKTOR Basketball Club, visited the Association and was warmly received by players, coaches, and board members. As many basketball fans would know, the Panathinaikos Basketball Club is an absolute powerhouse of European Basketball. Since they were established in 1919, they have developed into one of the most successful basketball clubs in Greek and European basketball history. Mr Parthenopoulos came to visit on May 13 and had the opportunity to watch the U14 and U16 junior representatives train. I am advised that he was very impressed with the talent on offer and I would expect nothing less! St George Basketball truly are one of the finest grassroots sporting organisations in my community and I am never left unimpressed with their love for the game. I congratulate all involved and thank Mr Parthenopoulos for making time in a busy international schedule to acknowledge the strength of basketball right here in the St George area.

#### **DR ASHLEY BERRY**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I would like to commend local GP, Dr Ashley Berry, who recently announced his retirement after providing medical care to patients in the St George for just over four decades. Dr Berry set up his practice in the suburb of Lugarno in 1986 and since then, has provided medical care to thousands. He now operates a clinic located on Letitia Street in Oatley, which has been operating for 14 years. A migrant from India, Dr Berry overcame early setbacks and was accepted into medicine, graduating from the University of New South Wales in 1979. He worked at Prince of Wales and Lidcombe hospitals before gaining further experience in the UK. Dr Berry's service to the community has been remarkable and his commitment to patient care will no doubt be remembered for years to come. Throughout his career, he has supported cancer patients, advanced nutrition education, and generously given his time through volunteer work. Once again, I thank Dr Berry for his exceptional service and I wish him all the best as he moves to Wollongong, where he will focus on educating new doctors. He will be sorely missed in the St George area.

#### **DUFFYS FOREST RURAL FIRE SERVICE**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—I would like to congratulate the longstanding members of the Duffys Forest Rural Fire Service Brigade who recently received their long service medals. Eleven members of the brigade received their medals for at least 10 years of volunteer service. These dedicated members meet regularly to maintain vehicles and practise skills that help to protect lives, homes and livelihoods from the devastating impact of bushfires. When the siren wails and smoke darkens the horizon, RFS volunteers drop everything. They

leave their jobs, families and personal lives to confront the danger head-on. They battle infernos in extreme conditions, often working tirelessly for days on end, facing immense physical and emotional challenges. Their bravery, resilience and unwavering resolve are truly inspiring. I would like to thank every member of the Duffys Forest Brigade for your service and commitment to our community. In particular, I would like to mention Christopher Syme, Joanne Drewett, Jennifer Harris, David Harris, Wendy Smallwood, Richard Smallwood, Deborah Frack, Lee Gregory, Sarah Reynolds, Peter Bull and Steven Hartgrove who all received long service medals.

#### **SUZIE STANFORD**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—Suzie Stanford is an outstanding member of our community and the current President of the P&C at Narrabeen Sports High School. Suzie began her time on the P&C at Elanora Heights Public School, where her three children attended. As Suzie's children moved on to high school, she turned her attention to Narrabeen Sports P&C where she handed the reins and saved the organisation from collapsing. Since then, Suzie and her team have advocated for better resources for the children at the school by fundraising, working with the staff and contacting local representatives. They have already achieved great things with their advocacy, including securing funding for a new performing arts centre, new school signs and a clean-up of the school grounds. Suzie was motivated to take action in her local community through the P&C. For Suzie, the P&C has been an opportunity to give back and see a real impact in the lives of so many across Pittwater. I would like to sincerely thank Suzie for all her hard work and dedication to our local public schools. This hard work will be recognized for years to come, and you should be extremely proud of your efforts.

#### **CLAIRE MORRIS**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—Claire Morris is a fantastic local volunteer who shares her knowledge of yarn work with women impacted by domestic violence. Claire has a wealth of knowledge around yarn work, which she learned from her grandmother and mother. The women in her family helped to set an example of giving back to the community, a principle Claire embodies through her work at the Northern Beaches Women's Shelter. Each week, Claire leads an activity that helps women impacted by domestic violence use their hands to create something. Sometimes the women crochet, knit, or weave beautiful creations. Claire believes in the restorative power of hand work and has seen the positive benefits it can have for the women she volunteers with. Claire takes pride in being able to show the women at the shelter the skills that the women in her family taught her. She enjoys giving back to the group and the connections she has formed with other volunteers at the centre. I would like to sincerely thank Claire for sharing her skills to help support other women in the community. Your dedication is outstanding and we are all better because of it.

