

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

**Wednesday 25 June 2025**

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

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

*[Notices of motions given.]*

## *Bills*

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

#### **Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from 27 May 2025.**

**Mr EDMOND ATALLA (Mount Druitt) (10:17):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment (Workplace Protections) Bill 2025. For 12 years under the previous Government, our industrial relations system was systematically eroded. Workers were silenced, consultation was sidelined and wages were suppressed under an unfair cap that hurt not just employees but also our broader economy and the communities those employees support. The result was a recruitment and retention crisis across our public sector workforce—teachers, nurses, paramedics and other frontline staff simply walked away, exhausted and undervalued.

In response, the Minns Labor Government committed to a complete reset, to build a modern, fair and collaborative industrial relations system. That is why, in our first year, we established the Booth and Boland taskforce to engage deeply with workers, unions, businesses and employers. Today's bill is a direct outcome of that consultation. The bill introduces several critical reforms that aim to balance the scales between employers and workers, restore mutual respect and lift workplace standards. Every worker in New South Wales deserves to feel safe at work—free from intimidation, discrimination or harassment.

Sadly, this has not always been the case. Research from the Productivity and Equality Commission estimates that workplace bullying alone costs the Australian economy up to \$36 billion annually, not to mention the mental and emotional toll it takes on individuals. While the Commonwealth Fair Work Act offers some protections, these are limited in scope and apply only to constitutional corporations and their employees. This leaves a significant jurisdictional gap. The bill squarely addresses this. It will establish a new anti-bullying and sexual harassment jurisdiction within the New South Wales Industrial Relations Commission [IRC] tailored to cover public sector workers, local government employees, and those working for unincorporated entities such as sole traders and partnerships. This reform gives workers a pathway to justice. By providing one clear, accessible forum for conciliation and resolution, we are putting people at the centre of the process—not bureaucracy.

Workplace health and safety has also been a core focus of the bill, and rightly so. Preventing injuries and deaths at work must be our priority. Too many families across this State have lost loved ones in tragic, preventable workplace accidents. The bill strengthens the Work Health and Safety Act by embedding accountability and boosting collaboration between unions, employers and regulators. Key to these reforms is the mandate for persons conducting a business or undertaking—known as PCBUs—to comply with codes of practice approved by the Minister. These codes are not optional. They are the benchmark. If businesses depart from them, they must prove that they are meeting or exceeding the standard. This balance between enforcement and flexibility supports innovation while ensuring that safety is never compromised.

The bill also introduces stronger protections around provisional improvement notices by requiring employers to notify the regulator upon receipt. It enhances information sharing between SafeWork NSW and other agencies, addressing longstanding gaps that families of deceased workers have raised time and again. They deserve answers, and the bill brings transparency to that process. The bill also clarifies the commission's powers during industrial disputes, enabling it to make recommendations or give directions even without unanimous party consent. It lifts the small claims threshold from \$20,000 to \$100,000, expanding access to justice for underpaid workers. It also makes important changes to align the Industrial Relations Act with the Police Act 1990, ensuring that industrial protections remain intact even in complex public sector employment contexts.

The bill is a major win for workplace democracy. It permits mutual gains bargaining to be declared unresolved by either party. This will restore balance and end drawn-out negotiations that go nowhere. The depth and breadth of this bill demonstrate the Minns Labor Government's commitment not just to reform but to transformation. These reforms were not rushed. They are the product of extensive consultation with workers, employers, unions, injured workers, legal experts, NGOs and the community. The bill will create safer, fairer and more productive workplaces. It empowers workers, supports employers who do the right thing, and provides our institutions with the tools they need to prevent harm before it occurs. The bill is a step towards an industrial relations system that New South Wales can be proud of. It is one that brings people back to the table, ensures dignity at work and protects life above all else. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (10:23):** I speak in support of the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation (Workplace Protections) Amendment Bill 2025. Every day, every worker in New South Wales deserves to go to work and return safely home to their families: nurses, paramedics, firefighters, tunnel workers, bus drivers, teachers, police officers, park rangers, social workers, administrative officers, our essential work force. Every day, every worker deserves to go to work knowing that their rights are supported, knowing that someone has their back. For 12 years, our essential workforce in New South Wales was neglected. Under the previous Liberal-Nationals Government, they suffered through an unfair wages cap, the removal of the industrial relations court, a recruitment and retention crisis, and a systemic breakdown in consultation between workers and employees.

In 2023, when the new Minns Labor Government was elected, we inherited this broken and outdated industrial relations system. We went straight to work to fix these problems. We reinstated the Industrial Court and introduced a mutual gains bargaining process. Today, we are acting again to return a fair and productive system to the workers of New South Wales. Firstly, I thank the Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety for her efforts to prepare the bill. I thank Anna Booth, the Commonwealth Fair Work Ombudsman, and His Honour Justice Roger Boland, former president of the Industrial Relations Commission [IRC], for their dedicated efforts in leading the Booth and Boland taskforce. I also thank the trade union movement, our work health and safety officers, our businesses both big and small and our NGOs. Most importantly, I thank the workers of New South Wales.

In our first year of government, we established the Booth and Boland taskforce. Engaging with invested individuals and organisations, the taskforce explored consultative bargaining, and identified opportunities to attract and retain public sector workers and shape more cooperative and productive workplaces in New South Wales. The bill introduces critical measures to improve productivity in the public sector and to protect the rights of all our workers in New South Wales. It will establish new anti-bullying and sexual harassment jurisdictions before the Industrial Relations Commission. It will clarify the commission's powers during industrial disputes, change freedom from victimisation provisions, and strengthen work health and safety protections—all to help keep every worker safe.

I now address key provisions of the bill. In schedule 1 item [1], the bill amends section 3 of the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to update the objects of the Act. Amending section 3 (f), which relates to equal remuneration, the bill inserts a specific reference to the achievement of gender equality in the workplace and the important goal of eliminating gender-based undervaluation of work. The bill requires the commission to consider the gender-based undervaluation principle in the 2024-25 award-making principles. This is also consistent with the 2024-25 gender equality budget statement.

The Booth and Boland taskforce received a number of submissions regarding an extension of the commission's jurisdiction to deal with disputes about injured workers returning to work. In light of this, the bill will amend the definition of an "industrial matter" in section 6 of the Industrial Relations Act. Expanding this definition permits unions to lodge a dispute, enabling the commission to be a more specialised workplace tribunal to hear the matter. Following the successful model applied in the Queensland Work Health and Safety Act 2011, the bill applies a key reform to enable work health and safety disputes to be handled by the Industrial Relations Commission. Adapted to suit New South Wales workplaces, this reform will ensure there is a pathway to finality for work health and safety disputes.

The bill also proposes an amendment to require an employer to notify the regulator if the employer is issued with a provisional improvement notice by a health and safety representative. With that amendment, SafeWork NSW will have access to improved data about emerging WHS issues, using the eyes and ears of our State's dedicated health and safety representatives. I give a huge shout-out to our workplace health and safety representatives, who voluntarily work to keep their colleagues safe in every workplace in New South Wales.

The bill also makes key amendments to better protect our workforce from workplace bullying. Schedule 1 [9] inserts new chapter 3A into the Industrial Relations Act. The chapter gives the IRC authority to conciliate, arbitrate and make orders in relation to bullying at work. Under the proposed amendment, an employee who is

bullied at work may seek an order from the IRC to stop and remedy the bullying. New section 144C provides that an employee is deemed to have been bullied at work if:

- (a) an individual, or group of individuals, repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards—
  - (i) the employee, or
  - (ii) a group of employees of which the employee is a member, and
- (b) the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

A stop bullying order is an order made under new section 144G. It is defined as any order the commission "considers appropriate to prevent an employee from being bullied at work". Further, the commission may remedy the bullying in the following ways:

- (a) the payment of damages to the employee as compensation for loss or damage suffered from the bullying,

The maximum payment is \$100,000. It can also order:

- (b) a prohibition on continuing or repeating the bullying,
- (c) the performance of reasonable actions or a course of conduct to be carried out to redress loss or damage suffered by the employee,
- (d) the publication of an apology or retraction,
- (e) the development and implementation of a program or policy aimed at eliminating bullying.

Those orders are the toughest New South Wales has ever had, and there are also tough penalties for contravening them. Under new section 144H, contravention of a stop bullying order may result in a maximum civil penalty of \$18,870 for an individual and some \$93,900 otherwise, such as for a corporation. That sends a very strong message to employers that bullying at work will not be tolerated.

The bill also makes important amendments to how sexual harassment in connection with work is handled. Currently, sexual harassment at the workplace is proscribed conduct under the Fair Work Act, the Federal Sex Discrimination Act 1984 and the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. In New South Wales, as the law currently stands, the president of the Anti-Discrimination Board can investigate a sexual harassment complaint and attempt to conciliate a resolution. Where conciliation fails, the complaint may be referred to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. The Fair Work Act and the Sex Discrimination Act provide a similar two-step process for workplace sexual harassment complaints.

The bill proposes an important change, providing the IRC with jurisdiction to hear workplace sexual harassment claims and permit all stages of the claim from conciliation to final determination. That will enable victims of workplace sexual harassment to have the matter resolved in one place. Part 2 of new chapter 3A of the Industrial Relations Act will reinforce the prohibition of sexual harassment of a person in connection with the person's work, and enable a person to seek an order from the commission to remedy and prevent the harassment. New section 144K defines an employee as a worker within the meaning of the Work Health and Safety Act, meaning the provision will only apply to workers in the New South Wales industrial relations system. New section 144L inserts a definition of sexual harassment based on the Federal Sex Discrimination Act. [*Extension of time*]

New section 144L provides that:

A person sexually harasses another person if—

- (a) the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person, or
- (b) the person engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person, and

the conduct, advance or request occurs in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

If sexual harassment occurs in connection with a person's work, whether against an employee, a prospective employee or a person conducting an undertaking, it will carry a civil penalty. Under new section 144N, the maximum civil penalty for an individual is \$18,870. The bill will also insert new section 400E. It clarifies that an application for a civil penalty order for an alleged contravention of new section 144N cannot be made unless a sexual harassment order has been made by the commission for the same conduct. New section 144P will permit the aggrieved person who alleges to have been sexually harassed, or an industrial organisation on their behalf, to apply for an order from the commission. Under new section 144Q, an application for such order must be made no later than 24 months after the alleged contravention.

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 that a court may grant leave to bring proceedings outside the limitation period if it is in the best interests of justice. This responds to situations in which there may be delayed

onset of injury or illness, such as dust diseases, following a worker's exposure to a risk of harm. The bill shows that there is a real need for change in New South Wales workplaces. Preventing injury and deaths in the workplace is the utmost priority of the Minns Labor Government, and we want it to be a priority of every employer in every workplace, for every worker in New South Wales.

WHS is a shared responsibility of employers, trade unions, community and workers. Our Government wants to see employers, unions and the regulator work together to protect workers from harm. Through these reforms, we aim to establish the conditions necessary to drive tripartite collaboration to prevent workplace injuries and deaths. We are also striving to improve the experience of workers at work, providing the frameworks to deal with incidents of harassment or bullying promptly and effectively. According to research from the Productivity and Equality Commission, bullying in the workplace is estimated to cost upwards of \$36 billion annually in Australia. A 2018 study by Deloitte also found that sexual harassment in connection to the workplace cost the Australian economy over \$3.8 billion. No price tag will ever be enough to reflect the harm that has caused to victims of workplace harassment and bullying.

According to a recent report released by the Australian Workers' Union, one in two Australian workers have experienced bullying, harassment or exposure to inappropriate behaviour. We must support those victims and ensure that our workplaces remain productive. In conclusion, I say that the reforms will not just benefit the State's essential workers but they will also improve conditions in our schools, hospitals and public transport, because better public sector workplaces mean better public services. Most importantly, the bill will improve workplace safety and conditions for millions of workers in New South Wales, including the over 3,615 essential and public sector workers in the Prospect electorate. Our workers show up through rain, storm, heatwave—even a global pandemic. Our workers continue through pain, dirt and dust, and chronic staffing shortages. Our workers give their all to get their jobs done. The fact is that the workers in New South Wales work bloody hard, and they deserve to be supported. For those reasons, I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (10:38):** I contribute to debate on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment (Workplace Protections) Bill 2025. I support the bill because it delivers key reforms, including the creation of new anti-bullying and sexual harassment jurisdictions within the Industrial Relations Commission, enhanced clarity around the commission's powers during industrial disputes and stronger protections against victimisation. It also amends the Work Health and Safety Act to bolster safeguards for workers across New South Wales. Preventing workplace injuries and fatalities remains a top priority for the Government, and it should be a priority in every workplace. The bill reflects that commitment, recognising that work health and safety is a shared responsibility among employers, unions, workers and the broader community.

In mid-2023 the Government established the Industrial Relations Taskforce to help lay the foundations for a modern industrial relations system in New South Wales after 12 years of going backwards. Several of the taskforce's recommendations have already been implemented through the Industrial Relations Amendment Act 2023. The Government's ultimate goal is to stop workplace injuries before they occur. Prevention, not just response, is at the heart of a strong and effective work health and safety system. By strengthening laws, improving oversight and encouraging collaboration between employers, workers, unions and regulators, the Government is focused on building safer workplaces across our State.

Many members have used the debate on the bill as an opportunity to reflect on the real-world consequences of our industrial relations framework by sharing stories from their communities. I take a moment to bring to the attention of the House the experience of one of my constituents. I recently met with Kim Harper, whose story is emblematic of the broken industrial relations system left by those opposite. Kim worked at Kmart Liverpool, previously Target, for 27 years. She was a loyal and valued employee—the kind of worker who is the backbone of the retail workforce. She was also the union delegate for her workplace.

In 2022 Kim began to experience repeated stalking by a customer. Understandably, that had a profound impact on her mental wellbeing. At the time, the store's management worked with her to implement practical, supportive measures. They allowed her to work in less public-facing roles, such as back of house, when needed. Those small accommodations made a big difference. The changes cost the business nothing, but they helped Kim feel safe and improved her wellbeing. However, after the transition to new management under Kmart, that supportive approach vanished. Flexibility gave way to indifference.

In 2023, just after clocking off her shift, Kim witnessed a serious incident at the store and intervened to help. Rather than acknowledging her long service or her genuine concern for customer safety, management criticised her for intervening and ultimately moved to terminate her employment. All the while, Kim was trying to navigate the workers compensation system for the earlier stalking incident. That system has been increasingly difficult for injured workers to access. It is a broken system. Kim had to change GPs eight times. She was shuffled between doctors who said they would not handle workers comp cases, and was left to manage her recovery without consistent medical or psychological support. At the same time, Kim was cut off from the community and

colleagues that once gave her a sense of belonging and formed part of her support network. Those things are not conducive to recovery. Kim's attempts to recover and remain employed were smashed by the broken system at every turn.

Kim's story is not an isolated one, but it is a powerful reminder of what is at stake. When employers fail to act on bullying and harassment, when systems are too rigid to support injured workers, and when management shows more concern for liability than for people, workers like Kim pay the price. This bill is about making sure that does not happen. We owe it to Kim, and to every worker who has been let down by the old system, to get this right. I thank Kim for coming to me and sharing her story. It was not easy for her to revisit such a difficult and painful experience but, in doing so, she has not only helped inform my advocacy in this place; she has also taken an important step in her own journey toward healing. It takes strength to speak up after being let down by systems that were meant to protect you. Kim's courage in coming forward has been deeply moving. Stories like hers are a reminder of why this legislation matters. Behind every clause and reform are real people who deserve to be heard, supported and treated with dignity.

This is not simply a case of a system falling short; it is a system that has, in too many cases, become part of the harm. When long-serving employees like Kim are abandoned by management and left to navigate an adversarial and fragmented compensation process, it underscores just how urgently reform is needed. This mess is not abstract; it has real consequences for real people. It highlights the need for members to commit ourselves to meaningful reform that will deliver better outcomes for workers and the community. Workers are also mothers, brothers, uncles, netball coaches, footy referees and volunteers. What impacts on a worker has a ripple effect more broadly.

The bill delivers on the Government's commitment to building a fairer, more modern industrial relations system. It brings significant reforms to work health and safety laws by boosting accountability and transparency and, most importantly, implementing preventative action to protect workers before harm occurs. I sincerely thank the Minister, her team and the department for their tireless work in delivering this legislation and advancing reform. The Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety is outstanding. She not only understands the technical detail of complex industrial reform, but also leads with compassion, clarity and an unwavering commitment to fairness. Her staff share that commitment. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr GREG WARREN (Campbelltown) (10:45):** I am delighted to make a brief contribution to debate on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment (Workplace Protections) Bill 2025. Colleagues know that in mid-2023 the Government announced the establishment of an Industrial Relations Taskforce to build a modern industrial relations framework for New South Wales. That took place because members on this side of the House knew that the system was broken. Like many other matters that come before this place, particularly in industrial relations, the Government knows that it is playing catch-up. There can never be enough measures put in place for the protection of workers because it is important that workers return home from work in the same condition that they left. Ultimately, that is what the bill is about. I acknowledge the Minister for Industrial Relations and thank her for her enduring passion to provide an industrial relations system that protects workers in New South Wales.

The bill seeks to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1996 and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 to implement a number of recommendations made by the Industrial Relations Taskforce in its report of mid-2023 as well as ensure the State's work health and safety laws encourage a safer working environment for workers. The reforms are long overdue, and it took the coming to power of a Labor government to have those matters addressed in New South Wales. In many cases, the silence was deafening—and that is exactly what can be heard from the conservatives sitting on the other side of the Chamber, in their rightful place.

The bill seeks to insert additional objects into the Industrial Relations Act in relation to gender equality, bullying and sexual harassment. It implements a new workplace bullying and sexual harassment jurisdiction before the Industrial Relations Commission. The workplace bullying scheme will only apply to workers in the public sector, local government sector and those who work for unincorporated entities. The sexual harassment scheme will only apply to workers in the public sector and the local government sector. Furthermore, the objects of the bill amend the Industrial Relations Act as follows:

- (i) to authorise the Industrial Relations Commission (the **Commission**) to make orders to prevent and remedy bullying at work and sexual harassment in connection with work,
- (ii) to create civil penalties relating to bullying at work, sexual harassment in connection with work and other matters,
- (iii) to make further provision for and consolidate existing provisions dealing with proceedings for contraventions of civil penalty provisions,
- (iv) to make further provision for matters concerning principles of association and victimisation in relation to being a member or not being a member of an industrial organisation,

- (v) to make further provision for gender equality in the objects of the Act and during bargaining and disputes,
- (vi) to address other miscellaneous and consequential matters.

The bill makes miscellaneous amendments to the Work Health and Safety Act 2011. The bill also makes consequential amendments to the Industrial Relations (General) Regulation 2020.

In concluding my brief contribution, the Government, the Minister and all of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber know that providing a safe workplace for workers is not a luxury; it is vital. It is essential to ensure that we have safe and healthy workplaces across New South Wales. I have no doubt that this will not be our last piece of industrial reform, because this is a progressive government committed to ensuring that workplaces are safe. The Minister for Industrial Relations knows that the worker is the backbone of our society and economy not only in New South Wales but also across our great country. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** It being 10.50 a.m., pursuant to standing and sessional orders, debate is interrupted for question time. I set down the resumption of the debate as an order of the day for a later hour. I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 11.00 a.m.

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The SPEAKER:** There are quite a few guests of members in the gallery today. I welcome everybody to the New South Wales Legislative Assembly for question time. I welcome to the gallery members of the Medowie RSL Sub-Branch, being Bernie Edmonds; Peter Stephenson; Mark Balsarini; Robert Burns; Elizabeth Fetherstone; and Ian Fletcher, who is accompanied by his companion dog, Twix, guests of the member for Port Stephens. I welcome members of the Family and Injured Workers Support and Advisory Group Noeline Bridge, Patrizia Cassaniti, Mark Johnston, Linda Moussa and Debra Pascall, guests of the member for Canterbury. I also welcome Atul Kumar, Nannita Gupta, Vinay Kumar and family, guests of the member for Blacktown. I welcome members of Hooves For Hope Equine Assisted Therapy, led by Ms Genean Beetson, guests of the member for Hawkesbury.

I acknowledge Professor Raja Junankar, a guest of the member for Fairfield. I also acknowledge students from Penola Catholic College, guests of the member for Penrith. I welcome students from the Australia International Academy, guests of the member for Strathfield. I acknowledge Father Tom Stevens, a guest of the member for Drummoyne. I also welcome Jada Kabbout, a guest of the member for Liverpool. I welcome Letitia Dawson, Kate Gibson and Ike Stroud, guests of the member for Heathcote. I acknowledge Rachel Amos, a guest of the member for Northern Tablelands. I also welcome members of Community Activities Lake Macquarie, or CALM, guests of the member for Lake Macquarie.

Finally, I welcome students and teachers participating in the New South Wales Parliament's Secondary Schools Student Leadership program and the Legal Studies and the Legislature program. It was a pleasure to meet with them this morning, although briefly. The members I spoke to this morning very much enjoyed the opportunity to speak to those student leaders. I hope you have a wonderful day.

#### *Bills*

#### **COMMUNITY HOUSING PROVIDERS (ADOPTION OF NATIONAL LAW) AMENDMENT BILL 2025**

##### **First Reading**

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

**The SPEAKER:** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### **SUICIDE PREVENTION BILL 2025**

##### **First Reading**

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

**The SPEAKER:** I order that the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for a later hour.

#### *Question Time*

#### **STATE BUDGET AND HOUSING**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla) (11:07):** My question is directed to the Premier. I refer the Premier to page 2-9 of *Budget Paper No. 01*. The Government's budget forecasts around 240,000 dwelling completions to

2029. That is 137,000 short of our Housing Accord targets. Will the Premier finally admit that his Government's current and expected policies will fail drastically to meet the housing accord targets?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:08):** The budget reflects the situation as it is today, with the current laws, the current planning changes and the current zoning. As the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces pointed out, there has been a significant increase under Labor. The Opposition's prediction was 180,000, so this is a significant increase on that. New laws and zoning changes will be presented to the Parliament soon by way of a bill. The Government hopes for bipartisan support for those changes—maybe.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Multi.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** We would like multipartisan support, but I do not know whether it will be unanimous. The bill will introduce more liberal changes for zoning and planning in New South Wales so that we can get supply going in the economy. I can point out a thousand quotes from some of the dryer members of the Opposition who say that supply is the missing link when it comes to housing affordability in New South Wales, but I suspect the nimby wing of the Liberal Party might get in the way. And they will forget all about this question. It will not exist.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** What about your backyard?

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The member for Wahroonga has chirped up. We have not heard from him since his conspiracy theory. Remember his conspiracy theory? I will remind the House. He said there was a giant corruption conspiracy in the planning department. ICAC said, "That's completely untrue", and he said, "I'll get back to you. I just have to speak to my secret sources." That was a year and a half ago. We are all ears. How are your secret sources? They are very secret.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** There will be a great opportunity very soon for the New South Wales Liberals and The Nationals to prove, once and for all, that they are not a pack of nimbys.

#### STATE BUDGET

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (11:09):** My question is addressed to the Premier. Will the Premier update the House on community reaction to the State budget handed down yesterday?

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:10):** The Pre-sale Finance Guarantee for 15,000 houses in New South Wales has been received warmly by the sector. The largest investment in out-of-home care, and particularly for foster parents, in the history of New South Wales was also warmly received by the sector. Of course, the \$9.4 billion improvement in our debt position from the 2023 pre-election budget update was warmly welcomed. The biggest improvement in the budget position in the shortest space of time in the history of New South Wales was also welcomed as responsible decision-making and management when it comes to budget repair.

Most encouraging is the fact that inflation, which started at about 7.8 per cent when we were elected, is between 2 per cent and 3 per cent, but at the same time real wages have grown and the budget has improved. All three of those things were specifically denied by the Coalition, when it was in government, at the 2023 election. Repeatedly and persistently, the Coalition Government said, "If you remove the wages cap, the debt and deficit position will get worse, not better." The opposite is the case.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** "Oh, really?", the experts opposite say. Look at the debt position: It is \$10 billion improved.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** When you do not have a Treasurer who spends nearly \$30 billion dollars in eight months, which is what the previous member for Hornsby did in the run-up to the last election, you can make improvements in the budget position. Unsurprisingly, the State budget has been met with support by many members of the community. Urban Taskforce Australia said:

Premier Minns, Treasurer Mookhey and Planning Minister Scully deserve strong praise for listening to industry. Today's announcement shows ... a solid understanding of the barriers to housing supply and how the Government can use its financial strength to access finance to underwrite or guarantee supply ...

That is good news.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Property Council of Australia welcomed the 2025-26 budget as "a clear response to industry calls for further support on housing delivery, planning reform and productivity", and went on to say that it delivered "real wins for the industry". That is good news. I always like to quote the Urban Development Institute of Australia [UDIA]; that drives those opposite a bit crazy. Who runs the UDIA?

**Mr Ryan Park:** That bloke, Stuart someone. Stuart Ayres?

**The SPEAKER:** Government members will come to order so that I can manage Opposition members.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** He has a mysterious past. Stuart Ayres? [*Extension of time*]

The headline of the UDIA's media release reads "NSW Budget makes inroads into the Housing Crisis". It states that the UDIA "has welcomed much-needed housing initiatives announced in the NSW Budget 2025-2026". It goes on to include a quote:

The pre-sale finance guarantee will see many apartment projects get underway faster. It's good policy and a great example of government listening and responding to industry.

Who said that? It was Stuart Ayres. The Business NSW media release states:

Business NSW CEO Daniel Hunter praised the budget for having the right intent and for the sensible approach to economic management ...

It also includes this criticism:

However there needs to be an emphasis to land essential reforms that ease the burden on business, especially the out-of-control cost of workers' compensation.

That is interesting. It was not all good news. The Leader of the National Party is a negative Nancy. He has put out a media release under the heading "Labor's Third Budget Blow for the Bush". It is a downbeat, sad media release from the Leader of the Opposition.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** But not all Opposition members share his view. One member said that the budget provided "welcome funding" for hospitals, schools, bridges, social housing and Aboriginal housing. That was the member for Riverina in a Facebook post. Thanks for that, Steph.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

I do not know where she is from.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Another member said that the budget delivered on some of the key parts of his plan for his region. He said:

I have been fighting hard for funding for a number of projects ... and it was good to see them in the budget ...

Who said that? It was the member for Tamworth. But this is the best one. In his Facebook post, this member wrote that his electorate "fared quite well" in the State budget, with \$252 million in additional funding. That was the member for Northern Tablelands. Thanks, boys; we could not do it without you. [*Time expired.*]

**The SPEAKER:** I call the member for Parramatta to order for the first time. I call the member for Miranda to order for the first time. Members will behave in a parliamentary manner or they will be directed to leave the Chamber.

#### STATE BUDGET AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (11:16):** My question is directed to the Minister for Emergency Services. I refer the Minister to *Budget Paper No. 04*, pages 3-1 and 3-23.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! Members will allow the member for Coffs Harbour to ask his question. He will be heard in silence.



**Mr GURMESH SINGH:** Yesterday, the Minister insisted that the Rural Fire Service received a budget increase. The budget papers show operating expenses of \$685 million in 2025-26, compared with \$734 million budgeted and \$807 million revised for 2024-25. Did the Minister mislead Parliament yesterday, or are the budget papers wrong?

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order and allow the Minister to answer the question. Members who continue to interject will be removed from the Chamber.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (11:17):** I would be misleading Parliament if I said I did not sleep a wink last night for worrying about this question. It is true that I was asked this question yesterday. The good members of this House will remember that I was actually working through the answers, and at one point I said, "Give me a bit of extra time, so I can explain it." The fact of the matter is—

**The SPEAKER:** I place the member for Myall Lakes on three calls to order.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** This is what happens: Those opposite ask a question and then they do not want the answer. I gave a lesson yesterday. One of the things I would say to students as a schoolteacher was "You have to look at the whole picture." Unfortunately, the member for Coffs Harbour did not look at the whole picture.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Looking at the operating expenses and the employee-related expenses in the budget papers, as I pointed out yesterday, there is actually an increase.

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

**Mr Adam Crouch:** No, there's not. There isn't.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Mate, learn how to read a budget paper. Let us talk about some of the different elements when it comes to the budget. As we work our way towards fulfilling 100 per cent of the bushfire recommendations, of course the budget could be expected to be tapering, because we have been delivering—

**Mr Adam Crouch:** Oh, it's a taper! It's not a reduction; it's a taper.

**The SPEAKER:** I direct the member for Terrigal to remove himself from the Chamber for 15 minutes.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Terrigal left the Chamber at 11:18.]*

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I say hi to the gang in the gallery. How are you guys?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for North Shore to remove herself from the Chamber until the end of question time.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for North Shore left the Chamber at 11:18.]*

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** It was pretty clear—before members opposite carried on a bit—that if you deliver projects such as control centres, delivery systems and data systems, they have been delivered, so they are not required.

**Mr Gurmish Singh:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Coffs Harbour rises on a point of order.

**Mr Gurmish Singh:** Yesterday it was quite obvious that we were referring to operating expenses. But the Minister is now talking about capital expenditure. He is talking about tapering budgets. The question was quite simple.

**Ms Yasmin Catley:** What's the point of order?

**Mr Gurmish Singh:** It is taken under Standing Order 129. Did the Minister mislead Parliament or are his budget papers wrong?

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** If Standing Order 129 is the only point of order the member for Coffs Harbour knows, that is a terrible audition for the top job. He should learn the standing orders. I am talking about the context. I will give an example of the difference between this Government and the time when members opposite were in government. Members will remember the Bega by-election. The Bega fire control centre was promised, with five million bucks. The brilliant doctor won; this Government won. When we came into government, we discovered that not one dollar had been allocated to that fire control centre. In last year's budget \$5 million was put in. This

is a government of action. The former Government was a government of spin and press releases. That is all it was. Members opposite should give me another extension.

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

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** Once the money has been spent and the project has been delivered, it has been delivered.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister will resume his seat. I do not require the assistance of Opposition members to apply the standing orders. Opposition members will come to order. Two members have been removed from the Chamber so far today and I am happy to remove more.

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (11:21):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plan to deliver more homes alongside the infrastructure and services that communities need?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:21):** I thank the member for Strathfield for his question. He is dedicated to making sure that future generations have access to homes, jobs and good infrastructure in New South Wales. That is exactly what the budget starts to deliver. The Minns Labor Government has introduced the biggest planning reforms in New South Wales history to build the housing we need, with the infrastructure to go with it. That is continued in yesterday's budget, which is every bit a Labor budget, with good economic stewardship allowing for new programs to reduce the biggest cost-of-living pressure on households—that is, housing.

The budget introduced a world-leading pre-sale finance guarantee—a \$1 billion initiative that goes guarantor on up to 50 per cent of eligible projects to accelerate housing construction and get it started earlier. It extends tax concessions indefinitely for build-to-rent housing. We have released draft guidelines to speed up the delivery of homes and infrastructure through works-in-kind agreements. They are not a new idea but, in the past, developers got a list of projects that were not necessarily in line with local infrastructure requirements. Our reforms invite developers to deliver infrastructure in place of contributions, but it must be in the best interests of the local community.

We are investing in skills and training to support an additional 23,000 apprenticeships in plumbing, carpentry and electrotechnology to get those homes built. Those initiatives have been made possible because the Government is getting the budget back on track and stabilising debt. The Leader of the Opposition tried to dismiss the initiatives as a drop in the ocean. He should tell that to the apprentices, the developers, the builders and the biggest beneficiaries, which are those people buying a home as a result of the initiatives. Industry stakeholders have applauded our budget measures.

**The SPEAKER:** The Leader of the Opposition will come to order.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** As we heard from the Premier, the Property Council welcomed the pre-sale guarantee, calling it "a bold and practical response to one of the biggest barriers to the delivery of new homes". The Urban Taskforce said that the guarantee was this year's "big budget surprise" and that the Minns Government deserved strong praise for listening to industry. Stuart Ayres from the Urban Development Institute of Australia said it was a "smart use of the Government balance sheet". Urbis chief economist Richard Gibbs simply said, "I think it's a good move."

But, sadly, not everyone sees the sense of all these proposals and, worse still, there is some confusion and denial about the need for housing. I was interested to see the Leader of the Opposition, only days ago, praise the Government for the works-in-kind policy initiative. Then, just yesterday, he said there was nothing in the budget to address financial feasibility to build. His confusion on housing—just like his confusion on workers compensation—continues. The Opposition's confusion is now so regular that it is almost unremarkable and should go unremarked, but we cannot help pointing it out. [*Extension of time*]

It is unforgivable that there is still resistance by members opposite to even the idea of increasing housing supply in their areas. Last month the member for Vacluse told an eastern suburbs forum that the Government's policy to build townhouses, terraces and six-storey apartment blocks within 400 metres of town centres was "quite confronting". In other words, the mere idea that the eastern suburbs might take more housing is an affront to the member for Vacluse. She is shocked by the idea of townhouses and small apartment blocks. Her argument is that she thinks the infrastructure cannot support it. They cannot take more housing because there is not a "decent supermarket", even though she admits that Rose Bay has, in her words, a "very fine Parisi's" and a Woolworths Metro. We do not have a Parisi's in Wollongong, so I had to look it up.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** What is a Parisi's?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** Apparently, they have a terrific cheese counter and an array of artisan sausages, just to help the people of Rose Bay make sure they have food in their pantries at any given time. Rose Bay also has a Harris Farm, a Coles Local and an IGA. There is even a Bunnings in Rose Bay. Of course, Rose Bay has its own ferry and is serviced by buses that run up and down New South Head Road. How confronting is all of that? What a shocking place to put housing! Most people would consider a town centre 10 minutes from Sydney CBD with multiple supermarkets and a Bunnings to be well located.

Let us recall that the member for Vaucluse is the same member who opposed plans to turn a derelict service station in Rose Bay into a Woolworths and an apartment block, arguing that the supermarket "would be great" but that the plans were "an unprecedented extension of a commercial site". She is the same member who, as a candidate, declared that her area should not be "punished" with more housing. Recently, I received correspondence that she is backing housing in Penrith—just not in her area.

### **BUS SERVICE 501**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (12:26):** My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, representing the Minister for Transport. Families in Ultimo and Pyrmont have consistently raised with me the issue of the 501 bus service being an unreliable way for their kids to get to and from school. It often runs late, or peak services are cancelled, leaving the students stranded on a weekly basis. What is the Government doing to improve public transport options for Sydney Secondary College Balmain students who live in Ultimo and Pyrmont so they can get to school safely and on time?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (12:27):** I thank the member for Balmain her question. She talked to me and my office yesterday about road issues, and I know she has spoken to the Minister for Transport about buses. The simple answer is that the Government is doing a lot. In this budget, we have allocated \$452 million for new bus services. It is about getting those services back on track and getting manufacturing back on track so that Sydney, the regions and the whole State has access to public transport. The member's question is specifically about the students in her electorate, and we are working on that. One issue is around the articulated buses. That is a legacy issue that we are dealing with. I have spoken to the member for Pittwater about that. How many articulated buses did members opposite order in 12 years? Was it 20, 30 or 40? No. Actually, it was zero.

When those buses failed, the Government had to get chassis here on planes to keep those services running. We acknowledge it is a challenge. The Minister for Transport is working on this. The Bus Industry Taskforce, which is led by a former Minister for Transport and is being implemented now by this Government, has exposed the consequences of the former Government's lack of investment, particularly in buses, in rolling stock, drivers, service provision and in all aspects of public transport in the State. The former Government left us a ticking time bomb with the fleet. Figures on driver retention were declining. Those numbers have now improved. We have reached the stage of having to get more buses for the drivers we have onboard who can do that work.

What is the Government doing with that \$452 million? We will increase the number of services on the road, accelerate the rollout of new buses, modernise the fleet and support local New South Wales operators. I take onboard the specific issue of route 501, which is a key route between the city and Parramatta and is particularly important for students. The Government is responding to challenges that are affecting reliability of services on that route. Transport for NSW has instructed the operator, Busways, to protect the selected morning peak trips to ensure that students and commuters can rely on the service when they need it. I thank the member for Balmain for her advocacy and assure her that the Government is responding through Transport for NSW. [*Extension of time*]

Why has that disruption occurred? It is because the fleet in region 7 includes route 501, which has a temporary shortage due to the withdrawal of 83 articulated buses for urgent repairs, but I repeat that the Government is acting to address that. The first of the repaired articulated buses for region 7 has now been delivered to the operator and they will soon be back on the road. The Government is reallocating buses to that region. With the indulgence of the member for Balmain, I give a shout-out to students in the gallery from Rutherford Tech High, Maitland High and Hunter Valley Grammar in my electorate and point out the thing about this Government: It is not just about Sydney, although that is really important, but it is also about places like the Hunter, the South Coast, Western Sydney, Cootamundra, Port Macquarie and others.

Since Labor came to government, every member of this House has come to us practically on their knees to ask the Government to fix the lack of investment in public transport by the former Government. They say, "Please help us. We have communities with new schools and new estates, but we are not getting the services we need". The Government is committed and wants more people on public transport. We know that if students, like those in

the electorate of the member for Balmain, have a good experience of public transport in their school years, they will be the commuters of the future. They will see public transport as an option. But when there is a lack of investment in not just new rolling stock but also basic maintenance, fleet renewal and recruitment of bus drivers, the services will not be available.

That is the problem that we have had to deal since coming to government every single day. I thank the member for Balmain for her advocacy on this issue because it is important that members stand up for their communities. I wish more members of the former Government had stood up when the Coalition Government had control of the purse strings to make the State's public transport better. It is an indictment that they did not.

#### STATE BUDGET AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (11:32):** My question also is directed to the wonderful Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's budget investments to build better and more connected communities?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport) (11:33):** It is great to have a question from the member for Riverstone. I have to say I really loved his video. It was really good.

**Mr Jihad Dib:** Were you in that?

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** No, not because I was in it—not that one. The member's video was about housing and how Western Sydney for too long has carried the burden of housing in this State.

**The SPEAKER:** I hope that was not at the expense of the member for Riverstone. A little levity is nice, but the Minister will return to her answer.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** I was asked a question, which was a bit of a Dixie, about vanity projects and it blew my mind. I thought about all the projects that the former Government poured money into like there was no tomorrow and no budgetary constraints because it just wanted to get things done. Last night someone said to me that it was like the former Government claimed everything—like the type of person who puts a \$2 deposit on every house and thinks they have solved the housing crisis. Those opposite never funded anything or made repayments. Since coming to government, we have had to deal with the former Government's blowouts. Every time, members opposite go on about COVID and it is all COVID's fault. It was not COVID's fault.

**Mr Paul Scully:** Matt Kean's fault.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** It was all Matt Kean's fault, yes—but we like Matt now, so it is okay. Even before 2019, the following projects were over budget by \$4 billion: the Sydney CBD and South East Light Rail was over by \$1.1 billion; the Pacific Highway, \$1.2 billion; Newcastle Light Rail, \$35 million; B-Line Bus, \$207 million; intercity fleet, \$1.1 billion; the Albert "Tibby" Cotter bridge, \$28 million; and the M12 motorway, \$130 million. The former Government just poured money into all those projects because it suited them when people like the member for Riverstone and his communities were dealing with the biggest investment in houses in the State's history, but no roads had been built.

**The SPEAKER:** Members will come to order. I call the member for Coffs Harbour to order for the first time. I call the member for Davidson to order for the second time.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The former Government would dribble out a dollar here and there with a couple of million for another study, but never built the roads. Since coming to government, the Minns Labor Government has allocated \$1 billion for Fifteenth Avenue; \$500 million for the duplication of Mona Vale Road; \$115 million for the Terrigal Drive upgrade—the member for Terrigal should just say thanks.

**Mr Adam Crouch:** It is Federal money.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Terrigal will not take the bait so easily.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** That does not matter. The New South Wales Government will spend it to help people. It is Labor money. Other allocations are \$100 million for the Maitland Westbound Overpass and approximately \$400 million for planning new projects. The Government knows we must have a pipeline of projects and is getting on with them. [*Extension of time*]

We have had to fund metro projects costing over \$3 billion, particularly in Western Sydney, because the former Government just did not do it. The former Government kept promising the community that it would fund the projects but never delivered them. The Government is having to do it. In the regions, it gets even worse—\$3.76 billion. Yesterday the member for Upper Hunter had a whinge about the 2025 budget because his electorate did not get enough money, yet over half a billion dollars is allocated to Singleton and Muswellbrook. The

Government brought forward that expenditure and is delivering for his electorate. If it was so good, why did it have to wait for us? This is the problem.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I call the member for Upper Hunter to order for the first time. The Minister will refrain from baiting Opposition members.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Prior to the 2023 election, the former Government signed contracts for upgrading the Coss River Road at a cost of \$332 million. The Federal Government did not provide the funding, and now the member for Bathurst is saying it is a road to nowhere. It was a vanity project. Otherwise, where did they get the \$11 billion to build the rest of the tunnel?

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Dubbo that he is on two calls to order.

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** Members opposite were promising everyone ice creams and Fanta, but with no money to deliver them—and they did that the whole time.

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

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** It is absolutely outrageous. I thank very much the members for Cootamundra, the Northern Tablelands and Tamworth. I feel as though the Premier got my Dixie because they were thanking us for the investment in their communities.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Tamworth to remove himself from the Chamber until the end of question time.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Tamworth left the Chamber at 11.38.]*

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON:** The member for Tamworth has had more conversations with me since the Minns Government was elected about Goonoo Goonoo Road than he ever had with any of the previous roads Ministers, and the same can be said about all the other projects. The Labor Government is here for everyone. The Labor Party is the party of the bush, the party of Western Sydney and the party of small business.

#### STATE BUDGET AND OPERATING EXPENSES

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby) (11:38):** I direct my question to the Premier. I refer the Premier to *Budget Paper No. 01*, page 7-7. Leaving aside employee expenses, interest and depreciation, he budgeted for other operating expenses going up to just 1.2 per cent over four years, yet the consumer price index is expected to go up 10.5 per cent in that same period. Is the Premier's flimsy future surplus a mirage, or is he instead planning savage cuts to frontline services?

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Hornsby will resume his seat. The member for Keira will come to order. The Leader of the House rises on a point of order.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** I refer to Standing Order 128 (2). If the member for Hornsby wants to ask the Premier a question about operational expenses, he can do so without it containing argument, inference or imputation. The member should be given the opportunity to reword his question or it should be disallowed.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The member for Hornsby will reword his question or he will forfeit his right to ask it.

**Mr JAMES WALLACE:** My question is directed to the Premier. I refer the Premier to *Budget Paper No. 01*, page 7-7. Leaving aside employee expenses, interest and depreciation, the Government has budgeted for other operating expenses going up just 1.2 per cent over four years, yet the consumer price index is expected to go up 10.5 per cent in that same period. Will the Premier explain the discrepancy?

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier) (11:40):** The premise of the question from the Opposition—by the way, this is day two of the budget—is other than employee expenses, infrastructure and capital, other than 99 per cent of the budget, on this 1 per cent of the budget what is the story with operating expenses? The member for Hornsby has almost conceded that the Government has gotten rid of the wages cap in New South Wales and is paying employees more and that is reflected in employee expenses. We have taken into consideration increases in health, education and transport, which is reflected in the budget papers. It is so infinitesimally small. I reflect again that it is only day two of the budget yet those opposite are already myopic. If the Opposition is so concerned about the surplus—and this is a question for the member as well—why does it not support the Government's workers compensation legislation? We are anticipating putting another \$2.6 billion into it. But as a result of those opposite blocking that legislation, that money will have to come out of the pockets of the hardworking people of New South Wales.

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The Government will not accept a lecture from the New South Wales Liberal Party when it is blocking much-needed workers comp reform in this State. Very soon workers compensation premiums will be distributed to New South Wales small businesses, and I make the point that—

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** We will be going to all those businesses and explaining that the reason for the increase is members opposite—you and you and you. I am enjoying it. Minister Kamper and I went down to the shire on Friday—what a beautiful place—and business owners there were very interested to hear about the voting history of the member for Miranda and the member for Cronulla. It will be a long process but we will enjoy it. We will have some fun.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The Leader of the Opposition rises on a point of order.

**Mr Mark Speakman:** I refer to Standing Order 129. The Premier was asked about a specific line item in the budget. He calls it infinitesimal but it is \$27 billion. Why is it only rising by 1 per cent when inflation is 10 per cent? It is a specific question about a specific line item.

**The SPEAKER:** I understand the Leader of the Opposition but I do not uphold the point of order because of the nature of the question. The Premier will be allowed to answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** We have not heard from the member for Hornsby yet, but I saw an interesting article about him on Politicom. It said that former Prime Minister Tony Abbott accused former New South Wales Treasurer Matt Kean of attempting to drag the Liberal Party to the left. It states:

Liberal Party insiders have described James Wallace—

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Coffs Harbour rises on a point of order.

**Mr Gurmesh Singh:** I refer to Standing Order 129. The Premier's comments are completely irrelevant to the question asked, except that the person who asked the question was mentioned.

**The SPEAKER:** My previous ruling covered the member's point of order. That should have given him fair warning that I will not uphold a point of order taken under Standing Order 129. The Premier will be allowed to conclude his answer.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** The article states:

Liberal Party insiders have described James Wallace as more green and more woke than Matt Kean – some even say he is "Kean on steroids".

Has he got his KeepCup? Has he got his Birkenstocks on?

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

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

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** His predecessor is responsible for the budget. Is that not true?

**The SPEAKER:** The clock has been stopped. The member for Wahroonga rises on a point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** I refer to Standing Order 73. The Premier has to stop making personal reflections in his answers during question time. Such comments should be made by way of substantive motion. They have nothing to do with the question that was asked.