#### **CHATSWOOD CROQUET CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Chatswood Croquet Club stands as a proud local institution and treasured part of the community since its founding in 1913. For over 110 years the Club has been a place of connection, sport and camaraderie for generations of locals. Tucked away just off the Pacific Highway, the Club continues to thrive thanks to the dedication of its members and committee who volunteer their time to maintain the grounds, organise play and welcome newcomers with warmth and enthusiasm. Today the Club hosts a range of games each week including Golf Croquet, Ricochet and Association Croquet, providing opportunities for social engagement, healthy activity and intergenerational friendships. It plays a quiet but meaningful role in the social fabric of Chatswood. My thanks to President Dan Howard, Vice President Bob Berry and the entire committee for their tireless work in keeping this historic club active, inclusive and welcoming.

#### **ROTARY NORTHBRIDGE FIREWORKS**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—It is my pleasure to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of Rotary Northbridge in delivering the 2025 Northbridge Community Fireworks — a much-loved local tradition that brought families, friends and neighbours together for a spectacular evening of celebration and connection. Held annually at Northbridge Oval, this event is more than just fireworks. It is a true community gathering, filled with food, entertainment, rides, music and laughter. It draws thousands of people from across the North Shore and is a testament to the strength of our local community spirit. My sincere thanks to David Hyde, the 2025 Fireworks Coordinator, President Peter Russell and the entire team at Rotary Northbridge for their extraordinary organisation and commitment. Their tireless volunteer work ensures the event is enjoyable, inclusive and welcoming for all ages. The Northbridge Community Fireworks is also an important fundraiser, with proceeds supporting local projects, charities and Rotary initiatives that make a difference both here at home and further afield. Congratulations to everyone involved on another successful event that lit up our skies and our community.

### CHATSWOOD LIBRARY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—The Chatswood Library is one of the most dynamic and well-loved public libraries in our state, and a cornerstone of learning, connection and culture in the heart of Willoughby. Located within The Concourse, Chatswood Library serves as a vibrant hub for residents of all ages and backgrounds. With over 5,000 square metres of space, it offers an extensive collection of books, multilingual resources, digital tools, study areas and community programs. Whether it's story time for children, digital literacy workshops for seniors or quiet spaces for students, Chatswood Library continues to meet the evolving needs of our diverse and growing community. The Library also plays a central role in fostering inclusion, hosting exhibitions, author talks, and community language programs that reflect the rich multicultural character of the area. My sincere thanks to the librarians, volunteers and staff whose dedication makes Chatswood Library such a welcoming and inspiring place. Their work enriches minds, supports lifelong learning and helps make our community stronger, smarter and more connected. Chatswood Library is a local treasure and one I am proud to support.

### FONOKALAFI FA'ANUNU

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Central Coast Athlete Fonokalafi Fa'anunu competed in shot put at the Australian Junior Championships in Perth. Fonokalafi Fa'anunu from Wyong Athletics Centre approached the competition with steady concentration and resulted with a win. An improvement from the state with a terrific distance of 14.79 metres in the Under-15 shot put. The athlete demonstrated remarkable consistency and skill by opening with a strong shot of 14.79 metres, which ultimately secured the gold medal, and maintaining near-peak performance with a 14.76 metre shot put in the final round, showcasing his ability to sustain intensity. Fonokalafi's is motivated to compete and strive for the best results. He has been at a national level for a few years and would likely have won last year but broke his leg. Last year the athlete competed in the NSW Junior Championships winning the Men Shot Put Under-14 by five metres with a distance of 15.51 metres. Congratulations to Fonokalafi Fa'anunu for representing the Central Coast and bringing home gold.

### WYONG FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

**Mr DAVID HARRIS (Wyong—Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research, and Minister for the Central Coast)**—Wyong Family History Group have taken part in the Australian Heritage Festival 2025. Across 4 days in April and May The Wyong Family History Group facilitated guided tours around the historic Wyong, learning about its establishment and development since 1887. Commencing from 4 Railway Square next to Wyong Train Station, the tour takes about 90 minutes passing most of the town's historic buildings along the way and guides showing photographs of early Wyong. The walk follows the Pacific Highway, before heading up Alison Road and finishing on Margaret Street at the Post Office. Wyong Family History Group was formed in 1983 by volunteers to promote, research and preserve the family history of members, visitors, and Wyong Shire pioneers. Preserving and understanding local history is crucial for community identity, engagement, development, and connecting with the past.

### LUKA VUCKOVIC

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—Not many 10-year-olds have had to demonstrate the exceptional strength and bravery of Illawong's Luka Vuckovic, one of the faces of Heartkids. Born with two holes in his heart, Luka has a heart condition that has required surgery and ongoing medical care. That being said, behind Luka's bright smile and enthusiasm to return to school, you wouldn't know there has been a such story of courage in the face of adversity. Importantly, childhood heart conditions including Luka's affect around one million Australians. HeartKids is the only national not-for-profit organisation solely focused on supporting and advocating for all people impacted by childhood-onset heart disease. Luka's visibility in HeartKids' campaign for funding for heart disease for young Australians has become a family affair, with Manuela and Milan Vuckovic bravely sharing their story to raise awareness and advocate for greater support for those impacted by childhood congenital heart disease. Incredibly, their resilience shines through in their strength and in the compassion they show to others walking a similar path. I commend Luka, Manuela and Milan Vuckovic for transforming this personal challenge into a powerful message and advocacy for change and extend my best wishes for the future.

### LA BELLE VIE FRENCH MARKET

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I commend Taren Point Public School for hosting the annual La Belle Vie French Market on 18 May. Due to the success of the French immersion program at Taren Point Public School since 2018, this small community is proudly one of only three schools in NSW to become a member of the

Australian Association of French English Bilingual Schools. In tribute to the French programs at the school, the market offers an immersion into French culture for the Sutherland Shire. La Belle Vie is a day of buttery pastries, handcrafted jewellery, artisan charcuterie and much more. With over 70 stalls, the French Market fundraiser provided visitors with a day of excitement and funds raised went to supporting the school's learning programs. None of this would be possible without the outstanding organisers of La Belle Vie French market. I recognise the indefatigable organiser Anyes Mclean and volunteer Parents and Citizens Association members Sara Jordan, Natalie Fenton, Carol Dobson Stone, Lacey Johnson, Sharn Taripo for running the school BBQ and face painting stall which contributed to the success of the event. Merci beaucoup to the Taren Point Public School community for facilitating another wonderful French Market.

#### **FIRE AND RESCUE NSW'S OPEN DAY**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I recognise the crew at Fire and Rescue NSW's Menai Station ("Menai Fire and Rescue") for their bravery and commitment to our community. The highly skilled firefighters and support staff at Menai Fire and Rescue have made it their duty to protect others. These courageous men and women not only respond to emergencies but also focus on incident prevention initiatives. I was pleased to attend the Station's Open Day on 10 March and meet the incredible team as they discussed fire safety with our community through kitchen fire simulator demonstrations and over literature to take away. Importantly, it was a fun and interactive day for the family with children being encouraged to explore the fire trucks. This wouldn't be possible without the exceptional individuals at Menai Fire and Rescue. I recognise Captain Brady Clarke, Deputy Captain Ben Miller, Station Officer Greg Hopcroft, Duty Commander Georges River, Inspector Brad Smith and firefighters Ralph Barton, Mitchell Smithson, Cameron White, Carly McLachlan, Jeff Endicott, Andy Drury and James Barbuto for their efforts. I thank the selfless men and women at Menai Fire and Rescue for ongoing dedication to protecting our community in the face of danger.

#### **GDSFA 125 YEARS**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I congratulate the Granville & Districts Soccer Football Association on reaching an extraordinary milestone - kicking off the 125th season of soccer! This is not only a moment of celebration but also a reminder of the indelible mark the GDSFA has made on our Granville and Parramatta communities for over a century. Founded in 1900 by Frederick William Barlow, the association has provided countless opportunities for players, coaches and supporters to be a part of something truly special. GDSFA has fostered a love for football in a safe and welcoming environment, where players from all backgrounds and abilities are encouraged to grow and thrive. But this achievement isn't just about the players on the field, it is also a celebration of the many community members who have supported this incredible organisation. As we celebrate this historic milestone, I am filled with pride for all that GDSFA has accomplished and excited for what the future holds. I would like to recognise current board members Steve Elriche, Mary Ghamraoui, Bianca Vitale, Orazio La Pace, Seb Tas and Hicham Zraika. Here's to 125 years of football and to many more seasons of teamwork and camaraderie!

#### **MALTESE COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Maltese Community Council for inviting me to attend the annual commemoration of the Sette Giugno. This significant event honours the lives of those lost in the tragic 1919 riots, which marked an important moment in Malta's fight for freedom against colonial rule. As a national holiday in Malta, the 7th of June is a day of reflection and remembrance. Each year, wreaths are placed at the victims' monument at Addolorata Cemetery, symbolising respect and gratitude for those who lost their lives. This simple yet moving gesture honours the memory of the six victims who lost their lives in the riots. I also want to acknowledge the invaluable work of the Maltese Community Council of NSW, which has been representing and supporting the Maltese community since 1967. The Council plays a crucial role in promoting the interests of the Maltese people and helping affiliated associations deliver essential services. A special thank you to Miriam Friggieri, Antoine Mangion, Annemarie Thind, Michael Zammit, Neville Zammit, Sandra Grech, and Marisa Previtera for their dedication and leadership in ensuring the success of the Council. Your contributions are acknowledged.