**The SPEAKER:** I do not uphold the point of order. The comments did not reach that level.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** That is a fair point of order. I simply make the point that the previous member for Hornsby spent \$27 billion in nine months, so it is a bit rich for the current member for Hornsby, as his successor, to question the budget.

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** No, it doesn't work like that.

**Mr CHRIS MINNS:** Why not? I read his maiden speech. He reckons he is the second coming.

**STATE BUDGET AND NSW POLICE FORCE**

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (11:44):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. Will the Minister update the House on how the Minns Labor Government's third budget continues work to build a safer New South Wales?

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (11:45):** I thank the member for Fairfield for his question. The third Minns Labor Government budget continues the work to rebuild the NSW Police Force and keep communities safe. It continues the difficult job of fixing the mess left to us by delivering the largest police budget ever. This Government is delivering a record \$5.37 billion to our police and a further \$411 million in capital investment. Let me compare that with what those opposite did. They capped wages for 12 long years, sending police wages backwards. They had no plan for recruitment or retention, and they had no plan to look after the hardworking police of the NSW Police Force.

This budget ensures that the NSW Police Force is future focused and properly resourced. The Government is investing \$125.8 million in cutting-edge technology upgrades, including \$24.6 million to fund the critically important Cyber Security Enhancement Program so that police can detect and respond to any cyber threats against them; \$50 million to improve the police's vast communications network, including upgrading the systems behind 000 and the Police Assistance Line; \$6 million in specialist investigative equipment to keep our police one step ahead of the worst criminals in this State; and \$45.2 million to modernise the police payroll system. Speaking of payroll, it would be remiss of me not to remind the House of the once-in-a-generation 19 per cent pay rise delivered to our police by the Minns Labor Government. It was an historic pay rise that has seen our police become the best paid in the country.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Interstate police are voting with their feet and coming to New South Wales in droves. Even New Zealanders are crossing the ditch to sign up. Kiwi politicians are fretting day in and day out, knowing that New South Wales is the place to be if you want to be a cop. This Government has also invested in recruitment by paying recruits to study in Goulburn. We are gradually building our numbers to fix the critical police officer shortage that those opposite left us. We are getting results. In May the largest class in over a decade attested at Goulburn and—watch this space—there are bigger classes to come. [*Extension of time*]

This budget, and our budgets before it, is about demonstrating our commitment to those who put their lives on the line, day in and day out. This Government understands what an important job it is to be a police officer, and that is why we back them 100 per cent. Another thing those opposite know nothing about is whole-of-government systems reform. This Government inherited the worst budget position in over a decade. Those opposite left us \$15.3 billion in deficit and almost \$190 billion in debt. That is debt for those in the public gallery to carry.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** Now we are on our way to a surplus. Expense growth under the Liberals averaged over six per cent. We have got that down to 2.4 per cent. Sensible, responsible—that is what you have here. Those opposite failed our public service with 12 years of a cruel wages cap. I see the kids in the public gallery nodding; they know. They get it. They are smart. And now we have secured fair wage deals for 70 per cent of the public servants here in New South Wales.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** This is a wonderful success. Those opposite left our essential services crumbling, but we have invested in schools, hospital upgrades and public preschools—free public preschools. They thought it was okay to have vulnerable children living in hotels and motels.

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

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY:** But as of this year, thanks to the Minister, no child is in a motel, and we thank the Minister for that. We are making the hard decisions for the future—for the future sitting in the public gallery.

**STATE BUDGET AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (11:50):** My question is directed to the Minister representing the Treasurer. *Budget Paper No. 03*, page 114 shows cuts of around 20 per cent to both transport and health infrastructure investment in 2025-26, compared with the forecast for 2025-26 in the 2024-25 budget paper. Has the Government run out of ideas for the people of New South Wales?

**Mr PAUL SCULLY (Wollongong—Minister for Planning and Public Spaces) (11:51):** I think the Opposition's tactics group has run out of ideas. When we have got so fine-grained on the day after the budget and have ignored the serious and headline results that the Government is talking about and has been talking about over the past couple of days—

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

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** —it leaves me wondering exactly where we are going to get to when it comes to tomorrow's speech in reply. I do not know what is going to be in the speech in reply, because I do not know what exactly the members opposite want to cut. The fact is the Government is investing in transport. We just heard that from the Minister for Roads on behalf of the Minister for Transport. We are investing in bus services. We are investing in upgraded rail services. And we continue to invest in infrastructure. We have an average commitment of just under \$30 billion in infrastructure spending over the next four years. This Government is getting on with the task of investing in the things that communities need, rather than just picking tiny holes in the budget.

Members opposite do not appear to like the fact that they have run out of ideas for questions, so they have gone into this morass of stuff. The bottom line is we are able to continue to make solid investments in the future of communities in New South Wales, making sure that we can deliver the services that people expect and that people want and need: more schools, more transport and greater infrastructure spend. That is exactly what we are about. We are increasing expenditure and making sure we are returning essential services, making sure the police are looked after, and making sure our public spaces are looked after with additional investment.

**Ms Monica Tudehope:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** Before I call the member for Epping on a point of order, I say to the member for Terrigal that his interjections are incessant. If he continues to interject, he will be directed to leave the Chamber.

**Ms Monica Tudehope:** My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. I referred to *Budget Paper No. 03*, which has not even been mentioned yet.

**The SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr PAUL SCULLY:** The member for Epping is disappointed, but in *Budget Paper No. 01*, *Budget Paper No. 02*, *Budget Paper No. 03* and *Budget Paper No. 04* there is a great budget. The member would do well to read it. She would see how you can do proper financial management, because in this budget the Government is getting debt under control, restoring essential services and reducing the pressures on areas with the greatest impact on cost of living. It is stabilising debt by cutting \$9.4 billion from debt growth into the future, saving \$400 million a year that we can reinvest in service delivery, reinvest in infrastructure delivery and reinvest in making sure that we are delivering the types of communities that New South Wales residents want and need.

#### STATE BUDGET AND REGIONAL HEALTH

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (11:54):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's commitment to strengthen access to essential health care in regional communities?

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (11:54):** I thank the member for Cessnock. It was great to be in his electorate last week, delivering a brand-new hospital upgrade for Cessnock—a community who absolutely adore their local MP. Well done to the member. It is always good to be there. I look forward to delivering on that. It is a great budget for regional, rural and remote health care. It is a really strong budget. I acknowledge the nurses in the public gallery. In a moment, I will get to that thing called "employee expenses". The Government is investing in three helicopter bases at Port Macquarie, Wagga Wagga and Moruya to go with the six that we have at the moment to deliver fast extraction of patients in some of the most difficult parts of New South Wales, up and down the eastern seaboard as well as inland. This will be an opportunity for us to provide faster response times to the community when they need it most.

In addition to that, we are making significant investments in paramedics and our frontline paramedic staff. A dedicated program of 500 paramedics for the bush is already delivering 250 of those paramedics out into regional, rural and remote New South Wales. We are also delivering what we touched on yesterday: important service upgrades for maternity services in regional, rural and remote New South Wales. I have got the message loud and clear: We need to do better when it comes to maternity services. Fifty-three positions will go to targeted midwife placements to fill the gaps in maternity care with more of those continuity of care models, like midwifery group practice. We want the very best, and we want women to be able to give birth as close to where they live as possible.



That is why it was interesting yesterday to listen to—or, I suppose, be exposed to—The Nationals' media release on this matter. Surprisingly, it starts with a massive photo. Not to state the obvious, but that is a bit weird. A media release with a photo of yourself on it—that is slightly unusual. I get nobody knows who you are, Duges, but that is unusual.

**Ms Sophie Cotsis:** They do not know who he is.

**Mr RYAN PARK:** We are not going to do that. This media release mentions that, as part of the 2022-23 budget, the Coalition Government put in a Rural Health Workforce Incentive Scheme, and that it is disappointing that has not been continued. [*Extension of time*]

Tragically for the member for Coffs Harbour—and I will get to the shadow Minister for Regional Health in a moment—that is not true. I do not want to state the obvious, but as of June 2025 more than 2,400 people have been recruited and over 9,000 retained as a result of the scheme. That is going to continue. Tragically, what we also saw yesterday was very unusual. The nurses in the gallery would be very interested in this. I will try to explain it as quickly as possible, without pictures. We have an enormous number of staff members—around 180,000. They do something: They deliver health services.

This is not a case of *Yes, Minister* where you have a really efficient hospital with no staff and no patients. We actually deliver health services, and they do it on behalf of the community. Yesterday, the member for Vacluse was complaining about the budget and said that most of it was on wages—wages growth! The nurses, the allied healthcare professionals, the midwives—they are not volunteers. They are paid. And what generally happens when you remove a cap is that wage expenses go up.

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

**Mr RYAN PARK:** In a big portfolio that relies on men and women to deliver health services, you are going to see an increase in employee expenses. What I can take from that is she wants to see employee expenses go down, and that fits in with the wages cap. I am very proud of this budget. I am very proud of the men and women who deliver health services. I am very proud that we are the ones delivering, for the first time, for regional, rural and remote New South Wales.

#### STATE BUDGET AND PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

**Ms ELENI PETINOS (Miranda) (11:59):** My question is directed to the Minister for Industrial Relations. What provision has been made in 2025-26 budget to cover potential wage rises above the Government's offer arising from arbitration decisions of the Industrial Relations Commission [IRC] in relation to firefighters, psychiatrists, staff specialist, doctors and nurses?

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:00):** I thank member for Miranda, and shadow Minister, for her question. This is an incredible budget. I thank the members of the Family and Injured Workers Support and Advisory Group who are in the gallery today for telling their story. Many of them have lost loved ones. A number of them have been seriously injured. Some Independents, Opposition members, Greens members and Government members joined them this morning to listen to their advocacy. I thank them for being here. The Government came to office in 2023 with a strong mandate to remove the wages cap and negotiate through the mutual gains bargaining program. We have succeeded with two-thirds of agreements negotiated.

Absolutely, it has taken time because for 12 years there was no reform process or sitting around the table. There have been changes. Along with the Minister for Health, I acknowledge the nurses and midwives in the gallery. We increased wages. In the first 18 months, there was a huge pay rise for our public sector workers. Absolutely, in this budget, there will be more support for public sector workers. On 1 July last year, we brought in the independence of the Industrial Court, and we recently appointed two additional commissioners to the commission. I am hopeful that today, with the support of the House, we will pass the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment (Workplace Protections) Bill 2025, the second tranche of work—

**Ms Eleni Petinos:** Point of order: My point of order is taken under Standing Order 129. The question is specifically how much money has been provisioned for outcomes of the IRC in relation to wages.

**The SPEAKER:** The Minister is answering the question. I do not uphold the point of order.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** As I mentioned earlier, the Government brought a bill to the House in November 2023, which members opposite did not support, to expand the Industrial Court. Now that they are interested in the court, there is a bill that I hope they support. We respect the independence of the court, and we await the decision.

## STATE BUDGET AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (12:03):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Emergency Services. Will the Minister update the House on the Minns Labor Government's budget investments to deliver the emergency services that communities rely on?

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (12:03):** I thank the member for Penrith. She is not only a fantastic local member but also a massive supporter of the emergency services. On many occasions, I have spent time with the member for Penrith at emergency services events. Yesterday the Minns Labor Government demonstrated a commitment to delivering better essential services and investing in the economy to keep our communities safe. The Government is delivering—here is one—\$2.21 billion in the 2025-26 budget to our emergency services agencies.

**The SPEAKER:** Order! I direct the member for Dubbo to remove himself from the Chamber until the end of question time.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I would like the member for Dubbo to stay. I know he is interested in the RFS, but we don't do winery tours any more!

**The SPEAKER:** I will cut the member for Dubbo some slack on that one, but he will still leave the Chamber.

*[Pursuant to standing order the member for Dubbo left the Chamber at 12:04.]*

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** They talked about the tapering. If the member for Coffs Harbour, the shadow Minister, wants to be a smart alec, I will let him know that \$2.21 billion is a 10.8 per cent increase on the budget for the emergency services than when he was last in government. Let us put those facts out there. Members opposite should not just cherry-pick certain things without looking at the whole context. The whole context is that \$2.21 billion is a 10.8 per cent increase in the emergency services budget. That is there in black and white. But I digress.

Last week the Premier and I joined other Ministers at Badgerys Creek at the site of the new airport where we are building a fire station. Why is that important? Because everyone knew that an airport was being built there, but only one government decided to build a fire station and make that commitment. We had to go about it the hard way, but we are there and have allocated \$42.2 million. Here is a novel idea: The funding actually includes 52 professional firefighters to be stationed there. I say that because the last time Opposition members were in government they opened Oran Park Fire Station—it was really fantastic, with all the bells and whistles—but they forgot one thing: firefighters. We need the firefighters, so we are funding the firefighters.

**Mr Ryan Park:** That's the employee expense.

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** That is the employee expense. We committed \$189.5 million to secure the positions of 286 firefighters whose jobs were unfunded. In other words, there was no funding for them. Again, I urge the Opposition to read the budget properly. *[Extension of time]*

In this budget we are also investing an additional \$17 million to renew our firefighting fleet. There will be 15 additional Fire and Rescue trucks, which will start to redress the under-investment. We also committed \$98.7 million to capital works for new stations at Wentworthville, Charlestown, Goonellabah, Lithgow, Broken Hill and Byron Bay, as well as for major upgrades to Parramatta and Mortdale. We have maintained funding for core services at the RFS, investing \$716.4 million in this year's budget. We are boosting aviation funding in the RFS by \$34.4 million over four years. Why is that important? It is so that we can secure the fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters that we require, particularly during the bushfire season. We have seen a global demand, and we are getting in early. We are world leaders when it comes to this. That is why it is important to make sure that we have the resources. Hopefully, we will not need them. But we must make sure that we plan for the worst and hope for the best and that we are ready for everything.

As I said, despite member opposite cherry-picking the figures, there has been a 10.8 per cent increase. Some of the things that may not be noticed but are reported in the RFS budget specifically include an additional \$3 million to ensure that every one of our volunteers can have an extra set of protective equipment. Money has also been specifically put towards improving mental health. We have not forgotten the State Emergency Service, the heroes of the recent floods. We have made a \$94.7 million uplift in investment, because they were left at a fiscal cliff. We are fixing all of that up. The \$2.21 billion is a 10.8 per cent increase on when the Opposition was last in government.

## UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:09):** My question is directed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. In January this year Labor Senator Tony Sheldon said in relation to vice-chancellor remuneration:

There's no other job in Australia where you can be paid so exorbitantly while performing so badly, with seemingly no consequences or accountability for the impact on university staff and students.

Like many in the community, The Greens are deeply concerned that governance and oversight of universities is falling by the wayside, given they are constituted under New South Wales law but funded federally. What actions has the Minister taken in response to the projected cuts to over 1,000 university jobs in New South Wales and recent reports about vice-chancellor salaries, including a six-figure pay rise for one Sydney-based vice-chancellor?

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:10):** I thank the member for Newtown for her question. I point out at the start that, while there are 10 public universities in New South Wales established under State legislation, the Commonwealth used its corporations power quite some time ago to take over the governance and funding of universities, so my powers to direct universities to do things are very limited. We get to appoint members to university governing bodies, approve certain land dealings and table annual reports in Parliament following their audits by the Auditor-General of New South Wales. I am concerned to hear about job losses in institutions. That has been raised with me by a number of people.

I note that many of our institutions have faced challenges. This year, in particular, the changes to overseas student caps are having a negative impact on a number of universities. Given that international education is New South Wales's second-biggest export, that is of concern to New South Wales as well. We work with the Federal Government through the ministerial councils, but we do not have the power to direct universities in a number of those areas. The national regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency, plays a key role in national governance and accountability standards.

On 23 January 2025 the Hon. Jason Clare convened the Expert Council on University Governance. The council brings together expertise to advise Federal and State governments on ways to strengthen university governance and improve institutional performance. Its focus will include key risk areas identified in the university accord process: ensuring universities are responsible employers, ensuring governing bodies have the right balance of skills and expertise, and ensuring that universities are safe environments for both students and staff. The New South Wales Government strongly supports those efforts, including the implementation of the new "University Governance Principles and Recommendations" currently being developed by the expert council.

We have seen the establishment of the National Student Ombudsman, which gives a single-point pathway for people who need to make complaints. We believe a student-centred approach, combined with strong, transparent governance and multi-layered accountability, will deliver the best outcomes for university students and staff. We are working with the Federal Government to support national efforts to ensure that all higher education staff are fairly and appropriately remunerated—an issue that I know has been highlighted in a number of areas, and which I raise in my discussions with universities. I highlight again that I do not have the authority to intervene in those matters, only to raise them with the universities, which I have been doing. [*Extension of time*]

Each university's governing body is responsible for determining the remuneration and performance arrangements for senior executives. I note that the annual reports suggest that the average salary for vice-chancellors has declined since 2019, but I have also seen the other reports that the member referred to. I acknowledge that there is community concern about a number of those issues, which the Federal Government, in conjunction with the States, is dealing with at the moment.

## STATE BUDGET AND TAFE NSW

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (12:13):** My question is also addressed to the Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education. Will the Minister please update the House on the Minns Labor Government's plan to tackle the housing crisis by building the skilled workforce that our State needs?

**Mr STEVE WHAN (Monaro—Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education) (12:14):** I thank the member for the Blue Mountains for her question. She is a passionate advocate for TAFE. I think she has been to see me at least three times in the past month about various things that she wants to see in TAFE, like enhancements to courses, or to raise issues. I am pleased that the budget handed down yesterday represents a real vote of confidence in TAFE in New South Wales. The \$2.8 billion in funding for TAFE, inclusive of capital, is a record investment that will help us invest in the areas with strongest demand. In the past few days, we have particularly highlighted the need for skilled workers in the construction industry. The budget will help tackle some of those issues in construction through both the core funding for TAFE and specific programs. The budget includes

\$40.2 million over the next two years to create an additional 90,000 fee-free apprenticeships and traineeships, with 23,000 of those in construction-related fields. That will get more tradies on the tools, with their fees paid for.

We are also backing experienced workers in that space, with a \$13.8 million Construction Workforce Package designed to upskill and support 4,800 workers into residential construction jobs over the next two years, boosting the number of tradies on job sites and accelerating the delivery of much-needed homes. That will create the pathways we need to get people skilled so they can help us deliver the ambitious housing targets that the Minister for Housing and the Premier have talked so much about, and which Government members are working very hard to meet. They are doing so on the back of having to rebuild TAFE after 12 years of neglect from members opposite, who capped wages, casualised our teaching workforce and left critical skills shortages across the State. The Minns Labor Government is turning that around.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** It's a real decrease from the last one.

**Mr STEVE WHAN:** The member for Wahroonga is talking about funding. In his last budget, when he was the Minister, recurrent funding for TAFE in the budget papers was \$1.996 billion. This time it is \$2.460 billion. That is a \$464 million, or 23 per cent, increase over his last budgeted figure. I do not know whether I want to say that too loudly or the Treasurer might hear, but it is well above inflation and is why we are rebuilding confidence in our TAFE right now and why we have been able to secure the jobs of 3,000 TAFE workers who have moved from casual to permanent employment. [*Extension of time*]

When Government members came to power, less than half the TAFE workforce was permanent, but now 85 per cent of the TAFE workforce is permanent. That builds in confidence in TAFE, and that helps us to deliver the skills our State needs.

#### *Business of the House*

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: BILLS**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (12:18):** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended this day to permit the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025, notice of which was given earlier this day, to be introduced and then proceed through all stages during the time allocated for Government business.

I am moving this suspension motion today because the situation at Northern Beaches Hospital is a matter of urgency for the hospital staff and the more than 270,000 residents of the northern beaches. It is also a matter of public interest to the entire State, given the potential scale of public funds required for the buyback of our hospital. The New South Wales Government has been negotiating with Healthscope over bringing the hospital back into public hands ever since Healthscope initiated those discussions in April. However, more than two months since negotiations started, with Healthscope's parent company having been handed to receivers in the interim, there is still no sign of an agreement being reached.

In that context, the Government proposed amendments to my Northern Beaches Hospital (Voluntary Contract Termination) Bill to help operationalise the sentiment of that bill by giving the State a legal mechanism to terminate the deed and negotiate fair compensation if needed. In the past 24 hours, on advice from the Clerks, it has been decided that, given the substantial nature of the Government's amendments, it is more appropriate for a new bill to be considered by the House. On that basis, I have given notice today of a motion to introduce the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. By way of this motion for the suspension of standing orders, I seek for the bill to be prioritised.

The northern beaches community has been left in limbo for too long. The uncertainty about the future of the hospital must end for the staff, for the families who have bravely come forward and told their stories publicly and privately, and for the entire community. The bill helps to clear a pathway to a timely resolution. The Legislative Assembly has unanimously passed legislation banning future public-private partnerships for acute hospital services. Now members must act to enable an end to that arrangement at the Northern Beaches Hospital as well. We should not tolerate a double standard. I call on members to support the suspension of standing orders to allow consideration of this important bill.

I sincerely thank the Government, particularly the Minister for Health and the Treasurer, for working with me to get to this point. I thank their staff. I understand that one hospital should not take up so much time. I think we all look forward to a day when that is not the case. I am grateful to the entire Parliament for its collective goodwill in working together to resolve this unfortunate situation. I thank the Opposition, particularly the shadow Minister for Health, for its cooperation and support. Lastly, I acknowledge the nurses from the Northern Beaches Hospital in the gallery. As I have said many times, the quality of care that the northern beaches community continues to receive is only because of the dedication and professionalism of the staff working at the hospital.

I know that often comes at immense personal cost. We are so grateful to those staff members. I hope that today they can see that the New South Wales Parliament is acting to resolve the situation as soon as possible.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Personal Explanation*

**MEMBER FOR KELLYVILLE**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney) (12:21):** By leave: I make a personal explanation in relation to a private member's statement made by the member for Kellyville on 5 June and subsequent comments from the Hon. Mark Latham in the Legislative Council yesterday. The member for Kellyville made deeply offensive and ridiculous allegations, repeating a conspiracy theory of Mr Latham that the Government bought my support through the Local Small Commitments Allocation grants program and the Premier's discretionary funding for homelessness services. While that private member's statement was not related to the Kellyville electorate and was clearly out of order, the member for Kellyville was supported throughout his contribution by the member for Newtown. In my view, it was a defamatory contribution.

These are the facts. The confidence and supply agreement with the Minns Labor Government that was agreed to by me, the member for Wagga Wagga and yourself, Mr Speaker, is a public document. It recognises that Labor won substantially more seats than the Coalition in the last election and that our intention is to provide stability to the Government in the interests of the people of New South Wales. The exact same agreement was made with the former Coalition Government. The statement was made months before I was emailed about the Local Small Commitments Allocation grants.

When I was informed about the Local Small Commitments Allocation grants, I highlighted that one of the organisations, Will2Live—a very worthy organisation—was not based in the Sydney electorate. I asked if funding could be provided to organisations that were based in the electorate, including Wayside Chapel, Rough Edges and Canice's Kitchen. The result was that those organisations, which feed people who are homeless, all received funding to be able to feed more vulnerable people. That is it. There is no scandal and there was no deal. I challenge the member for Kellyville—the coward from Kellyville—to either apologise or make those allegations outside—

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

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Sydney will resume his seat. I will hear from the member for Wahroonga on a point of order.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Under the standing orders, a personal explanation is not an opportunity to attack another member of this place. It is completely not what it is for, but that is exactly what the member for Sydney was doing.

**The SPEAKER:** The comment of the member for Sydney was out of order. The member should deal with those issues by way of substantive motion.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** I will continue. As I said, I challenge the member for Kellyville either to apologise for those allegations or to make those allegations outside this place without the protection of parliamentary privilege. I will happily see him in court. I have taken down far more cunning clowns than him.

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

**The SPEAKER:** I can anticipate the point of order from the Manager of Opposition Business.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Those comments of the member for Sydney go completely against your ruling, Mr Speaker. It is unfortunate, given that the member for Sydney is presumably trying to establish a serious matter, that he would flout your ruling in that way.

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Sydney is again in breach of the standing orders. The member will return to the leave of a personal explanation.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** The real scandal that is currently occurring is the Liberal-Latham-Greens coalition of chaos, which is attacking me for getting homelessness services funded and is threatening staff with arrest, which has watered down our hate crime laws and which is seeking to make our workers compensation system unworkable.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** Point of order—

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Sydney will resume his seat. If the member continues in that manner, I may withdraw his leave to make a personal explanation. I will hear the point of order from the member for Newtown.

**Ms Jenny Leong:** I absolutely respect the right of the member for Sydney to make a personal explanation, particularly as I have been the subject of private members' statements that have attacked me, without me being present in the Chamber. However, the member's implications should be the focus of substantive debate outside his personal explanation. I ask that members be reminded to respect the role of personal explanations.

**The SPEAKER:** I uphold the point of order. The member for Sydney will be more mindful of the rules relating to personal explanations.

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH:** The comments made by the Hon. Mark Latham in the Legislative Council last night breach a confidentiality court order. Mr Latham is someone who thinks far too much about me. He thinks and talks far too much about my sex life. He is not someone who the Liberal Party should be taking its strategic lead from. Surely the Liberal Party has enough white dudes named Mark; it does not need to recruit Latham as its co-leader.

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

**The SPEAKER:** The member for Sydney will resume his seat. I assume he has concluded his personal explanation, but I definitely would have upheld the point of order that I expect the Manager of Opposition Business was about to make about the member's rather difficult personal explanation.

**Mr Alister Henskens:** Mr Speaker, I make the further point that the member for Sydney is the chair of the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics. He went against your rulings on no fewer than three occasions, which is unbecoming of the office that he holds in this House.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Manager of Opposition Business for his advice.

**Mr Ron Hoenig:** Point of order: Mr Speaker, the member cannot use a point of order to be critical of an office holder of this House. Comments made by the member for Sydney infringed the standing orders. Points of order were taken. The Speaker made rulings upholding those points of order. That is really the end of the matter. Alternatively, I will give the member for Sydney—and I am sure nobody on the other side of the House wants this—the opportunity, by way of suspension of standing orders, to move a substantive motion. Then all matters can be ventilated. Either we finish it now and get on with the business of the House, or I will give the member for Sydney the opportunity that he no doubt craves.

**The SPEAKER:** I thank the Leader of the House for his contribution. I have ruled in accordance with the standing orders. It is not always easy to bring members immediately back to the leave of the matter, or even directly within the standing orders. That is not unusual. I believe that I ruled appropriately.

#### MEMBER FOR KELLYVILLE

**Ms JENNY LEONG:** By leave: Given that I was mentioned in the Chamber in relation to the personal explanation by the member for Sydney, I feel it is important to put some comments on record so the facts can be made clear. I happened to be in the Chamber when the member for Kellyville was making his private member's statement as I was the next speaker. In his statement, the member for Kellyville started discussing the Local Small Commitments Allocation grants, and members of the Government sought to shut him down. In that context, I said that the clock should be stopped. On a previous occasion, during a private member's statement, I had tried to speak on an issue close to the hearts of the people of the electorate of Newtown but was stopped by a point of order claiming that my statement was not about my electorate. I stood up to defend against that. I did not defend what the member for Kellyville was saying, nor was I in the Chamber for the purpose of backing him up. That needs to be made clear, and I reserve my right to make a further personal explanation in future about the implications made about The Greens by the member for Sydney.

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY:** I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

**Leave not granted.**

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

**The CLERK:** In accordance with the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of the Auditor-General's Performance Audit report entitled *Regulating mine rehabilitation*, dated 25 June and received this day.

*Bills***INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS) BILL 2025****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (12:32):** I contribute to debate on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment (Workplace Protections) Bill 2025 on behalf of The Greens, and I indicate our support for the bill. This bill continues the work commenced by the New South Wales Labor Government in 2023 when it brought forward its first tranche of industrial relations changes that included re-establishing the Industrial Court and introducing a mutual gains bargaining process. The Greens supported that legislation, just as we support this bill today.

The bill acts on findings and recommendations made by the Booth and Boland taskforce established by the Minns Labor Government and proposes a raft of changes that, together, would make a significant impact on workers in this State. Crucially, it addresses the glaring gap that The Greens identified in the Industrial Relations Amendment Bill 2023, even though we supported its passage in November 2023. In debate on that bill, I raised concerns about the lack of protections against gender-based undervaluation of work in the public sector, particularly in the context of women being the backbone of our teacher, nurse and midwife workforces. In response, the Minister gave assurances that the Government was working to address those issues.

While it is deeply disappointing that the Government has not sought to address that by delivering on the wage increases and improved conditions that nurses and midwives are asking for, this bill does, in part, deliver on those assurances made by the Minister. I note also, considering that this debate is happening in the shadow of planned workers compensation changes that seek to stigmatise and undermine those who experience psychosocial injury at work, that it is hard to also not address those concerns.

I turn now to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill seeks to amend section 3 of the Industrial Relations Act, which sets out the objects of the Act, to insert new sections 3 (f) and 3 (f1) that explicitly reference the prevention and elimination of discrimination, bullying and sexual harassment and the achievement of gender equality in the workplace. The Greens are particularly pleased to see that the Government has taken our suggestion and is proposing new section 3 (f1), which would specifically establish the elimination of gender-based undervaluation of work as an object of the Act. In order to achieve those objects, schedule 1 [9] to the bill proposes the insertion into the Act of new chapter 3A, which establishes clear jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission for matters pertaining to bullying and sexual harassment.

As the Minister pointed out in her second reading speech, the principal legislation relating to those issues for workers in New South Wales is the Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011, but that lacks a dedicated complaints handling mechanism. Proposed new chapter 3A would address that gap by empowering the Industrial Relations Commission to conciliate, arbitrate and make orders relating to workplace bullying and sexual harassment. Part 1 of the new chapter would relate specifically to workplace bullying, and the definition of "bullied at work" is set out in new section 144C as:

- (a) an individual, or group of individuals, repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards—
  - (i) the employee, or
  - (ii) a group of employees of which the employee is a member, and
- (b) the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

If the commission is satisfied that this threshold has been met and that the bullying will continue without intervention, new section 144G empowers it to make a stop bullying order. New section 144H would make it a civil offence to breach a stop bullying order, with penalties reaching up to \$18,870 for an individual or \$93,900 otherwise. The changes would also empower the commission to make an order of damages of up to \$100,000, paralleling remedies that are currently vested in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal under the New South

Wales Anti-Discrimination Act. Part 2 of new chapter 3A would establish similar remedies and penalties in relation to workplace sexual harassment. New section 144L defines "sexual harassment" using the same terms set out in section 22A of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977. It states:

A person sexually harasses another person if—

- (a) the person makes an unwelcome sexual advance, or an unwelcome request for sexual favours, to the other person, or
- (b) the person engages in other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the other person, and

the conduct, advance or request occurs in circumstances in which a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated that the other person would be offended, humiliated or intimidated.

New section 144T provides that, if the commission is satisfied that this has occurred, it can make an order to stop and remedy the sexual harassment that is occurring. Again, penalties for contravening such an order are steep and reach up to \$18,870 for an individual and \$93,900 otherwise. Those are sensible provisions, and The Greens support them.

Bullying is shamefully rife in many workplaces and that the public service is no exception. Sadly, this workplace is also no exception. In 2024 the Australian Public Service Commission found that 10.5 per cent of Australian Public Service employees nationally perceived bullying or harassment in their workplace. Who can ignore the New South Wales Government's own People Matter Employee Survey in response to which thousands of public sector staff ranging from teachers and nurses to cops and even parliamentary staffers reported workplace bullying? For example, someone in a position of power yelling at someone in front of their work colleagues that they are a hypocrite could be considered the start of bullying practice in the workplace. Sadly, the lack of leadership of the Minister responsible for work health and safety in New South Wales is demonstrated by the way we interact in this Chamber.

We know that for those with marginalised identities, workplace bullying and sexual harassment often go hand in hand, and First Nations women, women of colour, transwomen and gender-diverse people are disproportionately at risk. A 2024 study from the University of Melbourne and Griffith University found that almost half of migrant and refugee women reported at least one form of sexual harassment in the workplace since 2019. Meanwhile, a 2022 survey conducted by the Australian Workplace Equality Index found that 26.7 per cent of respondents from the LGBTIQ+ community had witnessed negative behaviours, including bullying and sexual harassment, towards people of diverse backgrounds. Those are shameful figures, and The Greens are pleased to see the Government taking these matters seriously in legislation. We hope it will continue to do so in relation to its resourcing of the cultures and practices it supports in the workplace. In addition to these significant changes, the bill proposes a range of amendments to the mutual gains bargaining scheme and the commission's powers during conciliation and arbitration proceedings.

Currently, disputes about injured workers' return to work are within the remit of the Personal Injury Commission of New South Wales under the Workplace Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998. Unions, injured workers and their advocates told the Booth and Boland taskforce that the Industrial Relations Commission's jurisdiction should be expanded to include return to work and the types of alternative duties that would be suitable to support this outcome. The Greens welcome the Government's attempts in schedule 1 [2] to deliver this. However, we cannot help but note the contrast between how this piece of legislation seeks to deal with the matter of injured workers returning to work and the other piece of industrial relations legislation that was debated during the last sitting week.

This bill is clearly the result of months of seriously considered and informed consultation with stakeholders, including workers, unions and employers. It recognises that workers are real people who can experience real harm at work. It would be remiss of me to speak about the obligations that employers have to their workers around the disproportionate exposure to harm of people from marginalised backgrounds without also mentioning Antoinette Lattouf, who today won her unlawful termination court case against the ABC. A staunch and unwavering voice for Palestine, Antoinette posted facts from Human Rights Watch content about the genocide in Gaza on her social media, after which the ABC shamefully moved to terminate her contract after only three days of service. Today the Federal Court ruled that this action by the ABC was unlawful and done "for reasons of political opinion". I congratulate Antoinette and her team on this outcome. I express The Greens' full solidarity and gratitude for her ongoing commitment to shedding light on the genocide and human rights breaches in Gaza. This outcome is a huge vindication and victory for independent journalism, free speech, and freedom of expression and association. The ABC must take accountability for its actions.

Again and again Government members have attempted to justify the changes to psychosocial workers compensation reforms in this State. It needs to be remembered that there is a direct intersection between bullying and harassment and injury in the workplace. The Greens are committed to standing up for workers' rights. I commend the bill to the House.



**Mrs HELEN DALTON (Murray) (12:42):** I move:

That the question be amended by omitting all words after "That this bill" and inserting instead:

"be referred to the Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development inquiry and report."

The Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment (Workplace Protections) Bill 2025 would make some pretty big changes to how workplace health and safety works in New South Wales. It might be well-meaning but it has not undergone proper consultation, especially with the people who will actually wear the costs: business owners, particularly in dangerous industries like construction. Not a single peak body representing construction—big, small or in between—was properly consulted before the bill was drafted, yet they are the ones who will be dragged into court if the bill passes as is.

From what I can see, the bill would give union officials some very worrying new powers. First, they will be able to take work health and safety disputes straight to the Industrial Court, with no involvement from the regulator and no checks or balances. Second, they will have the power to prosecute minor safety breaches, the type that are usually resolved with a warning or education. Third, if they win a case, they could pocket up to 50 per cent of the fine. Lastly, they will be allowed to film and take photos on worksites without proper oversight, turning ordinary workers into targets without any legal safeguards.

Let me be clear: These powers go well beyond what the Work Health and Safety Act was ever meant to allow. The Act was supposed to create a fair, balanced and nationally consistent safety system, not a legal free-for-all where unions get to play judge, jury and bounty hunter. It risks turning the Industrial Court into a political weapon. A union could ignore a SafeWork NSW decision not to pursue a matter and launch its own prosecution over a minor compliance issue, like a labelling error on a power board. They could also make money out of it. That is not justice. That is not safety. That is a shakedown.

Inspectors are there for a reason. They are trained, independent and accountable. Union reps, however well intentioned, are not the same. Giving them these powers without the same scrutiny is dangerous. Let me be clear: I am not standing up for dodgy operators; I am standing up for fairness. Bad employers should be held to account, but the system has to be proportionate and reviewable and based on evidence, not politics or profit. That is why I want the bill referred to a committee. Let the committee hear from the employers, regional businesses and tradies who will cop the fallout. Let it examine whether these changes will actually improve safety or just increase litigation and conflict. We owe it to workers to get safety right and we owe it to employers to make sure the laws are fair and workable.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (12:47):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions to debate on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment (Workplace Protections) Bill 2025. In particular, I thank the member for Miranda, who indicated the Opposition's support for the bill; the member for Blacktown, who spoke about the benefit of the new bullying and sexual harassment jurisdiction and the importance of making underpayments easier to recover; and the member for Heathcote.

The bill completes the second step of the Minns Government's industrial relations agenda. In our first year we re-established the Industrial Relations Commission. This year we have rebuilt the State's work health and safety framework. The member for Newcastle spoke about how, for 12 years, public sector workers were rejected by the previous Government. This bill continues the Government's progressive reform of the State's industrial relations system. I know the member for Newcastle is a very strong advocate for that, as are all the members I have mentioned.

The member for Bega said that the bill improves the conditions of public sector workers, particularly in regional New South Wales. The member for Coogee stated that the bill reflects Labor's core principles. At its heart, this bill is about making New South Wales fairer and safer for everyone who works in the public service. The member for Mount Druitt, who represents a large number of public sector workers from greater Western Sydney, spoke about workplace democracy, dignity at work and keeping workers safe. The member for Prospect said the bill, at its heart, is about making sure that when workers go to work, they will return safely to their families. He also emphasised the critical role that health and safety representatives [HSRs] play in our workplaces. Through sharing Kim's story, the member for Liverpool, who is a very strong advocate for workers, highlighted the importance of assisting workers to return to work and helping those who have been victimised. I thank Kim for allowing her story to be mentioned in the Parliament.

The member for Campbelltown, who is a strong advocate for the people of his electorate, spoke about workers being able to return home safely from work, and the importance of the work that the Minns Labor Government is doing in the industrial relations and work health and safety space after 12 years in opposition. I thank the member for Newtown for her contribution and for her strong advocacy on behalf of workers in this

State. I also acknowledge the contribution of the member for Murray, who raised a number of concerns with the bill on behalf of peak organisations. The Government has conducted extensive consultation on the bill and will not support the member's motion. But perhaps I may be able to convince the member for Murray that there is no need to refer the bill to a committee, and to withdraw her motion.

The member is a very strong advocate. I have visited Griffith, in her electorate, and we have conducted a round table on safety in the agricultural industry. The member has put forward a number of reforms that the Government has supported. The Government has also put a number of items on the small business rebate scheme, at the member's suggestion. The concerns that the member for Murray has raised should have been brought to the attention of my office earlier. The bill has been in the public arena, and we have been speaking to the business community. Last week I held a round table with a number of contractors and businesses—maybe the organisations mentioned by the member for Murray were not in attendance. I would have appreciated it if the member had brought her concerns to me earlier. I want to allay those concerns and fears. This is not about "gotcha" moments; this is about protecting workers and employers.

In response to the member for Murray, I note that the proposed changes to the work health and safety dispute procedure mirror similar provisions in Queensland and, according to business and union stakeholders, the procedure has worked well in that jurisdiction. It is important to note that the dispute procedure allows employers, not just unions, to refer disputes. At present, unions can already prosecute category 1, 2 and 3 offences in New South Wales. The changes in the bill establish a clearer procedure for prosecutions to be brought. I agree with the member for Murray that SafeWork NSW needs to be an effective work health and safety regulator, which is exactly what this Government has sought to deliver. We have invested a record amount into the reform of SafeWork NSW, over the next two decades. Work health and safety is tripartite: By its nature, it involves businesses, workers and unions working together.

The bill has been subject to extensive consultation. It has been available on the Parliament's website for a month and the concerns raised by the member for Murray have not been raised by other stakeholders. I foreshadow that the Government will propose three technical amendments to the bill, which have been communicated to members. I also note that the member for Barwon has foreshadowed an amendment. The Government is making New South Wales a safer and better place to work. The bill before the House follows tranche 1 of the Minns Government's industrial relations reforms re-establishing the important role of the Industrial Relations Commission, making the industrial relations legislation fit for purpose and rebuilding our work health and safety regulator.

This important work created the structure needed to deliver meaningful improvements to wages and conditions. We are now building on this work with tranche 2 of our reforms, which introduces a major package to strengthen psychological work health and safety in New South Wales workplaces, with a particular focus on stopping workplace injuries before they occur. I have ventilated the provisions of the bill extensively. I appreciate everyone who has been involved in putting the bill together. It has been extensive work, and not just in the past 18 months but over 12 years. I thank community members, injured workers and unions for their contributions to the development of the bill. I thank Unions NSW and its affiliates.

In particular, I acknowledge the public sector unions, Business NSW, the business community, the legal fraternity and public sector agencies, who provided valuable feedback. I also thank the Premier's Department and industrial relations officials. I acknowledge their hard work, particularly over the past two years, during which we have passed a number of important bills. I also thank the Parliamentary Counsel and, of course, my amazing staff. I thank everyone for their sterling collaboration, without which we would not have this bill. I express my immense gratitude to all involved. 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, to which the member for Murray has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to. A division has been called for. There being fewer than five members for the question, the question is resolved in the negative. I direct that the names of those members be recorded in the *Votes and Proceedings*.

**Ayes, 3**

Mrs H. Dalton  
Mrs J. Hannan  
Mr M. Regan

**Amendment negatived.**

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**Consideration in detail requested by Ms Sophie Cotsis and Mr Roy Butler.**

**Consideration in Detail**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** By leave: I will deal with the bill in groups of clauses and schedules. The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 be agreed to.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (13:01):** By leave: I move Government amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2025-111D in globo:

**No. 1 Prohibition on sexual harassment in connection with work**

Page 8, Schedule 1[9], proposed section 144N. Insert after line 2—

**Example—** A visitor to a small business sexually harasses an employee of the business and the owner of the business (each a *protected person*). The visitor contravenes this section because the visitor has harassed the protected persons in connection with the protected person being either an employee or a person conducting a business.

**No. 2 Appeals regarding work health and safety disputes**

Page 25, Schedule 3[4], proposed section 102I, line 10. Omit "Part 3". Insert instead "Part 7".

**No. 3 Confidentiality of information**

Page 26, Schedule 3[16], proposed section 271(3)(c1)(i) and (ii), lines 28 and 29. Omit all words on the lines. Insert instead—

- (i) a person who holds office in, or is an employee of, a registered organisation,
- (ii) a person who holds office in, or is an employee of, an employer organisation,

Amendment No. 1 is the prohibition on sexual harassment in connection with work. That amendment provides an example of what constitutes sexual harassment for the purposes of new section 144N. Amendment No. 2 relates to appeals regarding work health and safety disputes. That amendment is a technical amendment to ensure that the correct appeals process at the Industrial Relations Commission applies for a dispute under new division 7A of part 5 of the Work Health and Safety Act. Amendment No. 3 relates to confidentiality of information. The first part of that amendment at paragraph (c1) (i) replaces the term "employee association" with "registered organisation". Similarly, the second part of the amendment at paragraph (c1) (ii) replaces reference to "an employer organisation officer" with "a person who holds office in, or is an employee of, an employer organisation". Both changes make the language consistent with the other elements of the bill that refer to registered organisations.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that Government amendments Nos 1 to 3 on sheet c2025-111D be agreed to.

**Amendments agreed to.**

**Mr ROY BUTLER (Barwon) (13:05):** I move my amendment No.1 on sheet c2025-139:

**No. 1 Reporting about psychosocial matters**

Page 29, Schedule 3. Insert after line 10—

**[20] Section 271DA**

Insert after section 271D—

**271DA Reporting about psychosocial matters**

- (1) SafeWork NSW must, as soon as practicable after the end of each 6-month period, give the Minister a report about the following for the 6-month period—
  - (a) the number and types of complaints received by SafeWork NSW about psychosocial matters that relate to—
    - (i) the government sector, or
    - (ii) the private sector,
  - (b) the number and types of notices issued under Part 10 by the regulator or an inspector about psychosocial matters that relate to—
    - (i) the government sector, or
    - (ii) the private sector,
  - (c) SafeWork NSW's insights about the issuing of notices under Part 10 about psychosocial matters that relate to the government sector and the private sector, including any recommendations for—

- (i) improving psychosocial work health and safety in the sectors, and
  - (ii) reducing psychological injuries in the sectors.
- (2) A report under subsection (1) may be included in a report provided to the Minister under section 271D.
- (3) In this section—
- 6-month period** means each of the following periods—
- (a) the period starting on 1 January in each year and ending on 30 June in the year,
  - (b) the period starting on 1 July in each year and ending on 31 December in the year.
- government sector** has the same meaning as in the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*.
- private sector** means the non-government sector and includes the non-profit sector.

**[21] Section 271E SafeWork NSW to publish information on website**

Insert "or 271DA" after "271D" in section 271E(1)(a).

One of my biggest concerns throughout the modernisation of the workers compensation legislation is that we are not doing enough when it comes to harm prevention. The most effective way to reduce the number of workers compensation claims and ensure happier, healthier and more productive workplaces is to prevent situations where people feel they have no alternative but to file a workers compensation claim. The system as it stands is weak in preventative measures and proactive steps to identify signs that a worker may be on a downward spiral and heading towards time lost, medical intervention and a workers compensation claim. There is inconsistency across government agencies and, in some cases, the current policies and procedures appear to increase harm to a person who has been genuinely injured. The private sector lacks a coherent and effective response.

One way to improve worker wellbeing is by understanding the volume and nature of incidents or interactions that may lead to a workers compensation claim and using that data to inform future decisions. We can identify industries, professions and even workplaces that need further attention. If I had a magic wand, I would do a lot more to ensure proactive engagement from persons conducting businesses or undertakings and officers, and a higher level of accountability for proactive steps to ensure the welfare of employers. I have no magic wand, but I can amend the bill to require SafeWork NSW to work across government to ensure that agencies have consistent and effective means, in both the public and private sectors, of preventing and, where possible, quickly responding to psychological injuries. That is a start, because, if we do not measure, we cannot manage effectively. That data will help target resources and identify areas for further attention for the Government.