#### **ANZAC DAY - CHRISTOPHER MASON**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging all those in Ryde who gathered to commemorate ANZAC Day 2025. This solemn occasion united residents, veterans, school students, and local organisations in shared remembrance. Particular thanks must go to Christopher Mason, the School Captain of Marsden High School, who led the gathering in prayer with grace and respect. Christopher's contribution exemplified the dignity and reverence that defines our ANZAC Day services. ANZAC Day continues to hold a profound place in our national identity. It reminds us of the courage, sacrifice, and resilience of all those who served and died in war and on operational service. Their legacy lives on in the freedoms we enjoy today and

the generations who continue honouring their memory. I am deeply proud of our community for upholding this tradition of remembrance with such sincerity and respect. Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's commemorations across the Ryde electorate. Let us not forget.

#### **EASTER PET PHOTO COMPETITION - RIVAH PRASHANT**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I rise to inform the House of the Ryde Electorate Easter Pets and Teddies Photo Competition. This delightful initiative brought smiles to many across our community. Residents were invited to showcase their creativity by submitting festive photos featuring their pets and teddies in Easter-themed settings. I especially thank Rivah Prashant for their heartwarming submission, featuring their pet birds nestled in a charming Easter-themed nest, complete with a festive backdrop. Rivah shared that they wanted their birds to try a competition for the first time - a sentiment that speaks to the joy and hope this event inspired. Rivah's effort captured the spirit of the season and the deep affection we share for our animal companions. I commend them for participating and thank everyone who entered for making this a joyful community celebration. Initiatives like this highlight the creativity and warmth that define the Ryde electorate.

#### **EASTER PET PHOTO COMPETITION - THOR RIGNEY**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in acknowledging the success of the Ryde Electorate Easter Pets and Teddies Photo Competition. This light-hearted and much-loved tradition brings out local families' creativity, celebrating Easter's joy through their beloved companions. This year's entries captured the season's spirit in all its fluffy, cuddly, and charming glory. I particularly want to thank Thor Rigney for their delightful submission of Buster - a mature-aged French Bulldog, dashing in his Easter bowtie. In their words, Buster is "always in the mood for extra cuddles," and winning this contest would only mean more of them. Many in the House would agree that's a worthy goal. Thor's participation, and that of all our entrants, helped make the competition successful. These contributions bring colour and warmth to our community, reminding us that sometimes, the simplest gestures bring the most joy. Thank you again to Thor, Buster, and everyone who took part in spreading Easter cheer across Ryde.

#### **GALLERY LANE COVE**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker – I wish to acknowledge Gallery Lane Cove for their recent exhibition opening of 'Gestures of Intent'. The growth of the Arts has been monumental within Lane Cove, and I pay tribute to Gallery Lane Cove for their support of emerging artists and community engagement.

#### **LANE COVE BUSHCARE**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker – I wish to commend the Lane Cove Bushcare program for their continued work in protecting and nourishing our local environment. Especially with their recent maintenance efforts at Stringybark Creek Reserve. I thank them for their stewardship.

#### **ANZAC DAY TAREE**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise the Taree RSL Sub-Branch and Club Taree for delivering a meaningful Anzac Day service this year. The Taree community gathered along Victoria Street and at Fotheringham Park to pay their respects. Club Taree CEO Paul Allan was the Master of Ceremonies, and Taree RSL Sub-Branch President Darcy Elbourne gave an address on the bravery of those who have served, as well as the history of the town's memorial clock tower - built through the support of local residents and businesses. Wreaths were laid by local schools and groups, musician Brianna Xuereb performed a moving tribute and 99-year-old WWII RAAF veteran Dulcie Balderston was honoured with a Commemorative Medallion marking 75 years since the end of the Second World War. I thank the Taree RSL Sub-Branch, Club Taree, and the wider community for continuing to ensure ANZAC Day is respectfully observed in such a meaningful way.

#### **BASS 'N' BLUES**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Tanya and Trevor Brown of Bass 'N' Blues in Taree – a music store that has been much more than a business for the past 30 years. Starting with just \$55,000 in 1994, the Browns built Bass 'N' Blues from the ground up, creating a place where musicians feel at home. Their store has supported everyone from beginners to seasoned performers, and it continues to be a trusted source for instruments, advice, and encouragement. Tanya and Trevor are musicians themselves and have poured their energy into growing not only a retail space, but also a local music community. Through talent quests, music expos, fundraising for youth ensembles, and their support of the eisteddfod, they've made a real difference. Sadly, the store was severely impacted by the Mid Coast flooding, with water inundating the shop floor. It's a heartbreaking setback for a business that has given so much to others. I thank Tanya and Trevor for their contribution to music in our region and look forward to seeing Bass 'N' Blues reopen and continue inspiring the next generation of musicians.

**DWAYNE KELLY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Dwayne Kelly of Old Bar, a well-known local breeder and poultry judge whose passion for animals began as a young boy on his family's property in Dyers Crossing. What started with a few cross-breed chickens has grown into a lifetime of involvement in the poultry community, with Dwayne now caring for more than 100 birds and judging shows across the region, including Wingham, Taree, Gloucester and Nabiac. Dwayne's interest was encouraged early on by a local mentor who helped him improve his knowledge and birds, leading to decades of involvement in breeding and showing poultry. In 2023, Dwayne helped form the Nabiac Poultry Club alongside fellow enthusiasts, and they'll host their first official show this June. Outside of poultry, Dwayne is also an accomplished horseman, having won multiple sporting and campdrafting titles. I thank Dwayne for sharing his knowledge, and for the role he plays in preserving and promoting local agricultural traditions.

**BRENDAN BATEMAN**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge Brendan Bateman, a local resident of Drummoyne who is a successful lawyer with a deep passion for history. Earlier this year, Brendan released his books *Drummoyne's Great War*, a three-volume biography recounting the lives of the 95 men whose names are recorded at the Drummoyne War Memorial. For the first time, the backgrounds of these men are preserved in vivid detail, with their stories of courage and sacrifice preserved for future generations to reflect and to honour. Brendan was inspired to begin this project in 2009 when he visited a local ANZAC soldier's grave in Villers-Bretonneux, France. Over the next 15 years, he worked and researched diary entries, service records and photographs, ensuring that the biographies were an accurate telling of these men's legacies. I acknowledge Brendan's family including his wife Ann-Marie, to whom the book is dedicated, and thank her for the role she has played in supporting him throughout his research. I sincerely thank Brendan for his dedication to preserving the history of our community and sharing the stories of these soldiers. His work has ensured that their sacrifices will never be forgotten, and their stories will live on. Lest we forget.

**BUSINESS WITH A HEART**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the outstanding work of Business with a Heart, a charitable organisation that supports children with life threatening medical conditions. Business with a Heart was founded by Tania Mastroianni in 2020 with the goal of ensuring that every child is given the opportunity to feel joy, comfort, and hope during their most challenging moments. At the heart of their charity is their 'Special Bear Friends' initiative which invites sponsors to purchase, stuff and dress their own teddy bear. These bears are then donated to children at local hospitals where they provide comfort and support for sick children. The charity has since grown to work in partnership with the Starlight Children's Foundation, HeartKids and the Ronald McDonald House Charities, amplifying their impact and delivering hope to children across New South Wales. I sincerely thank Tania and all members of the Business with a Heart volunteer team for their dedication to such an inspirational cause. Their passion and creativity has had a meaningful impact on the lives of countless children and families, ensuring that all children are given the support they need.

**YEO PARK 100TH ANNIVERSARY MINI-EXHIBITION**

**Ms JO HAYLEN (Summer Hill)**—Yeo Park in Ashfield is one of the inner west's most loved outdoor spaces and on 1 June this year we will celebrate its 100th birthday. Opened in 1925, Yeo Park is named after former Mayor John Yeo, and is a place for locals to relax, play sport, and in recent years, enjoy the fabulous Outfield café. It is home to old and new features including a magnificent heritage listed bandstand and an Aboriginal Survival Memorial commemorating the survival and resilience of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples. The red brick building that houses Outfield café was once a baby health centre owned by the Department of Education before ownership was registered to Ashfield Council in 1999. Local artist Sorrel Trevarthen, of Picket Fence Illustrations, is marking this occasion by opening a "mini-exhibition" of illustrations of Yeo Park locals at Outfield café. This event will have art, live music and family fun with a portion of proceeds going to the Yeo Park Infants School P&C. Congratulations to Sorrel, Caleb and Belinda and all the team at Outfield café, and all involved in organising this fabulous celebration of an historic space in our community.