The amendment ensures that timely data is available to help identify workplaces and professions that require more or better targeted intervention. It proposes that SafeWork NSW report on psychosocial matters as soon as practicable after the end of each six-month period. It will identify the number and type of complaints received by SafeWork NSW about psychosocial matters. It will provide public oversight on the key psychosocial issues in workplaces across both sectors. The number and types of notices issued under part 10—importantly, improvement notices and prohibition notices—will improve public oversight on where workplaces are falling short of the required standard and therefore need increased focus for improvement.

Finally, SafeWork's insights into the notice issued and subsequent recommendations will provide a qualitative analysis of the numbers, identify practical steps that can be taken to bridge any gap between the two sectors and generally lift standards across all industries. We need to test this legislation but, to do that, we need honest accountability mechanisms built into the scheme. Reporting is a key element, since it will provide data that supports a government that is attempting to restructure and repair a non-viable scheme.

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety) (13:08):** I welcome the contribution of the member for Barwon to this debate and to the workers compensation debate. I thank him for his strong advocacy, which he outlined very eloquently. He represents the largest State electorate by area. All members here want to ensure people go to work and come home safely to their families and friends. For the member for Barwon and other regional and rural MPS, the distance they have to travel and the work that they have to do in their communities is obviously very different to what we understand here in the suburbs and the city. I want the Barwon community to know their member is a very strong, loud voice to government and to me in particular. I have had many conversations with the member for Barwon, who is very methodical, logical and considered in his contributions and very practical when dealing with employers, industry and the workforce.

The Government absolutely agrees to the amendment moved by the member for Barwon. The amendment will require SafeWork NSW to provide the Minister of the day with a report about psychosocial risk and injuries in New South Wales workplaces. The amendment will improve the Government's and SafeWork's visibility over

psychosocial risks at work. I draw the attention of the member for Barwon and all other members to the visit to Parliament by the Family and Injured Workers Support and Advisory Group during question time. Members across all political parties spoke to the group's members. The group was established under the former Coalition Government, which in 2020 was a very important initiative. I acknowledge the work of the former Government in establishing the group, but I note that its establishment occurred under very difficult and tragic circumstances.

Today, the Family and Injured Workers Support and Advisory Group made a very big call to the Government in support of the points made by the member for Barwon about trauma-informed support and work being done in relation to psychosocial risks. I absolutely assure the member for Barwon that this amendment will improve the Government's bill. I welcome the member's constructive contribution to improving the health and safety of New South Wales workers.

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that amendment No. 1 on sheet c2025-139 of the member for Barwon be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

**The ASSISTANT SPEAKER (Mr Jason Li):** The question is that clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended be agreed to.

**Clauses 1 and 2 and schedules 1 to 3 as amended agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **EVIDENCE (AUDIO AND AUDIO VISUAL LINKS) AMENDMENT (LOCAL COURT BAIL DIVISION) BILL 2025**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (13:13):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Amendment (Local Court Bail Division) Bill 2025 introduces changes to the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998, or AVL Act. The AVL Act governs appearances before courts by audiovisual link, or AVL, and audio link in New South Wales. Changes are needed to that Act to formalise the use of AVL in first appearance bail matters and to support the commencement of the Chief Magistrate's new centralised Bail Division of the Local Court. Currently, section 5BB of the AVL Act allows for accused detainees to appear by AVL by default in all criminal proceedings except for physical appearance proceedings, which include trials, hearings, fitness hearings and first appearance bail matters. Section 5BA requires an accused detainee to appear in person in physical appearance proceedings, unless the court directs otherwise, the parties consent, or an exception applies.

While first appearance bail matters are physical appearance proceedings, there are already a wide range of exceptions to this requirement. These include, firstly, where the matter falls during a certain time period, including weekends, public holidays, and the Christmas and New Year shutdown and magistrates conference periods; secondly, where a magistrate is not available at the location where the accused would usually appear from in person; and, thirdly, where the accused is being held at a place prescribed in the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Regulation 2024. It is important to note that first appearance bail matters are already being heard via AVL if they fall within one of these exceptions. For example, during weekends and holidays, bail matters are currently heard via AVL in centralised bail courts. The presumption in favour of in-person appearances for first appearance bail matters in the AVL Act no longer reflects the reality of court operations. AVL is now being used across New South Wales in many first appearance bail matters, for a number of reasons. Developments in technology, and changes implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, have improved the capacity of the court system to use AVL, leading to greater use across courts in New South Wales.

Our Government also introduced changes with respect to domestic violence bail matters that ensure magistrates make bail decisions pursuant to section 70A of the Bail Act 2013, which have now taken effect. These reforms involved amending the AVL Act to allow the use of AVL in first appearance bail matters where a magistrate is not available at the location where the accused would usually appear in person. Also, accused persons held at some locations are already exempted from the presumption that they appear in person under the regulation, and individuals in those locations make up a large number of the State's first appearance bail matters. In particular,

I refer to accused persons held at Surry Hills Police Station and Amber Laurel Correctional Centre, which are both very, very busy locations.

The Chief Magistrate of the Local Court is now establishing a Bail Division of the Local Court, in which bail matters will be heard using AVL from a central hub at the Downing Centre. The bail division will further formalise the use of AVL for first appearance bail matters and will complement the reform to ensure that bail decisions are made by magistrates. The bail division model will involve the presiding magistrate being physically present at the Downing Centre, while accused detainees, prosecutors and defence practitioners will appear via AVL from across the State. However, in circumstances where AVL cannot or should not be used, it is very important for people to note that the model will retain the ability for an accused person to appear physically.

There are anticipated to be a number of benefits that flow from the new arrangements, which will create a sustainable operating model for managing bail matters. The creation of a bail division is expected to relieve workload pressures on regional and smaller metropolitan courts, magistrates, and court users, and contribute to the effective overall management of the workload of the Local Court. As a result of my travels around the State, I have to say that when I speak to regional magistrates, they really want this. Recently, I heard the member for Bathurst say in the media that the new arrangements are somehow an assault on the regions. Regional magistrates want this so that they can spend a full day on hearings to reduce their list. They will not have to dedicate an hour or two at the end of every day to hear bail applications. They really want this to happen. The bail division will allow magistrates to develop special expertise in bail matters and improve the quality and consistency of bail hearings. It is anticipated that the bail division will be rolled out in stages from July 2025.

In stage 1, the bail division will hear first appearance, weekday bail matters, arrest warrant applications and detention applications from regional areas and from two inner metropolitan locations, Newtown and Waverley. The bail division will ultimately be expanded to other locations in metropolitan Sydney. The Department of Communities and Justice has been supporting the operational implementation of the bail division. It has been working closely with a bail division advisory board, which includes representatives from the Chief Magistrate's Office, the Children's Court, Corrective Services NSW, NSW Police Force, Legal Aid NSW, Justice Health and Forensic Mental Health Network, Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), NSW Bar Association and the Law Society of New South Wales. These stakeholders are all peak bodies and experts in their fields. It is appropriate that they have been consulted.

The Children's Court is also developing a separate model for children's bail matters that are ordinarily dealt with by Local Court magistrates in regional areas on weekdays. These will be centralised in Parramatta Children's Court and will be heard by a specialist children's magistrate. This will help to ensure a tailored and consistent approach to bail decisions made in relation to children. This bill introduces amendments to the AVL Act which reflect the intended future use of AVL as the default arrangement in all bail matters. The amendments also allow for sufficient flexibility to accommodate transitional and local arrangements where physical appearances are necessary or preferable, such as when the required technology is not in place.

The bill also includes supporting amendments which are needed to facilitate the bail division and to modernise the AVL Act for bail proceedings. This includes enabling accused detainees to appear by audio link in limited circumstances and clarifying and strengthening existing safeguards around the use of AVL and audio links. We intend for these amendments to be in place to facilitate the operation of the bail division from July 2025. The bill has been carefully drafted so that it reflects current and future best practice. It goes without saying that our Government acknowledges the importance of ensuring that the rights of accused detainees and the obligations of legal practitioners are protected in bail proceedings. The bill specifically incorporates legislative safeguards which recognise this.

Our Government is also conscious that some accused persons have different needs and requirements. For example, some accused persons may be living with a disability or there may be a need to take into account specific cultural considerations. This bill ensures that the courts have flexibility to deal with these matters by providing heads of jurisdiction the power to issue directions in practice notes. It also gives other parties the ability to seek a direction that an accused detainee appear physically if it is in the interests of the administration of justice. Safeguards have also been carefully considered and strengthened, including that AVL should only be used if all parties can see and hear each other.

Both the new bail division and the implementation of the measures in this bill will be monitored by an ongoing cross-agency monitoring group that will allow any implementation issues to be raised and dealt with. In other words, we will be keeping a very close eye on this as it develops. As I have said a number of times before, I consider any legislation in my portfolio as being under constant review. If any issues arise, particularly with respect to vulnerable people or children being negatively impacted by these changes, then I will look at them carefully. Consultation occurred on these legislative amendments with members of the bail division advisory

board and the heads of jurisdiction. I thank these stakeholders for their contributions. The operation of the new bail division will continue to be monitored by court services and the Chief Magistrate.

I now turn to the specifics of the bill. Schedule 1 [1] to the bill removes first appearance bail proceedings from the definition of "physical appearance proceeding" in section 3 of the AVL Act. The effect of this is that the presumption in favour of AVL in new section 5BB will now apply to first appearance bail proceedings in addition to other types of bail proceedings. Importantly, new section 5BB includes the following exceptions to the presumption in favour of AVL, which will ensure that there is still an ability for an accused person to physically appear before a court if needed. Firstly, the court may, on its own motion or on the application of a party or designated government agency, direct that an accused detainee should appear physically if it is in the interests of the administration of justice and taking into account factors relevant in the case together with any factors specified in the court rules. For example, it may be appropriate for an accused detainee to appear physically if they are not able to communicate or comprehend proceedings via AVL.

Secondly, there is an exception under new subsection 5BB (2) if AVL is not available or cannot reasonably be made available to provide sufficient flexibility to accommodate transitional and local arrangements. Schedule 1 [7] to the bill creates a new power in new section 5BB so that the heads of jurisdiction can make a direction by a practice note or other document that regulates the practice and procedure of the jurisdiction to exclude certain matters from the presumption in favour of AVL for bail proceedings. This includes an ability to exclude the following: firstly, particular locations—for example, where a particular location is not yet included in the bail division or does not have AVL facilities; secondly, classes of accused detainee—for example, children may be excluded from the presumption in certain circumstances; and thirdly, particular time periods—for example, some metropolitan Local Court locations are not yet included in the bail division. Bail matters may continue to be heard by AVL at centralised bail courts on weekends while weekday matters may generally continue to be heard in person.

New subsection 5BB (6) allows a head of jurisdiction to exclude a category of matters from the presumption of appearance by AVL. New subsection 5BB (7) provides for the matters to be dealt with in person unless the court orders otherwise in the interests of the administration of justice. The intention of this provision is for it to apply when a location or class of matter is excluded from the presumption of appearance by AVL. There will instead be a presumption in favour of appearance in person. However, this is not intended to preclude a court from ordering that an accused person within that category appear via AVL or audio link on a case-by-case basis as long as all the relevant statutory requirements are otherwise met.

Consequential amendments are required to reflect that the presumption in favour of physical appearance under section 5BA will no longer apply to any bail proceeding. Schedule 1 [5] to the bill removes the list of exceptions to the presumption of physical appearance proceedings for first appearance bail from section 5BA (2) as they are no longer required. Schedule 2 to the bill repeals the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Regulation 2024. The only substantive provision in the regulation is a list of locations which are exempt from the presumption of physical appearance proceedings for first appearance bail under section 5BA (2) (e). The regulation is no longer necessary as section 5BA (2) will be repealed by the bill and the overriding presumption in favour of in-person appearance will be reversed.

Schedule 1 [6] to the bill introduces new subsection 5BB (2A), which will enable audio links to be used in bail proceedings in limited circumstances. The AVL Act currently only provides for accused detainees to appear via AVL in bail proceedings. However, there are some situations where it may be necessary and appropriate for an accused detainee to appear by audio link in bail proceedings. For example, if the AVL has failed, then an audio link would enable the matter to be dealt with expeditiously and would avoid the need to either transport the accused over a long distance or to hold them in custody for a longer period of time. This will be particularly important in the bail division because there will be increased reliance on AVL technology for bail hearings. I emphasise that the intention of this new provision is not to enable the use of audio links in bail proceedings because it is more convenient or because certain locations do not have AVL facilities. Rather, it is intended as a stopgap in emergency situations. Accordingly, new section 5BB (2A) includes several safeguards that must be considered on a case-by-case basis, including that an audio link can only be used in bail proceedings where, firstly, AVL has failed or is otherwise not available; secondly, audio link is available; thirdly, the parties to the proceedings including the accused and/or their legal representative consent to the use of audio link; and, finally, the court is satisfied that the use of audio link is in the interests of justice. All four of those safeguards need to be met.

Schedule 1 [2] supports the new audio link provision by clarifying that entitlements under other Acts or laws for a person to be present in bail proceedings is satisfied if AVL or audio link are used, as long as the criteria for audio link use under new section 5BB (2A) are met. The bill also updates and amends existing safeguards for the use of AVL and audio links in the legislation. The new centralised bail arrangements will result in an increased use of AVL for both court appearances and legal conferencing. It is important that the rights of an accused person

to understand and participate in legal proceedings and access confidential legal advice are maintained. That point was emphasised by stakeholders throughout consultation on the amendments.

Schedule 1 [6] includes a new note making clear that requirements for expediency under sections 46 and 71 of the Bail Act 2013 continue to apply and should not be considered discharged where AVL has failed or is otherwise not available. That ensures that the existing provisions in the Bail Act that safeguard timely bail hearings continue to operate unaffected by the measures in the bill so that accused persons do not spend any more time in custody than is reasonably necessary. Schedule 1 [8] clarifies that the requirement in new section 5BC that facilities are to be made available for private communication between an accused detainee appearing via AVL in a criminal proceeding and the person's representative applies regardless of where the parties are physically located and includes circumstances where audio link is to be used. That is important for the bail division, where neither accused detainees nor legal practitioners will be physically present at the court.

Schedule 1 [9] amends sections 20A and 20B to make clear that participants must be able to see and hear each other if using AVL, or hear each other if using audio link, no matter where participants are appearing from. Schedule 1 [10] clarifies that the ability of a court to adjourn the proceedings or make another appropriate order if AVL has failed under new section 20D also applies in circumstances where AVL is unavailable. I note in relation to first appearance bail proceedings that it will generally be preferable to make an order that facilitates the accused's timely appearance rather than to adjourn the proceedings, given the court's obligation under section 71 of the Bail Act 2013 to deal with bail applications expeditiously. Finally, schedule 1 [3] and [4] are technical amendments to clarify the definition of "appear" in part 1B.

The bill will commence on proclamation. It is intended to commence at the same time as stage one of the bail division of the Local Court. The amendments are important to ensure that the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act reflects the modern operation of bail proceedings in the Local Court and supports the new centralised bail division. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (13:33):** I contribute to debate on the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Amendment (Local Court Bail Division) Bill 2025. Two observations should be made from the outset. The first is that up until this bill, the law required that a person who was not granted police bail be physically brought before a court as soon as reasonably practicable to be given the opportunity to make a bail application. That requirement was not without exceptions, as the Attorney General noted but, generally speaking, that was the case in the overwhelming majority of circumstances where bail was refused by the police. This bill seeks to change that presumption of physical appearance and, indeed, to take that out of the legislation, meaning that the limited exceptions have also been taken out. I note that one effect of that change will be that only magistrates will determine bail applications. That is certainly something that the Opposition strongly advocated for after the unfortunate circumstances giving rise to Molly Ticehurst's death, where the accused in that case had been granted bail by registrar on a weekend in a regional country area.

While the Opposition is enthusiastic about the notion that there will be a consistency of magistrates hearing bail applications in New South Wales whenever they may occur, some concern has been voiced about those changes. As a junior solicitor in my own practising career of 27 years, I had to go down to the cells in the Magistrates Court to get instructions from clients in order to make bail applications. The physical appearance and mood of people in those circumstances is certainly relevant and clearly observable to a magistrate when they hear a bail application in person.

One concern, particularly in regional areas, is that in bail applications at a centralised location over audio link there will not be the opportunity for the bail authority to observe the bail applicant in the manner that they have traditionally been able to, except for the very limited circumstances that existed under the law up until this bill. It cuts both ways, I might add, in terms of whether bail should be granted or not granted. It is certainly those kinds of concerns that have given rise to the member for Bathurst making public statements. I have also had the opportunity to read an article written by the former magistrate David Heilpern, who is now dean of the law faculty at Southern Cross University, in which he highlights his concerns that the advantages that are granted to the bail authority by seeing the bail applicant in person will be diluted by reason of the changes.

I note that the Attorney General has said two quite important things. Firstly, he said that there was some consultation with heads of jurisdictions and the bail advisory committee. Secondly, he said that he will keep a close eye on how this change to the law will operate in practice, because it is fair to say that it is a dramatic change from what has been the law for hundreds of years. It has been thought that coming before a court in person at the first reasonable, practicable opportunity was effectively a kind of habeas corpus—recognised in the common law system since the Magna Carta—that was considered part of the protection of civilian rights and liberties within our community.



I note the concerns that have been raised. I note the concerns that, under this new model, bail authorities will not have a deep understanding of the community circumstances that may apply to the particular person seeking bail. I understand all of those concerns. I also understand the arguments of efficiency, centralisation and specialisation, and consistency, which the Attorney General also drew attention to, as being potential benefits of this new change. Whether this results in an overall improvement will require the close eye that the Attorney General referred to.

Certainly, magistrates determining bail applications exclusively is a very important matter. It is also very important that there is still the ability, as a default mechanism, for a person to come physically before a court and make a bail application in certain circumstances, rather than it being over audiovisual link. The Opposition will not be opposing the legislation but will be actively monitoring how it works out and whether any modifications in the interests of the public, of the community and of justice will be necessary once the scheme has an opportunity to get up and running.

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford) (13:41):** I speak in support of the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Amendment (Local Court Bail Division) Bill 2025 on behalf of my friend and colleague the member for Mount Druitt, who has had to leave the Chamber for a personal matter. The bill reflects the ongoing evolution of our justice system and is a necessary response to the operational and technological realities of our courts in 2025. I thank the Attorney General and his team for the work behind the bill and the Minns Labor Government for the considerable investment that made it possible. The courts need to come into the modern era to support our communities across New South Wales.

The bill amends the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998, or AVL Act, to formalise what is already occurring in practice: the increasing use of audiovisual links in first appearance bail proceedings. The bill supports the Chief Magistrate's initiative to establish a centralised bail division of the Local Court, and it brings the Act into alignment with a system already shifting toward modern, efficient and just practices. Tonight, in the Parliament of New South Wales, I would like to thank the Chief Magistrate for their work across our courts, and their work to change and modernise the system.

Under current law, there is a presumption that an accused detainee should appear in person for first appearance bail matters, fitness hearings and trials, under section 5BA of the AVL Act. By contrast, for all other bail matters, there is a presumption in favour of appearance via AVL under section 5BB. This legal inconsistency does not reflect the practical reality on the ground. In our State, AVL is already being used extensively in first appearance bail matters. That is due to a large range of practical reasons—many of them acknowledged within the legislation itself.

For example, AVL appearances are already the norm during weekends, public holidays and magistrate conference periods, when centralised bail courts handle a significant volume of cases. Many of those cases originate from high-volume locations. In addition, recent reforms to the Bail Act 2013, particularly the removal of a registrar's power to make bail decisions under section 70A, have resulted in even greater use of AVL. When a magistrate is not physically available to preside at a particular location, the law now permits the use of AVL. That reform has proven effective and has been widely adopted without compromising procedural fairness. The bill is not just about acknowledging what is already happening; it is about supporting a visionary step forward.

In July 2024 the Chief Magistrate announced the establishment of a bail division of the Local Court. That major reform initiative will centralise first appearance bail matters at the Downing Centre using AVL. Magistrates will preside from the Downing Centre, while accused detainees, prosecutors and defence lawyers will appear remotely. While adult bail matters are being centralised in the bail division, children's bail matters will be dealt with separately, with a model currently in development to support regional children's cases being heard at Parramatta Children's Court by specialist magistrates. That reflects a thoughtful approach that recognises the different needs of young people in the justice system.

The amendments in the bill give legislative effect to these reforms. Specifically, the bill removes first appearance bail matters from the definition of "physical appearance proceedings" in section 3 of the AVL Act. That change means that the presumption in favour of AVL—already applied to other bail proceedings—will now apply to first appearances. It should be noted that the safeguards remain firmly in place. Under section 5BB, a court can still order a physical appearance if it is in the interests of justice. If AVL is unavailable or impractical, the default remains physical attendance. The bill also provides heads of jurisdiction with the power to exclude certain classes of detainees or locations from the AVL presumption via practice note, allowing for the flexibility needed during the transition period and beyond. Importantly, the bill also introduces a limited use of audio links in bail matters. This is not about convenience; it is about practicality. There may be rare situations where AVL fails. We know that technology sometimes lets us down—for instance, due to technical issues in remote regions. An accused person should not be penalised by remaining in custody simply because of an equipment failure.

The use of audio links will only be allowed with the consent of all parties and where the court deems it to be in the interests of justice. The bill also strengthens critical protections for accused detainees. It ensures that facilities must always be provided for private communications between accused persons and their legal representatives, regardless of location. It confirms that bail matters must still be heard expeditiously, as required under sections 46 and 71 of the Bail Act, and ensures that participants must always be able to see and hear each other using AVL or, at a minimum, hear each other when using an audio link.

The bill is not about cutting corners; it is about ensuring that justice can be delivered fairly, efficiently and consistently across the State. It recognises the reality of how our courts are operating, the strength of the technology now available and the collaborative leadership being demonstrated by the Chief Magistrate and the broader legal community. The bill strikes the right balance between embracing modern systems and protecting the rights of accused persons. It ensures judicial discretion remains in place while removing outdated barriers that slow down our courts and waste valuable resources. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (13:47):** I speak in support of the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Amendment (Local Court Bail Division) Bill 2025. I also commend the Attorney General for his work on reform in this space, as well as for other reforms within the Attorney General portfolio. The bill will amend the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998, or the AVL Act, to formalise the use of audiovisual link in first appearance bail matters, supporting the commencement of the Chief Magistrate's new centralised bail division of the Local Court. By way of background, the AVL Act requires accused detainees to appear physically in physical appearance proceedings unless the court directs otherwise, the parties consent or an exception applies. For all other kinds of bail hearings, there is a presumption in favour of accused detainees appearing via AVL. In practice, accused detainees are already appearing via AVL in a significant proportion of first appearance bail matters. In July 2024, the Chief Magistrate announced plans to further formalise the use of AVL in first appearance bail matters by establishing a centralised Bail Division of the Local Court, as previously mentioned. This bail division will involve local court bail matters, including first appearance bail matters being heard from a central hub at the Downing Centre. The presiding magistrate will be physically present at the hub while accused detainees, prosecutors and defence practitioners will appear via AVL.

The bill will amend the AVL Act to reverse the presumption of physical appearance by accused detainees in first appearance bail matters, so that using AVL becomes the default arrangement for all bail proceedings. It provides a power for heads of jurisdiction to make a direction, by practice note or similar, to exclude particular locations, classes of persons or time periods from the presumption in favour of AVL for bail proceedings. Where this occurs, the matter will be dealt with in person unless the court directs otherwise in the interests of the administration of justice, which is a cornerstone of this space.

The bill will enable an accused detainee to appear via audio link in bail proceedings where the AVL has failed or is otherwise unavailable, where the parties consent, and where a court is satisfied that it is in the interests of justice. The bill also clarifies and updates existing protections for the use of audiovisual and audio links in the AVL Act, including ensuring the requirement for facilities to be made available for private communication between an accused detainee and their representatives applies irrespective of the location of the parties. It makes clear that requirements for expediency under the Bail Act continue to apply and should not be considered discharged where AVL is not available or appropriate. Finally, it ensures that requirements in sections 20A and 20B of the AVL Act that the accused detainee, prosecutor, defence practitioner and magistrate must be able to see and hear each other if using AVL, or hear each other if using audio link, apply no matter where participants appear from. The bill seeks to make local courts fit for purpose and use technology to bolster their operations. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (13:51):** I support the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Amendment (Local Court Bail Division) Bill 2025, which I will refer to as "the bill". Firstly, I acknowledge the collaboration between the Treasurer and the Attorney General, along with the Department of Communities and Justice, in the development of the bill. The Department of Communities and Justice has been working directly with the Bail Division Advisory Board to support the operational implementation of the bail division. It has also supported the development of measures in the bill. The advisory board comprises representatives from the Chief Magistrate's office, the Children's Court, Corrective Services NSW, Legal Aid NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service, the New South Wales Bar Association and the Law Society of New South Wales. I thank all of those organisations for their efforts and contributions to support this important reform.

The bill will amend the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998, or "the Act", to provide for a new presumption that all bail proceedings, including first appearance bail matters, will occur by audiovisual link [AVL]. The bill will make required amendments to the Act to formalise the use of audiovisual links in first appearance matters. It will also support the commencement of the Chief Magistrate's new centralised Bail Division of the Local Court. Under the current law provisions of the Act, the presumption is that bail matters are to be

heard in person. Under section 5BA of the Act, an accused detainee must appear physically in physical appearance proceedings, such as bail proceedings, unless otherwise directed by the court. While this presumption exists, there is already a wide range of exceptions to this requirement, which have been made in the interests of justice. I will detail those later in my speech. The current presumption in favour of in-person appearances for first appearance bail matters no longer reflects the reality of our court operations in New South Wales. To ensure the effective and timely administration of justice, it is important that we evolve with available developments in technology and the needs of our communities.

I will now address the key amendments in the bill. Firstly, schedule 1 to the bill will remove the requirement for an accused detainee to physically appear in court for bail proceedings. It will amend section 3 of the AVL Act to remove first appearance bail proceedings from the definition of "physical appearance proceedings". In effect, this will provide that section 5BB and the presumption in favour of AVL will apply to first appearance bail proceedings and other types of bail proceedings. It is important to note that section 5BB contains exceptions to the presumption in favour of AVL to ensure there is still an allowance for an accused person to appear physically before a court when needed. This enables a court, on its own motion, or by application of a party or government agency, to direct that an accused person appear physically if in the interests of justice. This exception to the requirement to physically appear in bail matters already applies where the bail proceeding occurs during a weekend, on a public holiday, during the Christmas or New Year shutdown period, or where a magistrate is not available at the location where the accused would normally appear in person. Importantly, the court will still have discretion to decide if a physical appearance is required in a particular bail proceeding.

Schedule 1 [7] authorises a head of jurisdiction for a court, in proceedings related to bail, to direct that accused detainees are required to appear physically before the court unless the court orders otherwise in the interests of the administration of justice. This may apply in situations where an accused detainee is not able to communicate or comprehend proceedings via AVL, such as for people experiencing a disability. Where a person may be experiencing a hearing impairment or be unable to comprehend that they are appearing in court due to an intellectual or cognitive impairment, this discretion can be applied.

Schedule 2 to the bill repeals the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Regulation 2024. The only substantive provision in this regulation is a list of locations exempt from the requirement to appear in person. As the presumption of physical appearance proceedings for first appearance bail under section 5BA, subsection (2) (e) will be repealed, and the overriding presumption reversed, the regulation is no longer necessary.

Currently, the Act only provides for accused detainees to appear via audiovisual link in bail proceedings. The bill recognises that there are some circumstances where it may be necessary and appropriate for an accused detainee to appear by audio link in bail proceedings. In light of this, item [6] of schedule 1 to the bill introduces a new subsection (2A) into section 5BB to enable audio links to be used in bail proceedings in limited circumstances. This provision will apply where the use of audio link will enable the matter to be dealt with expeditiously, such as when AVL has failed. This could prevent the accused detainee being held in custody for longer periods than necessary or the requirement to transport the accused over a long distance. It is important to note that this provision is not intended for use as a matter of convenience or where AVL facilities are not established. As recognised in the Minister's second reading speech on the bill, this provision is intended only as a stopgap measure in emergency situations. [*Quorum called for.*]

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

Currently, the Act only provides for accused detainees to appear via audio visual link in bail proceedings. The bill recognises that there are some circumstances where it may be necessary and appropriate for an accused detainee to appear by audio link in bail proceedings. In light of that, schedule 1 [6] introduces new section 5BB (2A) to enable audio links to be used in bail proceedings in limited circumstances. [*Extension of time*]

New section 5BB (2A) will apply where the use of audio link will enable the matter to be dealt with expeditiously, such as where AVL has failed. That could prevent the accused detainee from being held in custody for longer periods than necessary, or the requirement to transport the accused over a long distance. It is important to note that the provision is not intended for use as a matter of convenience or where AVL facilities are not established. As was recognised in the second reading speech, the provision is intended only as a stopgap in emergency situations. New section 5BB (2A) accordingly contains important safeguards that may be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure the proper use of the provision. For example, it includes requiring the consent of all parties to the proceeding and the accused person to proceed via audio link.

With the new centralised bail arrangements, we expect to see an increased use of AVL for both court appearances and legal conferencing. It is integral that the rights of an accused person to understand and participate in legal proceedings, and access confidential legal advice, are maintained. The bill contains safeguards to ensure that fundamental right is maintained. Schedule 1 [8] clarifies the requirement in new section 5BC that facilities

are to be made available for private communication between an accused appearing via AVL in a criminal proceeding and their legal representative. It provides that this applies regardless of where the parties are physically located and in circumstances where an audio link is to be used.

Schedule 1 [9] also provides that evidence must not be given by AVL in proceedings relating to bail unless the AVL facilities enable persons who are at the courtroom to see and hear persons in the proceedings and vice versa. Simply put, participants must be able to see and hear each other if using AVL. New section 20D provides that, if persons in the matter cannot be adequately seen and heard due to the failure of the AVL technology, the court may adjourn the matter or make another order appropriate in the circumstances. AVL is now being used across New South Wales in many first appearance bail matters. AVL has enabled justice to be effected expeditiously and fairly for the best outcome of all involved.

Developments in technology and changes implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic improved the capacity of the court system to use AVL, thus creating an opportunity for greater use across courts in New South Wales. The Minns Labor Government also introduced changes with respect to domestic violence bail matters that ensure under section 70A of the Bail Act 2013 that only magistrates make bail decisions. That was in light of the terrible tragedy in which a vibrant, young life was taken far too soon. We all remember and honour Molly Ticehurst. Out of respect, I will not detail the matter further. In light of Molly's death, the longstanding practice of registrars presiding over bail matters on weekends and public holidays was stopped. Allowing bail proceedings via AVL ensures judicial resourcing for magistrates to make those determinations.

The use of AVL also has cost-saving effects and practical benefits for the court, as well as defendants and practitioners. Particularly for regional court settings, AVL will reduce the impacts of distance and improve access to justice. Our justice system faces terrible pressure to keep pace with the needs of our community. These amendments are important to ensure that the AVL Act reflects the modern operation of bail proceedings in the Local Court and supports the new centralised bail division that will be established by the Chief Magistrate of the Local Court. It is anticipated that the bail division will be rolled out in stages from July 2025. For a society to properly function, it must have an effective justice system. Allowing the use of AVL will ensure that we continue providing that in New South Wales by facilitating fast and effective proceedings. As such, I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:06):** In reply: I thank the shadow Attorney General, and member for Wahroonga, the member for Gosford, the member for Fairfield and the member for Prospect for their contributions to the debate. The Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Amendment (Local Court Bail Division) Bill 2025 supports the establishment of the Chief Magistrate's new centralised Bail Division of the Local Court, and modernises the Evidence (Audio and Audio Visual Links) Act 1998—which I will refer to as the AVL Act—in relation to bail proceedings. A number of benefits are expected to flow from the new arrangements, which will create a sustainable operating model for managing bail matters.

The creation of a bail division will help to relieve workload pressure on regional and smaller metropolitan courts, magistrates, court users and staff, and contribute to the effective overall management of the workload of the Local Court. In addition, the bail division will enable magistrates to develop special expertise in bail matters and improve the quality and consistency of bail hearings. I note the comments from the member for Wahroonga referring to the "overwhelming majority" of people appearing in person before courts in bail matters. Developments in technology and changes implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic improved the capacity of courts across New South Wales to use audio visual links but, even before the pandemic, AVL was already used in a third of all first bail hearings in New South Wales. Since 23 November 2024 all New South Wales adult bail and detention applications have been centralised to a single location on weekends. The Supreme Court has centralised bail applications via AVL for many years for applicants from all over New South Wales. The bill reflects the modern operation of bail proceedings, and the measures in the bill progress sensible changes that will help to ensure timely access to bail magistrates across the State and relieve pressure on our Local Court, which is the busiest court in Australia.

I take this opportunity to address some further matters raised by members in debate. The member for Wahroonga referred to concerns about the impact of AVL on bail applications where magistrates will not be able to see people who are applying for bail in person. I note that AVL is already widely used in proceedings across New South Wales, not only in bail but also in criminal trial proceedings. In particular, AVL recorded evidence is used extensively in sexual assault and child sexual assault proceedings, including under measures that were progressed by the former Government. AVL allows judicial officers to see the faces and expressions of individuals applying for bail and to hear what they say. It allows juries to do that as well. Further, a 2021 study by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research entitled *Estimating the impact of audio-visual link on being granted bail* found that there was no meaningful difference in the likelihood of bail refusal for defendants appearing via AVL at their first court hearing compared with those appearing in person.

The member for Wahroonga commented on the need for the bail division and the provisions in the bill to be monitored. As I said previously, the operation of the new bail division will continue to be monitored by a cross-agency working group and the Chief Magistrate, and issues can be raised through that forum. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research will also monitor and evaluate the operation of the bail division, including whether the introduction of the bail division results in a change to any of the following outcomes: the nature of first court bail decisions; consistency in court bail determinations; time from police bail refusal to court decision; representation rates at first bail hearings; and proportion of matters finalised at the first court appearance.

The member for Wahroonga highlighted that the bail division may not be able to respond to local and regional concerns. I take the time to briefly highlight the benefits to regional and rural communities that the centralisation of bail is expected to offer, including access to magistrates with special expertise in bail matters and reduced need to transport accused detainees long distances to appear in person at court. Stage one of the bail division will focus on centralising first appearance bail matters from regional areas across New South Wales. I refer members to the public statement of the Chief Magistrate, which highlights a number of important matters. He stated:

The Bail Division consists of Judicial Officers with extensive experience in the criminal law, both in legal practice and on the Bench. Each of these Magistrates have experience of living and working in regional communities including those in the Far West, Northern Rivers, Western NSW and South-western NSW.

...

Recognising the need to become familiar with local areas, each Magistrate will remain in each region for the duration of their appointment to the Bail Division. The Bail Division will allow greater access to justice, as first instance bail applications will be prioritised in a dedicated Court instead of being dealt with within the busy lists of the various rural and regional Local Courts.

Legal representatives will continue to be able to make submissions about appropriate local supports and services for accused detainees. The bail division will be an open court, with support agencies—as well as family, friends and the media—able to access proceedings by an online link. The changes in this bill will benefit regional communities and ensure that they have access to judicial officers who have experience in regional communities and can prioritise important bail decisions. These amendments are important to ensure that the AVL Act reflects the modern operation of bail proceedings in the Local Court and supports the new centralised bail division, which will relieve pressure on the Local Court, create a sustainable operating model for managing bail matters and help to ensure timely access to justice that is both principled and consistent. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** 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.**

## **STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT (ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS TRIBUNAL) BILL 2025**

### **Second Reading Speech**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (14:15):** On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce the Statute Law Amendment (Administrative Appeals Tribunal) Bill 2025. This bill will support the Commonwealth Government's abolition of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the establishment of a new Federal administrative review body named the Administrative Review Tribunal. The Administrative Review Tribunal conducts independent reviews of administrative decisions made by Commonwealth government agencies, departments and Ministers under more than 400 Commonwealth Acts and legislative instruments. In order to ensure consistency with Commonwealth legislation, this bill will make consequential amendments to relevant New South Wales legislation and legislative instruments to remove references to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and replace them with references to the Administrative Review Tribunal, and remove references to the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975 and replace them with references to the Commonwealth Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024.

The Commonwealth Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024 abolished the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and established the Administrative Review Tribunal. This Act was assented to by the Parliament of Australia on 3 June 2024 and commenced by proclamation on 14 October 2024. As this change commenced by proclamation on 14 October 2024, an interim measure was included in section 4 of the Commonwealth Administrative Review Tribunal (Consequential and Transitional Provisions No. 1) Act 2024, which provides that

any reference to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal in legislation is a reference to the Administrative Review Tribunal, and that any reference to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975 of the Commonwealth in legislation is a reference to the Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024 of the Commonwealth.

I turn to the detail of the bill. Schedule 1 to the bill will make consequential amendments to the following Acts: Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (New South Wales) Act 1994 No 53; Australian Mutual Provident Society (Demutualisation and Reconstruction) Act 1997 No 56; Biological Control Act 1985 No 199; Competition Policy Reform (New South Wales) Act 1995 No 8; Corporations (New South Wales) Act 1990 No 83; Federal Courts (State Jurisdiction) Act 1999 No 22; Gene Technology (New South Wales) Act 2003 No 11; Marine Safety Act 1998 No 121; Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 No 73; Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 No 31; Research Involving Human Embryos (New South Wales) Act 2003 No 21; Sydney Harbour Tunnel (Private Joint Venture) Act 1987 No 49; and Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (New South Wales) Act 2005 No 12.

The bill will also make a consequential amendment to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014 to replace a reference to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal with a reference to the Administrative Review Tribunal. This bill is part of the Government's ongoing work in regularly reviewing and updating legislation to ensure that it continues to meet its objectives. This includes ensuring that New South Wales law keeps pace with developments in the legal system and remains consistent with Commonwealth legislation. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr ALISTER HENSKENS (Wahroonga) (14:19):** Unfortunately, although nothing within the Statute Law Amendment (Administrative Appeals Tribunal) Bill 2025 is objectionable in itself, its very existence is a complete abuse of parliamentary process. All that the bill does is replace redundant language within 13 New South Wales Acts that refer to Commonwealth legislation, where the Administrative Appeals Tribunal has been replaced with the Administrative Review Tribunal. In my 10 years in Parliament there have never been amendments like this which have not been put within a statute law miscellaneous provisions bill, which is what should have occurred on this occasion. The sole reason for the existence of this bill is to artificially pump up the number of bills that this Government is putting through Parliament as some sort of metric that it will rely upon at a later time.

The changes should have been put in a statute law miscellaneous provisions bill because they do not do anything substantive to the law of New South Wales. I note that the Attorney General was in the Chamber earlier, but he would have been too embarrassed to present this bill himself because it is such a disgraceful abuse of parliamentary process. It is a transparent attempt to artificially pump up the number of bills going through the Parliament. It should not have been presented in this way, and I call out the obvious: This bill is unnecessary.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (14:20):** I speak in debate on the Statute Law Amendment (Administrative Appeals Tribunal) Bill 2025. The bill performs a necessary function in ensuring that New South Wales legislation remains consistent with recent changes at the Commonwealth level. Specifically, the bill amends various State Acts and one regulation to replace references to the now-abolished Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal with references to its replacement, the Administrative Review Tribunal. The Commonwealth Government passed the Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024, which formally established the new body and repealed the previous Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975. The Act came into effect by proclamation on 14 October 2024. As an interim measure, transitional provisions have been in place to ensure continuity in references to the new tribunal. This bill ensures that our own legislation reflects those changes and removes reliance on transitional provisions over time.

Schedule 1 to the bill makes amendments to 13 Acts and one regulation spanning a range of subject areas, including agriculture, health, marine safety, gene technology and corporate law. Each of those pieces of legislation previously referenced the Administrative Appeals Tribunal as the relevant body for review of certain Commonwealth decisions. Those references will now point to the Administrative Review Tribunal. Additionally, the bill replaces references to the repealed Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975 with references to the Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024. They are technical but necessary updates that ensure the law remains clear and functional for all parties who rely on it, whether that be courts, agencies, legal practitioners or members of the public. While the content of the bill is largely procedural, its intent is important. It reflects a commitment to legislative clarity and interoperability between State and Commonwealth laws. It also reflects a significant principle: our commitment to making justice more accessible, transparent and fair. That matters deeply to the people I represent in Strathfield. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (14:23):** I speak in support of the Statute Law Amendment (Administrative Appeals Tribunal) Bill 2025, which makes consequential amendments to relevant legislation to remove references to the abolished Administrative Appeals Tribunal for consistency with Commonwealth

legislation. The Commonwealth Government abolished the Administrative Appeals Tribunal on 14 October 2024. It was replaced by the Federal administrative review body known as the Administrative Review Tribunal. Given that references to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal appear in various items of legislation, updates are required to ensure that New South Wales law is fit for purpose and remains consistent with Commonwealth legislation. Specifically, the bill updates 13 Acts by replacing outdated references to the now-abolished Administrative Appeals Tribunal with correct references to the Administrative Review Tribunal and the Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024.

The bill amends the Australian Mutual Provident Society (Demutualisation and Reconstruction) Act 1997, the Corporations (New South Wales) Act 1990, the Federal Courts (State Jurisdiction) Act 1999, the Agricultural and Veterinary Chemical (New South Wales) Act 1994, the Biological Control Act 1985, the Gene Technology (New South Wales) Act 2003, the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022, the Poisons and Therapeutic Good Act 1966, the Research Involving Human Embryos (New South Wales) Act 2003, the Marine Safety Act 1998, the Sydney Harbour Tunnel (Private Joint Venture) Act 1987, the Water Efficiency Labelling and Standards (New South Wales) Act 2005, and the Competition Policy Reform (New South Wales) Act 1995. The Administrative Review Tribunal plays a critical role, particularly in Fairfield, with respect to applications being made to it. Maintaining the coherence and quality of New South Wales legislation is a matter of significant public interest, as it enables the effective operation of our legal system. This bill is therefore vital to ensuring our laws remain relevant and aligned with current practice. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect) (14:25):** I speak in support of the Statute Law Amendment (Administrative Appeals Tribunal) Bill 2025. I thank the Hon. John Graham, MLC, Special Minister of State, and his department for the preparation of the bill. The bill makes an important amendment to support the Commonwealth Government's abolition of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal [AAT]. It also supports the establishment of a new Federal administrative review body, the Administrative Review Tribunal [ART]. I recognise our colleagues in the Commonwealth Government for their efforts to review the operations and effectiveness of the AAT and implement this important change.

The bill supports the establishment of the ART. The ART conducts independent reviews of administrative decisions made by Commonwealth government agencies, departments and Ministers under more than 400 Commonwealth Acts and legislative instruments. To ensure consistency in how the ART will operate, the bill will make consequential amendments to New South Wales legislation to remove any references to the AAT and replace them with references to the new body. It will also effect removal of references to the Commonwealth Administrative Review Tribunal Act 1975 and replace them with references to the Commonwealth Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024. Whilst only effecting consequential amendments, this bill is an important measure to ensure the effective operation of the ART to provide timely, just and fair administrative review pathways.

I now address the amendments within the bill. The Commonwealth Administrative Review Tribunal Act 2024 abolished the former tribunal and established the Administrative Review Tribunal. Assented to by the Parliament of Australia on 3 June 2024 and commencing on proclamation on 14 October 2024, the Act provided the framework for a change to those Federal administrative review bodies. Upon that assent, the ART was established. Schedule 1 to the bill makes consequential amendments to relevant Acts and instruments in New South Wales to support the setting up of the ART. In the interests of expediency, I will not name each Act affected but, to name a few, the bill includes amendments to the Competition Policy Reform (New South Wales) Act 1995, the Corporations (New South Wales) Act 1990, the Federal Courts (State Jurisdiction) Act 1999, the Marine Safety Act 1998, the Medicines, Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 2022 and many others. The bill also makes a consequential amendment to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Regulation 2014 to replace a reference to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

The bill effects a change from the AAT to the ART, but it is more than just a name change. In his second reading speech to the Parliament of Australia, the then Attorney-General noted that:

the AAT no longer enjoys the trust and confidence of the Australian community it serves, and is not fit-for-purpose.

Key problems with the existing tribunal include appointments by the former Liberal-Nationals Government of individuals on the basis of their involvement with the party, not on merit. This included the appointment of as many as 85 former Liberal MPs, failed Liberal candidates and former Liberal staffers. The AAT was also not financially sustainable and prone to significant delays in the hearing of applications before the tribunal.

Whilst only making consequential amendments, this bill is a key piece in the larger picture to establish a more effective Federal administrative review body. The Albanese Labor Government abolished the AAT and established the ART to better serve the interests of the Australian community. The AAT proved an ineffective tribunal. Rather than following the appropriate merits review process to ensure that the right people were making

key decisions, the former Federal Liberal Government parachuted in its mates. This fatally compromised the AAT, undermining its independence and eroding the quality and efficiency of its decision-making.

One legacy of the former Federal Liberal Government was the amalgamation of the AAT with the Social Security Appeals Tribunal, the Migration Review Tribunal and the Refugee Review Tribunal. This created a decades-long backlog that left people in New South Wales vulnerable, such as an older Australian waiting to receive the correct pension; a veteran injured fighting for our country waiting for compensation for his service injury; a mother to a non-verbal child with autism waiting to find out whether she is eligible for NDIS funding and living below the poverty line in the meantime; and a father who fled persecution in Myanmar waiting for the determination of his protection visa application, knowing that he will surely face execution if forced to return home.