**RUSSIAN ORTHODOX MALE CHOIR OF AUSTRALIA**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge the Russian Orthodox Male Choir of Australia who recently performed *Tales from the Homeland* alongside the Sydney Concert Orchestra on Sunday 18 May 2025. The Russian Orthodox Male Choir of Australia are a group of talented third and fourth generation Russian migrants who perform a range of traditional Russian folk music. Their performances showcase their phenomenal vocal talent as well as their dedication to their heritage, keeping alive the stories of the Russian community in Australia. Behind each performance of the Russian Orthodox Male Choir of Australia is the

outstanding Musical Director and Founder Nektary Kotlaroff. His deep knowledge of music and passion for preserving the rich traditions of Russian choral singing has captivated audiences and inspired many. I sincerely thank all members of the Russian Orthodox Male Choir of Australia for their dedication to sharing their traditional music with us. I wish them all the best in their future performances.

#### **PARENTS FOR CLIMATE**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I acknowledge the remarkable efforts of Parents for Climate, a grassroots network of parents and carers advocating for a safe climate future for our kids, who have recently achieved a significant victory in their legal action against Energy Australia for greenwashing. This marks the first greenwashing case against an Australian energy provider and sets a powerful legal and moral precedent: that corporations must be honest about their climate impact that is threatening our kids' futures and can no longer get away with misleading claims of green credentials. This win is more than a legal milestone; it's contributing to a broader conversation about the efficacy of carbon offset programs and the necessity of genuine reduction of climate pollution from major polluters. I commend Nic Seton CEO of Parents for Climate, Equity Generation Lawyers Principal Lawyer David Hertzberg, the whole team at Parents for Climate, and all its supporters for this incredible achievement and your dedication to securing a safe climate for our kids to thrive. It's a win for truth, transparency, and meaningful climate action that will have lasting impact on future generations.

#### **PYRMONT PENINSULA PUBLIC TRANSPORT FORUM**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I would like to formally acknowledge and commend the Pyrmont Peninsula Public Transport Forum for hosting another inspiring and forward-thinking meeting dedicated to improving public transport services in the Pyrmont and Ultimo area. Held at the Pyrmont Community Centre, the forum brought together a diverse group of stakeholders—including local residents, students, business owners, visitors, council representatives, state Members of Parliament, the principal of Blackwattle Bay Highschool, and Transport for NSW officials—to share ideas, identify solutions, and advocate for the community's evolving transport needs. The Forum's strong and effective advocacy has already delivered tangible improvements, including increased bus service frequency and greater connectivity, showcasing the power of community-driven collaboration. A heartfelt thank you to Lesley Bentley for her outstanding leadership, commitment, and continued efforts in championing better public transport for Pyrmont. Her dedication is helping to shape a more accessible and connected future for the whole community.

#### **HARDING MILLER EDUCATION FOUNDATION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—Congratulations to the ten outstanding students from the Prospect Electorate who were recognised at the Harding Miller Education Foundation Awards ceremony in Darling Harbour on the 12th of May 2025. The Harding Miller Education Foundation is an Australian charity that supports female students with high potential to overcome socio-economic disadvantage. Granting a \$20,000 scholarship, the Foundation lift educational outcomes. Each scholar also receives a high-quality laptop, personal tutoring, prepaid cards, school essentials, homework help and extensive enrichment opportunities over four years of high school - equipping them with tools to excel and pursue higher education. Since 2016, the Foundation has awarded over 1,000 scholarships from more than 400 schools across the country. This year, the Awards welcomed the newest members of the scholarship program, including Emma Hoskins from The Hill Sports High School in Seven Hills and Angelina Hong, Bernita Thai, Chloe Tieu, Hoang Nguyen, Isabella Shaw, Jinghan Zhang, Loan Tran, Monique Archer, Natalie Williams and Vietanhthi Vu from Prairiewood High School. I commend you all on your exemplary results, conscientious efforts and resilient spirits – attributes that will carry you to great success. Congratulations once again to all our very deserving recipients in the Prospect Electorate.

#### **GFCBW SYDNEY CHAPTER CHARITY BALL**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Friday 16th May, I was delighted to address hundreds from our local Taiwanese-Australian community at the Global Federation of Chinese Business Women Sydney Chapter Charity Ball, at Shangri-La, Sydney. Originally founded in the United States in 1994, the GFCBW is an internationally renowned business association that today spans across 5 continents, with a presence in more than 70 countries. The GFCBW Sydney Chapter was established in 2022, with a focus on strengthening ties between Australia and Taiwan, also supporting our local community through charitable causes. This year, all funds raised went in support of Women's Community Shelters, supporting women and children escaping the scourge of domestic violence. At the event, I was pleased to be joined by a number of special guests, including David Cheng-Wei Wu, Director General, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Sydney, the Hon. Anthony Roberts MP, my fellow NSW Parliamentary Friends of Taiwan Co-Chair, Annabelle Daniel OAM, CEO, Women's Community Shelters, Parliamentary colleagues and Shu-Min Lin, Global Chairwoman, GFCBW. My heartfelt congratulations go out to Ching-Mei Maddock, President, GFCBW Sydney Chapter, and all our dynamic Taiwanese-Australian women for hosting a wonderful event and for generously supporting such a noble cause.



### TAMIL GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 18th May, I was honoured to address hundreds from our local Tamil Australian community at the annual Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day event at Blacktown Boys High School. Tamil Australians are a dynamic part of our Prospect Electorate community. With an estimated 150,000 Tamil speakers across Australia, our local Prospect Electorate is the beating heart of Tamil community life. Many thousands of Tamils arrived in Australia as refugees following the final stages of the Sri Lankan Civil War. After half a century of state-based repression and violence, tens of thousands of Tamil civilians, including women and children, were directed to designated 'No Fire Zones' and subjected to heavy artillery fire, aerial bombings and subsequent executions in Mullivaikkal in May 2009. In my address, I spoke about our Tamil community in the Prospect Electorate and across the world who still live with the wounds and scars of this conflict. My deepest respects go to Krish Illungkoo, President, Rajeevan, Secretary Australian Tamil Congress, and all organisers and volunteers across our Tamil Australian community for a moving Tamil Genocide Remembrance Day commemoration. I remember and I demand justice for all victims and survivors of the Tamil Genocide.

### LILLIAN HOWELL COMEDY WITH A CAUSE

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—Today I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Lillian Howell Project in bringing together their recent 'Comedy with a Cause' fundraiser at Balmain Town Hall. The Lillian Howell project is an essential community service which helps to provide a safe and supportive environment for young women who are experiencing homelessness. Their housing and therapeutic services have been genuinely life changing for countless women in our local community. I was so honoured to be able to support Lillian Howell's recent comedy gala, an event that brought awareness to the amazing work that the project does, along with providing a much-needed laugh. I would like to give my sincere thanks to all the staff and volunteers involved in the Lillian Howell Project's work for our community. I am grateful for the opportunity to support this organisation that helps to provide dignity, stability and hope for the young women at Lillian's refuge. I give special thanks to the Project's CEO Vivian Stavi and Chief Goodwill Architect Nat Britton and Nicole Graham for their invitation to this fantastic event.

### THE BETHUNGRA SPIRAL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—The Bethunga Spiral one of regional New South Wales's most remarkable engineering achievements and an engineering icon of Regional NSW. Located just north of Junee, the Bethunga Spiral is a marvel of railway engineering and a vital piece of Australia's rail history. Constructed in the 1940s to address the steep gradients that challenged steam locomotives on the Main South Railway Line, the spiral allowed for a smoother and safer climb by enabling trains to loop over themselves through a series of tunnels and bridges. This iconic rail structure is one of only a handful of spirals in Australia and remains in active use today, carrying freight and passenger trains through the picturesque countryside of the Riverina. It stands not only as a feat of design and engineering ingenuity but also as a symbol of the resilience and progress of regional infrastructure. The Bethunga Spiral is a point of pride for the local community and a tourist attraction, drawing rail enthusiasts and history lovers from across the country. I commend all those who have worked over the years to preserve this unique piece of our heritage and encourage more Australians to explore this extraordinary site.

### FAREWELL TO MR KEIGHLEY OF BOOROWA CENTRAL SCHOOL

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I rise today to acknowledge and celebrate the extraordinary contribution of Mr John Keighley, who recently retired from permanent teaching at Boorowa Central School after nearly a decade of dedicated service. Known affectionately as "Mr K," Mr Keighley has been a cornerstone of the school community, making a profound impact across both primary and secondary education. Most recently serving as the school's special education teacher, Mr Keighley's calm demeanour, flexibility, and wealth of experience created a nurturing and inspiring environment for his students. His teaching style, thoughtful, straightforward, and enriched with life stories, earned him deep respect and affection throughout the school. Mr Keighley's presence, both in the classroom and across the school grounds, will be sorely missed. In a heartfelt gesture, students and staff lined the corridors in a guard of honour to mark his final day, a fitting tribute to a teacher who gave his heart to the Boorowa community. Although retiring from full-time teaching, I'm sure Mr Keighley is looking forward to new adventures. I thank Mr Keighley for his service and wish him all the best in this next chapter.