A shattering example of this was the establishment of the Immigration Assessment Authority [IAA] in 2015 as an independent authority within the Migration and Refugee Division of the AAT. Time and again, we saw examples of the previous Federal Liberal Government not caring about the correct tribunal process, nor the impact it had on our justice system. However, the reforms in the bill and the solution of the establishment of the ART change everything. The Albanese Labor Government has implemented a solution to this problem. Seeking to restore trust and confidence in Australia's system of administrative review, it established the ART, which will offer a new, efficient, accessible, independent and fair review body that is focused on its applicants. After consultation with invested stakeholders, including a dedicated taskforce led by former Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, KC, and former Justice of the High Court of Australia the Hon. Patrick Keane, AC, KC, a new design for the ART was determined.

In conclusion, it is clear that the AAT had developed systemic problems in its operation. The Federal Government acted to correct those. Through this bill, the New South Wales Government supports this initiative. This is another example of this Government's commitment to continual review to ensure that our laws are regularly reviewed and updated to meet their objectives. The Minns Labor Government is committed to ensuring that New South Wales legislation reflects developments in the legal system, working in tandem with our Federal Albanese Labor Government colleagues to get the job done. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour) (14:33):** On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: In reply: I thank the members who contributed to this debate. I am sorry that the member for Wahroonga and shadow Attorney General does not agree with the way the bill has been drafted, but nonetheless I thank him. I also thank the member for Strathfield, the member for Fairfield and the member for Prospect. The bill reflects the Government's ongoing commitment to good governance through the regular review and update of legislation in response to identified needs. The Commonwealth Government abolished the Administrative Appeals Tribunal on 14 October 2024 to establish a new Federal administrative review body, the Administrative Review Tribunal. Accordingly, the bill makes consequential amendments to relevant New South Wales legislation and instruments to reflect this change and ensure that the law in New South Wales keeps pace with developments in the legal system and remains consistent with Commonwealth legislation.

I will briefly address some of the matters raised during the debate. The bill is part of the Government's ongoing work of regularly reviewing and updating legislation to ensure good governance and effective legislation. This bill makes consequential amendments across legislation in a range of portfolio areas to reflect the Commonwealth abolishing the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and establishing the Administrative Review Tribunal. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Donna Davis):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Ms ANNA WATSON:** On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## **CRIMES AMENDMENT (SEXUAL OFFENCES AND FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION) BILL 2025**

### **First Reading**

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



## Second Reading Speech

**Mr MICHAEL DALEY (Maroubra—Attorney General) (14:36):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I begin by acknowledging the family members of Jacinta Rose "Cindy" Smith who are in the gallery. Cindy was a First Nations Wangkumara girl, born to parents Dawn and Neil in 1972. Dawn and Kerrie, Cindy's sister, are with us today. On behalf of the Parliament of New South Wales and all members, I offer them our warmest welcome. Cindy and her cousin Mona Lisa Smith, a First Nations Murrawarri and Kunja girl, died in the early hours of 6 December 1987 after the vehicle they were passengers in, driven by a 40-year-old man, crashed. They were aged just 15 and 16. Their deaths were a profound tragedy, and their families have been campaigning for change and justice for them for decades. The inquest into Mona and Cindy's deaths, which concluded last year, was a direct result of their unrelenting advocacy, as is one of the changes in the Crimes Amendment (Sexual Offences and Female Genital Mutilation) Bill 2025, which I am proud to bring to this place today on their behalf. I also acknowledge representatives of the National Justice Project, particularly my friend George Newhouse, who have been working with Cindy and Mona's families to advocate for change for a very long time.

It goes without saying that sexual offending is one of the most heinous forms of criminal behaviour. It is a violation of a person in circumstances of significant vulnerability, and the impacts often stay with victim-survivors for the rest of their lives. Worse than that, in too many cases it contributes to intergenerational trauma that causes damage for generations. No less serious is female genital mutilation, recognised internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women. Such practices can cause significant harm, have no health benefits and have no place in New South Wales. The bill contains several amendments to criminal offences relating to these behaviours that form part of the Government's ongoing program of legislative review and reform to provide better protections for victim-survivors. The reforms in the bill are responsive to court decisions, inquest findings and other relevant developments that have highlighted opportunities for enhancement or improvement. They will ensure that our criminal law remains fit for purpose in a modern New South Wales.

Before I speak about the detail of the bill, I note the subject matter that is dealt with is of a highly sensitive nature and may be distressing for some people. Please note that hereafter I will be referring to child sexual assault, sexual assault, sexual misconduct committed against a deceased First Nations woman and female genital mutilation. There are four key reforms in the bill. I will go through each of them in detail, but in summary they are as follows. Firstly, the bill will make a number of changes in relation to the offences that criminalise female genital mutilation. Principally, these will clarify that the offences apply to adult victims as well as child victims, and that the conduct covered is not limited to acts carried out for ritualistic or traditional purposes only. This amendment addresses limitations on the operation of the offences arising from the Court of Criminal Appeal's interpretation of their scope in the case of *Russell v R* [2023] NSWCCA 272.

Secondly, the bill will expand the existing offences for sexual acts with or towards a child to also apply to sexual acts done in the presence of a child, where that presence is a source of sexual gratification and/or arousal. This reform follows the Court of Criminal Appeal decision of *Director of Public Prosecutions (NSW) v Presnell* [2022] NSWCCA 146, which clarified the scope of the existing offences and led to the identification of a gap that will be addressed by the changes in this bill. Thirdly, the bill will enable a trier of fact to return a special verdict in circumstances where there is uncertainty about whether a victim was alive or dead at the time an offender commits an act of sexual interference. This amendment responds to the 2024 report of the coronial inquest into the deaths of Jacinta Rose "Cindy" Smith and Mona Lisa Smith.

Fourthly, the bill will amend the definition of "child" for the purpose of the child abuse material offences, so that they will apply to material that depicts the abuse of children under 18 years of age, lifted from 16 years of age. This will bring New South Wales into alignment with several other jurisdictions, including the Commonwealth, and acquit our obligations under international instruments of the International Labour Organization, to which Australia is a party. The bill has been informed by careful consultation with key stakeholders including justice agencies, legal peak bodies, and domestic, family and sexual violence sector specialist organisations. I thank these organisations for the time they have taken to engage with the Government in refining these reforms.

The first reform in the bill relates to the offences for female genital mutilation under the Crimes Act 1900. Section 45 of the Act prohibits a person from performing female genital mutilation on another person, or aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring a person to perform such practices on another person. Section 45A prohibits a person from taking another person from New South Wales, or arranging for another person to be taken from New South Wales, with the intention of having female genital mutilation practices performed on them. Both offences rely on the same definition of female genital mutilation.

In the Russell case, the appellant conducted unregulated trade as an "extreme body modification artist". He was found guilty in the District Court of one charge of performing female genital mutilation, following a cosmetic procedure performed on a 29-year-old woman. On appeal before the New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal, the appellant successfully argued that section 45 of the Act only criminalises female genital mutilation practices committed on female children and, further, is limited to when those practices are performed for ritualistic or traditional purposes. This decision applied what the Court of Criminal Appeal termed the "seriously considered dicta" of the High Court in the earlier case of *The Queen v A2* [2019] HCA 35.

Female genital mutilation practices can be, and are, performed on adult women. Whether performed on children or adults, female genital mutilation practices are harmful. It is clear that the intention of the Parliament when first passing laws banning female genital mutilation was to prevent these practices from occurring in New South Wales at all, and the amendments in this bill ensure that will continue to be the case. Items [1] and [5] of schedule 1 to the bill will put beyond doubt that both child and adult victims are protected by the offences in section 45 and section 45A of the Act. There is a number of sound and clear reasons for this. Firstly, this reflects the original policy intent of the Parliament and will prevent the perverse outcome that limiting the offences to child victims may encourage those who engage in such practices to wait until their victims are adults. Secondly, some forms of female genital mutilation are especially relevant to adult women, such as re-infibulation after childbirth.

Thirdly, regardless of the age of the victim, such practices are abhorrent. When Parliament last considered reform to these offences in 2014, it was accepted that the immediate harm to the girl or woman can include severe pain, haemorrhage, tetanus and sepsis, and that long-term health problems and pain are associated with the practice. It is important that our criminal offences remain robust in the condemnation of such completely and utterly unacceptable practices. Items [2] and [6] of schedule 1 to the bill clarify that the offences are not limited to acts engaged in for ritualistic or traditional purposes. Again, this amendment is being made for sound and clear reasons. Firstly, while there has been a historical focus on such purposes, it is now well established that female genital mutilation is not limited to such circumstances. This is reflected in the definitions used internationally by the World Health Organization and in Australia by key medical bodies such as the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, which are not limited to ritualistic or traditional contexts.

Secondly, retaining a limitation to ritualistic or traditional practices in the offences could unnecessarily increase the complexity of prosecutions, raising questions as to what the overriding purpose of the procedure was, rather than the procedure itself and the harm it causes. Thirdly, there is a clear risk that such a limitation would exclude certain practices outside a ritualistic or traditional purpose that are still obviously harmful and should not be allowed. Clarifying that these offences apply to adults regardless of their purpose may invite questions as to the balance we need to strike with adult women's bodily autonomy and the potential application of the offences to consensual surgical and non-surgical interventions. This is something that has been carefully considered in the progression of these amendments. We have considered them carefully, consulting heavily with and relying on advice from NSW Health.

The current drafting of section 45 (3) of the Crimes Act 1900 already makes clear that the performance of three types of surgical operations does not constitute an offence of female genital mutilation. First, under section 45 (3) (a) an operation that is necessary for the health of the person on whom it is performed, and which is performed by a medical practitioner, is not considered female genital mutilation. This provision aligns with widely accepted policy definitions that female genital mutilation refers to practices that do not have a medical function. Such operations can include female genital cosmetic surgery, when performed by a medical professional. The term "necessary for the health of the person" includes where operations are necessary for the mental health of the person. This is the appropriate balance, noting that surgical procedures should only be performed by appropriate medical practitioners.

Second, under section 45 (3) (b) of the Act an operation performed on a person in labour, or who has just given birth, for medical purposes connected with that labour or birth, when performed by a medical practitioner or authorised professional, is not female genital mutilation. One of the key differences under the current provision is that these procedures are able to be performed by "authorised professionals", in addition to medical practitioners, without the person committing an offence of female genital mutilation. Currently, "authorised professional" is defined in section 45 (7) of the Act to include a registered midwife or overseas equivalent if the operation is performed outside Australia, midwifery student or medical student. Item [4] of schedule 1 to the bill will add a regulation-making power to enable other classes of persons to be prescribed as "authorised professionals". This will ensure that this legislation can be updated as needed, in line with evolving medical practice or to address certain circumstances. While the bill does not prescribe any additional authorised professionals at this time, future inclusions, if any, will be subject to consultation with peak medical organisations

and the Ministry of Health. Third, under section 45 (3) (c), a sexual reassignment procedure performed by a medical practitioner is not female genital mutilation. This provision is not being amended and will remain in place.

While the current law is clear on surgical procedures, the bill makes some changes to exempt certain non-surgical procedures. Again, we have introduced these provisions after consulting with medical and health professionals. Schedule 1 [3] inserts new subsection (4A) (a), which provides that piercing and tattooing performed in accordance with applicable legal, professional and ethical requirements are not female genital mutilation. Piercing and tattooing are well regulated procedures in New South Wales, including by the regulatory frameworks for health and safety under the Public Health Act 2010 and its regulations, and the licensing framework under the Tattoo Industry Act 2012. Piercing and tattooing for minors are further regulated under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998. This includes a prohibition on genital piercings for all children under the age of 16. The explicit exemptions for piercing and tattooing included in the bill will have the benefit of providing certainty to people lawfully providing such services that they will not be committing an offence of performing female genital mutilation. Of course, if these procedures are performed in contravention of the required standards, they can be considered female genital mutilation.

Schedule 1 [3] also provides a regulation-making power under new subsection (4A) (b) to exempt other non-surgical procedures. This provides flexibility in the event that other non-surgical industries become regulated in an analogous manner to piercing and tattooing and it is appropriate to also exempt such procedures. Taken together, the reforms to the female genital mutilation offences made by the bill will restore the original scope of the offences and ensure that they protect women and girls, while improving clarity and certainty for lawful surgical and non-surgical procedures that are not intended to be captured.

The second reform contained in the bill are the amendments to the sexual act offences involving children at schedule 1 [7] to [10]. Currently, part 3, division 10, subdivision 7 of the Crimes Act 1900 contains a series of offences relating to sexual acts "with or towards" a child. Sexual act offences cover conduct that is sexual but is not sexual intercourse or sexual touching. The different sexual act offences relate to different circumstances—namely, the age of the child, whether the sexual act occurs in circumstances of aggravation and whether the act is done for the production of child abuse material. These offences carry different maximum penalties, reflecting the different levels of seriousness of the conduct. While the offences are distinct, they do share core elements. The critical term here is that the sexual act in question must be performed "with or towards" the child.

In Presnell, the Court of Criminal Appeal held that the term "with or towards" requires an intention, on some level, to engage the child physically. In that case, the accused person was charged with one count of intentionally carrying out a sexual act towards a child under 10. The prosecution's case was that the accused was masturbating while the child was laying with his back to the accused and playing on a mobile phone. It was not disputed that the accused was hiding his actions from the child. The majority held that in this case, since it was not disputed that the accused person was hiding his actions from the child, there was no evidence to infer an intention to engage in a physical way with the child. Therefore, the masturbation was not "with or towards" the child, and the offence did not apply.

The amendments in schedule 1 [7] to [10] expand the sexual act offences to capture sexual acts done in the presence of a child, where the presence of the child is a source of sexual gratification or arousal. This change will capture circumstances where the physical presence of a child is being used for the sexual gratification of the offender and as part of a sexual act, even if there is no intention to engage the child physically. The criminal law should prohibit sexual acts engaged in whilst in the presence of a child, where that child is a source of sexual gratification. Engaging in this type of behaviour suggests a sexual interest in children and willingness to act on that interest in a child's presence. There should be no doubt that children should be protected from conduct of this type. The amendment is specifically limited to circumstances where the presence of the child is a source of sexual arousal or gratification. Those are the circumstances we want to prohibit, and this element ensures that the provision does not criminalise any unintended conduct. I also note that this amendment applies only to the sexual act offences involving children and not the sexual act offences involving adults.

The third reform in the bill enables a special verdict where there is uncertainty as to whether an offender engaged in sexual interference with a victim while the victim was alive or deceased. This reform responds to the tragic circumstances of the deaths of cousins Mona Lisa Smith and Jacinta Rose "Cindy" Smith. Both Mona and Cindy died as a result of a motor vehicle crash outside of Bourke in 1987. The car was driven by a fellow by the name of Mr Alexander Grant, who was charged with two counts of culpable driving by driving under the influence causing death, but was ultimately acquitted by a jury. Horrifyingly, evidence from the scene of the crash suggested that Cindy had been subjected to some form of sexual interference or touching after the crash. However, at the time, a charge of indecent interference with a dead body against Mr Grant was not pursued because the time of Cindy's death could not be determined.

A coronial inquest into the deaths of Cindy and Mona was completed in April 2024, after much lobbying. The State Coroner found that their deaths were caused by the motor vehicle crash, and the vehicle was driven by Mr Grant. The State Coroner also found that Cindy had been sexually interfered with after death. The State Coroner's findings in this matter are both devastating and disturbing, and highlight several deficiencies in the justice system's response to Mona and Cindy's deaths in 1987. This includes a lacuna in the law in relation to the sexual interference Cindy was subjected to.

We have criminal offences for non-consensual sexual conduct involving living persons and for indecent interference with dead bodies. But as the coronial inquest showed in stark detail, an offender can escape liability where sexual misconduct occurred but a trier of fact is not able to be satisfied beyond reasonable doubt as to whether the victim was alive or deceased, due to the inconclusiveness about the time of death. This is because, on the one hand, a sexual offence without consent can only be committed on a living person and, on the other hand, an offence of indecent interference with a dead human body can only be committed once the victim is deceased. Allowing a perpetrator to escape accountability through such a technicality is clearly unacceptable. What happened to Cindy in 1987 should never happen to another person or their family again. This reform, brought about by the tireless advocacy of Cindy and Mona's families, will make sure that it never does.

Schedule 1 [11] inserts new section 80AH, which provides that a trier of fact may return a special finding that it is satisfied beyond a reasonable doubt that the accused either committed a sexual offence under division 10 of part 3 of the Crimes Act 1900 or indecently interfered with a dead human body under section 81C (a), but is not satisfied as to which of the offences was committed due to uncertainty about whether the victim was alive or deceased at the time the conduct the subject of the offence occurred. If such a special verdict is returned, the accused person is then liable to be sentenced on the basis of whichever offence has the lesser maximum penalty. The special verdict will be available to be returned only where the accused has been charged with either a sexual offence or indecently interfering with a dead human body, and where all other elements of each of the offences are met. This includes, for the purposes of certain sexual offences, that the person did not consent.

While a novel reform in this context, this reform aligns with the existing special verdict provisions under section 121 of the Crimes Act 1900, which applies to the offences of larceny and receiving. This reform will commence on a date to be fixed by proclamation to enable necessary systems upgrades to be made. As part of this new special verdict, the bill also makes a supporting amendment to strengthen the penalty for the offence of indecent interference with a dead human body under section 81C (a) of the Crimes Act 1900. Schedule 1 [12] will increase the maximum penalty for this offence from two to three years imprisonment.

The other criminal conduct relating to dead human bodies currently covered by section 81C (b) is much more expansive. It can include, for example, offering indignity to human remains, which could be lower level conduct in comparison with sexual interference. This bill will therefore move the offence under section 81C to a tiered penalty structure, which recognises that sexual offending is generally considered more serious than other forms of offending against a person. Section 81C is already listed in table 1 of schedule 1 to the Criminal Procedure Act 1986. This means the offence will be tried summarily, unless the prosecution or accused person elects to have it dealt with on indictment. I again acknowledge the Smith family and the National Justice Project on this issue and thank them. Law reform cannot erase the tragedy of the loss of those two little girls, but I am grateful to have had the opportunity to improve the law and make sure that no other offenders will avoid justice in the future.

The final reform in the bill is the increase in the relevant age for child abuse material from 16 years of age to 18 years of age in schedule 1 [13]. Consequential amendments to remove redundant terms are included in schedule 1 [14] to [16]. Division 15A of the Crimes Act 1900 sets out the offences relating to child abuse material. These offences cover the production, dissemination or possession of child abuse material, as well as offences relating to administering a digital platform or encouraging use of a digital platform to deal with child abuse material. This component of the bill is simple. It will amend the definition of child under section 91FA to refer to a person under 18 years of age rather than a person under 16 years of age. This amendment will have application to all of the offences in this division because of the interaction with the definition of child abuse material under section 91FB.

This definition has three key components. First, the material must depict or describe a person who is, who appears to be, or who is implied to be a child. The revised and higher age will automatically be applied to this limb of the child abuse material definition. Second, the material must be a depiction or description of either a child as a victim of torture, cruelty or physical abuse, a child engaged in a sexual pose or sexual activity, or is in the presence of another person who is engaged in such a pose or activity; or the private parts of a child, which refers to their genital or anal area, or the breasts of a female person or a transgender or intersex person who identifies as a female. Third, the depiction or description must be done in a way that reasonable persons would regard as being in all the circumstances offensive.

That is an objective element, and the provision further sets out matters to be considered in deciding this element and include the standards of morality, decency and propriety generally accepted by reasonable adults; the literary, artistic, educational or journalistic merit, if any, of the material; and the general character of the material, including whether it is of a medical, legal or scientific character. Therefore, the amendment in this bill will extend our existing offences to also criminalise the production, possession and distribution of material depicting the abuse of people under 18 years of age.

The New South Wales Government is introducing this change of a number of reasons. First, this change brings New South Wales into line with other jurisdictions, such as Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory the Northern Territory and, most importantly, with the Commonwealth. The comparable Federal child abuse material offences apply to the possession, production and distribution of material depicting sexual conduct involving those under 18 years of age through a postal or similar service or through a carriage service. These offences already provide significant coverage, as in our modern world the majority of child abuse material is transmitted digitally, which is through a carriage service, but Commonwealth offences may not be applicable to all circumstances because they require proof that the person intended the use of a carriage service for distribution and access—a limiting element that reflects the Commonwealth's constitutional remit.

Reform to the New South Wales offences will provide complementary coverage and fill any potential policy and legislative gaps. This reform also aligns with a broader approach to material depicting under-18s. Most notably, under the *National Classification Code*, material that describes or depicts in a way that is likely to cause offence to a reasonable adult, a person who is, or appears to be, a child under 18, whether the person is engaged in sexual activity or not, must be classified as Refused Classification. The sale or public exhibition of material that is Refused Classification is prohibited.

Second, this amendment will acquit New South Wales's obligation under convention C182 of the International Labour Organization [ILO]. Australia is a signatory to this convention. Under Article 1, signatories are required to take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Article 3 describes what is considered the worst forms of child labour for the purposes of C182, and this includes the use, procurement or offering of children under 18 for child prostitution, the production of pornography, or pornographic performances. In 2022 the ILO specifically observed that the current age threshold for these offences at 16 meant that New South Wales was not compliant. The organisation stated:

*The Committee once again urges the Government to take the necessary measures to ensure that all child victims of prostitution who are under the age of 18 years...*

This bill makes that change. I briefly touch on the potential for inadvertent capture arising from this expansion. I appreciate that there may be concerns that this reform could apply to mutually consensual sexting conduct between individuals who are above the age of consent. That is not the intention of this reform.

Commonwealth offences already utilise the under-18 threshold and have not given rise to any known issues. There are also a number of safeguards that apply against those concerns in existing New South Wales legislation. Firstly, the definition of child abuse material requires that the depiction or description must be in a way that reasonable persons would regard as being offensive in all the circumstances. Having regard to the standards of morality, decency and propriety in our current society, ordinary sexting conduct where all the individuals are above the age of consent and otherwise are in a consensual relationship would not appear to meet this standard of offensiveness.

Second, the relevant New South Wales offences already include defences and exceptions that go above and beyond those available for Commonwealth offences. Briefly, these include defences under section 91HA, including that the only person depicted in the material is the accused person. For example, this means that a person who takes nude photographs of themselves would not be captured by the offences. An exception under section 91HB for possession of child abuse material is if the possession occurred when the accused was under 18 and a reasonable person would consider the possession acceptable having regard to the nature and content of the material; the circumstances of its production and how it came into possession of the accused; the age, intellectual capacity and other relevant circumstances of the child depicted and the accused person; and the relationship between the accused and the child depicted. In addition, there is a requirement for DPP to approve the commencement of prosecution for those under 18 years of age for offences under sections 91G and 91H. These robust safeguards were already in place and will continue to apply to the expanded offences to ensure their appropriate application in tackling exploitative material involving minors.

This bill brings together a number of important improvements to the criminal law. It demonstrates the continuing efforts of the Minns Government to identify and address gaps or issues in the criminal law. The bill ensures that our criminal law is better able to protect victims of serious criminal conduct. We are protecting children who may be exposed to risk from sexual acts performed in their presence. We are protecting young people

from potential exploitation through child abuse material. We are ensuring that female genital mutilation is clearly prohibited for women and girls regardless of the motivation or purpose of the conduct. We are ensuring that perpetrators are not able to escape accountability for the truly horrific act of sexually interfering with a person who is near death.

I acknowledge the agencies, organisations and individuals who made representations to me and others in the New South Wales Government about these reforms, which update the statute book with critical improvements. We consulted widely over a long period to make sure that we got these provisions right. We believe we have got them right. These reforms collectively ensure that our criminal law remains fit for purpose and operates as intended. The bill is one part of our Government's ongoing efforts to reform and improve legislation. All members in this place contribute to that process. I commend the bill to the House.

**Debate adjourned.**

**HEALTH SERVICES AMENDMENT (NORTHERN BEACHES HOSPITAL DEED TERMINATION)  
BILL 2025**

**First Reading**

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

**Second Reading Speech**

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (15:11):** I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

I am pleased to bring the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025 before the House. In recent years, the people of the Northern Beaches have been the subjects of an experiment in public health. The Northern Beaches Hospital opened in Frenchs Forest in my electorate of Wakehurst in 2018. It replaced two former public hospitals that had serviced the area: Mona Vale Hospital and Manly Hospital. The Northern Beaches Hospital is a public-private partnership [PPP] hospital where public health services are paid for by the New South Wales Government but delivered by the private operator Healthscope. It is the only hospital operating under this model in the State. This delivery model is underpinned by a project deed—a contract that is hundreds of pages long between the State and the private operator Healthscope, which expires in 2038.

The people of the Northern Beaches were promised that the new Northern Beaches Hospital would provide the best quality health care. In fact, Healthscope committed to perform in the top quartile of comparable hospitals on many measures. The State gets these superior services at a discount. Sound too good to be true? It turns out that it is. The PPP experiment for acute hospital services for public patients has not worked. The PPP model of the Northern Beaches Hospital has been controversial from the start and has come under increasing pressure and scrutiny in recent times. Several families have come forward with their experiences at the hospital, including the Massa family, who experienced the death of their toddler Joe; and the Pitman and Atkinson family, who lost baby Harper. On Monday this week, Helen and Dan Broadly told their story publicly about their baby, Finn.

In addition to these high-profile cases, there have been hundreds of submissions to the parliamentary inquiry into the Northern Beaches Hospital that is currently underway. I sincerely thank everyone who has come forward. These individual tragedies give a human face to the systemic problems with the PPP operating model. These structural challenges were made clear when the Audit Office of New South Wales published its performance audit of the hospital in April this year. This was a major milestone in the push for greater transparency and accountability at this facility. The report concluded:

The Northern Beaches Hospital public-private partnership is not effectively delivering the best quality integrated health services and clinical outcomes to the Northern Beaches community and the State – the standard required under the arrangement and the key objective of the project deed.

The report details a whole range of concerning findings that have been widely discussed, so I will not elaborate more on them. The formality of a report by the Auditor-General does not and cannot be expected to capture the true human cost of how the PPP model is operating in the Northern Beaches. Front of mind for me are the people I have met and their stories. This includes the nurses, midwives, doctors, security guards and cleaners who are burnt out and under-resourced, and the families who are traumatised by their treatment at Northern Beaches Hospital. A submission to the Auditor-General by a staff medical council that represents over 300 doctors and fellows at the hospital is also seared into my brain. It is shocking reading. I will quote from the submission:

It is the opinion of the MSC that the current resources provided by Healthscope make clinical practice at NBH unsafe to both patients and clinicians, compromises patient care, is unsustainable and is a recipe for wholesale burnout.

I also quote a career nurse who has been at Northern Beaches Hospital since day one:

We leave a shift worrying that we haven't been able to give our best – because there's just not enough staff on the floor. We have minimal support staff, dysfunctional IT systems and nobody performs at their best inside a pressure cooker.

The quality of care that the Northern Beaches community continues to receive is only because of the amazing staff working at the hospital. The reality is that we are getting cut-cost health care at the Northern Beaches Hospital, and it is not sustainable. Staff are being squeezed and patients are being put at risk. Our community deserves a not-for-profit local public hospital.

The financial position of Healthscope is bad and getting worse. On April 10, Healthscope publicly announced its desire to commence discussions to return the public hospital at Northern Beaches Hospital to the New South Wales Government. It has been over two months since negotiations started, and the parent company of Healthscope has been handed to receivers in the interim. There is no sign of an agreement being reached. Northern Beaches Hospital staff and the community have been left in limbo. The staff and community need certainty. This bill provides a pathway to a timely resolution.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. In my view, an operator termination event occurred following the appointment of receivers to the parent entities of Healthscope and this resulted in a change in control under the deed without the State's consent. I understand that this is also the view of the Government. The Northern Beaches Hospital deed has two mechanisms to terminate the deed in whole or in part: a voluntary termination by the State, and a termination due to an operator default. Different compensation amounts are payable depending on whether the termination is an operator default termination or a voluntary termination. I am sure it will come as no surprise to any member that compensation will be more beneficial to Healthscope in the event of a voluntary termination, because that is the deal the former Government signed up to.

The grounds for an operator default termination include a change of control without the State's consent and an insolvency event. I agree with the Government that the appointment of receivers to the parent entities of Healthscope led to a change in control without the State's consent. This should properly be considered an event that triggers the operator default termination provisions in the deed, which would, therefore, entitle the Government to terminate the deed. Healthscope disputes that position. The Government has made it clear that a negotiated outcome is preferable. If an agreed outcome cannot be reached, then it is simply unacceptable for taxpayers to have to meet the risk and cost of what may be a protracted contractual dispute in the courts or for there to be ongoing uncertainty as to the future of the hospital.

Delays also risk undue stress and distraction falling on the shoulders of clinicians and managers at the Northern Beaches Hospital, who must remain focused on providing safe and effective care. The Government needs to step in and resolve the issue to ensure a smooth transition for patients, staff and the community as whole without Healthscope benefiting from a windfall. Healthscope has incurred costs associated with the building and operation of Northern Beaches Hospital. The deed in place with Healthscope contemplates an early end of the deed. I recognise the importance of the Government upholding its contractual obligations and, ordinarily, the Parliament would not interfere with the Government's contractual obligations. However, it is simply not acceptable to the New South Wales community for Healthscope to be allowed to continue to operate the hospital for at least until 2038. I am very concerned about the appointment of receivers to parent entities of Healthscope. Further, the New South Wales Auditor-General has concluded that:

The Northern Beaches Hospital public-private partnership is not effectively delivering the best quality integrated health services and clinical outcomes to the Northern Beaches community and the State ...

The Government needs to be able to act and address legislatively the issue of the status of the Northern Beaches Hospital expeditiously in a manner that protects patients, ensures continuity of services, provides for a fair and equitable outcome to both parties and ensures Healthscope does not benefit from a windfall gain. In addition, whether a resolution is found by negotiation or through legislative means, there needs to be scope for ministerial intervention to ensure a smooth transition of the hospital.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill proposes amendments to the Health Services Act to allow the Government to terminate the project deed on terms that are fair and equitable to both parties in all the circumstances, which includes compensation paid on the basis that there is an operator termination event. The final compensation figure is reached by subtracting the reasonable handover costs, including transition and remediation costs, that will be incurred by the State. The bill allows the Minister for Health to terminate the deed by statutory notice. Once such a notice is given, the deed will be taken to be terminated as if an operator termination event has occurred. That means the compensation payable will be under the operator default termination provisions of the deed. The bill makes clear that the State will not have any other liability as a result of the termination of the deed other than the operator default compensation.

The bill also displaces the dispute resolution provisions in the deed to create a clear process to resolve disputes, which I will come to shortly. The bill includes an additional requirement that Healthscope pay the State

additional handover costs, such as remediation and transition costs, that are reasonably expected to be incurred by the State in assuming control of the hospital long before it was ever intended to be handed back under the contract and transitioning the hospital to the public health system or another person. The deed factors in some handover costs associated with a termination when determining compensation based on an operator default. However, there are likely to be additional handover costs not contemplated by the deed. For example, the Auditor-General's report identified that the hospital's electronic clinical systems present quality and safety risks—a finding also made as long ago as 2020 by a New South Wales parliamentary inquiry.

There has also been public reporting of claims of equipment not being maintained or replaced at the hospital. I expect that those additional costs will be negotiated between NSW Health and the operator. In the event that there is not a negotiated outcome, and a statutory termination notice needs to be issued, the bill will require those costs to be accounted for. That is to account for the fact that, if a statutory termination notice is issued, the State will take over control of the hospital much earlier than intended and will incur significant handover costs that were not contemplated at the time of entering into the deed. In addition, given the Government's concerns with how the hospital has been run by the operator, a right to recover additional costs is required to ensure that the operator pays for unplanned costs, rather than New South Wales taxpayers, to allow for transition of the hospital back to the State with minimum disruption to patients and staff. The bill ensures that there is no double counting. If the handover costs are recoverable under the deed, they cannot be separately recoverable under the provisions in the bill.

The bill ensures that any compensation payable by the operator under the legislation is able to be recovered by the State under the parent company guarantee given by the Healthscope parent company entity. In relation to disputes about compensation, the bill displaces the provisions in the deed relating to dispute resolution and instead includes specific statutory provisions. Under the bill the parties have 30 days to negotiate compensation in relation to the compensation payable under the operator default provisions in the deed and the handover costs provided for in the bill, or another period specified by the Treasurer. If the parties cannot agree, they can ask the Treasurer to appoint an independent person to determine compensation. The independent person has the power to require the parties to provide information to assist in determining the compensation. That approach provides certainty that prolonged and protracted contractual disputes do not hang over the hospital and that the Government and Healthscope's lenders have a clear resolution pathway. That is important to support an orderly transition for staff and patients at Northern Beaches Hospital.

The bill also includes provisions for the Minister for Health to direct Healthscope or another person in relation to transitioning the operation of the hospital. That power applies irrespective of whether the transition of the hospital occurs following a negotiated outcome between the parties or the issue of a statutory termination notice. Transitioning a hospital from one operator to another is a massive undertaking that needs to be done carefully and in a way that minimises disruption to patients and staff. Normally, a transition would have a long lead time, with plans developed well in advance. However, due to the current situation with Healthscope, there may be some limitations on the ability to do that. As such, there needs to be a power to ensure that relevant directions can be given, if required, to ensure a smooth transition that minimises any possible impact on the safe and effective delivery of care.

I expressly acknowledge that the bill also includes some very broad regulation-making powers, particularly allowing the further modification of the Northern Beaches Hospital deed and project documents if required. It is absolutely vital that there is a smooth transition of the hospital. If parts of the deed might impact a smooth transition, there needs to be a mechanism that allows for it to be varied in order to protect patients and staff and ensure the hospital continues to function and provide vital health services to the people of the northern beaches. Section 2 allows the commencement of the provisions in the bill to commence on proclamation. Commencement on proclamation will allow NSW Health and the operator of the hospital time to attempt to reach a negotiated outcome before the Government has to rely on the legislation.

I acknowledge that it is highly unusual to allow for the Government to step in to legislatively override contractual arrangements, but it is a highly unusual arrangement and an extreme situation. The people of the northern beaches, and the whole of New South Wales, need confidence in their ability to access health services in the short and long term. The end of a public-private partnership designed to deliver a community hospital cannot be allowed to cause disruption to the community that the hospital serves. I recognise—and the Government has made clear that it also recognises—that there is a contract in place and, if possible, the end of that arrangement should be reached between the parties in a manner that protects the community. However, if that cannot happen, then it is right and proper for the Government to step in to ensure a smooth end to the agreement that delivers continuity of service, sustainability of employment for the workforce, a fair and equitable outcome for all parties and the best outcome for the State. It also must ensure that Healthscope does not benefit from a windfall gain.



I call on the Parliament to support the Government in its efforts to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. Again, I thank the health Minister, the Treasurer and their teams—in particular, Rosie, Esther and Melanie—for working with me to get to this point. I understand that one hospital should not be taking so much of our time. We all look forward to a day when that is not the case. The health Minister and the Treasurer have shown impressive leadership in dealing with the matter. They have brought real compassion, integrity, conviction and shrewdness to resolving it, from listening to grieving parents to negotiating with Healthscope and everything in between. To their credit, they came to the northern beaches for a community forum, which was attended by hundreds of mostly angry locals. They are briefing local members and meeting with hospital staff and their representatives. It is crucial that staff on the ground are listened to as the future of the hospital is decided.

I look forward to continuing to work together to deliver the best outcome possible. I say to the entire Parliament that I am grateful for the collective goodwill shown to date as we work together to resolve the unfortunate situation. I thank the Opposition, particularly shadow health Minister, the member for Vacluse, for her cooperation and support. Lastly, I acknowledge that nurses from the Northern Beaches Hospital are in the public gallery today, and I thank them for coming. I commend the bill to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Before I call the Minister, I too thank the nurses for being in the gallery today. I also thank them for their patience.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr RYAN PARK (Keira—Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast) (15:28):** I contribute to debate on the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. From the outset, I also acknowledge the nurses and midwives from the Nurses and Midwives' Association who are here today, particularly those from the Northern Beaches Hospital. I have had the opportunity to speak to them a couple of times, including as recently as last week. Our conversations are important as we work through a challenging situation. I assure them that we will continue to have many more discussions as we try to reboot the Northern Beaches Hospital. I acknowledge the member for Wakehurst for introducing the bill. It is an important bill, and one that he has advocated strongly for on behalf of his community. I have said before that this was the first issue that the member for Wakehurst raised with me as a new Minister, and I never stopped believing in his passion and his commitment to getting this resolved for his community. His community is very lucky to have him. I also thank the member for Pittwater, who has stood alongside the member for Wakehurst and ensured her community is kept informed, every step along the way.

At times, it is hard being local members in this place, and it is hard being local members out in the community, because people rightly want things turned around quickly. We understand that. Speaking as a local member, I am exactly the same. I acknowledge the patience and understanding the member for Pittwater has shown during this process as we try to unpack a difficult situation. I also acknowledge the shadow Minister and member for Vacluse, who is in the Chamber, as well as the member for Manly. They are also impacted by the challenges at the Northern Beaches Hospital, and I acknowledge their broad support of this bill and of what we are trying to do in relation to this issue. It is not easy for any of us. We are facing a challenging situation.

It is important to note that the contract entered into by the previous Coalition Government was for Healthscope to run the hospital. That experiment has been shown to have failed. I will talk about that in a moment. I have said it before in this place, and I will say it again: This was something that concerned me, outside of politics, from the very beginning. Labor opposed the privatisation from opposition when it was first introduced and remains steadfastly opposed to the model in government. We do not believe that it is the best way to deliver acute public health services.

But we, and I, respect the fact that the community votes in government. They voted in the previous Government. Labor was not successful. They voted in that Government, and that Government had a right to make its decision. The challenge now, for the Government, is to restore confidence and faith in the delivery of hospital services for the people of the northern beaches, restore the confidence and faith of the staff who work every day at that facility, and restore the confidence and faith of taxpayers, to whom we are responsible for spending money as wisely as we can.

A few weeks ago, the Parliament passed historic legislation, colloquially known as Joe's law, to prohibit the Government from entering into this type of public-private partnerships, specifically in relation to the building and operating of public acute hospitals in New South Wales. I am pleased to update the House that that bill, the Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition) Bill 2025, recently received assent from Her Excellency the Governor and is now in force. We need to pause to remember, and to ensure that we, as parliamentarians, do not make this mistake again. We have a responsibility to learn from the past and to do whatever we can to ensure that future governments do not entertain a contract like this. It has not worked for the people of New South Wales, and

it certainly has not worked for the community of the northern beaches and the staff who are responsible for delivering those services.

However, the legislation passed a few weeks ago does not apply to the deed currently in place with Healthscope. It is future-thinking and not retrospective in nature. The Government is, however, very concerned about the deal that the Coalition Government signed the community up to in relation to the Northern Beaches Hospital. That is why we are pleased to speak in strong support of the bill from the member for Wakehurst. The Government acknowledges there is a deed in place. We are not denying that. It was put in place by a Government elected by the community, with the right to make decisions on the community's behalf.

However, through that deal, Healthscope has incurred costs for the building and operation of the Northern Beaches Hospital. In the ordinary course, as the member for Wakehurst has outlined and as I feel I should emphasise, the Government does not interfere with its contractual obligations. We do not do that. That is not par for the course for governments, and I respectfully say that has been the case for past governments. In a Westminster system, that is not what is typically done. But this is no ordinary course. With the appointment of receivers to the parent entities of Healthscope, the Government's view is that there has been a change in control under the deed without the State's consent, meaning that an operator termination event, in our view, has occurred. An operator termination event allows the State to terminate the deed. I acknowledge that Healthscope does not share this view.

The Government will continue to work with Healthscope and the receivers to achieve a satisfactory and fair resolution to the arrangement at the Northern Beaches Hospital. However, those attempts cannot continue indefinitely. Patients, staff, the people of New South Wales, the people of the northern beaches, and the communities that the hospital serves need certainty about the running of the hospital. Last week, when I spoke to hospital staff representative Shaye Candish, it was very clear to me that a timely resolution is something that they prioritise. I understand that, and I have received that message loud and clear. However, certainty is needed about the running of the hospital. A resolution needs to be on fair terms, and the transition needs to be done in a manner that ensures continuity of the safe delivery of health services. What we can never do is forget in these discussions and negotiations, in trying to resolve a complex situation, that we must continue to provide high-quality and safe care. That is paramount.

This is a challenge in an environment where the issue has been so widely publicised. I cannot walk in the shoes of those working at the hospital, but I acknowledge the difficulties that they must be facing at the moment, working at that facility. As their Minister, I want the staff to know that I hear that and I see that. I am not saying I understand it, but I am very empathetic towards it, and I certainly acknowledge their challenges. I know that I would find it a challenge, and I am sure they find it a challenge each and every day. Both the member for Pittwater and the member for Wakehurst have made it clear to me that that is a concern of theirs, and it remains a concern of the Government.

The bill from the member for Wakehurst will enable the deed to be terminated if negotiation attempts fail. I highlight and emphasise that it is only if negotiation attempts fail. We remain at the table. The Government, through both NSW Treasury and NSW Health, is trying to get a resolution. I acknowledge the teams from NSW Health and NSW Treasury that are working around the clock to try to resolve this. The bill will allow the Minister to terminate the project deed by statutory notice. That will mean that the compensation being paid to Healthscope will be on the basis that there is an operator termination event under the project deed, which will avoid the risk of a protracted legal dispute in relation to the termination of the deed. Providing that the State may also recover the reasonable handover costs that it incurs by assuming control of the hospital, the bill makes it clear that there will be no double counting. If the handover costs are already recoverable under the project deed, then they cannot be separately recovered under the provisions in the bill.

It also provides that the State will not have any other liability as a result of the termination of the project deed other than for an operator default termination. The bill displaces the dispute resolution provisions in the project deed and includes statutory dispute resolution provisions. It allows the Minister to direct Healthscope or another person in relation to transitioning the hospital to the State or another person or body. The bill provides certainty and clarity in the difficult and complex situation we find ourselves in. It provides a clear resolution pathway for all parties and, most importantly, for the community of the northern beaches. That is exactly what they need—a process that is done carefully and fairly, and minimises disruption to patients, staff and visitors.

This is by no means an attack on the private sector. The Government acknowledges the important role that private health facilities, hospitals and healthcare providers can, do and will play in our healthcare system. We acknowledge the organisations and companies that deliver services through hospitals and other health services. However, the Northern Beaches Hospital is a local community hospital. It needs to function as such in the short, medium and long term. Ideally, the end of the current public-private arrangement should be via agreement between the parties. That is what the Treasurer and I seek. However, if a fair resolution that provides certainty to the

community cannot be achieved in a timely manner, then it is necessary to have legislation in place to allow the Government to end the deed in a manner that protects patients, staff and New South Wales taxpayers.

I reiterate the extreme frustration that I feel as the Minister for Health over the fact that the former Government signed taxpayers up to this arrangement. We now have to try to resolve and clean up this situation. It is beyond complex. It is beyond challenging. We spend enormous amounts of time trying to resolve something that, to be frank, we should not have to resolve. At times, I feel that I know more about Northern Beaches Hospital than I do about Wollongong Hospital. This is a challenge for us as a government. This is a challenge for our staff and officials who are working on this. More than that, it is a challenge for the community and for their elected representatives and the staff who operates that health service.

I say to the staff and to their local MPs that we are determined to get this resolved. If the Treasurer and I could do it this afternoon, we would. But that is not possible. I do not want to put a timeline on the resolution of this. Instead, I want people to know that the Government is working around the clock to accelerate a resolution to the complex set of arrangements that we find ourselves in. I was taught to be up-front and direct with the people I try to serve. I say that not to pass judgement or kick this issue down the road, but to acknowledge that it is complex, it is difficult and it is challenging. It is also something that people want resolved quickly. Those two things have to converge as soon as possible.

Once again, I acknowledge the member for Wakehurst for bringing the bill to the Parliament and for his strong advocacy on behalf of his community alongside the member for Pittwater. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the ongoing stress and anguish the staff at Northern Beaches Hospital have experienced. They have made it clear to me a number of times that they feel they are losing staff because of this. I am extremely concerned about that. We are here because of tragedies involving children like Joe Massa. We are on a course to rectify that not just for the Massa family but the community more broadly. They and the House have my absolute commitment that I will do whatever I can to improve services to the people of the northern beaches. Like every other community, they deserve nothing less. We think the bill provides us with a pathway if things cannot be resolved, and I acknowledge the challenges faced by our staff, patients, community and their representatives in this place.

Bills like this are not crafted on their own. I acknowledge the team from NSW Health and the Ministry of Health for their tireless work over the past few months. I acknowledge the team from the Ministry of Health who were part of the negotiation team. They have been working furiously to try to unpack a complex situation. I acknowledge the team from NSW Treasury, who are doing fine work with NSW Health as we go on this journey. Among my personal staff, I acknowledge Rosie Rand and Mel Haskew for the enormous effort they have put into this piece of legislation. I acknowledge Ester from the Treasurer's office, who probably needs to bring a seat into my office. I feel I am a permanent resident of NSW Treasury at the moment, which I am sure frustrates her and her boss enormously. I acknowledge all of their work. This is difficult and complex work. We are trying to resolve this as quickly as possible. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vauchuse) (15:46):** I lead for the Opposition in debate on the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025 brought by the member for Wakehurst. The Opposition will not stand in the way of the passage of this bill. We support it in principle, consistent with the bipartisan approach we have maintained on matters relating to the Northern Beaches Hospital. The people of the northern beaches have spoken. Their confidence in the hospital has been shattered, and they want the hospital returned to public hands. We hear that, we respect that and we support a path forward.