### TOMMY WELLS MEMORIAL FISHING TRIP EQUALS \$3,351 FOR CAN ASSIST

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Twenty-one keen Gundagai fishermen recently set out to travel to Merimbula for the four-day annual Tommy Wells Memorial Fishing Trip. The weather was not all it could have been with high seas preventing the boats from heading out every day, however, they did make it out on Saturday and Sunday and plenty of fish were caught. Saturday afternoon was the \$20 punt on a horse at the TAB. This year,

only seven fishermen managed to choose a winning horse. The fourteen losing fishermen had to donate another \$20 to the Can Assist fund, and the winners all donated their TAB winnings. The Misdemeanour Award Ceremony, whilst the group enjoyed some excellent seafood, was held on Sunday afternoon, with Murray Naughton winning the prestigious "Tom Wells Memorial Hat" Award. This long fishing weekend is always a lot of fun, but they are also fun with a purpose. The group raised \$3,351 for Gundagai Can Assist, and I believe they are all looking forward to next year's Merimbula trip.

### **KEADS**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I acknowledge Phil McNulty, founder and managing director of Key Engagement Areas Disability Services [KEADS]. Phil founded KEADS in 2023 after 27 years in the disability sector to create a safe and inclusive space for young adults on the spectrum to learn life skills and help them gain employment. Phil's motto is "Whatever your needs, find them at KEADS..." a statement proven to be invaluable in his commitment to helping people with a disability. KEADS support clients with employment and work experience. Phil hired former clients Harrison Shield and Arvin Tecson after assisting them navigate their TAFE courses. He has also organised work experience placement for his client Stacy-Lee Davis in my office and supported her through her education. I would also like to recognise the hard work of all of Phil's clients in reaching the goals they set with his assistance such as travelling independently, gaining further education, social and independent living skills. The work that Phil is doing for young adults with disabilities in our community is crucial for them to be able to become independent, confident, take part in the workforce and be involved in everyday activities that many of us take for granted.

### **VALE PATRICIA ELKIN OAM**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the life of Patricia Elkin OAM and her profound influence on the New England arts scene, particularly through her pivotal role in the creation and success of Packsaddle – an annual fundraising exhibition comprising emerging and well-established artists. As a founding member and long-time patron, Pat helped elevate the profile of contemporary art in the region, leaving a wonderful legacy at New England Regional Art Museum [NERAM]. Pat is known to have made exceptional contributions to Australian art, which were acknowledged through her Order of Australia Medal in 2022. This recognition was a testament to her tireless efforts to support local and national artists, ensuring their works reached a wider audience, through the packsaddle group's exhibitions. Pat enriched many lives and remembered with great fondness by all who had the privilege of knowing her. Pat's infectious joy at gallery openings will be sorely missed and her charismatic presence, humour and passion remembered fondly. I offer my condolences to Pat's family and friends, through such loss there is an abundant legacy left to many. Pat's life was well lived and will be remembered warmly by all who knew her. Vale Patricia Elkin OAM.

### **MILLIE COUPLAND - NSW LIONS YOUTH OF THE YEAR**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the achievements of Armidale local Millie Coupland, who recently won the NSW Lions Youth of the Year at the State final in Tamworth, ahead of finalists from across Sydney and regional NSW. The judging comprised of two parts – interviews with a panel of six, charged with judging each finalist's community service, leadership and academic achievements, as well as competing in public speaking, which involved two impromptus, along with a prepared speech. I congratulate Millie on this accomplishment, which then allowed her to progress to the Lions/Leo Clubs National Final in Traralgon, Victoria. Millie competed against winners from across all other states and territories. An incredible opportunity and an impressive set of accolades to add to her growing list of achievements. I commend Millie for her hard work and dedication and for giving back to the community through many pursuits. Special thanks to The Armidale School, the Lions Club of Armidale Dumaresq, as well as Millie's family, for giving her encouragement, opportunities and support.

### **INVERELL EISTEDDFOD SOCIETY**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Inverell Eisteddfod Society on their 77 years of staging their annual Eisteddfod. The Eisteddfod is a regional arts festival, providing a platform for regional performers to showcase their talents and to gain experience, featuring competitions in music, speech, dance and drama. I congratulate both past and present organisers of this event, working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the Eisteddfod is delivered each year for competitors and the community to enjoy. Special thanks to the current committee including: Jo Cowley, Mark Leonard, Hayley Johns, Julie Philipps-Lewis, Lynne Pratt, Gayle Leonard, Kym Foley, Amanda Fittler, Helen Robinson and Carol Harmer. Each member gives their time voluntarily, with such organisations in regional towns simply unable to function without the support and commitment volunteers give. Special thanks Kristin Belsham for sharing her wealth of experience and expertise in her role as adjudicator for the competition, as well as to each and every competitor, for taking the opportunity

and giving their best. I commend all involved in the great success of the 2025 Eisteddfod and on the longevity of this wonderful organisation.

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