The bill gives the Minister the power to terminate the contract with Healthscope in whole or in part via a statutory notice and to initiate negotiations regarding compensation. If an agreement cannot be reached, either the Treasurer or the operator can appoint an independent person to determine compensation. These are significant powers, and they reflect the exceptional circumstances at play. Healthscope's parent company is in receivership, the hospital is under intense scrutiny, and it is very clear that the community has lost faith. It is very dangerous if a community loses faith in their medical facility.

We support the Government's goal of ensuring New South Wales taxpayers do not pay a cent more than is appropriate for the hospital's return to public hands. We agree that Healthscope should not receive a windfall for failing to deliver on its obligations. We know from the Auditor-General's report that two offers were made in late 2023 to return the hospital to public hands, but these offers were rejected by the Government. The Opposition and the public do not know the full nature of those offers. Healthscope has been at the table negotiating terms for an exit. It has said publicly that it is not seeking windfall gains, so what is stopping the Government from coming to an agreement around terms of exiting the deed?

Without this bill, we do not know the answer to that question, but I sincerely hope that negotiations can come to a conclusion that is satisfactory for all parties without the need to exercise the powers that come with this bill. That would be the best outcome for the people of the northern beaches and New South Wales, and for future

business confidence. The bill asks the Parliament to place considerable trust in the Government. Most of the commercial details remain confidential. We have not seen Healthscope's compensation claim. We do not know what quantum is being discussed, and yet today the Parliament is being asked to provide the legal framework for a deed termination.

We understand the need for commercial-in-confidence provisions, but let us be honest about what that means: The Government is asking us to trust that the legislation is necessary and will be used judiciously. We give that trust—which is sometimes hard to do in this place, although we must—but we do not relinquish oversight. By the way, I make clear that I am addressing the Government directly with these concerns, noting that the bill has been drafted entirely by the Government even though it comes under the name of the member for Wakehurst, whose original bill was the motivation for our debate today. The bill provides the Minister with broad regulation-making power, but the Parliament retains disallowance powers. The Opposition will be watching those powers closely. If the Minister uses them in the course of negotiations, we expect full and timely transparency to the House.

Let me also sound a cautionary note: Governments enter into contracts with the private sector on behalf of the people of New South Wales. If contracts can be rewritten or terminated without certainty and due process, we risk undermining confidence in government partnerships and creating the potential for sovereign risk. That is not a theoretical concern; it affects our ability to attract private sector investment to support our New South Wales economy. There are government contracts for all sorts of services, be it at the new airport or rolling out renewable energy, IT services and other outsourced services. Contracts between governments and private entities should be trusted and relied upon. That is why the Opposition urges caution when it comes to the potential for rushed settlements. We support expediency in this case but expect the Government to "hasten carefully" to ensure that the State does not face legal recourse through these actions.

I remind members that the Coalition has been consistent in its multipartisan approach of working with both the Government and crossbench on the issue. To clearly repeat what I have said before in this place, the Coalition has no plans to build a northern beaches style hospital again. We have been absolutely unequivocal on that point. That is why we supported Joe's law, which was legislation to ensure it cannot happen in the future. The Northern Beaches Hospital model was a one-off model planned 11 years ago and built with the very best of intentions. It was successful on many measures outlined by the Auditor-General, but there is no doubt about the failure of that particular model. It should not and will not happen again. The former Coalition Government built or significantly upgraded 180 hospitals and health facilities, and had another 130 in the pipeline when it left government. None of those were public-private partnerships.

It has at times been disappointing to see the Minister for Health play politics with the issue, particularly during question time a couple of weeks ago, and talk about the political campaign he will mount at the next election. A scare campaign is not what the public wants. It does not reflect the truth of the matter, nor the constructive nature with which I and the Opposition have sought to engage with the Government on the issue. The Opposition has been supportive every step of the way in what it acknowledges is a very difficult situation. The Opposition bears no ill will towards anyone on the matter and seeks only to work collaboratively with the crossbench and the Minister to ensure an expedited exit of the partnership arrangement. Opposition members will continue to work constructively. I acknowledge the nurses and midwives present in the public gallery today. I know that it has been an extraordinarily difficult journey for them and for the doctors and administration staff at the Northern Beaches Hospital, as well as representatives from the Health Services Union.

A month or so ago, I was also at the public forum on the northern beaches where we heard stories from staff about being spat on or having their tyres slashed. That is completely unacceptable. I acknowledge the care that the staff proudly deliver to the community every day. The Auditor-General also acknowledged in his report that the Northern Beaches Hospital outperformed many public hospital peers on at least a dozen different metrics. I know that is because of the hard work and professionalism of the staff. It is my hope that, through cross-party support, we will help the staff restore confidence and trust in that hospital. I know that staff are now exiting the hospital. My hope is that staff can go to work feeling proud, cared for and not overworked. I know the staff carry the guilt of looking after a community that, at the moment, drives past or wants to take the ambulance to the next hospital. That is unacceptable and dangerous, which is why the Opposition is committed to working with all parties in the House to make sure the matter is speedily resolved.

As I have said on many other occasions, I also acknowledge the Massa family, Elouise and Danny, their fight to get answers about what happened to Joe and their campaign to ensure that no other family has to go through what they did. I also acknowledge the other families who have spoken about their situations at the Northern Beaches Hospital, and the hundreds of people who have made written submissions to the parliamentary inquiries. In closing, I acknowledge that these are extraordinary circumstances that call for unusual intervention. The Coalition supports the bill brought by the member for Wakehurst because we want to see the Northern

Beaches Hospital restored to a standard that the community can trust. We trust the Minister will use the powers granted to him today with care and integrity, and we will hold him to that. We support the bill, we support the community, and we will continue to demand the transparency and accountability that the people of the northern beaches and New South Wales deserve. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend) (15:55):** I contribute to debate on the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. I thank all of the staff who have patiently and diligently remained in the public gallery during this very important debate. I particularly thank the member for Wakehurst for his diligence in introducing the original form of the bill as a new member. That is really difficult to do because parliamentary procedure is not easy to learn. Members are debating the Northern Beaches Hospital deed of agreement. I say to the Northern Beaches Hospital staff that public-private partnerships never work, no matter the sphere of government: Federal, State or local. I have always opposed them. I opposed them in government, I opposed them in opposition and I will oppose them in government again if I have to. I think the Minister knows very well that I will do so.

This has been a huge mistake. Government members were in opposition when the former Government determined to do this, and it was an absolute mess. It may well save Healthscope to a degree, but it will not save the costs to the Government, the community, the staff, the patients and the Massa family. No matter how many excuses people make, private-public partnerships do not work. Whether it was State government looking at privatising Australia Post, the 2007 Government that I was part of looking at privatising electricity, or State government looking at privatising prisons—mistake, mistakes, mistakes. When local governments determined to use private contractors for garbage services or decided to outsource all their pools to private companies in Newcastle, half the workers got sacked and were replaced—in the case of Newcastle, by Irish backpackers. The model does not work.

Returning to the bill, I thank the member for Wakehurst. I agree with him that the transition needs to be smooth. It must ensure that the patients are looked after. It needs to ensure that the staff—including nurses, wards persons, cleaners and clinicians—are looked after. It must also look after the community of the northern beaches, because it has been messed around so much that it does not deserve this any longer. Any contractual arrangement in a public-private partnership always benefits the private provider. The cost always ends up being put back on the community because it pays the costs to State government in taxes. It also costs the staff. Public-private partnerships do not work and should not be entered into again.

We cannot minimise the damage caused by this horrendous error. It has compromised patient care, the staff and the community. The reports show inadequate outcomes and inadequate staff safety. When I talk about public-private partnerships being bad, in the worst-case scenario, the worst thing one can do is privatise the hospital. That is the worst outcome, and we have done that. We recognise now that it was a mistake. It should not have been done in the first place.

I agree with the member for Wakehurst that this needs to be number one on the books for the Minister for Health. It needs to be resolved as quickly and sensibly as possible for the best outcome for the community of the northern beaches and the staff of that hospital. That is what it is all about. I completely and utterly support what the member for Wakehurst is trying to achieve today and admire him for it. It is wonderful that he is doing it as a new MP. He obviously cares about the community and the workers. I thank the member for Wakehurst and wish him all the best. I will certainly be there in the background to oppose any other public-private partnership that any government tries to start, because they do not ever work.

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly) (16:00):** I make a brief contribution in support of the Northern Beaches Hospital (Voluntary Contract Termination) Bill 2025. I vividly remember attending the ribbon cutting at the Northern Beaches Hospital as a new MP. If someone had told me then that today we would be discussing the well-documented and well-reported tragedies that have taken place in that hospital, I would not have believed them. The intent at the time amongst all involved was to build a hospital that the people of the northern beaches would be proud of—one they would trust and feel confident to use. When it comes to health services, intent does not cut it. Intent does not provide certainty. It does not build trust. Certainty and trust are the key pillars of a good health service.

The Minister and the member for Wakehurst have established the need for this bill. The key criteria of its success have been well documented. Ultimately, it is about what is fair and best for a community. Another critical aspect is the bill's timeliness. I, along with many others in Parliament, attended a forum with the staff and the team at the Northern Beaches Hospital. It seemed to me that what the staff and the community need is certainty around timelines, and for this debate to not drag on. I thank the staff and the professionals at the Northern Beaches Hospital for their work and the effort they have undertaken over many years. Under trying and difficult circumstances, they have provided the best support and care that they could to the people of the northern beaches.

I have taken my daughter to the emergency department to have her lip sewn up, or to treat a bonked head. The staff have always done an outstanding job. We felt blessed to have them helping and supporting us.

However, that does not forgive the situation and arrangement that exists at Northern Beaches Hospital at the moment. For the reasons outlined previously, that must change. This bill deserves bipartisan support. It is with some regret that I state for the record that there was no courtesy briefing and little to no engagement with the shadow Minister about the reworking of the bill. That is unfortunate because we want to encourage all members to support this bill. It must bring a swift end to the arrangements at the Northern Beaches Hospital. In supporting the bill, I am sure I join many in the community who hope that that outcome is delivered by the passing of the bill in this place.

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (16:04):** I contribute to debate on the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. Subject to the passage of amendments, the bill will be renamed the Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition and Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. This is a significant and necessary piece of legislation. I begin by thanking and commending the member for Wakehurst for bringing the bill to the House. In the face of deeply distressing circumstances at the Northern Beaches Hospital, the member has responded with integrity, purpose and urgency. His advocacy reflects a deep commitment to his community and to the principle that public health must remain in public hands.

I also acknowledge the proactive work of the member for Pittwater, who has similarly shown leadership and resolve on this issue. I know the people of Wakehurst and Pittwater would be proud to have such strong and principled representation on this matter and many others. The member for Wakehurst has introduced this bill because, like the members on this side of the House, he believes that public hospitals and health services should be publicly owned and publicly run. It is a simple and reasonable expectation that the health and wellbeing of our communities should not be compromised by the pursuit of private profit. I support the bill wholeheartedly because I believe, without apology, that health care is a public good and should never be treated as a commodity to be bought and sold.

Regrettably, that view has not been shared by those opposite. The Northern Beaches Hospital was the flagship of their ill-conceived privatisation experiment. It was a project born of ideology. The consequences have been disastrous. The most heartbreaking of those consequences was the tragic death of Joe Massa following failures in care at the hospital. Beyond that tragedy, the failures of this model have been well documented. The hospital has struggled to integrate with the broader public health network. It has failed to deliver the standard of care the community deserves. It has been plagued by persistent risks to patient safety. The people of the northern beaches did not ask to be part of that experiment. They were used as test cases for a broader agenda that puts ideology before lives and privatisation before people. It is a legacy that continues to damage confidence in our public health system. It is a mess that the current health Minister and the Government have been left to clean up.

We started that work earlier this year with the passage of the Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition) Act. It was assented to earlier this month, which means we have protected public hospitals statewide from being saddled with the terrible arrangements at Northern Beaches Hospital. That legislation is part of a broader Government response, including a parliamentary inquiry, a review by the Clinical Excellence Commission, and steps to improve paediatric care protocols like REACH. It prohibits future public-private partnerships from building or operating acute public hospitals.

The Northern Beaches Hospital is the only current example of that failed model, and Labor has never supported it. We opposed similar proposals for Maitland, Wyong, Goulburn and Shellharbour in 2016 because they were expensive, complex and compromised the integration and quality of care in our public health system. This is not about opposing private health care outright. Private hospitals play a valuable role, especially in elective surgeries and specialist care. However, acute public hospitals should be publicly owned and operated. Those facilities must be fully integrated into our statewide system to deliver the consistent, high-quality care that patients deserve. Public-private partnerships are still allowed in areas like medical imaging or pharmacy, and the legislation includes a regulation-making power to deal with any unforeseen consequences. When we passed that important legislation, we made it clear that when it comes to our local public hospitals, health care must come before profit.

The Government will move a series of amendments to strengthen and clarify the provisions of this private member's bill, ensuring the responsible and orderly transition of the Northern Beaches Hospital back into public hands. The amendments are designed to provide legal certainty, protect public funds and support the delivery of safe, continuous health care for the northern beaches community, as well as provide certainty of process for hospital staff. Firstly, the amendments will empower the Minister for Health to issue a notice terminating the Northern Beaches Hospital deed either in full or in part. Once issued, the termination will be treated as if it were

an operator default event under the existing deed. That is an important safeguard as it means the State will not be subject to additional liabilities beyond those already contemplated in the contract.

Secondly, compensation payable to the hospital's private operator will be calculated in line with the operator default provisions of the current deed. However, that amount will be reduced by what are referred to as "handover costs", which are those costs the State is reasonably expected to incur in assuming control of the hospital, including the costs of transition and necessary remediation works. In effect, the operator is required to cover the reasonable costs associated with transferring the hospital back into the public system. To ensure fairness and transparency in this process, the amendments also provide for a negotiation mechanism between the State and the operator. If an agreement on compensation and handover costs cannot be reached, either party may request that the Treasurer appoint an independent person to make a binding determination. That approach ensures disputes are resolved efficiently and at arm's length.

Another key amendment enables the Minister to issue directions for up to 12 months after the termination of the deed to assist with the safe and effective transition of hospital services. Those powers are designed to ensure that patients and staff are not disrupted and that health services continue to be delivered safely throughout the transition period. Additionally, the amendments provide for regulation-making powers that allow the Government to respond flexibly to any unforeseen issues that arise as a result of the termination. That includes the ability to make further modifications to the deed to support the public interest if required. Finally, to reflect the expanded scope of the bill, the amendments will also change its title to the Health Services Amendment (PPP Prohibition and Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. That more accurately captures both the intent and the practical effect of the legislation. Together, the amendments will ensure that the transition of Northern Beaches Hospital into public operation is legally sound, financially responsible and focused on the wellbeing of patients, staff and, ultimately, the community.

I once again thank the member for Wakehurst for bringing the bill to the House, and I thank the member for Pittwater for her strong and consistent advocacy on behalf of her community. Both members have shown a deep commitment to standing up for the health and wellbeing of their constituents. I know that they jointly hosted a community forum in May to ensure that local residents had a genuine opportunity to be consulted and heard on the future of this vital health facility that provides much-needed services in their communities. That kind of grassroots engagement is exactly what good representation looks like. With this bill, we not only respond to serious systemic failures but also restore public confidence in our health system. We are drawing a line under a failed privatisation experiment and delivering things the people of the northern beaches deserve: certainty, accountability and a public hospital that is run in the public interest. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (16:12):** I speak in support of the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025 introduced by the member for Wakehurst. It is time to bring our hospital back into public hands; to ensure we are no longer at the mercy of corporate entities or their receivers that have failed us; to avoid drawn-out negotiations that risk the health and safety of patients, doctors and nurses; to prevent taxpayers funding windfall profits; and to clarify a deed that continues to fail us, even after the operator, Healthscope, has gone into receivership. This bill is a measured and necessary response to a broken deed.

I thank the member for Wakehurst for his leadership over many years in addressing some of the issues seen in our hospital. Without the member for Wakehurst, we would not have had the independent audit of the hospital that exposed its failings. The member and I recently co-hosted a public forum and, of course, he recently introduced this legislation. Together with community and hospital staff, we have now built the case for public control. I thank the Minister for Health and the Treasurer for their genuine engagement with my community on the hospital and for the huge amount of time and work that they have dedicated to addressing the hospital's failings and getting it into public hands. I also acknowledge their teams. That exorbitant amount of time and necessary dedication to these issues has, in part, caused the member for Wakehurst to bring the bill to Parliament to avoid the long and protracted negotiations or, potentially, legal battles we now risk.

Since entering Parliament I have received numerous emails, attended packed public meetings and sat with families who have experienced the Northern Beaches Hospital's tragedies. I acknowledge some of those families today, including the Massa, Gill and Atkinson families. They all say the same thing: The hospital is not delivering the public health care that our community deserves. As we have heard previously, in 2018 the former Liberal-Nationals Government closed the public hospitals at Mona Vale and Manly and replaced them with a single, privately operated facility, the Northern Beaches Hospital, run by Healthscope under a 20-year deed. The negotiations lacked transparency, and the promises were big, but the results have not been realised. We have fewer public beds, less transparency and poorer outcomes.

The private operator, who was owned by offshore private equity until recently, received tens of millions of dollars in additional public funding while incurring only token penalties for failures. Healthscope is now in

receivership. Arguably, that should trigger an ability for government to step in, but it does not. That is why this bill is before us. I think everyone acknowledges that public ownership of hospitals is not perfect, but it is better. The Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation recently confirmed that in its submission to a current inquiry. It outlined systemic problems like unsafe workloads, incompatibility and failures in risk management systems, cost cutting and understaffing that would not occur under public management. Another example of this is that Healthscope was not required to implement NSW Health's Safe Staffing Levels initiative.

We saw the scale of community concern at the public forum held recently at Dee Why RSL, where over 300 people turned up to listen to the health Minister, Treasurer, shadow health Minister, the member for Wakehurst and me and to understand the issues with the hospital. Health staff and unions were there also. Question after question demanded, "Why can't the Government step in? Why hasn't the contract been breached? Why isn't this being treated as a health crisis triggering extraordinary powers?" I note that the member for Manly also questioned this at the time, asking why the Government could not step in and get the deal done.

The previous New South Wales parliamentary inquiry and the Auditor-General's report have confirmed what locals have long suspected: The hospital is underperforming, underfunded and mismanaged. As I mentioned, there are two incompatible electronic record systems, critical equipment shortages and a lack of clinical integration. That is not good enough, and the member for Wakehurst outlined additional failings found in recent submissions, particularly from the doctors at the hospital. The operator has now offered to buy back the public services at the hospital. A taskforce has been established and negotiations with the Government continue. However, as we have heard, those negotiations are at risk of stalling or being legally challenged in court. That is not in the interests of our community, of patients, doctors and nurses at the hospital, and of the taxpayer.

What does this bill do? It provides the New South Wales Government with a pathway to terminate the deed without triggering the hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation that would apply under the current contract unless a formal breach was proven. Given that the public-private partnership was designed to save the taxpayer money, the deed should, arguably, have been designed to prevent that if the circumstances in which we now find ourselves occurred. But it has not, and it was arguably sloppy drafting. This bill allows the Minister for Health to issue a statutory termination notice. Once that happens, a default is deemed to have occurred under the deed. That removes the need to prove a breach in court, and it gives the Government leverage to negotiate from a position of authority.

The bill sets out a structured and time-limited negotiation process led by the Treasurer. If negotiations fail, the matter can go to an independent assessor, such as IPART, to determine compensation based on actual investment, not inflated expectations or projected profits. It also empowers the Minister to issue directions to ensure continuity of care and an orderly transition, protecting patients and staff alike. There is an argument that legislating to override a contract or a deed creates a sovereign risk. Generally, that is true. Governments should be cautious when intervening in commercial relationships, but this is not a normal case. It is exceptional, as it deals with acute health care. The bill is narrow in scope, applying only to a specific deed and contains clear safeguards. It should not be a precedent for other public-private partnerships. I note that, due to recent legislation, New South Wales will not enter into public-private partnerships for acute public healthcare services in the future.

I am satisfied that this is a responsible and necessary course of action. I am very happy to hear that the Opposition has shown its intention to support the bill. The bill gives the State a credible and fair process to regain control of the hospital if negotiations fail, which is what my community expects. To be clear, my view—and the view of my community—is that a growing community like ours needs more public beds. Ultimately, the New South Wales Government should consider purchasing the whole hospital. The bill may go some way towards making that outcome slightly more likely. It is a strong step forward in restoring trust in health care for my community on the northern beaches. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (16:20):** I make a contribution to debate on the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. I acknowledge the work of the member for Wakehurst in bringing the bill to the House and his advocacy on behalf of his electorate. I also acknowledge the member for Pittwater for her advocacy and contribution to this debate. The Northern Beaches Hospital public-private partnership has not worked. Labor would never have engaged in this sort of arrangement, and we will never let it happen again while in government.

While private health facilities play an important role in the health system, there are statewide models of care that apply within the New South Wales health system. The benefit of a networked system is that planned or unplanned transfers can occur easily based on clinical need. The ease of different New South Wales health organisations to work collaboratively demonstrates the strength of the New South Wales health system. Private health facilities are not integrated into the broader New South Wales health system in the same way that public hospitals are. That was illustrated in the recent Auditor-General's report, which pointed out Northern Beaches Hospital's lack of integration in the New South Wales health system.



Northern Beaches Hospital has illustrated a number of complex issues associated with the performance of public-private partnerships. The northern beaches community deserve high-quality acute hospital services. In April this year the Northern Beaches Hospital Taskforce was established to investigate the continuing future operation of the public-private partnership and provide advice to the New South Wales Government. Members of the taskforce met with Healthscope's receivers to commence discussions on their approach to the hospital, the sale process and other relevant matters with the aim of reaching an agreed outcome for the hospital. The Government continues to work with Healthscope and its receivers with the aim of reaching an agreed outcome. However, if such agreement cannot be reached in a timely manner, it is important that uncertainty about the future of the hospital can be resolved. This bill will allow for that certainty.

The Government considers that an operator termination event has occurred under the project deed. The appointment of receivers to Healthscope's parent entities has resulted in a change in control under the project deed without the State's consent. Such circumstances would entitle the Government to terminate the project deed due to operator default, and compensation would be payable on the basis of an operator default termination. Healthscope disputes that position. The Government is seeking to reach an agreed outcome for the people of New South Wales. However, if that cannot be achieved, the Government needs to be able to act definitively and avoid ongoing uncertainty about the hospital's future.

Patients, staff, the northern beaches community and the people of New South Wales deserve better. Staff at Northern Beaches Hospital do not need further stress and distraction. They need to remain focused on providing safe and effective care. Furthermore, taxpayers should not be responsible for meeting the risk and cost of what could potentially be a protracted legal dispute. I appreciate that it is very unusual for a government to step in to legislatively override contractual arrangements, but this is an extreme situation relating to the end of a public-private partnership for an acute public hospital. It cannot be allowed to cause disruption to the northern beaches community, who rely on this hospital for public health services.

The bill will allow the Minister to terminate the project deed, with the Government to pay compensation as if an operator termination event occurred under the deed, less the handover costs expected to be reasonably incurred by the State in assuming control and transitioning the operation of the hospital. Ideally, the parties will come to an agreement about the end of the arrangement. But if this does not occur, the State needs to be able to bring an end to the project deed through the process provided in the bill. That is paramount for the people of New South Wales, particularly the people of the northern beaches. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain) (16:25):** On behalf of The Greens, I speak briefly to the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. I start by thanking the member for Wakehurst for bringing this important bill to the House. I note that the bill has been amended substantially by the Government. I make it clear from the outset that The Greens do not oppose the bill. We agree wholeheartedly with the principle that public-private partnerships do not work. We believe critical public health services should never be privatised. There is no question that what the bill seeks to do is absolutely the right move.

I acknowledge, as other members already have, the terrible tragedy of the Massa family that has brought this bill to the House. Many other heartbreaking stories have since come out in the media that have shone a light on the problems and deficiencies with the public-private partnership at Northern Beaches Hospital. I acknowledge the work of the member for Wakehurst and the member for Pittwater in advocating for change in their communities. I acknowledge the Northern Beaches Hospital staff who are in the gallery. Those who take up the profession of nursing are critical to our communities. The work they do is so important and they should be appreciated for it. They deserve to work in a place where they can be confident that they have all the resources they need to deliver the care the community deserves. I thank them for everything they do for us.

The Greens agree that Healthscope should receive no windfall gain in light of this failed model. It is important that the Government works in the best interests of the people of New South Wales and we do not end up in a situation where a healthcare company whose public-private partnership has failed is seeking to profit from that arrangement through a windfall gain. This is a very important issue, so I am pleased that the Government is working to get it resolved as quickly as possible. The Greens appreciate the urgency of the situation, because the northern beaches community deserve world-class health care.

I also mention what the member for Manly spoke about. My Greens colleague Dr Amanda Cohn in the other place, who is our health spokesperson, is disappointed with the short time frame of the bill. We acknowledge how important and urgent it is, but we want this done in a multipartisan way. The changes proposed in the bill are quite complex, so The Greens want to make sure there is enough time to properly scrutinise the latest version, which was shared today in its entirety. The Greens will reserve any more comments on the bill, other than to acknowledge that this is very important work. Dr Amanda Cohn will make a more detailed contribution to debate on the bill in the upper House. The Greens commend the work being done to end public-private partnerships in New South Wales, particularly in health care.

The northern beaches community deserve good, safe health services. They do not deserve to go to an emergency room without the confidence that the hospital is able to deliver the kind of care people need. They deserve to expect that once they or their family are there, they are safe and will be given the best care. We certainly do not oppose the bill, but we will make more detailed comments when it proceeds to the other place. I commend the Government and all of the members who have worked so hard to try to resolve this critical issue.

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson) (16:29):** I thank the member for Wakehurst for introducing the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. I thank the people in the gallery who are here today to hear what we have to say about the bill and, hopefully, to see it passed. As the shadow Minister for Health has indicated, the Opposition supports the bill. Davidson is a suburb on the northern beaches, but the electorate of Davidson also takes in other parts of the northern beaches and Ku-ring-gai, so members of the community that I represent use the Northern Beaches Hospital. All members of this place would agree that the public deserves to have access to world-class health care. Speaking from personal experience, particularly in the past year, I know there are times when people think they will not need health care but in fact they do. Hospitals are really important places that many of us may need to visit only once or twice as a patient during our lifetime. But we have to make sure the service is there when it is needed and that it is of a world-class standard.

Prior to the Northern Beaches Hospital being built, the area was serviced by Mona Vale Hospital and Manly Hospital. When the Coalition came to government in 2011, there was a need for a new world-class hospital. With only good intentions at the time, the Northern Beaches Hospital was created as a public-private partnership. Looking back now, we can all agree that, clearly, it has not lived up to expectations. In fact, it is extremely disappointing. Healthscope failed our community. The member for Wakehurst has brought a very important bill to this place to make sure that our community has access to a world-class public hospital that will be run by NSW Health. That is certainly something that I get behind. What we have seen from Healthscope has been extremely disappointing. It needs to be held accountable. We need to do everything we can as members of Parliament to make sure that northern beaches residents have confidence in the health system and a world-class public hospital, now and into the long-term future. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN (Wakehurst) (16:33):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on the Health Services Amendment (Northern Beaches Hospital Deed Termination) Bill 2025. They were the Minister for Health; the member for Vacluse, leading for the Opposition; the member for Wallsend; the member for Manly; the member for Liverpool; the member for Pittwater, who is a great new addition to our Parliament; the member for Bega; the member for Balmain; and the member for Davidson. I will go over a couple of things that were said. I make no secret of how impatient I have been to get this issue resolved.

Since March 2023, when I was elected to this place, my staff and I have been dealing with no end of people coming to us to tell their stories—mostly not good ones. We have been asking questions from day one. Before going any further, I thank my staff members Ishbel, Sean, Gypsy and Susie, who have been there when we have been talking to not just the nurses, midwives and clinicians but also the families who have shared their often horrific and tragic experiences with us. I thank them for everything that they have done and dealt with. It has been a big deal, and that is not lost on me.

I very much appreciate the staff of Northern Beaches Hospital sharing their experiences with us. As the Minister said today, the very first meeting I had in this Parliament was with him to discuss what we were initially being told was going on. The answers I got back from the department were not satisfactory, because of the stupid contract and deed that are marked "commercial in confidence". The most basic of questions could not be answered. That is not right. My staff and I searched high and low to find a way to support the hospital staff in a meaningful way and to bring the hospital back into public hands. It is awful that we had to pass the legislation known as Joe's law because of other tragic events at Northern Beaches Hospital. But it did at least galvanise the Opposition in support and led to an acknowledgement, "We did this. We tried it. We made a mistake."

People are allowed to make mistakes—whether it should cost a human life or not is a whole other thing. But the Opposition has been big enough to say, "We need to change that." We also have the collective will of the department. I have been very patient, to the point where I have worked closely with government to get bills passed for other things. Members have to work with the Government to get a bill passed in this place—full stop. As a member of Parliament, sometimes you have to accept that it is not going to be your bill; it will be the Government's bill. I do not care. It is not about me; it is about the community. It is about the greater good and the people we serve. It will always be about that.

I take the points that the Government has made. I did get impatient when, after two months of negotiations, we were going nowhere. I said to the Treasurer, "I'm moving a bill to call the bluff of Healthscope." The bluff was, "We don't want a windfall gain", which I had called out from day one. However, I was also going to be pleasantly surprised if that was the case—it does not appear so yet. So I moved a bill which was, in hindsight, too harsh. But knowing that I had the will of the Parliament, because we had passed Joe's law, we said no more to

public-private partnerships. We all spoke about that around the table and an opportunity presented itself. The Government amended my original bill, and I said, "That's fine. I'm happy for them to own it. I don't care. The amendments are fine by me." I was happy so long as the bill gave a very clear path for the nurses, for the clinicians and for our community to have the hospital back where it belongs and to build a more positive and bright future for it. So, when it was amended, again, I drew a line in the sand and said, "I'm just going to bring this bill forward and get this done."

I apologise that there has not been a great deal of consultation about the bill. It is just about the timing. It has been too long. We need to get on with this, because it is going to take a long time to get the hospital back. The health Minister has explained the nuanced difficulties of it. The nurses and clinicians have also been telling us since March 2023 just how hard it will be to bring the hospital back into public hands. But we have to start somewhere, and the bill seeks to do that. It provides a very clear pathway. I will continue to hold the Treasurer and the Minister for Health to account to be as transparent as they are permitted to be under the contract, which is still commercial in confidence. There is only so much they can tell us, but I trust them.

And I trust the Opposition, who has said that it will support the bill going forward, that a mistake was made and that it would never do the same thing again. That is great. To my dying breath, I will remember that, just as I will remember that the Minister said he would never have done this and will never do it. I believe that to be the case. The bill is there to support that. I thank my staff and all the contributors. Let us get this done and get the hospital back into public hands so we can all move forward. I particularly acknowledge my staff, who have had to deal with this. They are not trained to deal with this sort of stuff, and that needs to be remembered. It has been a hell of a week in this Parliament. I publicly acknowledge and thank all the staff who worked on the bill. It has been a pleasure, but it has been hard. I thank members from all sides of the Chamber for their support. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Clayton Barr):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Mr MICHAEL REGAN:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

## CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2025

### Second Reading Speech

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (16:40):** On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Government is pleased to introduce the Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. The bill ensures that young people are represented on the boards of the State's cultural institutions, helping to shape the role these organisations play in preserving, promoting and providing access to arts, culture, heritage and knowledge. The bill makes amendments to the legislation establishing the New South Wales cultural institutions to increase the membership of the governing body of each institution to include at least one young person aged 18 to 28 at the time of appointment. The cultural institutions subject to the amendments are the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences or the Powerhouse Museum, Museums of History NSW, the State Library of New South Wales and the Sydney Opera House.

The New South Wales Government is committed to empowering young creative leaders to steer the future of the arts in New South Wales. In October 2023 the Government held a youth round table to hear directly from young people about the challenges around youth representation in the arts, culture and creative industries sector. The Creative Communities policy, released in December 2023, was informed by the concerns and recommendations raised by young creatives during consultation, including the youth round table. We heard about the need to increase mentorship programs for young people, including in the regions, and the need for programs that support the leadership development of diverse members of the sector. In response, Creative Communities recognises that access to and participation in arts and cultural activities are essential for the mental health, wellbeing and future of young people across New South Wales.

Through the Creative Communities policy, the New South Wales Government has committed to ensuring that the next generation of cultural leaders are at the decision-making table. This includes providing the opportunity to advise the Minister for the Arts directly, through the establishment in February 2025 of the Creative Youth Network. Young people appointed to cultural institution boards will become a part of this network, which

is intended to meet twice a year, further strengthening this important cohort. We have already heard positive feedback from youth members structurally engaged with the State Government on the importance of ongoing consultation. The next generation of artists and creatives need to see representation, and see and hear their own stories, which can only be achieved by investing to bring young people to the front line. This commitment goes beyond consultation; the New South Wales Government is committed to ensuring that young creatives are engaged in real decision-making.

We have already started to implement this through recent changes to the Create NSW Artform Boards. The boards are composed of diverse arts and cultural practitioners and leaders from across New South Wales who assess applications made to the Arts and Cultural Funding Program, helping to deliver a transparent and streamlined funding process. As part of reforms to make the Arts and Cultural Funding Program simpler, fairer and faster, Create NSW is committed to Artform Board membership that is reflective of the diversity of New South Wales. This includes ensuring that each Artform Board includes representation from young and emerging practitioners and organisations. Young Artform Board members have reflected that there is a sense of empowerment in being able to contribute to the sector in this way. They have also noted that the role provides valuable opportunities to learn more about their sector and that, for young people's perspectives to have real impact, they need to be part of a broader, supported presence.

In introducing the bill, the New South Wales Government seeks to build on this impact, with two goals: to bring on both the next generation of audiences and the next generation of cultural leaders. While young people make up over 30 per cent of the population of New South Wales, the average age of directors continues to increase to 61 years of age. There is an evident underrepresentation of a key demographic of future art workers and audience members in the sector. We are already in the midst of a severe decline in participation in the arts. We cannot hope to increase our cultural institutions' engagement with young audiences without engaging young leaders in the process. It is with the guidance of the next generation that the State's cultural institutions can remain relevant and uplift the contribution of the arts sector to the State's economy.

The bill ensures that young creative leaders will be equal participants in decision-making for the State's important cultural institutions. We know that diversity is crucial to sound decision-making. By bringing young people to the table, we are upskilling the existing capabilities of the next generation. We can see that they have the ideas; we are simply providing them with the training and experience of sitting on the board. The purpose of this is for the participants to take their experience back to their own communities and organisations, to uplift and drive change at the grassroots level.

Following the passage of the bill, an expression of interest process will be undertaken to identify suitable candidates. We want to ensure that the selected board members are set up for success right from the start. Prior to commencing, they will be sponsored for corporate governance training, with the support of the Advocate for Children and Young People. The advocate has also agreed to work with existing board members to ensure that the young leaders are properly supported, and cultural institution leaders have agreed to mentor the new board members. This will ensure that young board members are fully prepared and supported to bring real value to the role.

I now turn to the detail of the bill. The bill seeks to amend legislation establishing certain New South Wales cultural institutions to provide that the board, council or trust of each of the cultural institutions must include at least one young person. The legislation amended includes the Art Gallery of New South Wales Act 1980, the Australian Museum Trust Act 1975, the Library Act 1939, the Museums of Applied Arts and Sciences Act 1945, the Museums of History NSW Act 2022 and the Sydney Opera House Trust Act 1961. A young person is defined in the bill as a person who is at least 18 years of age and not more than 28 years of age at the time of appointment. The bill also includes consequential amendments to provisions related to quorum to maintain the intent and effect of quorum constituting a majority of members. I am pleased to introduce this legislation. We need the emerging generation of creative leaders to drive our arts, culture and creative industries sector forward, and we can only achieve that if we provide them with the opportunity to lead the way. I commend the bill to the House.

### Second Reading Debate

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON (Tamworth) (16:48):** On behalf of the Opposition, I contribute to debate on the Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. The Opposition will support the bill, which is uncontroversial. It makes minor amendments to the membership of governing bodies of some of the cultural institutions of New South Wales. The Government's bill will require six of the State's institutions to have a young person between the ages of 18 and 28 as a member of the governing bodies of those institutions. The institutions affected by the legislation are the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences or the Powerhouse Museum, Museums of History NSW, the State Library of New South Wales, the Opera House and the Art Gallery of New South Wales. The bill aims to give young people a seat at the table in decision-making for those select few institutions.

The New South Wales Opposition believes it is important to have young people engaged in the arts and supports the inclusion of young people in cultural agenda-setting across New South Wales. The Opposition believes that young people can make strong contributions to the State's arts and culture, if provided the opportunity, and recognises that they will one day be taking up the responsibility of guiding and leading the State's cultural institutions.

One of the major concerns stated by the Government in its justification for the bill is a persistently low attendance and participation rate for young people in the institutions captured by this legislation. A range of causes have been stated as being behind this persistently low participation rate, including cost and location barriers. I believe it is important to also recognise the changing nature of the arts, and the changing nature of the way young people access culture. Around 90 per cent of young people participate in the arts and culture online, and many young creatives have shifted to online forums. Social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and TikTok are global multimedia opportunities for participating in culture, and young people are predominantly participating in the arts in those spaces. Careers are now built online. It is incumbent upon the Government to recognise that shift.

The Government hopes that by requiring those six cultural institutions to have a young person represented in their governing bodies, greater engagement with youth will occur. As noted by my colleague in the other place, the Hon. Jacqui Munro, the Minister already has the power to appoint young people to these positions under the current legislation. If the Government had genuinely sought to implement this reform, it could have done so by, for example, appointing young people to the board of the Art Gallery of NSW earlier this year. The Government stated that previous attempts to do so proved unsuccessful, but the question of why that is so remains unanswered. If there was an attempt to recruit young people at that time, why did it fail? Were there genuine attempts to recruit young people, or was it a tick-box exercise?

It seems to me the stated purpose of this legislation could have been achieved without the blunt instrument of legislation, but that was not done. As a result, we are left with legislation that is minor in its reform, which consumes valuable Chamber time but is intended to bolster weak legislative reform by the Government. However, simply having a young person on the board will not result in any meaningful change unless the Government institutes the appropriate support and advice to the governing bodies to ensure that the voices of young people are heard. These are some of the important issues the Government should be addressing as part of the debate. It is important that the Government ensures that these appointments do not prove to be tokenistic. Membership of these governing bodies is generally dominated by older persons who have the time and resources to expend on their voluntary roles. Having more experienced and senior fellow board members may be an intimidating and overwhelming environment for young people. It is incumbent upon the Government to ensure that the appropriate supports and training are in place to ensure that a young person, who may be unlikely to have the experience in governance, can make meaningful contributions to our cultural institutions.

To that end, I note the Government's intention to undertake training for existing board members on working with young people. It would be worthwhile if the Government also commits to reviewing these appointments to ensure the purpose of the bill is still being met. This would also allow for any additional training or support to be provided, should it be required. I also note the selection process for these positions is not defined in the legislation. I urge the Government to undertake an open and transparent expression of interest process to ensure the appropriate diversity of these appointments. It will be a privileged few who have the opportunity to serve on these boards, so the Government must ensure that the diversity of young people is appropriately represented through the appointments. There are challenges with implementing this legislation and the Opposition will be keeping a watchful eye over the process.

I believe there are more ways the Government could engage young people in the arts and in our cultural institutions. The recent arts and music education inquiry was an opportunity for the Government to really address the core issue of declining participation in arts and music. An interest in the arts begins at home, and parents play an incredibly important role in fostering that love and passion for culture. But an interest also begins in the classroom, at our schools, with our extraordinarily talented arts and music educators. The arts and music inquiry was an opportunity to recognise the hard work of arts and music educators and better support them in fostering a love of the arts and music in future generations. It was also an opportunity to engage and fund our State's conservatoriums—the birthplace of many musicians, including those who perform at the Sydney Opera House, which is one of the institutions captured in this legislation.

The Government's response to that inquiry was poor. It was unsatisfactory. It was a let-down for teachers and for conservatoriums. The Opposition believes it was also a missed opportunity for the Government to act on what could have been real and meaningful change. If the Government is serious about engaging young people in our State's cultural institutions, then reform must start in the classroom, not just when a young person fits into the 18 to 28 age bracket. The Minister and his team may have a passion for engaging young people in our cultural

institutions, but without a whole-of-government approach, that task will be more difficult. I will now address the bill in detail.

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

**Mr KEVIN ANDERSON:** I note the interjection by the member for Blue Mountains, who is a very fond and passionate support of arts and music education. The Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2025 amends legislation establishing certain New South Wales cultural institutions, increasing the membership of each institution by one person. That person will be a young person. A young person is defined in the bill as a person who, at the time of appointment, is at least 18 years of age and not more than 28 years of age. The bill amends six Acts to enable that to occur: the Art Gallery of New South Wales Act 1980, the Australian Museum Trust Act 1975, the Library Act 1939, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Act 1945, the Museums of History NSW Act 2022, and the Sydney Opera House Trust Act 1961.

In conclusion, the Opposition will support the bill unamended. The bill is simple and uncontroversial, and the aims outlined in the Minister's second reading speech are worthwhile. The Opposition is hopeful that the Government is genuine in its push to engage young people in the arts. We hope this legislation is not an opportunity for a media release and a headline, but an opportunity to get more young people into our State's proud cultural heritage. I note the contribution to this debate by the member for Coogee, who is a very strong supporter of arts and music education and the cultural sector.

There is much more for the Government to do. The Opposition would welcome the opportunity to work with the Government to engage more young people in the arts, especially in music through the State's conservatoriums, which need more funding. I have outlined some important issues that need to be managed in relation to this legislation and encourage the Government to take them onboard. I commend the bill.

**Mr JASON LI (Strathfield) (16:57):** I support the Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. As my children frequently tell me, I am getting old and I may not understand the issues that confront young people today.

**Dr Michael Holland:** You're a spring chicken.

**Mr JASON LI:** I thank the member for Bega. I would say the same thing about him, but anyway. Young people make up over 30 per cent of the New South Wales population. It is imperative that we strive to reflect their thoughts and interests in our leading cultural institutions. Those organisations need the guidance of young leaders to get young people excited and engaged and to have their voices heard. To achieve this, we must provide young people with the opportunity to advocate and make decisions that cater to the future generations of young artists and audiences.

Prior to the release of the Creative Communities policy in December 2023, a youth round table was held to hear directly from young people about the challenges around youth representation in the arts, culture and creative industries sector. During the round table, we heard about an increased need for mentorship programs for youth, regional youth and diverse members of our community. The feedback heard during the round table has informed the New South Wales Government's commitment to ensuring that the next generation of cultural leaders are given the opportunity to make decisions and directly advise the Minister for the Arts. The Creative Youth Network was established in February 2025. It is an important step in delivering on this commitment. The inaugural meeting enabled young creative leaders to provide advice directly to the Minister for Transport, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy.

Members of the Creative Youth Network told the Government that people who should have their voices heard are not even able to get in the room, which leads to a gap between what cultural institutions provide and what the next generation of artists need. The Creative Youth Network and this bill are both opportunities to address this issue by enabling young leaders to structurally engage with the New South Wales Government. The next generation of artists and art workers need to see representation. They need to see and hear their own stories. This can be achieved by only investing to bring young people to the front line through avenues such as the boards of cultural institutions.

Young people appointed to the boards of cultural institutions will become a part of the Creative Youth Network. This will expand and strengthen the cohort, provide a wide range of perspectives that draw from different experiences and amplify the various priorities of young artists and art workers across the sector. Shortly after the passage of this bill, the Government will initiate a process for an expression of interest to identify outstanding young candidates to serve on the boards of the leading cultural institutions of our State. This process will be open for a four-week period. It will invite applications from young people aged 18 to 28—which only just excludes the member for Coogee!

Applicants will come from all corners of New South Wales and from all walks of life. This is an open call to the next generation of creative thinkers, cultural leaders and community voices. Applicants will be asked to share not only their background and experiences but also their vision. They will be asked why they believe they are the right person to represent young people and contribute meaningfully to the governance of one of our world-class cultural institutions. With the support of the Advocate for Children and Young People, all of the successful applicants will be sponsored to complete a course through the Australian Institute of Company Directors, which focuses on corporate governance.

This is in line with the Government's commitment to setting these young leaders up for success. The Advocate for Children and Young People has also committed to engage directly with the existing boards of each cultural institution to ensure that the young appointees are welcomed, mentored and supported in their roles. We want these young leaders to be equipped, empowered and ready to bring real value to the table. We need the next generation to guide cultural institutions and to become leaders that bring the sector forward into the future. I commend the bill the House.

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

*Public Interest Debate*

**HUNTER AND MID NORTH COAST FLOOD RECOVERY**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:01):** I move:

That this House:

- (1) Notes that on June 3, after visiting the Myall Lakes electorate, Chris Minns said "In the coming week I'll be working with the Commonwealth Government to extend grants up to \$75,000".
- (2) Acknowledges the Federal Government is ready to roll out its share of category D funding for flood affected communities — but is still waiting for Chris Minns and Daniel Mookhey to request support.
- (3) Condemns the Minns Labor Government's lack of support for the Mid North Coast and Hunter regions following last month's flooding event.
- (4) Calls on the Minns Labor Government to urgently maximise category C funding and roll out category D funding.

On Monday I stood on the banks of the mighty Manning River with thousands of people. I stood with dairy farmers, beef farmers, oyster growers, small businesses and community members. People who have been affected and people who have not been affected all stood in support of each other. We heard stories from those who had been severely affected about what this natural disaster meant to them and how it had affected and continued to affect them.

One of the key questions that came up is the same question I have asked myself as I moved this public interest debate: Why? Why are we asking this question of the Government? Why are we having this debate today? Why are we begging the Government for money for a one-in-500-year flood when we know that communities will need help and support moving forward? Our communities are not asking for more than they deserve. Our communities are asking for support. They are asking the Government to do what it said it would do. I stood with the Premier in the Pulteney Street arcade when he looked business owners in the eye and told them that this was worse than Lismore, and yet here we are over a month later and there has still been no increase in support.

We are still waiting for the category D declaration to be made. There has been a game of ping-pong between the Federal and State governments about which one has made the application. Members know that it really does not matter when communities are shovelling mud and sifting through what is left of their lives. The Premier has come to my area twice. He came with the Minister for Emergency Services and the Minister for Recovery. He brought the Prime Minister with him. He spoke to people who had lost everything that they own, right when they were hurting the most and when they were in the very depths of their trauma. He shook their hands, looked them in the eye, told them he would help them and then he left.

People expected the Premier to stick to his word, but all we have had is silence. That sticks with people when their mental health breaks down. They no longer feel that they can move on. We are debating this in Parliament today to hold the Government to account for its inaction and for not supporting communities when they need it the most. These floods were not your average weather event. If a one-in-500-year flood does not qualify for category D funding, then what does? Can any member answer that?

Water levels broke records right across the Manning Valley region. Entire towns are still isolated. Roads and bridges have vanished. In Wingham, 85 metres of the 100-year-old Bight Bridge was washed away. Homes and farms were swallowed whole. The only public hospital in my electorate was inaccessible. The hay bales are

still stuck to fence lines. You can still see mud and silt everywhere. Businesses that were once bustling with life are now silent and dark. The sheer force of the water has permanently reshaped our rivers. Entire properties are gone. I have seen piles of dead cattle on properties. I have seen cattle washed up on beaches in Forster, Seal Rocks and Burgess Beach. The oyster leases along the Manning River are gone. Our oyster farmers will not have an income for two to three years, and some will never return to the waterway.

The Premier and the Minister for Agriculture both stood on the dock with those farmers and listened to their stories, but there has still been no further support. Members cannot grasp the effect of the floods from photos, and it is not something that I can explain to members in this Chamber. Members need to see it with their own eyes to truly understand the scale of the loss. That is exactly what the Premier did, and yet communities are still literally rallying and begging for additional support. Jane Polson is a dairy farmer who spoke at the rally. She said:

Our farm was hit by the worst flood on record. Our entire property was inundated, four homes flooded. The resulting damage was catastrophic. We lost 100 head, 40 calves drowned, and 60 heifers were washed into barbed wire fences or out to sea. We were lucky to save the milking herd. They were put into the dairy at 1 am where they stood with water up to their backs for three days. It was a battle to save the surviving herd from illness and mastitis, from not being able to milk or feed them for three days.

The toll on people's mental health sits firmly on the shoulders of the Premier. The delay in Government support has left my community vulnerable and in a continual state of shell shock. It has been unable to take steps forward. It is unsure of how to move on and unsure of how to rebuild.

Category D funding exists for disasters exactly like this. It is designed to support long-term recovery after severe natural disasters where homes are lost, industries are crippled and lives are changed forever. It is the only pathway to unlocking real help, like infrastructure repair, support for local businesses and primary producers who have lost income and assets, and mental health support for communities traumatised by loss and upheaval. Why is the Minns Labor Government stalling? The Premier made a commitment to those affected by this disaster. He said he would work with the Commonwealth to get the \$75,000 grants flowing. He stood with me on the flood-ravaged soil of the Wingham Brush Nature Reserve and told my people he would help. It is time to stand by that commitment, because our communities simply cannot wait any longer.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (17:08):** I speak on behalf of the Government in this public interest debate. The entire Chamber thanks all of the local MPs who have been working on the ground with their communities which are recovering from this flood event. I particularly acknowledge the work of the member for Myall Lakes, the member for Oxley, the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Tweed, the member for Clarence, the member for Newcastle, the member for Northern Tablelands and the member for Coffs Harbour. The important information relayed by those members has helped the Government identify where support measures can be targeted. We are listening to affected communities to make informed decisions. Significantly, recovery is always a work in progress. The important thing is to work with communities and their members to make sure they are being supported in their recovery.

The severe weather and flooding experienced on the New South Wales east coast in May were devastating. There are many words that can describe that devastation. I thank the member for Myall Lakes for outlining, in an articulate way, what the communities across the Mid North Coast and the Hunter are going through. With the emergency response phase now passed, the NSW Reconstruction Authority is leading that recovery. It is a coordinated approach with government agencies, councils, non-government partners, community groups and others to provide support and practical help to communities in need. As we all know, Dave Owens, a former deputy commissioner of the NSW Police Force, has been appointed as the recovery coordinator. He will be coordinating on-ground efforts to ensure timely and targeted actions to support those communities in need. We know that they are doing it tough, and it is a time when mental health impacts can come to the fore.

A natural disaster declaration was made on 21 May, activating immediate support under the national Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements for households, councils and other groups in impacted local government areas [LGAs]. That declaration was extended on 22 May to include a further three LGAs, bringing the total to 19. They are Armidale, Bellingen, Central Coast, Cessnock, Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour, Dungog, Kempsey, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, MidCoast, Muswellbrook, Nambucca, Newcastle, Port Macquarie-Hastings, Port Stephens, Singleton, Upper Hunter and Walcha. The initial support available includes emergency accommodation, food vouchers, personal hardship grants, grants for low-income households to replace damaged goods, low-interest loans for small businesses and primary producers and assistance to councils to help with the clean-up and emergency infrastructure repairs.

Since coming to office the Minns Government has approved an additional \$8.2 billion in expenditure to support recovery from natural disasters. In the six years since the unprecedented bushfire devastation across the State in 2019-20, the New South Wales Government, in partnership with the Commonwealth, has spent \$9.5 billion providing disaster relief and recovery across the State, or \$1.6 billion per year. That represents a more than 100,000 per cent increase compared with the six years prior to that, where expenditure averaged \$154 million



per year. The budget this week also outlined a further \$4.2 billion of disaster relief across the forward estimates, a figure that is likely to increase in response to both previous and potentially new disasters. On the matter of those bushfires in 2019-20, I remind those opposite that the former New South Wales Government ignored more than 20 proposals to help the Black Summer bushfire-ravaged Blue Mountains, leaving us without a cent from the State's \$177 million economic recovery program. That shameful pork-barrelling in the disaster and recovery phases is something that I will never forget, or forgive. It was shameful. I note—

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Horner):** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member for Oxley will come to order. The member for Dubbo will come to order. If either member interjects again, I will place them on a call to order. The member for Dubbo had to leave the Chamber earlier today as he was on three calls to order, so I will start the count afresh. The member for Coffs Harbour will come to order. The members to my right have been listening quietly; I expect the members to my left to do the same.

**Ms TRISH DOYLE:** I finish by acknowledging that I know how communities suffer. We will stand with them and continue working for what they need.

**Mr DAVID LAYZELL (Upper Hunter) (17:13):** I thank the member for Myall Lakes for bringing the motion to the House. It is important to acknowledge the number of people who have been affected by the floods, the damage those floods have done and the work that has gone into making things good again. I thank my colleagues for their great work helping people get back on their feet. I was thinking about that this morning on the metro during peak hour. I was trying to get out through the barrier, but it would not let me through. I was tapping away with my card, holding everyone up during peak hour while trying to work out why I could not get through. I was denied exit. It was embarrassing but mistakes happen.

However, the mistakes of the Government are unbelievable. The mistakes it has made granting flood assistance to people in my area alone have been terrible. A random selection of communities have been designated as flood affected, while communities right next door have been ignored. It is a postcode lottery as to whether people can get assistance. Imagine how those people feel when they apply for personal hardship flood assistance at Service NSW only to be told that they were not affected by the flooding. Can members imagine how that must feel? I have met with Bolwarra farmers who have lost their entire crop of turf. They told me that the assistance they requested was denied. I met with a farmer from Largs who had water all through his house. He rang up for assistance but was denied. I think about my mates in Gloucester and Rookhurst, John and Suella Hannaford, who were stuck in the mountains for two weeks because the roads were closed. After the roads were opened up, they tried to get assistance money, but they were denied because apparently they were not flood affected. What sort of flood assistance is it? How can someone be denied by Service NSW if they are flood affected? It is an absolute mess.

I have ranted and raved in this place about this in the past. NBN Newcastle, the *Newcastle Herald* and the local ABC do good work on it, but it took *The Daily Telegraph* to join the campaign before the Premier noticed. All of a sudden, the Premier visited the region and sorted it out. "Don't worry," he said, and added a few more postcodes. The only problem is that it has not solved the problem yet. There are still postcodes that are completely left out. There are still people who cannot get flood assistance. There are people who had water all around their houses who cannot get flood assistance. It is unbelievable. The problem has not gone away.

It is hard to believe that here in Australia we are unable to accurately map flood-affected areas, despite all the resources at our disposal. It is as if we are living in Transylvania under Count Dracula. The Premier is a bit like Count Dracula. He went to the flood-affected areas with the Prime Minister, all smooth, well-mannered and elegant, behaving as if it was fantastic that he was there. But he left those communities in complete despair, and we are left cleaning up the mess. It is unbelievable. The Premier sucked the blood out of regional New South Wales, out of the farming industry and out of the mining industry, but what has he give in return? Nothing. Those industries carry this State in export earnings. They are important industries, but he has not helped them out in any way.

The next thing to be cut, to \$25,000, were the financial grants. What happened to the \$75,000 grants? Which one of the mob opposite decided to cut those? It is outrageous. The Government is supposed to be helping people and getting them back on their feet. Some people have had millions of dollars of damage to their properties, but the Government decided to cut the funding. Some people cannot even get category D funding. The Federal Minister came to my area, kicking the tyres, to try to work out how the Commonwealth Government could provide some decent funding. But those people could not even get category D funding. They were completely denied again. The State Government is not even helping the Federal Government come to the party. The whole thing is a joke. The Government needs to start helping people recover from the flood emergency. It needs to help them get back on their feet so that they can get back to doing what they do best.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (17:19):** I recognise the member for Myall Lakes, and the intention and approach of members opposite in dealing with this natural disaster. Many of us lived through the 2019-2020 bushfire disaster. That was before I came to this place. Madam Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that five years after that event we still have not fully recovered. There are people who are still homeless or unhoused. I know that fires are different from floods. They say that fires are a "clean" disaster—you can just go in and rebuild. But that is not the case. Floods are very messy and very smelly. But I do acknowledge the initial references to mental health. That has been one of the greatest things in my community. It is the consequence not only on mental health in our community—that will go on for generations; it will not go away—but also on significant physical health, as I mentioned, and homelessness. The bushfire, which was followed by floods in my electorate, impacted our businesses, our agriculture and our aquaculture. Small businesses in local towns were burnt out, in contrast to the small businesses that were flooded.

I was a clinician at that stage. I remember being at Moruya District Hospital with a fire front approaching from the south and a fire front descending from the north. The fires met behind the hospital and were only a couple of hundred metres from it. Our communities were separated. Batemans Bay and Moruya are only 20 minutes apart, but we did not see people for months because we were just inaccessible. I am not being an apologist—these things take time. We have appointed Dave Owens, the former New South Wales deputy police commissioner, as the recovery coordinator for the event. He will coordinate ground efforts to ensure that we have timely and targeted actions. The member for Blue Mountains referenced the natural disaster declaration that was announced and then extended. The good member for Blue Mountains also gave a long list of support that we have provided. Recovery centres and outreach centres have been operating at key locations, as they were in the bushfires. We are listening to our communities.

But these events have come one on top of the other—particularly with ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred—and we want to ensure that small businesses and primary producers who were impacted by both get similar support in their recovery. Since coming to office, the Minns Government has approved an additional \$8.2 billion in expenditure for this. As we said before, there has been a tenfold increase in natural disaster expenditure compared with the six years before that. This is not going to change. We are in an era of climate change, when these events will become more and more frequent. In additional disaster expenses from the Commonwealth reimbursements, we have had expenditure of \$11.4 billion on the State Emergency Service and the Rural Fire Service. The disaster recovery has included more than \$1 billion for programs including flooding relief, regional roads and transport, the Resilient Homes Program and the Infrastructure Betterment Fund.

Despite the criticism, I must speak of my Federal member, the good Kristy McBain, the member for Eden-Monaro. She showed true leadership first in the Tathra bushfires and then in the Black Summer bushfires and 2019 fires. Two weeks after she got her job, she was thrown into that. We have been faced with criticism after criticism of damage, of mistakes, of maldistribution, of a postcode lottery and accusations of bloodsucking, when in fact the money is going back—

**Mr David Layzell:** It's true.

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND:** Where is the blood being sucked from? If you want to show real leadership—

**Mr David Layzell:** Come on up!

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND:** Come on up—as if I do not know. Real leadership is not this adversarial approach. Real leadership is working with all levels of government to have a significant effect on our communities.

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (17:24):** Government members talk as though it is business as usual, but I can tell the member for Bega that we are sick of excuses and this avoidance language. We are not being adversarial. I have worked with the relevant Ministers at Federal and State levels for the past five weeks. We are not getting the support that we need and deserve. The member for Myall Lakes and her community in the Manning have done a fantastic job showing their resilience and supporting each other through a very difficult time. We have seen homes destroyed, furniture in piles and livelihoods out on the footpath. Yet nothing has been done.

The media cycle comes and the media cycle goes. It moves on to the next headline and the people of Oxley, as well as people in the other electorates affected, are still counting the cost. They have hosed out the mud but now we are facing emotional trauma and difficulty because we are still being ignored. Our local small businesses are being pushed to the brink. Rodney Mowle from RM's Diesel and Tractor Service has worked in that industry for 40 years. He lost half a million dollars worth of equipment through damage during the last floods. One of the strongest men I know, he was reduced to tears in front of the camera, playing it all out and helping bring awareness to the plight of our community. But there is no category D from the Premier.

The owners of Hot 'N' Tasty Bakery, a much-loved bakery—we go there to get our pies, our buns and our bread—have had to remortgage their home just to stay afloat. But there is no category D from the Premier. None at all. The Halfway Shop still has not reopened. This is an iconic takeaway located right next to our netball, cricket and soccer fields. Everyone ducks around the back and goes to the Halfway Shop to get their snacks. But there is no category D from the Premier. They cannot even reopen. The Central Kempsey IGA is a pillar for our community. Even though there was no shop to sell them in, it supplied fruit and vegetables to the community free of charge. Time and time again, it has shown up for our community. It had 16 freezers and fridges destroyed. All the shelves were knocked onto the ground—there was absolute destruction. Everyone turned up in droves and it continued to give back to our community. But guess what? There is still no category D funding from the Premier.

These businesses need support to recover—and it is not just the locals. We are a community based on agriculture and tourism. We need tourists to return to our community. Our economy relies on it. Primary producers and oyster growers are all exhausted. Some of them are thinking of quitting. They cannot recover. We have had pastures destroyed, livestock stranded and fences down. There is debris in our paddocks. Farmers are handfeeding cattle every day just to survive. They are farmers like Wade Francis and Sue McGinn, whose property I took the Minister for Recovery to see firsthand. Where is she during this important debate? She is not in the Chamber. The Minister for Agriculture does not even show her face in the Macleay Valley. As I said, our economy is based on tourism and agriculture but she cannot even come to our valley despite my invitation to do so on 3 June. That is a long time ago and I have not received even an email in response. Do we even matter?

The mental toll is growing heavier every day. If the Minister will not front the people who are doing it tough, does she even deserve to speak for our sector? We have seen the Government act fast in other parts of the State. To be honest, the Ministers have been really good to our face. We have spoken to them and they have been accommodating. But that was before the Premier teased our community. He came to our flood zone and responded with hubris. He was talkative and listened to the stories. Then he teased us the very next day by saying, "I'll be working over the next week to get \$75,000 worth of funding." I ask the Premier: Where is that? I tell you what, it is not in our pockets.

Some of our hardest-hit areas cannot even access the \$180 hardship payment. A creek in my area divides two suburbs. On one side people can get the \$180 and on the other side they cannot. I tell you what, a creek does not come up on one side and not on the other; it comes up equally. In Lismore the maximisation of category C to \$75,000 and category D was announced in one week. This Sunday at the racecourse at 12.00 p.m. the people of the Macleay and Oxley will stand up because the Government will not stand up for them. I cannot wait to see members there for a free barbecue, which has been sponsored by local community businesses.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR (Cessnock) (19:29):** I move:

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

- (1) Acknowledges the devastating impact of recent floods on the Mid North Coast and Hunter regions.
- (2) Acknowledges that the New South Wales Government is continuing to work with the Commonwealth to ensure appropriate support is provided to those impacted by the floods on the Mid North Coast and Hunter regions.
- (3) Notes that New South Wales has been experiencing a run of the most devastating natural disasters in its history, with a cost of disaster assistance provided over the six years since the 2019-2020 bushfires increasing by more than 1,000 per cent compared with the previous six years.
- (4) Notes that the New South Wales budget includes an additional \$4.2 billion of disaster relief across the forward estimates.

Disasters are occurring. They are terrible, tragic, devastating and deeply impactful. No member in this House would suggest otherwise. We acknowledge that a grief journey comes after that, and that it will be different for each individual and community. The timeline for that is different for all. The Government acknowledges that the floods have had a significant impact, and that is why category A, category B and category C funding has been rolled out. Importantly, we must all acknowledge that within a postcode, a local government area or a suburb, not everyone is affected in the same way. I am on the Public Accounts Committee. The other day, the Auditor-General tabled a report about disaster relief grants. It made the point that, on one particular occasion, the State had budgeted \$250 million but ended up rolling out—I think, from memory—\$532 million.

**Mr Michael Kemp:** Because there were no compliance checks.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** The report said there was no checking of the impact, the targets or goals or the reality of the different grants that were rolled out. I acknowledge the comment made by the member for Oxley. We have to have a more targeted approach. We need to do compliance checks when people stick their hand up and ask for grants. We have all probably heard stories where people stuck their hand up for an emergency grant even though they might not have been impacted as much as others. In some ways, they ruin it for everyone else.

It is essential that State and Federal government support gets to the people who need it most, and that the maximum amount of support reaches those people. That work that is currently underway and will be led by the Reconstruction Authority, which has moved into that role as we have moved from response to recovery. It is the responsibility of the Reconstruction Authority to do that work in conjunction with local councils and authorities, the State Government and the Ministers, and the Federal Government. I do not think that the tone of the debate of this bill in the House today helps any of that. It frustrates, infuriates and incites communities that are already hurting. I know members want to bang the drum on their behalf and advocate for them, but there's a fine line between advocacy and adding fuel on the fire.

**Mr Michael Kemp:** We've been working really closely with them, mate.

**Mr CLAYTON BARR:** I acknowledge the members who have been working with the Premier and with the Ministers. That is a lovely change to the way government operates in New South Wales. Historically, members affected in these situations could not always get access to a member. The member for Cootamundra is the exception to the rule. I commend the amendment to the House.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** Members will come to order.

**Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie) (19:34):** By leave: The Mid North Coast flood disaster last month created an indelible mark on our region, as the member for Cessnock stated. Torrential, life-threatening rain caused waterways to rise. It engulfed homes, farms, businesses and infrastructure, causing widespread devastation across many areas of the electorates, including Port Macquarie, Oxley, Myall Lakes and the Upper Hunter.

**Ms Kate Washington:** And Port Stephens.

**Mr ROBERT DWYER:** And Port Stephens. Unfortunately, the member for Blue Mountains forgot about Port Macquarie. I apologise for that and apologise for not mentioning Port Stephens. Sadly, the floods up and down the Mid North Coast cost five people their lives. The scale of the damage was overwhelming. In the face of such loss, what shone through in our electorates was the unity of our communities. Time and time again, we witnessed act of kindness, bravery and determination. Volunteers, emergency service personnel and community members stepped up and put their own needs aside to help others. We are very grateful to the State Emergency Service, Fire and Rescue, Marine Rescue, NSW Police Force, Rural Fire Service, ambulance crews and local council staff. Their rapid response, professionalism and tireless efforts saved lives.

Tim Bale from Hannam Vale in my electorate told me that 25 per cent of the dairy in New South Wales comes from the Mid North Coast—from the Oxley, through Port Macquarie and down to the Manning. Unfortunately, people like Tim Bale are milking other farmers' stock because they cannot get back up on their feet. Some are not likely to. Across the Mid North Coast, more than 4,000 people representing the New South Wales Government were on the ground completing rapid responses and clean-ups. In addition, 2,000 people from councils, electricity companies, telcos and volunteers also supported those efforts. On Sunday 25 May I had the pleasure of working alongside the Leader of the Opposition, Mark Speakman, and the Federal MP Pat Conaghan. They worked tirelessly cleaning out flood affected houses on the Mid North Coast. Be it with a broom, gurney or muscle, they moved people's personal effects damaged by the floods onto the footpath for collection.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The Clerk will stop the clock. Audible conversation and members wandering around the Chamber is distracting, particularly for a new member. The member for Port Macquarie will be heard in silence.

**Mr ROBERT DWYER:** I acknowledge the effort of the Premier and the Minister for Emergency Services in coming to our area to see firsthand the devastating impact on local communities caused by the massive flooding. I also single out the Minister for Recovery, who came to our electorate multiple times. She has been on the ground talking to flood-affected families and attending a number of community meetings to help heal those families that are doing it tough. Whilst I welcomed the announcement of category C funding to help small businesses and primary producers start their recovery from the floods, \$25,000 is simply not enough support. The Mid North Coast is calling for the maximisation of category C funding and a rollout of category D funding that will allow eligible applicants to apply for up to \$75,000 with State and Federal Government assistance.

The current \$25,000 threshold simply is not enough and flies in the face of the devastation that affected so many people in the State. My understanding is that the Premier has not requested the Federal Government for the \$75,000 category D funding. I understand that the Federal Government is ready to roll out its share of the category D funding. What is the State Government waiting for?

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown) (17:39):** Before any member jokes that the electorate of Newtown is not a flood-affected region, I recognise the high impact on the flood-affected communities of members across the

State. I speak on behalf of The Greens because the debate occurs in the context of recognising that climate change is the cause of these extreme natural disasters. Neither the motion before us nor the amendment addresses that fact, but it is important for us to recognise that these events are becoming more frequent and that the pressure is there. I speak on behalf of The Greens to put on record that we support the motion of the member for Myall Lakes, but we will not be in a position to vote for it given that the Government has moved an amendment.

It is important to make clear that, although the amendment put forward by the Government is factually correct in that the budget line item is a correct figure, that means nothing when people on the ground need dollars for recovery right now. The Government is, in a sense, using an amendment to reword the entirety of the motion so that members do not get to vote on the substantive motion. That indicates that the Government is attempting to stop the community's call for absolute funding from being heard. While the release of funding may not do everything to address the devastation and destruction that has occurred in those communities, if it gives people a sense of hope and alleviates stress, that is critical. Sadly, because of the way the numbers on the amendment will fall in this place, The Greens will never get the chance to vote on the substantive motion moved by The Nationals. I acknowledge that fact. I thank the Opposition for moving the motion and express that The Greens support the need for urgent action on the request being put forward in it.

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence) (17:41):** By leave: I thank the House for allowing me to make a contribution to the debate. I acknowledge my parliamentary colleagues on the Opposition and Government benches. I feel a little sorry for Government members today. Having to defend the indefensible is like winning the toss on a green wicket and electing to bat. Seriously, recovery is really bloody tough. We all know it. Every member knows how tough it is. In 2022 people in my community suffered the worst flooding of their lives. We have not recovered, and we do not pretend that we have. In 2019 fire destroyed 187 homes in my electorate, and the residents have not recovered. Cootamundra is in drought at the moment, and it will take that community a very long time to recover. Recovery is tough. I have said before in this place and will say again now that the hurt and frustration will very quickly turn to anger. I have seen it in my electorate, and I am sure that all members in electorates affected by the floods are seeing it now.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** And we've seen it before.

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON:** Yes, we have seen it before. That is true. The next time it rains, though, the stress that those communities will feel, from my experience, is untold. The absolute mental strain as those communities recover is untold and unmeasured. That is a very important point. Honestly, unless anyone has stood and smelled flood mud after two days of sunshine, or cleaned out flood mud from their own or someone else's home or business, they will not deeply appreciate what these communities are going through. In 2022 the funding was quick and appreciated. I hope this comment is taken the right way, but the Government is now being judged. It is being judged against what happened in 2022.

**Ms Trish Doyle:** And 2019.

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON:** And 2019, but 2022 is the benchmark. It needs to be acknowledged that the Government is being judged right now in this place but, more importantly, in the communities affected. In 2022 the funding was swift and hit the ground when needed. Quite frankly, the communities of the Mid North Coast and the Hunter need every bit of support possible right now, so let us not quibble. Let the best of this place be on show to ensure that the communities get what they need. If category D funding is not approved, we should honestly scrap it altogether and wipe it out because it will never be approved again.

I plead with Government members to listen, as I know they are, to members representing communities who are hurting at the moment. Those communities will shortly become very angry. I note that the member for Lismore, and Minister for Recovery, is in the Chamber. All the goodwill that she has is evident because she has lived it and understands what we are talking about. I plead with members not to quibble. Government members must get the money out the door, and apply to the Federal Government for category D funding to help our communities recover. Again, I thank the House for allowing me to make a contribution.

**Mr GURMESH SINGH (Coffs Harbour) (17:46):** By leave: I acknowledge all MPs who have contributed to today's debate. I know that passions can run pretty hot on these topics, but natural disasters often bring out the best in our Parliament and our communities. I remember coming to this place in 2019 as a fresh-faced MP. I think it was only eight weeks after I was sworn in that we had bushfires just north of my electorate, in the electorate of Clarence. From then, we had bushfires all up and down the State for seven months. At the time, it felt like the worst disaster this State would ever face. Fast forward to the floods of 2021 and 2022. No-one would ever say that the recovery was perfect, but the Government at the time rolled out support to those communities with great speed. That said to those communities, "The Government has got your back. It is here to support you where it can."

The crux of the motion as moved by the member from Myall Lakes goes to a promise made by the Premier on 3 June that, within a week, the Government would look at category D funding up to \$75,000. The Commonwealth is telling us that it is waiting for the State Government to make a request. That is why I say to The Greens that they can support the motion, because it is truthful. It matters to our community that these things are put on public record, and it matters that they know that it is not just elected representatives from our electorates who have their back but from across the State. We know that \$75,000 in funding will not fix everything. For some people, it will not even be 1 per cent of what they have lost. But it shows those communities that the Government—not only previous Coalition governments, but also this Government—has got their backs. It shows that there is hope. It shows that they are not alone in fighting for recovery after a disaster.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (17:49):** By leave: I assure communities on the Mid North Coast and in the Hunter that I do have their backs. I do care. I do understand what it is like. I have lived it and I am still living it as a local member. The member for Clarence, the member for Tweed, the member for Ballina and I still meet regularly in a community leaders forum to work through our recovery. Disasters, by their very nature, are complex. They create chaos. They create grief and trauma and shock. I am watching that. I experienced it on the Mid North Coast and in the Hunter. I still have to visit a few areas. I assure members that the things their communities need are the things I am advocating for. I will not resile from that. I know members would like progress to be quicker. I do not want to go into 2022 in chapter and verse, because I lived it every day. I was then in opposition. I know what it is like to be in opposition, not government. I worked with former Premier Perrottet and I worked well with the then Deputy Premier, the member for Bathurst. I also gave them a bit of stick.

**Mr Dugald Saunders:** A lot of stick!

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** A lot of stick, yes. What I am saying is that it is not perfect. In terms of the timing, after the catastrophic 2022 floods then Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced support on 3 March. The guidelines did not come out until May and rent assistance was provided in April. I could go through all the timing and the dates, but I do not want to do that. I understand it does not help the communities. With the bushfires, I think it was 87 days. In the Central West, it was something like 90 days. These things are ingrained in me, but I do not want to go into that. I simply give an assurance that I am working and doing the best I can. When the Premier said that he was working towards getting the funding, he was mindful of what is going on in communities.

Disasters cause grief for local members too. People talk about mental health and members are impacted too. It impacts those who were affected directly but, as local members, we must carry it. We have to carry our communities to a place of strength. It is not easy to recover. I would love to give everyone everything and restore exactly what was there. That is what I wanted to do in our communities, but we could not. We can only do the best we can. I assure the member for Myall Lakes that we are doing everything we can. It is not helpful to condemn the Government. I did not condemn the former Government. Yes, I went hard, but I did not condemn. I said that I was disappointed at times, but I did not condemn. I urge members to keep working with the Government. I will continue to do that.

**Mrs Tanya Thompson:** I have been working with you, Janelle.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** I know. You and I do work together. I am just saying that it is better that we do it. We will get there.

**Mr Michael Kemp:** You could tell us the funding is there and then work it out later.

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN:** We will get there. I thank the House for giving me leave to contribute to the debate.

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes) (17:53):** In reply: I thank all the members who have contributed to this debate. I thank the member for Upper Hunter, the member for Oxley, the member for Blue Mountains, the member for Bega, the member for Cessnock, the member for Port Macquarie, the member for Newtown, the member for Clarence, the member for Coffs Harbour and the Minister for Recovery for their contributions. I have been handed a lot of notes filled with a lot of quibbles and squabbles. In question time this week I was accused of politicising this natural disaster. I really took offence to that because not once have I made this a political issue—not once. So I will not. I will put down all the notes. There is no place for politics in natural disasters—I have said that from the outset.

I am here because my community is hurting. I am here because I am their voice in this place to fight for what they need. What they need is category D funding. The \$5,000 available at the moment for small businesses—which is part of the \$25,000 they can unlock, but \$20,000 is in retrospect—does not help them right now. Unlocking category D would help them because that unlocks more funding. The \$75,000 for primary producers will help farmers. That is what will give them hope and the insight to rebuild their lives. I will not politicise the

issue. I will not make it about us and them. I am talking for my community—that is my job as a local member. Because I love my community, that is what I do.

Regional New South Wales—and all members should know this—is the engine room of this great State. When members stop supporting regional New South Wales, we will stop supporting them. Members should remember that while they stir the milk in their coffee, enjoy the nice piece of meat on their plate at dinner or enjoy beautiful oysters. They should remember where it all comes from. Those producers are the people the Government is letting down by not supporting them right now. I remind members—particularly those opposite—that thousands of people stood with me in Taree on Monday. That is very rare for a small community that has just been affected by a big flood disaster. Minibuses had to travel from Croki—there are only two cars left in Croki that work. Can members imagine how hard it was for those people to get there to rally in support and to beg for money from the Government? I urge members to do the right thing and support the communities that need help now.

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The member for Myall Lakes has moved a motion, to which the member for Cessnock has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....43  
Noes .....33  
Majority.....10

**AYES**

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

**NOES**

Anderson, K	Henskens, A	Singh, G
Ayyad, T	Hodges, M	Sloane, K
Clancy, J	James, T	Speakman, M
Cooke, S	Kemp, M	Thompson, T
Cross, M	Layzell, D	Toole, P
Crouch, A (teller)	McGirr, J	Tuckerman, W
Dalton, H	Moylan, B	Tudehope, M
Davies, T	Preston, R	Wallace, J
Di Pasqua, S	Provest, G	Williams, R
Donato, P	Roberts, A	Williamson, R (teller)
Dwyer, R	Saunders, D	Wilson, F

**PAIRS**

Atalla, E	Petinos, E
Car, P	Lane, J
Cotsis, S	Taylor, M
Finn, J	Coure, M
Minns, C	Griffin, J

**Amendment agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Sonia Hornery):** The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

*Bills*

**CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2025**

**Second Reading Debate**

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:05):** I speak in support of the Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. As the Parliamentary Secretary, and member for Coogee noted, the New South Wales Government is pleased to introduce this bill. Its introduction represents the Government's commitment to invest in the creation and empowerment of our next generation of arts and cultural leaders. Through Creative Communities, which is the arts, culture and creative industries policy released in 2023, this Government encourages the next generation of culture workers and leaders to step forward. It knows that exposure to and participation in cultural activities have significant benefits for personal and community wellbeing and development. The creative industries are also an important contributor to our economic future. It is estimated that the creative industries contributed \$55.1 billion to the New South Wales economy in 2019-20. That represents about 9 per cent of gross State product.

Engaging and empowering the next generation of artists and creatives to lead the way is crucial if we want to continue to grow the creative industries and ensure the health and sustainability of the arts and culture sector. We know there is no shortage of young creative practitioners with the ability and insight to help guide that growth. Western Sydney has a wealth of talented youth from diverse cultural backgrounds, and I am proud to promote and advocate for them to whoever is listening. The Government has already established the Creative Youth Network, which brings together young creatives to directly advise key Government Ministers on issues impacting young people engaged in the arts, culture and creative industries. The Government has also made changes to the Create NSW Artform Boards to ensure that young and emerging practitioners and organisations are represented in the assessment of applications made to the Arts and Cultural Funding Program. That ensures the perspectives of the next generation of creatives and audiences are reflected in funding decisions.

We know that our young creative leaders have the talent and vision; what is required now is opportunity. There is no better place to provide that than on the governing bodies of our State's cultural institutions, and I am so glad that we will soon be welcoming one of those institutions to Parramatta. Our cultural institutions are leaders for the arts, culture and creative industries sector across New South Wales. They encompass all disciplines of the creative industries and play a critical role in encouraging people to engage with arts and culture. The cultural institutions are a central repository of our State's history, and they provide vital services and programs throughout New South Wales. Importantly, they are key partners in driving implementation of the Government's Creative Communities policy.

By structurally engaging young creatives through the boards, trusts and councils that govern the State's cultural institutions, those emerging leaders can have a broad and lasting impact on the arts, culture and creative industries across New South Wales. Those next-generation leaders will bring new perspectives to Australia's oldest cultural institutions and help them to grow new audiences that reflect our diverse communities. Empowering young creatives in that way will also allow them to develop skills and expertise they can take back to their own communities and creative practices while also honing their governance and leadership skills to drive the arts in New South Wales for the future. Supporting the next generation of creative leaders is a key step in building a thriving arts and cultural sector for years to come. I congratulate the Minister, his staff and Create NSW officers, who have driven this game-changing amending bill alongside arts advocates from across New South Wales. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:09):** I speak in support of the Cultural Institutions Legislation Amendment Bill 2025. The bill seeks to enshrine a reserved place for at least one youth representative on the board, trust or council of several New South Wales cultural institutions. Reserving a specific youth representative place will enable the voices of young people to contribute to shaping the future of our cultural institutions. The bill will do this by amending the governing legislation of New South Wales State cultural institutions to specify the inclusion on the board, trust or council of at least one young person who, at the time of appointment as a member, is at least 18 years of age and not more than 28. This will be required for a number of culturally significant institutions—namely, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the Museums of History NSW, the State Library of NSW and the Sydney Opera House.



The bill demonstrates the Government's commitment to enhancing the participation and engagement of young people in New South Wales's top cultural and creative institutions. The Government's whole-of-government arts, culture and creative industries policy, Creative Communities, emphasises the need to widen access to cultural and creative life for New South Wales residents of all ages. By working to bolster the participation rates of young people in our leading creative institutions, we will allow their voices to be heard at the decision-making tables. That is critical, because young people are such important stakeholders in that space. This will allow them to grow the arts further and further as the years go by. Their perspectives are important, as art is the conveying of ideas and perspectives.

Importantly, this will not only continue beyond the 10-year Creative Communities policy, but also become a part of the DNA of our State's cultural institutions, ensuring long-term vibrancy and inclusion for New South Wales into the future. Young people are our State's future. By empowering them to engage with our cultural institutions, we ensure that those institutions stay relevant, innovative and accessible for generations to come. I commend the bill to the House.

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL (Coogee) (18:11):** On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: In reply: I thank all the members who contributed to the debate. As I outlined in my opening remarks, the bill seeks to ensure that the next generation of creative and cultural leaders are represented on the governing entities of our State's cultural institutions. The amendments will capture the intrinsic value that the perspectives of young leaders bring to the table. They will also harness the sustainable and enduring economic impact of the arts, culture and creative industries, helping to assure growth and productivity for future generations. Most importantly, the bill will help to breathe new life into our cultural institutions by harnessing the vibrancy, forward thinking and fresh perspectives that young people offer in response to the changing needs of this rapidly evolving sector.

During consultation on the bill, several members provided suggestions on how to strengthen it. I thank those members, in particular. I also acknowledge the contributions of the member for Tamworth, the member for Parramatta, the member for Fairfield and the member for Strathfield, as well as the Hon. Jacqui Munro and Dr Amanda Cohn in the other place. I reiterate a number of the issues raised by the member for Tamworth, particularly regarding expressions of interest and the training of young people. The member for Strathfield said that shortly after the passage of the bill the Government will initiate an expression of interest process to identify outstanding young candidates to serve on the board of our State's leading cultural institutions. This process will be open for a four-week period and will invite applications from young people aged 18 to 20 from all corners of New South Wales and from all walks of life.

The member for Tamworth also raised the upskilling of these young people. In line with the Government's commitment to setting up these young leaders for success, and with the support of NSW Advocate for Children and Young People Zoë Robinson, all successful applicants will be sponsored to complete a course through the Australian Institute of Company Directors, with a focus on corporate governance. Following the passage of the bill, the advocate has committed to engaging directly with each cultural institution's existing board to ensure that young appointees are welcomed, mentored and supported in their new roles. The Government wants to set up these young people in the best way possible and will provide them with the training and skills they need so that they can contribute fully.

The member for Tamworth also referred to the necessity of the bill. I reiterate the words of Minister Graham in his speech in the other place. Let me be clear that he wrote to these institutions and asked for reform to happen. In this place the Government is doing what it is meant to do. I remind members that our responsibility is to set the legislative framework to determine how bills operate, which is what the Government is doing with this bill. We are making these institutions fit for purpose for the twenty-first century. I acknowledge the contribution of the passionate and dedicated NSW Advocate for Children and Young People. I am also thankful for the support her amazing team will provide to the new appointees, ensuring the right training and mechanisms are in place to fully realise the benefits of these amendments. I also acknowledge the Create NSW team for the work they have done in delivering the Creative Communities policy, which underpins the bill—particularly Rachel Muscat for her work on the bill, as well as her policy team, led by Mark Crees.

Finally, I acknowledge the Australian Institute of Company Directors, whose partnership will ensure that the new youth representatives on cultural institution boards will be professionally trained, confident and well prepared to engage in the future of art, culture and creativity in New South Wales. The New South Wales Government is committed to providing a platform for young leaders to be impactful in the creative sector to guide our cultural institutions into a new era. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### Third Reading

**Dr MARJORIE O'NEILL:** On behalf of Ms Jenny Aitchison: I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### IDENTITY PROTECTION AND RECOVERY BILL 2025

#### Second Reading Debate

**Debate resumed from 6 May 2025.**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden) (18:17):** I am pleased to support the Identity Protection and Recovery Bill 2025. The bill will establish an Act to provide a core government provider of identity protection and recovery services and certain fraud control services within New South Wales. The functions in the bill are conferred on the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service and may be delegated to staff in the ID Support NSW business unit. ID Support already provides critical identity protection and recovery support to the people of New South Wales, and the bill will consolidate and expand on its functions in an ongoing way.

As we know, large-scale data compromises are the new normal, and many people in New South Wales and the broader Australian community would have been affected by a data compromise in the past few years. Data compromises pose a risk to individuals. Once an organisation they have transacted with has been breached and their personal information has been accessed, they can find that their identities have been taken over and loans or phone accounts have been opened in their name. Data compromises also contribute to increased scam risks. Even if only a person's contact details are compromised, scammers can use that information to try to trick people to part with their money or give them more personal information. ID Support provides practical help to individuals, government agencies and private sector organisations when they are impacted by a data compromise.

The identity protection and recovery functions in proposed section 10 consolidate ID Support's critical role in assisting public and private sector agencies and individuals prevent and respond to data compromises. Proposed section 10 allows ID Support to do two overarching things. First, it will be able to advise and make recommendations to mitigate the risk of harm to individuals when a personal data compromise occurs, and to increase resilience and protection against personal data compromises. Second, it will respond to personal data compromises, including by advising on and recommending actions to replace or reissue identity documents, and protect and recover personal information; advising on the risk of harm to impacted individuals; and notifying impacted individuals and providing information to public sector agencies or private sector entities to help them to notify impacted individuals quickly.

Increasing resilience and protection against personal data compromises through education and outreach is a key way that ID Support helps the New South Wales community. ID Support has been targeted and strategic about its education and outreach, ensuring that it is engaging with people in the community who are the most vulnerable to personal data compromise and identity fraud. We know that older New South Wales citizens have faced challenges with data compromises and subsequent scams from people who have obtained their information online. It is important that digital transactions are accessible and safe for everyone in our community, including those who did not grow up doing their banking and paying their bills online or on a device.

In March 2025 ID Support attended the NSW Seniors Festival Expo, which attracted over 20,000 people. It provided an opportunity for older Australians to learn directly from ID Support how to recognise online scams and to remain safe online. As part of this event, ID Support also held an Identi-TEA, which gave ID Support staff the opportunity to hear from and give advice to New South Wales seniors on a range of matters, from concerns about how to set and manage strong passwords to what to do when they receive a scam text or email. Sadly, many seniors at the event reported being targeted by impersonation scams, especially those pretending to be from MyGov.

Scammers can be sophisticated actors who use a range of techniques to convince their victims that they are someone else. ID Support is giving New South Wales seniors tools to detect and protect against this kind of behaviour. ID Support is also ensuring that we are supporting young people before they begin transacting online. Those aged 14 to 18 are particularly vulnerable to personal data compromise because, in the space of a few years, the amount of information about them can increase rapidly as they enter the workforce and receive a tax file number; open personal bank accounts; obtain their learner or provisional driver licence, or a passport; or enrol in tertiary education. We know that as young people start receiving forms of identification, they become more vulnerable to identity theft and fraud. Fraudsters have recognised this vulnerability and may target them to exploit their lack of knowledge.

Any young person, and their parents or caregivers, can access ID Support's "Keeping your identity safe" eLearning module for young people aged 14 to 18, which provides them with tools and guidance to spot scams and protect their personal information. It is interactive, and has quizzes, videos and case studies designed to help students from years 9 to 12 to develop skills to navigate the online world safely. Recently ID Support also ran engagement sessions in Fairfield and Cabramatta during Youth Week. At these events, young people shared their experiences with scams, and ID Support's knowledgeable staff provided practical tips on safeguarding their identity.

ID Support's work is vital to ensure that young people can start their adult lives with the identity documents they need and with the knowledge and confidence to protect themselves against identity theft. We know that people in culturally and linguistically diverse communities can also be particularly vulnerable to identity misuse. The NSW Digital Inclusion Strategy was released this month. Initiative 5.5 of the strategy is to "support a multilingual campaign to promote broader community understanding of how to protect themselves against and recover from online scams and data breaches." ID Support will be a key part of this initiative. Throughout 2025, ID Support will partner with Multicultural NSW to offer translation services to diverse populations in its contact centre and will run translated in-person education sessions in the community.

ID Support's outreach has helped ensure that the community is aware and ready to act, so they will be less susceptible to data compromises and less likely to get scammed. People who have attended ID Support's education and awareness sessions, or have visited ID Support's website, know exactly whom to call and what to do if they are notified that they have been impacted by a data compromise, or even if they notice something is not right in their accounts. The bill sets the scope of ID Support's functions in proposed section 10, capturing the important education and advisory role that ID Support has been playing. I am pleased to see ID Support's role consolidated in an ongoing way. I support the bill.

**Dr DAVID SALIBA (Fairfield) (18:24):** I speak in support of the Identity Protection and Recovery Bill 2025. I commend the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government for his work in this space. ID Support NSW is a business unit within the Department of Customer Service tasked to respond to data compromises. The bill establishes ID Support as the core government provider of identity protection and recovery services and certain fraud control services within New South Wales. It also provides statutory exemptions to a range of Acts and other secrecy provisions that are necessary for these services. The bill consolidates the functions that ID Support has been performing under the IDSupport NSW Privacy Code of Practice.

The bill enables ID Support to do its critical work. The bill does this in a number of ways. Firstly, it confers identification protection functions on the secretary of the department administering the bill. The identity protection recovery functions enable ID Support to advise and make recommendations to mitigate the risk of harm to individuals when a personal data compromise occurs, and to increase resilience. The bill also enables ID Support to respond to personal data compromises, including by advising on and recommending actions to replace or reissue identification documents, and protect and recover personal information; advising on the risk of harm to impacted individuals; and notifying impacted individuals and providing information to agencies or private sector entities to help them notify impacted individuals quickly, because timely notification is important to mitigate damage.

The bill confers identify fraud control functions upon ID Support, enabling it to advise and make recommendations regarding actions to detect, prevent and mitigate the likelihood of identity fraud, matters pertaining to the Compromised ID Register, or CIR, and to facilitate CIR and life-status checks for fraud-check users. The bill also provides legislative authority for ID Support to work with agencies and other entities to provide its services in a personal data compromise by providing necessary exemptions from laws such as the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002, and other provisions. In addition, civil, criminal and disciplinary liability protections for disclosures that are made consistent with the bill are provided, where necessary.

Finally, the bill confers a power to make regulations to support the functions of ID Support established by the bill. The bill is important to enable ID Support to perform its functions. I commend the Minister for his work in bolstering this service. As we know, the threat of online scammers and data compromises is increasing, and we need to ensure that our agencies are robust to counter the threats posed by actors in that space. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (18:28):** In reply: I thank the member for Fairfield for his great contribution. He captured, very closely, the importance of legislation like this. It is not the sort of thing that will make headlines, but it makes an absolute difference to people's lives, given that there are so many bad-faith actors out there at the moment, and the number of identification infringements that are occurring through phishing and scamming. I thank the members representing the electorates of Manly, Mount Druitt, Coogee, Liverpool, Penrith—or, as the member says, the Riff—Heathcote, Parramatta, Port Stephens, Camden and

Fairfield for their contributions to debate on the Identity Protection and Recovery Bill 2025. I thank the member for Manly, the shadow Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, for his engagement with the bill. He focused on the compromised ID register and how the bill has been developed in consultation with law enforcement.

The member for Mount Druitt highlighted the exemptions from the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998—also known as the PPIP Act—the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 and certain secrecy provisions. Those exemptions are necessary for the timely and seamless provision of ID Support's services to individuals, public sector agencies and private sector entities that are impacted by a data breach. The member for Coogee, the member for Penrith and the member for Camden highlighted the fraud control functions and their growing importance given the costs of identity crime, including within their communities.

The Parliamentary Secretary for Customer Service and Digital Government set out the role of ID Support NSW and why now is the time to empower that organisation to keep protecting the people of New South Wales, whatever the identity landscape looks like in the future. That was also the theme of the contributions of the member for Heathcote and member for Fairfield. The member for Parramatta and the Minister for Disability Inclusion—who is in the Chamber and is doing outstanding work—spoke to how the bill fits within the digital inclusion framework. I had the wonderful opportunity to join both members for the launch of the Digital Inclusion Strategy. The bill is one part of that. Inclusion means that everybody should be included. The member for Parramatta and the Minister understand how critical these services are to ensuring that vulnerable communities do not get left behind in the digital journey that we are all on.

The Identity Protection and Recovery Bill 2025 is a key part of delivering on the NSW Digital Inclusion Strategy. It consolidates ID Support as a vital service within the New South Wales Government, protecting individuals from the risk of identity compromise and related identity fraud risks. I thank everybody who has made a contribution to the bill. I especially thank the members of my department and office who put this together and everybody who engaged in every bit of consultation. As I said, we will look back in years to come and see that this puts down a marker for what we think is incredibly important to ensure that we protect people and their identities. I commend the bill to the House.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Ms Stephanie Di Pasqua):** The question is that this bill be now read a second time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **Third Reading**

**Mr JIHAD DIB:** I move:

That this bill be now read a third time.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Community Recognition Statements*

#### **ST ANTHONY OF PADUA, AUSTRAL**

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (18:32):** On 15 June I had the joy of celebrating the Feast Day of St Anthony and 60 years of faith, family and service with the St Anthony of Padua parish community in Austral. The day began with a beautiful mass led by Archbishop Anthony Fisher, followed by a fantastic community celebration filled with food stalls, music, rides and the kind of warm, welcoming atmosphere for which the parish has been known for many decades. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces coming together to honour such a meaningful milestone in the life of the church and the wider Austral community. I say a big congratulations to Father Ronnie and all the organisers and volunteers whose hard work made the day such a memorable success. St Anthony's continues to be a shining example of Austral's fabulous community spirit. Here's to another 60 years of faith, connection and celebration in the community.

#### **TRIBUTE TO CHARLES CASUSCELLI, FORMER MEMBER FOR STRATHFIELD**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (18:33):** I pay tribute to Charles Casuscelli, RFD, former member for Strathfield, who passed away last Friday, aged 68. Charles served with distinction and integrity as the member for Strathfield from 2011 to 2015. During his time in this place, he was a tireless advocate for his community and always strived to deliver for the people he represented. Charles was a proud Italian migrant, born in Rome in 1956. He moved to Australia, where he grew up in Western Sydney before joining the Defence Force in 1987. In 1993 Charles was recognised with a Reserve Force Decoration, a testament to his commitment to service. Since leaving Parliament, Charles continued to serve the people of Western Sydney as the CEO of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils. My condolences, thoughts and prayers are with Charles's

family—his wife Maria, his daughters Eleisha and Bianca and their families, and his friends and loved ones—during this difficult time. Vale, Charles Casuscelli. May he rest in peace.

#### **SUSSEX INLET VIKING FESTIVAL**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast) (18:34):** I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the organisers, volunteers, performers and the entire Sussex Inlet community on the success of this year's Viking Festival. The Viking Festival is a vibrant celebration of our stunning South Coast and the rich Scandinavian heritage introduced to the area by the Ellmoos family. The extraordinary event brought Viking history to life with an immersive village camp, complete with traditional tents, fire pits, cooking demonstrations, sewing, games and thrilling combat re-enactments. Families enjoyed the Lego stall, rides and demonstrations, while live music filled the air from morning to night. The Sussex Inlet Viking Festival is a treasured highlight on the South Coast calendar. It showcases the creativity, passion and community spirit that make the South Coast so special, and it brings people to the South Coast during our quiet winter months. I congratulate Sussex on another unforgettable event.

#### **GREG STEELE**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley) (18:35):** From the rumble of the Newcastle earthquake in '89 to the rising waters of the Mid North Coast floods in 2021, Greg Steele has been a calm, steady leader in the face of crisis. For 50 years Greg has served with the SES, always showing up for our community and putting in the long hours. While he will not make a big fuss of it, Greg's award of the King's Birthday Honours Emergency Services Medal is truly deserved. His journey started at the local surf club, but it was the adrenaline of rescue work, the challenge of floodwaters and his particular love of swiftwater that drew him into the SES. Over five decades, Greg has become a skilled land rescue operator, trusted trainer and mentor to hundreds. He has certainly left an enduring mark on the Mid North Coast community. I personally thank Greg for all the work he has done, along with the rest of the SES, especially over the past year. I congratulate Greg on his well-deserved award.

#### **ROSETTA READS LITTLE LIBRARY**

**Mr WARREN KIRBY (Riverstone) (18:36):** I acknowledge the remarkable initiative behind Rosetta Reads Little Library, recently opened at 38 Rosetta Street, Schofields. Conceived by a local mother navigating complex health challenges while raising young children, the initiative emerged from a deep yearning for connection, access and community. Unable to reach the local library or afford new books, she envisioned a simple yet powerful solution—a street library within walking distance for families, carers, students and neighbours. Supported by her husband and family, and motivated by a desire to give back, she transformed her vision into reality. Rosetta Reads now offers free books to the public, fostering literacy, kindness and inclusion. It is a space where stories are shared, hope is exchanged and community ties are strengthened. I thank the organisers, Julie and Jonathan. Their dedication has created more than a library; it is a symbol of resilience and local generosity. They have gifted Schofields a place of belonging and inspiration. May Rosetta Reads continue to grow as a cherished hub for all who pass by.

#### **GEORGE SHEPPARD**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (18:37):** George Sheppard is an outstanding Pittwater local who recently retired from the Rural Fire Service after nearly 50 years of helping to protect the people of the northern beaches from fires, floods and other emergencies. As a volunteer for 26 years, George held numerous positions within his home brigade and at a district level. He was at the front line of many major bushfires that devastated the northern beaches, where he bravely protected numerous homes and lives. Some of those catastrophic fires include the Warriewood and Ingleside fires of 1977, the Manly Dam fire in 2000, the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park fires in 2004 and, more recently, the Black Summer bushfires. George has played a selfless role in the development of the Northern Beaches Rural Fire District over the past 48 years and has been a mentor, friend and much-loved colleague over that time. I sincerely thank George for helping to keep our community safe and for the sacrifice he has made throughout those years.

#### **ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER GAVIN WOOD, APM**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter) (18:38):** I thank Assistant Commissioner Gavin Wood, APM, for more than three years of service leading the vital Crime Prevention and Youth Command [CPYC]. As the head of the CPYC, Assistant Commissioner Wood spearheaded partnerships with the PCYC, the NRL, the Sebastian Foundation, schools and more. He also led the wildly successful inaugural Emergency Services round of the NRL last year, which featured the police. Assistant Commissioner Wood has never wavered in his goal to steer young kids away from crime and antisocial behaviour, ensuring that kids have access to the help they need to stay on track. He has also been known to join an early morning Fit for Life class or two at the PCYC. We wish him the best in his new role as the

commander of the North West Metropolitan Region, where he will, no doubt, continue to keep our community safe. North-western Sydney is lucky to have him.

#### STITCHES COLLECTION

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (18:39):** I use this time to recognise an outstanding community organisation, located in the heart of Lalor Park, called Stitches Collection. For the past 14 years, Stitches Collection has been a creative mental health charity supporting people with disabilities and mental health challenges through the arts. The studio, Creative Groundz, is home to the handmade Stitches dolls, each designed to open dialogue around mental health, resilience and social justice with the next generation. I commend the team for its deep engagement with the local community, with whom it has co-created artworks, books and baby wraps that celebrate First Nations' stories. The organisation runs vital programs such as the Stitches food bank, disability engagement workshops and local events including an Anzac Day celebration and the Lalor Park Collective Christmas event. As a community hub and safe space, Stitches Collection has been truly transformative for the Lalor Park community. I extend my thanks to this remarkable team and congratulate it for the ongoing contribution to the electorate of Winston Hills.

#### SHOAL BAY PUBLIC SCHOOL

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (18:41):** In stunning Shoal Bay is a beautiful school with a big heart. Over the years when I have visited Shoal Bay Public School, I have met caring students and felt their sense of pride and their connection to their community. I have also seen the frustration of families when it comes to the size of the school hall. When children have had their moment to shine, families have found it hard to see their kids because they simply could not fit in the hall. So I have had a bigger hall on my wish list for years. I am delighted we are now going to be delivering it. Yesterday the Minns Labor Government's budget announced will deliver Shoal Bay Public School a bigger and better school hall. I thank the former and current members of the P&C association, who, alongside me, have never given up the fight. I especially thank current P&C association president Cheryl Kernot and members Fran Martinelli, Sian Kernot, Michelle Edwards and Krystal Bradley, and all the parents, carers and families, alongside their wonderful principal, Heath Lawless. I look forward to everyone sharing special moments at the school together, matching the school's big heart with a bigger and better school hall.

#### TRIBUTE TO JIM CRAWFORD

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands) (18:42):** I recognise the life of and service to the Moree community of the late Jim Crawford. Jim moved to beautiful Moree in 1982 and from that point immersed himself in our community, giving his time and expertise selflessly to many organisations to improve the lives of others. Jim served as a councillor for Moree Plains Shire Council from 2016 to 2021 and over the years served Apex, Rotary, the Rural Financial Counselling Service, Moree Community Transport, Meals on Wheels, Moree Family Support and the Moree area's homelessness service committee. He took on enduring leadership roles in many of these groups and organisations. This well-earned recognition is for a life well lived, with Jim ensuring that his life included constantly giving and supporting others. Jim's commitment to volunteering stood as an example of how one person's generosity can leave a lasting gift. Community organisations in the bush thrive because of volunteers like Jim. I give my sincerest condolences to Christine, Sarah, Tracey, Amy and all Jim's family and friends.

#### AUBURN GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

**Ms LYNDA VOLTZ (Auburn) (18:43):** I am proud to recognise the all-female robotics team from Auburn Girls High School, selected to represent Australia at the Universal Robotics Challenge in Japan this September. Year 11 students Hala Awwad, Aiza Zahid, Isha Chaudhury, Rifa Fatima, Taiba Rahimi and Daniella Ronquillo—guided by Dr Lisa Wallis, Jamie Wan and Principal Anna Tsoutsa—have shown remarkable drive, intelligence and teamwork to earn this opportunity on the world stage. They have spent countless hours designing, coding, testing and refining their robot, all while managing schoolwork and fundraising. Their commitment is inspiring, and they are blazing a trail for young women in STEM. Getting to Japan comes at a cost. The team is aiming to raise \$40,000. So far, they have raised \$9,000 through raffles and sausage sizzles. Cumberland Council has pledged \$15,000. I have personally contributed \$1,000, and the Omar Mosque has generously added \$2,000. This is more than a competition; it is a story of talent, grit and community spirit.

#### BLUE BUTTERFLY INSTITUTE

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:44):** The Blue Butterfly Institute held its third annual high tea fundraiser at the beautiful Gledswood Homestead, and I was, as ever, moved by the coming together of supporters to raise funds to support victims and survivors of sexual trauma. The event gathered community members, advocates and supporters in a powerful show of solidarity. Founded by Tina Meyer, the Blue Butterfly Institute

is a non-profit organisation that offers a safe and empowering platform for individuals affected by sexual trauma. Through education, outreach and digital resources, the institute helps people understand trauma-related behaviours and fosters healing. The event featured inspiring talks, including from Tina; Kara Thornhill, the vice-president of the institute and founder of Maverick; Alison Brahe-Daddo, an ambassador and author; and Ash Hartney, the founder of the Bathhouse and host of Poolside Perspectives, reflecting on overcoming adversity. Guests also participated in heartwarming letters of love. It was a well-attended and enjoyable event, for an outstanding cause. Well done.

#### DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITIES AND JUSTICE

**Ms TRISH DOYLE (Blue Mountains) (18:45):** I thank the caseworkers, foster carers and frontline staff members in the Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] in the Blue Mountains and across New South Wales. They do some of the toughest, most emotionally demanding work in our State, quietly, professionally and tirelessly. They are the backbone of our child protection system, and we are so grateful for them. I thank also our extraordinary Minister Kate Washington for visiting the DCJ office in Faulconbridge in the Blue Mountains in November 2024, for sitting with our local workers, hearing them out and taking them seriously, for truly understanding the toll of working for our most vulnerable children. The \$1.2 billion investment in child protection, including historic pay rises, in the 2025-26 budget, is proof that the Minns Labor Government is listening and acting. We see them, value them and are backing them.

#### HAYDEN PEASE

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek) (18:46):** I commend and congratulate Glenmore Park local man Hayden Pease for obtaining four first place finishes and the overall championship title in his debut season in the sport of classic physique. Classic physique is a division within bodybuilding that emphasises a more traditional, aesthetic-focused physique, focusing on proportions, symmetry and overall balance rather than extreme muscle mass. At the I Compete Natural competition for the North Coast region, held in Newcastle, Hayden placed first among the first-timers, novices, under-23s and the open class. He was crowned the overall classic physique champion of the event. Hayden's outstanding results continued at the Sydney Superbodies competition, held at Rooty Hill, in which he placed third in the under-23s and second in the open class. Hayden intends to take time out of competing to further progress and then return to the stage in 2027 and 2028. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I thank and congratulate Hayden and wish him continued success in this interesting form of sport and technique.

#### TRIBUTE TO CHARLES CASUSCELLI, FORMER MEMBER FOR STRATHFIELD

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (18:47):** I pay tribute to Charles Casuscelli, who recently tragically passed away. Charles was born in Rome. By the age of seven, his family had migrated to Australia. He grew up in Blacktown. His career in the private and public sectors was diverse. He served in the Australian Army as a captain at the headquarters of the Australian Defence Force. Charles served in this place as the Liberal member for Strathfield from 2011 to 2015. His advocacy was around transport, but he made important contributions through his committee work on the sentencing of child sexual assault offenders and investigations into human trafficking and exploitation. Charles was appointed the CEO of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils [WSROC] in 2015, and I served with him as president from 2016 to 2019. We formed a wonderful partnership and friendship as we balanced each other's views. Charles was a strong and relentless advocate for WSROC and truly a champion for Western Sydney. I give my profound condolences to his wife, Maria, and his daughters, Eleisha and Bianca. Vale, Charles Casuscelli. May he rest in peace.

#### WILSON FAMILY OLIVES

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (18:48):** I acknowledge Wilson Family Olives, which was awarded a gold medal at the 2025 international olive oil competition in Italy for its classic extra virgin olive oil. The international competition is dedicated to promoting and recognising excellence in the extra virgin olive oil industry and the flavoured oil industry. The competition is open exclusively to producers who can show the full traceability and authentic origin of their products. A distinguished group of internationally renowned experts forms the judging panel, ensuring that only the highest quality oils receive recognition. Nick and Jules Wilson first dreamed of planting olives while visiting Italy's Chianti region in 2000, inspired by the striking similarities between the Tuscan climate and that of Central Western New South Wales. They took their first steps toward realising their vision in 2007, when they planted their first olive trees on their Narromine farm. Twenty-five years later, they have come full circle, not only turning that dream into a reality but also now celebrated as award-winning producers. I congratulate Nick and Jules. They should be extremely proud.

### WESTMEAD HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (18:49):** I was truly moved during a recent visit to the Butterfly Room, where I saw firsthand the incredible work of the Westmead Hospital Foundation. The deeply thoughtful initiative provides a private, peaceful space for mothers and families grieving the loss of a child at birth. It is a quiet sanctuary, set away from the maternity ward to ensure that families are given the privacy and care they need during such a heartbreaking time. The foundation's commitment goes beyond bricks and mortar; it has ensured that the room is supported by trained staff ready to simply listen and offer comfort. The room is beautifully decorated thanks to generous donations and funding that have turned it into a space of reflection and warmth. A heartfelt thank you goes to Bianca and Julie, as well as senior specialists Saha, Laura, Rita and Jeanette. Their work is nothing short of remarkable and deserves every bit of recognition.

### IC CARE

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly) (18:50):** IC Care is a not-for-profit organisation that supports people in Wollondilly to remain living independently at home. It is a provider of the Meals on Wheels service and works hard to reach as many people as it can. It has recently launched a new initiative to reach even more vulnerable people in our community through Shout a Mate a Meal. The George IV Inn at Picton was the first site to facilitate the program. Patrons were able to scan a QR code and shout a meal for someone in need. While IC Care has been able to support a great number of people who are eligible for government funding and meals, it saw a need for those who were going without. Shout a Mate a Meal is designed to start bridging that gap. IC Care's ultimate goal is to expand the initiative so that it is available across Wollondilly, and then statewide and Australia-wide. I thank IC Care for the initiative, along with all the other great work it does. I acknowledge the George IV Inn for being the pilot location of the wonderful program.

### NATHAN LEE

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (18:51):** Tonight I congratulate year 11 student Nathan Lee from Cecil Hills High School, who recently represented Sydney South West at the NSW Combined High Schools Rugby Union Carnival in Singleton. Nathan was the only student from his school selected to compete, which is an extraordinary achievement in itself. Over three days, he and his teammates played five matches against strong opposition from across nine regions of New South Wales, finishing fifth in the State. I am told that he plays loosehead but can also play tighthead and hooker. The talent runs in the family, with his dad and older brother also enthusiastic rugby players. Nathan's success is a testament to his dedication, perseverance and sporting talent. His commitment to training and teamwork has paid off, and he should be immensely proud of representing our community at such a high level. It is not the first time. He has represented Fiji in the Pasifika Cup twice. Nathan is a young man on the move, looking to dedicate his time to studies and rugby, and he is proud to represent the south-west and Cecil Hills. Well done, Nathan.

### ALBURY-WODONGA WINTER SOLSTICE

**Mr JUSTIN CLANCY (Albury) (18:52):** I mark the final annual Albury-Wodonga Winter Solstice event and take a moment to honour and thank two extraordinary individuals, Annette and Stuart Baker, along with those whose efforts have made the event into a powerful message of hope, connection and community for the past 13 years. It has helped shift the narrative of mental illness and suicide loss from one of isolation to one of strength and healing. In 2013, after the unimaginable loss of their 15-year-old daughter Mary, Annette and Stuart bravely transformed grief into action. They created the Winter Solstice event in Albury, a space where stigma around mental illness and suicide loss could give way to honesty, compassion and community. At a time when silence often prevailed, they sparked powerful conversations and offered a sanctuary for remembrance and storytelling. The event became a beacon of strength and solidarity. Last weekend the Winter Solstice shone for one final time in its current iteration at Albury's QEII Square. With the theme "In community lies strength", it was not just an event but a legacy. I thank Annette, Stuart and all for their courage, compassion and tireless advocacy.

### SURF LIFE SAVING NSW

**Ms MARYANNE STUART (Heathcote) (18:53):** Tonight I acknowledge Surf Life Saving NSW. Guardians of the waters, always on lookout and on duty, where they patrol, we are safer, secure and are given peace of mind. Tonight I am proud to recognise Surf Life Saving NSW for guarding our communities for yet another patrol season. This season 82,000 volunteers united to perform 3,100 rescues and 24,000 medical assists and made 216,000 preventative actions. More than numbers, those actions signify expertise and peace of mind for all who come to enjoy our golden beaches. While the patrolling season is over, the work is never done. Now, Surf Life Saving NSW looks to improve its methods of surveillance and public education initiatives and further ameliorate the dangers of the ocean so that the multitude can enjoy our beaches safely. It is through that upright



example that it has become one of the largest volunteer emergency service organisations in Australia. On behalf of our fair State, I thank Surf Life Saving NSW for its sacrifices.

#### **CARMEN DRIVE COMMUNITY PHARMACY**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping) (18:54):** I am pleased to extend my warm congratulations to Carmen Drive Community Pharmacy on the resounding success of its fifth annual Biggest Morning Tea event, hosted on Friday 20 June. It is the fifth year that Carmen Drive Community Pharmacy has hosted the event, and the gathering has become a highlight for our Carlingford community, uniting us in support of the Cancer Council's vital work. This year's event saw an impressive turnout. Through collective generosity, the pharmacy raised over \$1,700. Those funds will aid in advancing cancer research, providing essential support services and promoting prevention programs. The success of the event is a testament to the dedication of the Carmen Drive Community Pharmacy team, Yvonne and Susan. Their efforts exemplify the power of community spirit and the impact we can achieve when we come together for a common purpose. I commend Carmen Drive Community Pharmacy for its outstanding contribution and thank all who participated and donated.

#### **TWEED VALLEY WOODCRAFT ASSOCIATION**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (18:55):** On Friday 20 June I had the honour of participating in an official presentation of life memberships to members of the Tweed Valley Woodcraft Association at its wonderful woodcrafters' workshop at 1 Banner Street, Murwillumbah, based at the Murwillumbah Showground. Life memberships were awarded to Douglas Robinson, past president for 12 years; Barry Lack, past treasurer for 14 years; George Cranney, past president; Terry Fahy, long-time member; David Wicks, long-time member; and Ron Hawkey, long-time member. There is a road leading into the showground called "Hawkey's Road". I am not sure it is the official name. I thank the president, Jim Lyttle, and the secretary, Margaret Ealand. They have been operating for 20 years and their work is exquisite.

#### **KEN CLEWETT**

**Ms ROBYN PRESTON (Hawkesbury) (18:56):** Tonight I acknowledge Ken Clewett of Hawkesbury. Ken is a longstanding member of the Rural Fire Service, and he recently received his Long Service Medal 5<sup>th</sup> Clasp at the Hawkesbury District Awards Presentation. Ken has achieved 69 years of service and is with the Gross Vale Brigade. He has devoted countless hours to helping the community in times of great uncertainty. During floods, fires and other emergency situations, Ken and his colleagues have responded, risking their own lives as they assist, perform rescue operations and save lives. Like many members of the Rural Fire Service, Ken does not crave recognition for his service. His selfless dedication in emergency situations is truly admirable, and the Hawkesbury community is grateful for the protection and assurance he has provided during his decades of service. I congratulate Ken on reaching that milestone. It was an honour to attend the ceremony and acknowledge his achievement. I know the Hawkesbury community is thankful his commitment and ongoing support.

#### **PENDRAGONS DRAGON BOAT CLUB**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (18:57):** I congratulate Penrith's Pendragons Dragon Boat Club. Its remarkable performance at the 2025 Australian Dragon Boat Championships has made our community immensely proud. Held at the Sydney International Regatta Centre in Penrith, the event hosted over 2,500 athletes from across the country. Pendragons took home back-to-back bronze medals, with an impressive haul of medals overall. There were stand-out performances from Kim Stein, Ray Debono, Jane Howard, Madeleine Jacques and Jannine To'o. They all dominated on the water. Their outstanding results demonstrate the club's dedication, teamwork and community spirit. I commend club president Lucy Richardson and every Pendragons paddler for their commitment to excellence and proudly representing Penrith on the national and international stage. I give a special shout-out to Madeleine Jacques and Jannine To'o, who are representing Australia at the International Dragon Boat Federation's 17th World Dragon Boat Racing Championships in Germany.

#### **CROOKWELL DISTRICT HOSPITAL AUXILIARY**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (18:59):** I recognise the Crookwell hospital auxiliary, which held a fundraising event on 4 May, at which Australian Army Band Kapooka played. An auction was held and raffle tickets were sold, with prizes donated to the cause by local businesses. A total of \$8,142.10 was raised at the event. That money will go towards the purchase and installation of new televisions for every hospital room, which will be integrated with the nurse call system. The work involved in supporting and hosting these events is admirable. They provide the community with the opportunity to come together to support the work of the auxiliary. Its tireless work supports Crookwell hospital to continue to deliver the highest standard of care and comfort to patients and families. I recognise and thank the president, Mr Greg Long, and all members of the Crookwell hospital auxiliary, who have an unfailing commitment to their community.

### NAME THE CRANE COMPETITION

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (19:00):** On Thursday 19 June I had the greatest pleasure to announce that the crawler crane supporting the delivery of the new \$330 million Eurobodalla Regional Hospital will officially be known as "Gooldy" in honour of Dr Sally Goold, OAM, the first registered Aboriginal nurse in New South Wales and a respected leader in Aboriginal health. I congratulate six-year-old Otis from Broulee Public School on putting forward the very fitting name as part of the "Name the Crane" competition. The name "Gooldy" will be prominently displayed on the crane throughout the construction phase of the new hospital. It was wonderful to see so many thoughtful and creative entries from local school students. More than 60 entries were received. I congratulate 11-year-old William, who won the Parliamentary Secretary's colouring competition. Name the crane competitions are a tradition with construction projects like these, and it was a great way for some of the youngest members of our community to get involved. Well done to Otis and William, and thanks to all the other entrants and runners-up.

### WATTLE GROVE VILLAGE DISCOUNT PHARMACY

**Mrs TINA AYYAD (Holsworthy) (19:01):** I commend the team at Wattle Grove Village Discount Pharmacy for their outstanding efforts in hosting this year's Biggest Morning Tea. Each year the pharmacy generously organises that important fundraiser, with a cake stall and raffle featuring a range of prizes that are donated by the pharmacy and its dedicated staff. This year the team raised its highest amount ever, demonstrating its deep commitment to making a difference in the lives of those affected by cancer. Pharmacist Zainab shared that nearly two out of three pharmacy customers have personally experienced cancer in their families or among close friends, reflecting the heartbreaking reality of the widespread impact of the disease. It is estimated that cancer is prevalent in 30 per cent to 40 per cent of people. The team's motivation is deeply personal and heartfelt. I extend my sincere thanks to the wonderful staff, including Fatima, Nikhita, Elianna, Zainab, Mona, Sophie, Poppy, Shreeya and Avani. Their compassion, generosity and community spirit are truly inspiring.

### TRACEY ESTEVES

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:02):** Tracey Esteves is a proud Hinchinbrook local and accomplished visual artist. Excitingly, Tracey will be a featured artist at Parliament House during her upcoming exhibition *Still Turning, Still Burning*. Tracey has called Liverpool home for 38 years, and has dedicated her career to both education and artistic practice, inspiring countless students in south-west Sydney as visual arts coordinator at Patrician Brothers' College, Fairfield. Her exhibition is a powerful exploration of Australian identity, environmental justice and displacement, drawing inspiration from Midnight Oil's *Beds Are Burning*. Through 15 striking large-scale paintings and textured panels, Tracey challenges us to reflect on our shared history and collective responsibilities. That body of work speaks directly to the experience of Greater Western Sydney, a place shaped by resilience, diversity and a deep connection to land—themes that are at the forefront of Tracey's artworks. I congratulate Tracey and thank her for representing Liverpool with passion and vision. I invite all members to experience her work and message this July.

### *Private Members' Statements*

### GIDGET HOUSE MORUYA

**Dr MICHAEL HOLLAND (Bega) (19:03):** I was delighted to represent Minister Ryan Park at the opening of the new Gidget House in Moruya on 11 June. It was one of those days. It was a really happy day—a day that demonstrated that sometimes happy things come out of unhappiness when people, organisations and government work together towards meeting a real need. It demonstrated the real importance of the wellbeing of families, the wellbeing of parents and the wellbeing of our most vulnerable, our children. It is part of a long race to extend those perinatal and early parenting services equitably across our State to those of greatest need, whether they are in our cities, our regions or our rural communities. I was responsible for the mothers and babies of the Eurobodalla for 20 years. It was evident that there was a great deficiency in perinatal mental health and early parenting services. In 2012 I met with passionate local psychologist Rona Murray and Professor Bryanne Barnett to discuss the primary health network's Perinatal Infant Mental Health Services initiative. The ball started rolling and, finally, after 13 years it is over the line.

Members of the House would be used to me sharing personal details. My wife and I have been married for 40 years. We have five daughters and now five beautiful grandchildren—one born in Goulburn. Back in 1993, at 30 weeks gestation and with three young children, my wife developed severe pre-eclampsia. When our daughter Grace was born, she weighed 820 grams. Lyn was very sick and I thought Grace would not survive. Our family was in Sydney, and I was on call 24/7 for other women and their families. It was a long 10 weeks, and then it was a long few years, taking two steps forward and one step back for a long period of time. I do not know how we did

it. We both experienced anxiety and depression, but it was a formative experience that brought home the need that anyone can have, regardless of the circumstances of the pregnancy and birth.

We were lucky. Grace grew up to be a nurse, and on 1 May she had a little boy. He was more than four times heavier than his mother was at birth. Even though perinatal mental ill health can affect anyone, we know who is at greatest risk. That emphasises the importance of the support of continuity of care before, during and after birth. The new Gidget House will play an important role in supporting women and their partners in Moruya and the broader South Coast who are struggling with their mental wellbeing. Across Australia, one in five new mothers and one in 10 new fathers will experience perinatal depression, anxiety, trauma or stress-related disorders associated with pregnancy or early parenthood. Effective early care not only helps mum, their partner and wider family, but also supports the development of the child, giving them the best possible start in life.

The services provided through Gidget House will help local women in their recovery, while focusing on the early parent-infant relationship, the foundation of any infant's emotional wellbeing and development. The co-location of Gidget House with the Tresillian Family Care Centre means local families, especially new parents, will have a wider range of support services to call upon under one roof. Tresillian is one of Australia's largest early parenting support organisations. Its advice and support on issues such as feeding and nutrition has proven invaluable to many parents over the years. Those services complement the range of NSW Health services that are designed to support perinatal mental health and wellbeing. Gidget House aligns with the Government's aim of giving all children in New South Wales the very best start in life.

Together with other agencies and non-government partners, NSW Health is leading the work that covers the critical first 2,000 days of a child's life from conception to the age of five. Most of a child's brain structure will have developed by the age of five, so that 2,000-day window is an important time for their physical, cognitive, social and emotional health and development. From making health and development checks for four-year-olds available in New South Wales preschools and long day care centres to expanding the nursing home visiting program for vulnerable families, our aim is to give every child in New South Wales, no matter where they live or their family circumstances, the best possible start in life. With the Gidget Foundation, the New South Wales Government is helping to expand the availability of perinatal mental health services, promote awareness and reduce stigma around perinatal anxiety and depression, better support health professionals who work with new parents, and deliver accessible peer support to new parents through the Gidget Virtual Village.

### RENEWABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn) (19:08):** I express my continued deep concern, which is shared by many in my electorate and across rural and regional New South Wales, about the glaring policy void across the State—that is, how the Government is managing the aggregated impacts of renewable energy infrastructure on our regions. Members will be familiar with my stance on the issue. Recently I was advised that a determination published recently by the Independent Planning Commission on the Valley of the Winds project in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone included the words "in the absence of a specific New South Wales Government position, policy or plan on cumulative impacts within the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone". Those words alone should alarm every member of this House.

What the IPC confirms is something regional communities have known for quite a long time: There is no comprehensive framework and no clear guidance for how planning assesses the impacts of multiple renewable energy projects, which have been stacked side by side, one after the other, across our rural and regional landscapes. In my electorate of Goulburn, many of our villages are feeling overwhelmed. I again reiterate that not one of those communities are anti-renewables. I am not anti-renewables. In fact, our electorate has one of the highest uptakes of solar panels on our homes. We were one of the first electorates to host wind farms and to support a community solar farm, and we have many Landcare and environmental protection groups. But we are also currently living the reality of what happens when the public allows corporations to dictate the use of our land.

People in those communities are facing the consequences of these solar and wind factories. Transmission lines and battery projects are approved in isolation, with no regard to the bigger picture. People in those communities are dealing with the fragmentation of productive agricultural land; the erosion of local biodiversity corridors; the constant strain on regional roads, infrastructure and councils; the mental health pressures and rising social division between neighbours; and, importantly, the fundamental breakdown in trust in the planning process and subsequently the Government, particularly when, for many years, we have seen many of those projects proposed, planned, built and delivered next door, but we continue to pay more money than ever to the electricity providers.

Local residents have raised concerns with me about the sheer proximity of the development to their homes, the lack of meaningful engagement, the feeling that their town—like many others—is being treated as a dumping ground for metropolitan and corporate energy needs. At present, each project is assessed on its own, without any

formal mechanism to consider the broader cumulative impacts on infrastructure, on community wellbeing or on our regional economy. That is not a planning system best serving this State; it is systemic negligence. The New South Wales Government has rushed headlong into the rollout of renewable energy zones, yet it has failed to put the guardrails in place to protect the very communities that are being asked to host this infrastructure. It has also failed to protect the communities that are not in renewable energy zones.

It is not good enough to leave it to local councils, to community groups or to individual landholders to raise the alarm when they are being stretched too far. What New South Wales needs is a clear, enforceable and statewide framework for cumulative impact assessment, something that weighs not only the economic benefits of those projects but also their long-term social, environmental and logistical consequences. We have seen what happens when regional New South Wales is ignored in the planning process: Progress stalls. New South Wales cannot afford to push forward with these mistakes in our energy transition.

Today I call on the New South Wales Government to step up and provide leadership on this issue. It is time to create a comprehensive policy that acknowledges what our rural communities already know: The impact of those projects is not measured one proposal at a time but in their accumulation, in their scale and in the way they impact our towns and our land. Everyone wants to support a transition to cleaner energy, but that transition must be fair, it must be coordinated, and it must not come at the cost of the communities that have always carried the weight of the State's infrastructure needs with little reward or reprieve.

### TEEYAN MELA

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith) (19:12):** It was a cultural experience to attend an extraordinary and colourful event that took place last weekend: the 2025 Teeyan Mela, hosted by the Punjabi Women Association of Australia. It was held at the Blacktown Leisure Centre, but Penrith also has a growing Punjabi community, and I was delighted to attend. For those who may not be familiar, Teeyan is also known as Teej, and it is a traditional Punjabi festival dedicated to women. Its roots trace back centuries to the Punjab region of India, where it is celebrated with great enthusiasm during the monsoon season.

In its essence, Teeyan is a joyous occasion that honours womanhood, family and cultural heritage, and provides an opportunity for women to come together to sing, dance and share stories passed down through generations. What makes the festival particularly special in Australia is how it serves as a cultural bridge that allows Punjabi Australian women, many of whom are first- or second-generation migrants, to maintain a strong connection with their cultural roots while sharing their traditions with the broader Australian community.

This year's Teeyan Mela marked the nineteenth consecutive year that the Punjabi Women Association of Australia has successfully organised this festival. The association's unwavering dedication is a demonstration of the importance of cultural preservation, community building and social cohesion. When attending Teeyan Mela, the atmosphere of warmth, vibrancy and unity is immediately evident. The venue was filled with families, children, community leaders and supporters from diverse backgrounds, all coming together to celebrate and learn about culture. Women adorned in traditional attire performed Giddha and other folk dances, while the rhythmic beats of the dhol echoed throughout the venue, creating an infectious sense of joy and pride.

Beyond the festivities, Teeyan Mela carries a much deeper significance. It offers women a safe, supportive space to celebrate not only their cultural identity but also their roles as mothers, daughters, sisters, leaders and contributors to our society. At a time when multiculturalism is a defining feature of Australia, events such as Teeyan remind us of the richness that that cultural diversity brings to our nation. As representatives of our communities, it is our responsibility to ensure that multicultural communities feel seen, heard and valued. Events like Teeyan Mela are not simply cultural showcases; they are opportunities for dialogue, understanding and unity. They embody the very principles of inclusion, respect and social harmony that underpin our multicultural success story in Australia.

I formally acknowledge and thank the Punjabi Women Association of Australia for its exceptional leadership, vision and dedication. For nearly two decades, it has created a platform that empowers women, strengthens family connections and fosters intergenerational learning. Its tireless work ensures that cultural traditions are not lost but rather thrive in a new homeland. I also extend my gratitude to the many volunteers, sponsors and supporters who contribute to the success of this event each year. It is often the work done behind the scenes—the countless hours of planning, rehearsing and organising—that makes events like Teeyan Mela so memorable and impactful.

I also acknowledge the important work of the Harman Foundation. The foundation plays a vital role in supporting vulnerable members of the South Asian community, particularly women and families experiencing domestic violence, homelessness and hardship. Its culturally sensitive programs provide essential services, counselling and safe spaces for those in need, ensuring that no-one feels alone or unsupported during times of

crisis. The foundation's commitment to compassion, dignity and empowerment is deeply valued by our community, and I commend its ongoing contribution to building a stronger, safer and more inclusive society. Harman Foundation volunteers also had a stall at the event, selling preloved clothing and shoes to raise much-needed funds. Of course I had to contribute and make purchases in support. Finally, I commend all the organisers and participants, young and old, whose performances, energy and passion continue to inspire.

### TRIBUTE TO UNCLE RAYMOND EDWARD PECKHAM

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo) (19:17):** I pay tribute to and recognise the life of well-known Aboriginal activist and Wiradjuri man, Ray Peckham. Ray passed away on 6 June at the age of 95. As a leading fighter for the rights of his people for decades, his legacy will remain forever. It is certainly an interesting story. Ray Peckham was born in Bunyip, Victoria, in 1929, as one of 13 children of Tom and Linda Peckham. He was impacted by issues of racism from an early age. His father, Tom, became involved in the Dubbo branch of the Unemployed Workers Movement, initiated by Communist Party activists in 1931, convincing them to take up issues of anti-Aboriginal discrimination. Tom found a community of working-class Aboriginal activists through William Ferguson and his Aborigines Progressive Association, and it was that community that Ray grew up in. Ray moved to Sydney in 1950 and was quickly initiated into the world of strikes, pickets and protests by veteran activist Pearl Gibbs.

In 1951 Ray Peckham gained a bit of national notoriety when he was elected as a delegate to the Berlin World Youth Festival along with fellow activist Faith Bandler. When Ray encountered complications obtaining a passport, the maritime and seamen's unions threatened to halt every major ship around Australia's shores. Just hours later, the Government reluctantly issued the passport. Unbeknown to Ray and his fellow activists, as they boarded the ship to Europe they were being filmed by ASIO, marking the beginning of extensive surveillance on him that would culminate in one of the largest ASIO files in Australian history. On his return from Europe, Ray became more deeply involved in activism. He worked as a builder's labourer and joined the Newtown branch of the Communist Party. He began visiting Aboriginal communities across New South Wales, working to connect their various campaigns and raise awareness of their efforts within the trade union movement. The Builders Labourers Federation supported his work, at times raising funds to allow Ray to take temporary leave from his job.

In early 1961 the New South Wales Labor Government sought to evict Horace Saunders, an Aboriginal man, from the Purfleet mission station in Taree. A campaign was launched in response to defend Saunders, with Ray playing a leading role. He toured the South Coast speaking at workplace meetings of coalminers, steelworkers and wharfies to raise awareness of the court case. In May 1961 the courts ruled in favour of Mr Saunders. In the early 1960s Ray launched a campaign across rural New South Wales. He stood alongside the Top Camp Aboriginal community in Moree to protest their exclusion from the local hospital. He raised public concern over 14 new Aboriginal homes that were built beside a rubbish dump in Armidale and joined a team investigating the harsh conditions faced by Aboriginal pea pickers on the South Coast. He collected thousands of signatures from unionised workers to help ensure that Aboriginal housing was built in Coonamble and Nambucca Heads.

Ray was a prominent figure during the referendum of 1967, enlisting support for the Aboriginal cause. Wherever he went, Ray's goal was to help build local, State and national organisations led by Aboriginal people themselves to fight for their rights. At the same time, he worked to forge strong connections between these groups and the broader workers movement, aiming to apply maximum pressure on governments and employers. Ray was a big-picture thinker who viewed the struggles of Aboriginal people as part of a global fight against injustice. During the 1960s he spoke at protests opposing the war in Vietnam, the suppression of democratic rights in the dictatorships of Spain and Greece, the apartheid regime in South Africa and racial segregation in the United States.

In 1983 Ray returned to Dubbo where he spent the rest of his life working with community organisations. His activism never really stopped. He played a key role in organising the installation of a statue of his father's old friend and fellow activist William Ferguson in Dubbo's main street, a lasting reminder of past struggles and the ongoing fight for justice. Opening that installation was the first thing I did as the newly elected member for Dubbo. I saw Ray pretty often in the main CBD area of Dubbo, particularly in recent years on his mobility scooter, and he always had something to say. Vale, Ray Peckham.

### STATE BUDGET AND PORT STEPHENS ELECTORATE

**Ms KATE WASHINGTON (Port Stephens—Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Inclusion) (19:22):** Yesterday's budget brought welcome news for the people of Port Stephens. It is focused, sensible and built on the priorities that we all share: safer roads, better schools, stronger support for the places we love and a deep commitment to protecting our most vulnerable. This is a budget that gets on with the job. It is full of meaningful commitments, the kind that will genuinely improve people's lives. It backs the people of Port Stephens. It builds on our future while delivering on the things that matter right now. Our

Government continues to back in one of the most incredible infrastructure investments for our region, the long-awaited M1 extension to Raymond Terrace. It is going gangbusters. An additional \$741.7 million in this budget is being injected into the project so that residents can travel more smoothly and safely through and across Port Stephens.

The Minns Labor Government believes in the power of public education, which is why we are investing in public schools across the State, including in Port Stephens. Key to many of my contributions in this place involves the new public high school at Medowie, which we are getting on with the job of delivering. This year's budget has \$34 million locked away to kick off the construction of Medowie's first public high school. I could not be more pleased that is going to happen very soon. At Hunter River High School we are putting the finishing touches on a \$39 million major upgrade, with an extra \$570,000 in this year's budget to bring it home. The upgrades at the school are incredible. I recently visited and have seen the school's new supported classrooms and new hall, which are transformational. In addition, the \$27 million upgrade at Irrawang High School has just been completed.

I have good news for beautiful Shoal Bay Public School too. It is getting a bigger and better school hall so that families can see their loved ones when it is their turn in the spotlight. This is a win for the whole community. They have been calling for this for some time, and I am glad that it will be delivered in this year's budget. Tomaree Lodge remains close to the hearts of many people in our community. It is a place of deep cultural and social significance. The budget is backing it with a \$4.6 million investment that will help shape its future. This is an ongoing process. Community is connected to the decisions that are being made about it. This is about preserving history and a space, and ensuring that its future use is for our community.

The budget also steps up when it comes to disaster recovery. Port Stephens has already experienced two natural disasters this year, so this is key for us and is why the \$4.2 billion that has been set aside in the budget for disaster relief is welcome. In addition, \$358.3 million has been set aside specifically for the May east coast flooding that my community experienced alongside many others. As I talk about protecting our community, I say a heartfelt thank you to the local Fire and Rescue crews. The budget includes nearly \$36 million for Fire and Rescue NSW and \$17 million for new firefighting equipment across the State, because we need to back those who back us when it matters most. I am also very excited that this year we will be delivering a Core and Cluster refuge. It will be Port Stephens' first ever refuge for women and children escaping family and domestic violence. That is also in this year's budget and is also going to be delivered.

Not only specifically in Port Stephens but areas more broadly are also benefiting from the significant investments that the Government is making. One area is close to my heart and was at the heart of the budget, and that is the \$1.2 billion child protection package, which will ensure that vulnerable children in all of our electorates, including in Port Stephens, live safely and have the stability and love in their lives that they need. We will be investing in foster carers, increasing their allowance for the first time in 20 years. We will be backing caseworkers, giving them a significant pay rise to reflect the important and incredibly difficult work that they do. The budget invests in Port Stephens and invests where it matters. It supports families, workers, students and carers. Above all, it backs a better future for vulnerable children in New South Wales.

#### **PITTWATER ELECTORATE LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN**

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater) (19:27):** The recent article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* by Carrie Fellner titled "Fury as Sydneysiders build their mansions, then 'ask forgiveness later'" struck a deep chord in Pittwater not just because it named suburbs in our electorate but because it also confirmed what we have known for years: Our planning system is being undermined by a select, small few. In Palm Beach, Whale Beach, Newport and other areas of Pittwater blocks are being bulldozed and replaced, at times, by oversized mansions that are built in flagrant breach of planning rules. Often the homes that are built are not what was approved by council. Once it is finished—when land and views have been maximised, tree canopies decimated and concrete poured on nearly every inch of the block—developers and wealthy homeowners lodge modification applications, or retrospective development applications, or building information certificates: effectively seeking forgiveness instead of permission. Another issue that is a bit more common is listing the cost of building works for far less than the actual cost.

One of the most infamous local examples is the \$20 million mega mansion built by Jennifer Hawkins and Jake Wall at Whale Beach. It takes up a huge section of the headland that now has a huge retaining wall as well as a huge mansion on it. Quite frankly, it is a blight on the landscape that is seen from across the beach and the other headland. The media covered the complaints of many locals that what was built went far beyond the original plans submitted and yet, despite public outcry and the council reportedly confirming that the confirmed cost of the original project had been exceeded, there is no precedent for charging additional fees. But the problem is far deeper than just celebrity builds. I have received a lot of emails from constituents. One recently shared that a building literally has taken up the beach, in breach of what was allowed to be built. It has vanished beneath

seawalls, sandbags and tyre piles, the result of negligent development and a complete failure of enforcement. Although neighbours and councillors raised objections, nothing happened—no rectification and no follow-up.

Nearby, another property was approved as a restrained, grey, three-storey home with native landscaping and a grass driveway. But what was built ended up being a huge, whitewashed villa with terracotta tiles, reflective white render and illegal stairs. Norfolk Island pines were illegally chopped down and, to this day, there is still no occupation certificate. However, the owners have lived unbothered there since 2023, while council officials, who apparently dropped their jaws during site visits, later said that modifications would be approved. This culture of retrospective approvals, rubberstamping of modifications and zero enforcement undermines public trust in our planning system. It fuels the belief that there is one rule for wealthy landowners and home owners with legal teams and private certifiers, and another for everyone else—one block at a time.

I raise another issue. My electorate is known for its amazing tree canopy. It is protected by our current local environmental plan [LEP], which is being harmonised as a result of council amalgamations that occurred a couple of years ago. At the moment, the new draft LEP is with the planning department for approval. It is important to recognise that the tree canopy is protected by not only the council's local canopy plan but also the conservation zoning within the harmonised LEP. I acknowledge some groups in my community who fought very hard for the conservation zones to remain. They include the Avalon Preservation Society, the Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association, the Newport Residents Association and individuals such as Marita Macrae.

I acknowledge how important that tree canopy is to Pittwater, which is defined as homes nestled in trees rather than homes with trees dotted around them. We have had koalas in our electorate. They no longer exist, but we still have signs warning drivers to watch out for them. While my electorate has lost its koalas, it has huge biodiversity. The conservation zonings allow for biodiversity pathways and ensure that the ecological significance of our area, which comes with many other benefits, which include being cool in the summer and having aesthetic values, needs to be retained. We must ensure that the new harmonised LEP keeps all those conservation zones. We also must end the culture of retrospective development approvals or building information certificates when there are significant breaches.

#### **TRIBUTE TO COUNCILLOR ALI KARNIB**

**Ms CHARISHMA KALIYANDA (Liverpool) (19:32):** It is with great sadness that I report the passing of retired Liverpool City councillor Ali Karnib and ask the House to join me in acknowledging the life of, and paying tribute to, a remarkable community leader, a long-serving public servant and a dear friend to many. Ali Karnib dedicated almost three decades of his life to the people of Liverpool, serving on council from 1999 until his retirement in 2024. His years of service placed him among the longest-serving councillors in our city's history. His service included three terms as deputy mayor. Few can claim such a sustained and meaningful contribution to local government. Ali's story is shared by many in our community. He arrived in Australia from Lebanon in 1984 seeking a better and more peaceful life for his family. He settled in Green Valley where he and his beautiful wife, Yousra, made Busby their home. Married for 46 years, Ali and Yousra were a team and were often seen together at council events and community functions.

From the very beginning, Ali embraced community life, building connections, advocating for fairness and working to improve the lives of those around him. Before entering public life, he was a maths and science teacher. He remained a passionate advocate for education throughout his career, deeply believing that knowledge and opportunity could transform lives, and there is no greater example of this than his own children. Ali proudly championed social inclusion and multiculturalism—values he lived by, not just spoke about. He served as president of the Lebanese Community Council and was a prominent figure in interfaith and multicultural community forums across Sydney.

Ali believed in the power of bringing people together. More than that, Ali handily used the particular power of food to bring people together. On Eids, Christmases and Lebanese Independence Days, he would host celebrations that brought together community members, politicians and media representatives over a massive table of Lebanese food, sweets and coffee. He welcomed all, regardless of cultural, religious or political affiliation. He understood that when we break bread with people, we better appreciate and understand them.

Perhaps my favourite Ali story, which reflects how much he supported community using their voice on their terms, was shared by former Liverpool councillor Cecilia Anthony. She and Ali attended an event at the then Liverpool Migrant Resource Centre after the election of the Howard Government, which had almost immediately cut funding to the program that funded migrant resource centres. Immigration Minister Phillip Ruddock was in attendance. After multiple performances, three young local hip-hop artists started performing. Ali knew the two Arabic-speaking kids. They were gaining some popularity and, as they started to perform, Ali and Cecilia realised they had changed the lyrics to rip absolute shreds off Ruddock and the Howard Government. Ali was in the second row. He jumped up and spent the rest of the performance clapping along with an enormous grin under his

distinctive handlebar moustache. I can just imagine the delight of those young artists to be cheered on so enthusiastically by a community leader.

More recently, Ali was interviewed by *The Guardian* in the lead-up to the 2015 election. He was featured proudly wearing a red Charishma Kaliyanda campaign T-shirt with his iconic moustache, debating with the Liberal volunteer over debt, public transport and electricity privatisation. For him, it was not about the political label but about the outcome. He had the back of anyone who wanted to do the right thing for people. When I served alongside Ali on Liverpool City Council, he was a mentor and guide to many, including me. He brought thoughtfulness, calm experience and an unwavering focus on people. That sentiment is shared by many, including former mayor Wendy Waller. Cecilia said:

... as a staunch feminist, trying to 'have it all', and serve on council, Ali never once suggested that perhaps I shouldn't be on Council (when I know a lot of others thought precisely that when I was pregnant with a 2 year old). He backed me 110% and I'll never forget that.

Ali had a strong moral compass and an even stronger sense of loyalty to his community, his colleagues and, above all, to his family. No matter how busy he was, no matter how long the council meeting went, he always found time to speak proudly—and often joyfully—about his children and grandchildren. Their achievements were his greatest pride. First and foremost, he was a family man.

Only recently, Ali marked his seventieth birthday while still full of energy and purpose. That he continued campaigning, serving and giving back to the very end is a testament to the man he was—selfless, determined and deeply committed to public service. That commitment to public service carries on in his son, Sam, who was recently elected as a councillor on Liverpool City Council. To Yousra and the Karnib family, I extend my heartfelt condolences. Your loss is shared beyond the Liverpool community. Ali's memory will live on—not only in council records and on plaques but also in the many lives he touched and the city he helped to shape. I know many in the Labor family are hurting over his death and their loss. May he rest in eternal peace.

#### DRUMMOYNE ELECTORATE TRAFFIC

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne) (19:37):** I came to this Parliament to work collaboratively with everyone, which includes the Government, the Opposition, the crossbench and Independents, to get things done for my community. I take this opportunity to provide an update on an important local issue for my community—Drummoyne traffic. Since the opening of the Rozelle interchange, Drummoyne has been impacted by traffic congestion. But in the past few weeks and months it has become so much worse. It is becoming more dangerous by the day.

My community feels like it has been sold out by the Government because it brought relief to suburbs such as Balmain and Rozelle, as it is more politically convenient to do so, and Drummoyne has missed out on real change. I really respect the Minister for Transport, the Hon. John Graham, but when he was asked a question by Sarina Andaloro from 7News last week about the issue, he said, "Well, we make changes in one area and that can mean others are impacted." I do not think that is good enough and my community does not buy it. What will it take to get action on this issue? People cannot get out of their driveways because traffic light phasing is holding up traffic in Drummoyne. The erratic drivers are a concern because there are three schools and just as many childcare centres within a one-kilometre radius. I do not want to see a fatality, but that is what my community fears. The cars driving in rat runs are a safety issue because those streets are not designed for such large volumes of traffic.

I note that the member for Leppington and the member for Auburn are in the Chamber laughing at this issue. It is not funny. I had a very productive meeting with the Minister for Roads this morning. I commend the Minister for listening to my concerns on this issue, which is so important to my community. I put on record that the way the Minister listened to me and approached this issue shows leadership. She works in a bipartisan way and has agreed to visit Drummoyne to see the issues firsthand. I look forward to working collaboratively with the Minister to bring relief to my community.

I also thank Richard Peck, who has been a local resident for more than 40 years. He is a great advocate on this issue and has put forward potential solutions to the problem. I have made representations to the Minister for Roads on behalf of Mr Peck. I also acknowledge the work of local business owner Julie Peadon. She is advocating on behalf of the Drummoyne business community, which has been impacted by the explosion of traffic congestion. Julie runs a local business teaching art classes. Her customers are leaving her business because the traffic has made Drummoyne difficult to get to and almost inaccessible. Julie and Richard gave up their time last week to join me on 7NEWS where we called for change. We put pressure on Transport for NSW and the Government to make traffic light signal changes and give us some relief.

I thank every person who has contacted me about this important issue, including Michelle Constantine of Little Lights Christian Child Care. I have heard from members of the public who have never contacted their local



MP before. That shows how untenable the situation is and why we need change. I will always fight for my community and work in a bipartisan way to get things done. We cannot wait two or three years for the Western Harbour Tunnel; we need relief now. I look forward to welcoming the Minister for Roads to the Drummoyne electorate. I hope that we can work together on this issue and bring about change.

Traffic light sequencing and phasing is holding up traffic in Drummoyne, and this is becoming a serious safety problem. Issues have popped up in the last couple of weeks, including in Marlborough Street, where cars have been held up. This causes erratic behaviour and makes people look for new rat runs. I feel for local schoolkids who walk to school. As I said earlier, there are three schools in a one-kilometre radius and just as many childcare centres in the area. This is becoming a serious problem. The business community is asking for help. It is already tough for small businesses, and we should not make it harder for them to stay open. I look forward to welcoming the Minister to Drummoyne, and I commend her for the leadership she has shown today. I really hope that we can work together to get this done.

#### **TRIBUTE TO PETER NAGLE, FORMER MEMBER FOR AUBURN**

**Ms LYNDIA VOLTZ (Auburn) (19:42):** Today I pay my respects to the family and friends of Peter Nagle, former member for Auburn. Peter's story is one of service, passion, resilience and deep commitment to his community, family, faith and the values of the Australian Labor Party, which he joined as a teenager in the 1960s. Peter was recruited by none other than Paul Keating when he was just 15 years old and working as a telegram boy for the Postmaster-General's Department, which is now Australia Post. Their first meeting was in Paul's car, which was parked in Bankstown. That was Peter—his political journey began not in marble halls but on the street among the people. Peter's first foray into public life came in the early 1970s when he was elected to Auburn City Council. He served from 1970-76, but Peter did not stop at one chapter.

He studied law and education. He passed the bar and became a barrister. He spent many years in the 70s and 80s practising law and teaching ethics at TAFE. Peter had a sharp mind and an even sharper sense of fairness. He also had a colourful résumé which included working as an organiser for the Musicians' Union, where he supervised international music legends like Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones. Only Peter could blend politics, law, education and rock'n'roll, while making it look effortless. Peter's career included working as a telegram boy, barrister, postman, storeman, clerical assistant, clerk, union assistant secretary, railway signalman, shunter and solicitor. His most important roles were always close to home. He was the proud father of Greer, Anthony, Nicholas and Alexander and was also a loving grandfather.

He was a regular churchgoer and was deeply connected with both the Sisters of St Joseph in Auburn and with his local Catholic parish in Regents Park. Peter liked a punt. He liked a drink, particularly at Carnarvon Golf Club. He loved people and loved a good Chinese meal. He loved the Western Suburbs Magpies. Peter was elected as the Labor member for Auburn in 1988, after a rather unusual preselection process, succeeding Peter Cox. That first election was tough and went to preferences, but Auburn became the safest Labor seat in New South Wales by 1995. This is thanks in no small part to Peter's unrelenting work on the ground. Peter fought hard for his community when a ferocious storm tore through Auburn in 1990 and damaged hundreds of homes, even though the Greiner-Murray Government denied him assistance. He never forgot the families who were still living under tarpaulins years later. He did not just see their struggle; he shouldered the burden with them.

Peter's legal mind had turned to workers' rights by 1991. He championed cases for cement truck drivers, egg carters and beer delivery workers who had lost their contracts unfairly. He argued for the concept of goodwill compensation for longstanding relationships that had been ripped apart by corporate power. Remarkably, Peter got the Industrial Relations (Contracts of Carriage) Amendment Bill 1994 through both Houses of Parliament. It was the first time in New South Wales history that the private bill of an Opposition member became law. During this battle, Peter met Karen Davies, whose father was among the affected workers. They later married and had two boys, Nicholas and Alexander.

Every political struggle was personal for Peter, and many of his personal moments were shaped by his politics. He stayed close to people who needed help. He raised money for disadvantaged families to attend the 2000 Olympic Games. He stood with Lucy Wang after the tragic murder of John Newman, the former member for Cabramatta. Peter stepped away from Parliament in 2002 after 14 years of service, but he was never far from public life. He lectured at UNSW and remained a proud life member of the Labor Party. He celebrated 60 years of membership this year alongside Paul Keating. He published a trilogy of books entitled *Power Seekers*, which were launched by his friends Paul and Graham Richardson.

He was born in 1946. Peter saw the world, but he always came home by train. He is survived by a devoted family, countless friends, former colleagues and a legacy that speaks for itself. Peter Nagle was a local legend. He was not a perfect man, but he was a passionate one. He fought for the underdog, believed in fairness and never stopped working for the people he represented. Peter passed away peacefully on Saturday 21 June at St Joseph's

Village in Auburn, close to where it all began. From me and on behalf of the former members for Auburn, Barbara Perry and Luke Foley, I say vale, Peter Nagle.

### **BLACKTOWN CITY LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS**

**Mr STEPHEN BALI (Blacktown) (19:47):** I congratulate the winners of the 2025 Blacktown City Local Business Awards. There were 35 categories this year, including awards for antiques, arts and crafts, gifts and the most inclusive employer. I proudly report to the House that 18 of the winners were businesses located within the Blacktown electorate. It was an amazing result. The Blacktown City Council area is a \$26.4 billion economy. If the "Democratic People's Republic of Blacktown" was a standalone nation, it would be larger than 72 of the 195 nations of the world. Blacktown had 33,878 registered businesses in 2024 compared with only 25,000 in 2020, which is a net increase of around 8,000 in the past four years. That means around 40 new businesses were started in Blacktown every single week.

The 300 businesses that were nominated effectively represent the top one per cent of businesses operating in the Blacktown local government area [LGA]. These are incredible numbers when you compare them with smaller LGAs, and they show why winning a Blacktown City Local Business Award is so prestigious. These businesses contribute enormously to the growth of our community. It is important to recognise these businesses and business owners in Parliament today. I congratulate Starlight Bakery and its owner, Jeremiah, on winning the Outstanding Bakery/Cake Business award. It is a bit of shame in one way because I have eaten at the bakeries of all 10 nominees. Starlight Bakery is one of the best. I am happy to say that it is located in my home town of Doonside. I congratulate Winning Smiles Dental Surgery—which is where I need to go after eating so many cakes—and Dr Samreen Kaur and Dr Raman Aulakh on winning the Outstanding Dental Services award, and Kids' Early Learning Marayong and director Kristy Zuvela on winning the Outstanding Early Childhood Centre award.

I congratulate Better Vision in Westpoint Blacktown on winning the Outstanding Health Improvement Services award. It is its second win in two years, reflecting the team's commitment to great customer service and outcomes. The entire team are elated that their customers and the community have supported them so strongly. Meticulous Cleaning Co and founder Leanne Regner won the Outstanding New Business award. Leanne started the business only 2½ years ago with her two daughters and it has grown through word of mouth because of the quality of their services. The family is incredibly proud to be recognised and say it has had an amazingly positive effect on their business.

I congratulate SG Dance and founder Sharni Gallagher on winning the Outstanding Performing Arts award, Family Vets Western Sydney on winning the Outstanding Pet Care award, and Eventspec and founder Chris Condon and managing director Nicole O'Reilly on winning the Outstanding Specialised Business award. It is their first nomination and first win—an amazing accomplishment for a business that took a huge risk starting out of the back of a van during COVID. Eventspec is used to being behind the scenes, but the award has put it in the spotlight and has already brought great benefits and potential clients.

Finally, I thank the sponsors of the awards night, including media partner *Blacktown News*. In particular, I thank Steve Loe, the founder of the Local Business Awards and managing director of Precedent Productions, for his amazing advocacy and support of local businesses not only in Blacktown but also across New South Wales and Australia for the past 40 years. He had the vision and understanding that it is an important accolade for businesses to be promoted in a competitive environment and receive a best-in-class award. I also thank him for his friendship over the past two decades that I have been attending the awards. I have got to know him as a person who is passionate about businesses and making a difference in his local area.

### **GNOO BLAS CLASSIC CAR CLUB**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange) (19:52):** There is an extraordinary club in my home town of Orange, the Gnool Blas Classic Car Club. Its story intertwines the spirit of motor racing with the heart of our community of Orange and the broader Central West. The story began in 1952, when the original Orange Cherry Blossom Festival committee, in collaboration with the Australian Sporting Car Club, envisioned a new motor car racing venue. That materialised in January 1953, when the Gnool Blas Motor Racing Circuit was inaugurated. Named after the Aboriginal term for nearby Mount Canobolas, and meaning "twin shoulders" or "twin peaks", the circuit was crafted from rural roads encircling Bloomfield Hospital, forming a 3.75-mile track.

Gnool Blas quickly etched its name into Australian motorsport history. In 1955 it hosted the South Pacific Championship, marking Australia's first International Automobile Federation sanctioned international race meeting. In 1960 it became the birthplace of Australian touring car racing, with the race won by David McKay in a Jaguar Mark 1. Those racing events attracted legendary drivers who began their racing careers on that track, including Sir Jack Brabham. However, by October 1961 the roar of racing engines faded as the circuit closed due

to safety concerns and financial challenges. Yet the spirit of Gnoo Blas would live on. In the years that followed, a group of passionate locals assembled to form the Gnoo Blas Classic Car Club, led by founder the late Denis Gregory. Its mission was clear: to preserve the rich history of the circuit and celebrate the evolution of motor vehicles.

Today the club has more than 450 members and hosts monthly runs and meetings, fostering a community bound by a shared love for classic cars. Each year the car club meticulously organises and hosts the Gnoo Blas Classic Car Show, a three-day event held on the second weekend of February. The celebration features a street parade, classic vehicle displays at Sir Jack Brabham Park and scenic drives around the Orange region. It is a tribute to the circuit's legacy and a testament to the enduring passion of its supporters. As we reflect on this journey, we are reminded that Gnoo Blas is more than a short-lived race car circuit or a local interest group and club. It is a symbol of community, the curation of motorsport history, passion and the timeless allure of motor racing, which is deeply rooted in Aussie culture. This year's Gnoo Blas Classic Car Show was the twenty-sixth annual event, with 850 vehicles on display and more than 6,000 spectators through the gate. It is estimated that the event injects millions of dollars into the local economy each year.

The Australian Motor Heritage Foundation has released an economic value study about the significant economic and social contributions of the historic vehicle movement. Key findings of the study were as follows. Firstly, owners of approximately 970,000 historic vehicles spend an average of \$10,240 per vehicle annually, totalling nearly \$10 billion nationwide. Secondly, the sector generates an estimated \$25.2 billion annually, encompassing both direct and indirect expenditures. Thirdly, the historic vehicle sector supports nearly 79,000 jobs, with 42,000 direct and 37,000 indirect positions. Finally, those jobs contribute approximately \$6.2 billion in wages and salaries each year. The study had over 6,000 respondents from 800 motoring clubs, which underscores the widespread community involvement and passion for historic vehicles. The findings emphasise the importance of preserving and promoting Australia's motoring heritage as a vital part of the nation's cultural identity. The results underscore the substantial role of the historic vehicle sector in Australia's economy and its enduring cultural significance.

Given the results of the study, and on the back of growing interest in classic cars and motor racing, the Gnoo Blas Classic Car Club plans to develop a clubhouse and museum. The plans are visionary, and such a facility will support and grow the club while complementing the city's cultural attractions and tourism. Funding for the proposed development will require government grants and investment. The club has boldly detailed a four-year plan to materialise it from concept stage. As a motor racing enthusiast and classic car lover myself, I admire the Gnoo Blas Classic Car Club's initiative. It is clear that the plans are based on the solid foundation of the growth of its annual event and the results of the Australian Motor Heritage Foundation study. I look forward to seeing the proposal progress.

### LISMORE LANTERN PARADE

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast) (19:57):** I was thrilled to be part of the opening of the thirty-first Lismore Lantern Parade's Fiery Finale at Oakes Oval last Saturday night. From the stage, I looked out and made the comment that it appeared to be the biggest crowd I had seen at the iconic Northern Rivers event, in addition to the people on the streets and in cars spread far and wide beyond Lismore Square Shopping Centre and the Lismore Base Hospital precinct. Such is the local and regional drawing power of this enduring celebration of community spirit each winter solstice. I congratulate Jyllie Jackson, OAM, her hardworking committee and team of volunteers and lantern carriers on staging another great spectacle for the city of Lismore. Families and individuals rugged up on a cold night to watch the parade of around 2,500 participants, including students from all the schools in the region, make its way along Molesworth, Magellan and Dawson streets to Oakes Oval.

*The Lismore App* reported that light rain in the early afternoon put a bit of a dampener on earlier festivities, but the skies cleared by 4.00 p.m., giving people the confidence to head into town. As is the case each year, lanterns of all sizes were on display and different styles of music were played along the route, creating a carnival atmosphere. The heart at the start of the Fiery Finale was a memorial to locals who have passed away who had inspired others over the history of the parade. Remembered with love were Sara Tinning, John Lush, Joanne Kambourian, Karen Coyle, Paul Barrett, Suzanne Olesen, John Miller, Issy Brent, Bede Flynn, John Fox and Heather Wood.

Warming to the finale's theme of "The Return of the Sun", Jyllie Jackson said, "Let tonight be a reminder, no matter how big the shadows, how heavy the rain, the sun always rises. So do we." The theme is a nod to the Chinese Year of the Snake, which represents transformation, but it can mean many things. It has spiritual significance in many cultures, symbolising hope, renewal and the triumph of light over darkness, as Jyllie alluded to. In the Northern Rivers region, where we have experienced natural disasters like the floods of 2017 and 2022

and the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20, the natural phenomena of the sunrise can also make us feel optimistic for better days in the future. *The Lismore App* described the Fiery Finale thus:

As a large crane and smaller birds moved around the sun, there was uplifting Irish folk music playing, before the sun spoke, bonfires were lit, and the sun was set on fire to an instrumental of The Beatles—Here Comes The Sun.

We liked that! In keeping with tradition, Jyllie Jackson's secret 2025 message was revealed in flames, "Time For Kindness". A short fireworks display followed. It had been a number of years since Oakes Oval was used as the venue for the Fiery Finale, but the grandstands and grassed area were full, making it another huge success. *The Lismore App* ran a viewer poll asking "What is your favourite Fiery Finale site?" with 303 people voting as of this afternoon. Oakes Oval sits at 74.6 per cent, followed by Riverside Park at 24.8 per cent, and other places at 0.7 per cent.

I thank my friend Jyllie Jackson for founding and nurturing the Lismore Lantern Parade, a nationally and internationally recognised, award-winning festival celebrating the winter solstice. The festival has grown from small beginnings and brings together local artists, businesses and communities to create a magical spectacular for locals and visitors to enjoy. The Visit Lismore Facebook page profiled Jyllie as a local legend who embodies Lismore's spirit of creativity, resilience and community. On the night, I called her a superstar. The Visit Lismore page says Jyllie has dedicated decades to fostering community engagement through art, storytelling and celebration. Her passion for lantern making and illuminated performances has transformed the parade into a signature event for Lismore and the wider Northern Rivers region. I also acknowledge that in attendance at the parade was a delegation from our sister city, Yamatotakada. The sister city agreement was struck with Lismore City Council in 1963. In a world often wracked by division and conflict, we need more lantern parades to spread harmony and peace.

#### **SURF LIFE SAVING CENTRAL COAST AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal) (20:01):** It is with great pleasure that I speak about the exceptional Surf Life Saving Central Coast Awards of Excellence 2025, which I recently had the pleasure of attending. Held at the vibrant Mingara Recreation Club and themed around a circus spectacular, the evening brought together representatives from all 15 surf lifesaving clubs across our region, from The Lakes in the north to Umina in the south. It was a great night filled with fun and community spirit, celebrating the tireless efforts of our local surf lifesaving volunteers. The annual awards evening provides a vital opportunity to formally recognise the outstanding contributions of our members, clubs and branches. These are the people who dedicate their time, skill and energy to keeping our beaches safe, building community resilience and excelling in surf sports and education.

On the Central Coast, we are incredibly fortunate to be home to one of the strongest and most vibrant surf lifesaving communities in the State. The Surf Life Saving Central Coast branch, or SLSCC, oversees the promotion, coordination and continued growth of surf lifesaving in our region. With 15 clubs and over 8,000 members, and seven of those clubs located within my electorate of Terrigal, the 2024-25 season was one of extraordinary activity and achievement. The statistics speak for themselves: Across the Central Coast, volunteer surf lifesavers performed a staggering 97,000 patrol hours and their efforts resulted in 341 rescues and over 11,000 preventative actions. Those numbers reflect not just the vigilance of our patrolling members but also their deep commitment to public safety and community service. I extend my sincerest thanks to our incredible trainers, assessors and facilitators whose dedication ensures that our members are equipped with the skills and confidence they need. The awards evening also highlighted our talented athletes and devoted officials, all of whom continue to inspire with their passion and performance, from the beach to the board.

I acknowledge the outstanding clubs and individuals from the Terrigal electorate who were honoured on the night. Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club once again shone brightly, taking out Club of the Year for the second consecutive year. It won Best Club in Australia at last year's awards—a testament to the hard work and dedication of every member. I congratulate Hayden Smith, awarded Masters Athlete of the Year; Jett Green, awarded Youth Athlete of the Year; and Terrigal Surf Life Saving Club, which also achieved third place in the overall surf points score of the year, another impressive feat. At Avoca Surf Life Saving Club, there were equally commendable achievements. Natalia Drobot received Athlete of the Year, Ella Beere and Natalia Drobot received Surf Sports Team of the Year—Open Female Double Ski Team, Trevor Gee was awarded Coach of the Year and Mia Jamal was Junior Lifesaver of the Year—Female.

Avoca SLSC earned first place in the overall surf points score of the year and placed third for Club of the Year—remarkable results that highlight the depth of talent within the club. From Wamberal SLSC, I congratulate Greg Diamond, who received Support Operator of the Year and was also recognised for a Lifesaving Recognition Award for his work with rescue water craft. Meanwhile, Copacabana SLSC was awarded Service Team of the Year for its innovative "Rockpool Rockstars" initiative—a shining example of creativity and community engagement.

The awards not only recognise excellence but also celebrate the collaboration and dedication of thousands of volunteers across the Central Coast. I acknowledge the hardworking club presidents from my electorate: Craig Sheppard from Killcare SLSC, Tom Tseng from Copacabana SLSC, Stuart Harvey at Avoca SLSC, Kim Findlay at North Avoca SLSC, Alison McNeill at MacMasters Beach SLSC, Richard Green at Terrigal SLSC and Adam Phillips from Wamberal SLSC. Their leadership and unwavering commitment ensures our clubs continue to thrive. I offer my heartfelt congratulations to all award recipients and nominees. They make our community so proud.

It would be remiss of me to not acknowledge the fact that more than 1.5 million people visited the Central Coast beaches last season, and every single person that swam between the flags went home safe and sound. There were no drownings on a patrolled beach on the Central Coast for another season. This is my tenth year in this place as the member for Terrigal, and during that time not one person has ever drowned between the flags on a patrolled beach on the Central Coast. Millions of people who have visited our region have gone home safe to their families because of our incredible volunteers, who put in literally hundreds of hours every season to keep people safe on our beaches. I thank everyone in surf lifesaving across the Central Coast. Their hard work, courage and community spirit remind us of what it means to look out for one another. I look forward to attending the State awards in the coming weeks.

**TEMPORARY SPEAKER (Mr Michael Kemp):** I also pay respect to all of our surf lifesavers around the State.

### STATE BUDGET AND PARRAMATTA ELECTORATE

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta) (20:06):** The 2025-26 New South Wales budget continues the work of rebuilding essential services we all rely on, building homes for New South Wales and laying the foundation for economic growth. Residents across the Parramatta electorate will benefit from these investments, but in addition there are great local projects that I am proud to see funded that will support our fast growing communities in many ways. We are bringing back the M52 express bus service between Parramatta and the Sydney CBD, which was an extremely popular bus route servicing people from Parramatta to Ryde, Hunters Hill, Drummoyne and Balmain.

The former Liberal Government axed the M52 in 2021, but with an additional investment of \$150 million in the 2025-26 budget the Minns Labor Government will deliver more buses and more bus services across Sydney and regional New South Wales. We will expand the popular 500X bus route to reinstate the direct service from Parramatta to the Sydney CBD via Ryde. We promised to bring back this route if we won the 2023 election as part of our plan to deliver better connected communities. We are doing exactly that, because as our area continues to grow locals need access to direct public transport that makes it easier to get between our two cities and the suburbs in between.

This budget demonstrates the New South Wales Government's commitment to ensuring public school students have access to world-class learning facilities, with a staggering \$9 billion in capital expenditure. Across the Parramatta electorate, we are rebuilding schools with new works totalling \$4.5 million. Funding for Newington Public School will include money for a permanent teaching building with new classrooms, new shared indoor common areas, multipurpose spaces and student amenities, the removal of demountable classrooms and landscaping works. This will help accommodate future growth in the Sydney Olympic Park area while also supporting the current students at the school. Rydalmere Public School opened on 12 January 1891. The original school building was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the administration building. With an investment of over \$1.7 million, Rydalmere Public School and preschool will now receive a further transformation. Rydalmere East Public School and Ermington West Public School will also receive funding for upgrades. This is alongside our work to ensure students build strong foundations in literacy and numeracy, including a focus on phonics.

It is dubbed "Sydney's worst roundabout", but we are determined to fix the congestion-prone Direct Factory Outlet roundabout once and for all with a further \$50 million in the budget to deliver an upgrade of significant consequence. That \$50 million brings the State's contribution to \$100 million alongside a matching \$100 million investment from the Commonwealth Government. The project will deliver a signalised intersection with a number of options set to be put to the community for consultation in the coming months.

A new children's hospice will be built within The Children's Hospital at Westmead to support the families of children and young people with life-limiting illness, due largely to the incredible advocacy of Rio's Legacy. The new paediatric hospice will be the second of its kind in New South Wales and only the fourth in Australia. The New South Wales Government is investing over \$20 million alongside \$13 million from the Mounties Group, funding from the Giants Foundation and support from the Sydney Children's Hospital Foundation.

The Westmead laboratory conducts 3.5 million pathology-related tests per year. Built in 1978, the laboratory has had minimal refurbishment in almost 50 years, and it is clear that it is no longer fit for purpose. In

its place we are building the first NSW Health pathology statewide hub with \$492 million allocated in the budget. The new hub will support the delivery of local and statewide clinical pathology, public health, medical research and specialised support services on the Westmead campus.

Fire and Rescue NSW keep our communities safe 365 days a year, so it is pleasing that station 027 in Parramatta is receiving upgrades totalling \$2.8 million that will equip the station into the future. There is even more great news for the Parramatta electorate in this year's budget, but this snapshot shows our Minns Labor Government is prioritising people and infrastructure where we have the fastest growing population—in Parramatta, in the geographical heart of Sydney.

### WINSTON HILLS ELECTORATE PROJECTS

**Mr MARK TAYLOR (Winston Hills) (20:11):** I take the opportunity today to update the House on some key projects that have had a significant impact on the Winston Hills electorate. These projects were part of WestInvest, which was introduced by the former New South Wales Coalition Government and continues under the renamed Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program. The WestInvest fund was a fantastic initiative that delivered essential upgrades to local reserves, recreational spaces and community facilities right across Western Sydney. As the Winston Hills electorate is situated in the heart of Western Sydney, many of our suburbs have directly benefited from these vital projects, so it is also important that we recognise the ongoing support of local councils—Blacktown City Council, City of Parramatta Council and The Hills Shire Council—which have worked in partnership to ensure the upgrades are delivered for the people of our area.

I provide an update on the status of some of those projects and acknowledge the important role they will play in improving liveability and community involvement in our local suburbs for years to come. One of the major projects delivered through the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program is the upgrade of Blacktown Aquatic Centre, which falls within the boundaries of the Winston Hills electorate. I had the privilege of attending the official launch of the \$77 million upgrade, where a clear and detailed master plan was unveiled. The redevelopment includes a new indoor pool, a refurbished outdoor pool, a 25-metre program pool, upgraded fitness rooms, change rooms and a new cafe. Those works will transform Blacktown Aquatic Centre into a world-class facility that promotes health, recreation and community engagement. It will serve as a hub for swimming development, water safety programs and inclusive access for residents right across Blacktown, Seven Hills, Kings Langley and the broader Winston Hills electorate. I am proud that this upgrade for Western Sydney was part of the vision outlined by the former Coalition Government, and I am pleased to see it becoming a reality for local families and community groups.

Another important project under the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program is the \$3.8 million upgrade to Max Ruddock Reserve, which is being delivered by the City of Parramatta Council. The original amenities building at the reserve has stood for over 50 years and is in urgent need of renewal. Just last week, I visited the site and was pleased to see that safety fencing has been installed and early works are underway. The new facility will feature accessible walkways, upgraded change rooms, increased storage areas, improved access to the playing fields and an elevated viewing platform. Max Ruddock Reserve is the home ground of the Winston Hills Football Club and Winston Hills Cricket Club. I have no doubt that the upgraded facilities will support the ongoing success of those clubs. They will provide the next generation of players with the tools they need to thrive and succeed. This investment in grassroots sport is a great outcome for the people of Winston Hills and the wider community in the electorate.

The Toongabbie community will also benefit from a \$3.7 million upgrade to Sue Savage Reserve and nearby Reynolds Park. This is called a multigenerational recreational facility. The project is being delivered by City of Parramatta Council. The project masterplan includes a new youth precinct centred around a skate park and BMX bicycle track. The upgrades will also include a multipurpose basketball court, fitness equipment and improved park infrastructure, creating a safe and inclusive space for young people and families in the Toongabbie area. This investment will not only improve the wellbeing of the local youth but also foster a sense of belonging and pride in the area. I encourage residents to visit the City of Parramatta Council website for ongoing updates.

I also note the commitments that the Federal Labor Government promised during the recent Federal election campaign. They include \$3.6 million for Binalong Oval in Old Toongabbie and \$25 million to ease congestion on the Toongabbie Bridge. I have advocated for those projects for many years, and it is terrific to see that funding has been allocated for the upgrades. I will do my best to hold the project providers to the highest account and ensure that the Winston Hills community receive the promised services.

To conclude, these projects are a testament to the lasting impact of the WestInvest fund, now known as the Western Sydney Infrastructure Grants Program. From the state-of-the-art Blacktown Aquatic Centre upgrades to the renewal of Max Ruddock Reserve in Winston Hills and the exciting youth precinct at Sue Savage Reserve in Toongabbie, each of the initiatives reflects a commitment to strengthening our communities through high-quality

infrastructure. I look forward to seeing the projects completed and enjoyed by local residents for generations to come. I assure the community that I will continue to advocate for further investment in Western Sydney to ensure that the Winston Hills electorate remains vibrant and supported into the future.

### REFUGEE WEEK

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice) (20:16):** Last week, I had the privilege of attending multiple Refugee Week events in my electorate. Throughout my electorate, community organisations and schools and the local council honoured World Refugee Day—the international day to honour people who have been forced to flee their home countries fearing displacement through war, persecution and poverty. This year's theme "community is a superpower" is precisely what we are in the electorate of Bankstown, a place where we celebrate the incredible, the ordinary and the extraordinary. At its core, "community is a superpower" is about sharing responsibility, resources and relationships among a group of people. It is not just about living side by side but about fostering interdependence. The concept of interdependence suggests that our strength lies in how we support and uplift one another. I have experienced the superpower of community firsthand growing up in multicultural Australia. I have seen strangers come together through shared experiences. Those very small yet profound moments reveal how easily the seeds of community can be sewn and remind us of the responsibility we each carry to nurture these connections. The real superpower lies not in exceptionalism but in solidarity.

On Thursday, evening I attended a vigil hosted by the Vietnamese Community Association to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the arrival of boat people. Our community gathered at the monument in Saigon Place in Bankstown to listen to stories, light candles and unveil the fiftieth anniversary plaque. The vigil was attended by the Hon. Tony Burke, MP, Mayor Bilal El-Hayek, local councillors and the community. It was an opportunity to honour who we are—an inclusive and welcoming community. I thank the Vietnamese Community Association's president, Peter Thang Ha, and the committee for their work in organising the event. I was also very pleased to catch up with my friend Dr Vinh who fled the fall of Saigon in 1979. He went on to study medicine at the University of Sydney with dreams of serving his community. He has done so tirelessly, and remains a constant support for the community.

On Friday evening, I went to visit Metro Assist, which hosted a heartwarming gala dinner to recognise the contributions that refugees make in our community. The evening featured inspiring speeches from community leaders and, most importantly, people with lived experience of being a refugee. They shared their stories of resilience, hope and growth in their great new homeland. I thank Metro Assist for its dedication to creating a welcoming environment, and for recognising the invaluable contributions that refugees make to our society. The evening offered an opportunity to reflect on refugees who arrived on our shores seeking a better life. They inspired us with incredible stories of survival and the many contributions refugees have made to our communities, including sharing their rich cultural heritage, inspiring us with their strength and determination, and helping us build a more inclusive society.

We all play a role in ensuring that everyone who flees their home in desperation is never demonised. It is our responsibility as elected members of Parliament to make sure that we are always speaking positively, especially for people who need a bit of comfort and support. The week is also a reminder of the ongoing human rights issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers in Australia and around the world. It also brings home the continuing destruction and displacement faced by many people in war-ravaged countries like Palestine, where people face constant bombings and the destruction of schools, hospitals and every bit of infrastructure. In Australia, we never have to encounter starvation, rockets and falling missiles, and I hope we never do. But, for millions of people, it is their daily reality. When we think about what we can do for others, that kindness and understanding goes a long way.

Many people do not want to leave their countries. However, with ongoing conflicts, persecution or disasters, they are left with no alternative. They make the decision to put themselves in danger on a leaky boat. It must be pretty bad on land to want to get on a leaky boat. Refugees will come to Australia. We are a great Australian story from 60,000 years ago to today. Every person has made a contribution. We know that together we can build a welcoming country where everyone is respected and valued. Refugee Week is more than a series of events or a date on the calendar; it is an opportunity to honour the creativity, strength and resilience of the great people and nation that we are and continue to be as we welcome everybody.

### REFUGEE WEEK

**Mr NATHAN HAGARTY (Leppington) (20:21):** Last week was Refugee Week, a moment to pause and listen to the stories of people who have fled war, persecution and disaster and now call Australia home. It was also a time to ask ourselves whether we are doing enough not just to help people find safety, but also to rebuild their lives here. Perhaps it is time to take a fresh look at our refugee program and ensure that it is built for the

realities and challenges of today. Today, more than 122 million people are displaced globally. That is nearly double the number from 10 years ago. Over 37 million of them are refugees fleeing war and persecution in countries like Sudan, Syria, Afghanistan, the Ukraine and, of course, Palestine. More will follow as climate-driven disasters and regional volatility force people from their homes.

Australia has played an important role over the decades. In November this year we expect to receive our millionth refugee since the program began in 1947. But, while we have much to be proud of, we also have much to modernise, because the real issue is not how many people we accept but how ready we are to support them and how effectively we help them contribute when they arrive. The contribution of refugees to Australia over the past half century is undeniable. Dr Bo Reményi, Frank Lowy, Anh Do, Les Murray, Deng Adut and Majak Daw are just a handful of refugees who have helped to reshape Australian society. They have left their mark on medicine, business, arts and culture, public service and sport. Those individuals did not just find refuge here; they found opportunity, and they gave back in spades.

But too often that opportunity is blocked by outdated policy. I am proud to say that the Minns Labor Government is already showing leadership on the issue of resettlement. On World Refugee Day the Government announced the creation of the first-ever NSW Settlement Advisory Council. Chaired by Professor Peter Shergold, AC, the council will provide expert advice to Multicultural NSW and act as a formal mechanism to guide policy decisions, improve service coordination and ensure that the NSW Settlement Strategy reflects the lived experience of refugee communities. As I have spoken about previously in this place, the Activate Australia's Skills campaign convened by Settlement Services International [SSI] is a non-partisan alliance of businesses, unions, social services and community organisations united by a common goal: to fix Australia's outdated qualifications and skills recognition system.

At a time when our country faces critical workforce shortages, we simply cannot afford to waste the expertise of new arrivals. The campaign's message is simple: If we activate Australia's skills, everyone wins. SSI CEO Violet Roumeliotis has welcomed the establishment of the NSW Settlement Advisory Council, noting that its objectives align closely with the work SSI is already doing. In her words, the council represents:

...something that would help address crippling skills shortages and allow new arrivals ... to utilise their skills and experience in their new home.

That is exactly the kind of alignment between whole-of-government strategy and the community-led solutions we need to ensure better outcomes for refugees and the communities they join. Another is the Kaldor Centre's 2024 proposed standing emergency protection framework, anchored by a dedicated emergency visa. The proposed model would allow Australia to act swiftly and systematically in emergencies, rather than waiting for political pressure or media attention to force a response.

It is not about inflating refugee intake for the sake of it. Rather, it is about building a system that is ready, adaptable, lawful and—most importantly—humane and capable of protecting people when conflict or disaster strikes, whether in the Ukraine or Gaza today, or a climate-displaced Pacific community tomorrow. With the re-election of the Albanese Government, Australians have backed a government with empathy and the vision needed to modernise how we respond to crises, and to unlock the potential of those who come here seeking safety and a new start. When we welcome people with the right policies and the right support, everyone benefits.

**The House adjourned, pursuant to standing and sessional orders, at 20:27 until  
Thursday 26 June 2025 at 10:00.**

*Written Community Recognition Statements*

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

**LISA CURTIS, TAYLOR CURTIS AND KATHRYN WAKELIN – RUN FOR PURPOSE**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I acknowledge Lisa Curtis, Taylor Curtis and Kathryn Wakelin in creating the 'Run for Purpose' event. The 5km run was held to fundraise for Levi's Project, which was established by Caringbah couple Kathryn Wakelin and Ben Wheeler to fund research into Diffuse Intrinsic Pontine Glioma, or DIPG, a fatal brain cancer in children which tragically took the life of Levi, their seven year old son. With more than 350 people running, Run for Purpose raised over \$23,000 for Levi's Project, while also helping to promote awareness of the terrible impact of DIPG. I also acknowledge the three local businesses who helped make the Run for Purpose possible. Highland Property, The Yard Gym, and HAM Cronulla worked together to sponsor the event, with HAM rewarding participants with a free coffee at the end of the run and promising to donate 50% of all coffee sales during the event to Levi's Project. The Mitchell Services Foundation was also a major sponsor of the event. It is wonderful to see the local community come together to support such an important cause.



**ETHAN BALL**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate Cronulla's Ethan Ball who is the Sutherland Shire Junior Cricket Association's [SSJCA] Cricketer of the Year for season 2024/25. Ethan led the 16A competition with the bat, scoring 702 runs for Caringbah Sports Cricket Club at an average of 58.5, including one century and six fifties. He also took 17 wickets and seven catches while captaining with maturity and working hard to encourage his teammates, during a season where the side was often short of players because of injuries. Opening the batting in representative cricket for SSJCA in the under 17 CS Watson Shield, he was the team's leading run-scorer with 258 runs at an average of 28.7, including a top score of 86. While playing for Caringbah Sports and SSJCA over the last four years Ethan has scored more than 2,000 runs at an average of 44.6, taken 48 wickets and held 30 catches. He has made a positive contribution to junior cricket in the Shire with his all-round talent, strong work ethic and good spirit and is a worthy recipient of this honour. I wish Ethan continued success as he moves into senior cricket.

**CRAIG JOHNSTON**

**Mr MARK SPEAKMAN (Cronulla)**—I congratulate GyMEA Bay's Craig Johnston for his remarkable feat of completing and winning the gruelling 2025 Terra Australis Bike Epic. The event is an individual time trial for experienced multi-day endurance pushbike riders over 6250 kilometres, from Wilsons Promontory in Victoria, up the eastern seaboard of NSW and inland through central and northern Queensland to the tip of Cape York. Imagine how challenging the ride was when his last 87 kilometres to the finish alone involved crossing 12 creeks, including the infamous Nolan's Brook that four wheel drive vehicles struggle to cross, and a sand riddled track. Craig is the only rider in the race's eight-year history to complete the route within the rules. Two other competitors finished before him this year but detoured significant sections of the prescribed route. Craig finished on 14 June after 44 days, 16 hours and 41 minutes. In congratulating Craig, race director Steve Watson said the event is a challenging daily physical and emotional journey and managing one's personal physical capabilities and maintaining some functional clarity of mind to action your ride plan effectively are critical skills for achieving success. As Steve said, Craig's performance is a "ride for the ages".

**MACARTHUR YOUNG CHAMPIONS AWARDS 2025**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—A wonderful evening at the Macarthur Young Champions Awards 2025 at Western Leagues Club, Campbelltown, celebrating remarkable young people making a difference in our community. From sport and the arts to leadership and kindness — the awards honoured the bright sparks shaping Macarthur's future. The Young Champions Awards celebrate the achievements and dedication of young people who make a valuable contribution to their local community. Founded in 2019 by Brian Laul and a team of community leaders under not-for-profit Rainbow Crossing Inc, the awards aim to inspire youth to pursue their dreams and build a brighter future for all. Thank you for having me along with so many friends and colleagues including Sally Quinell MP, Member for Camden, Greg Warren MP, Member for Campbelltown and Anne Stanley MP, Member for Werriwa. Congratulations to the deserving nominees and winners.

**SCOTT CHASELING**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Small Impact Studio is a unique glass blowing studio located in Mittagong, where artist Scott Chaseling along with fellow creative Gina Fairley create incredible works out of glass. Scott's talent has recently been recognised by being selected as a finalist in the prestigious international Loewe Foundation Craft Prize. This momentous accolade sees Scott as one of only 30 artists selected worldwide from over 4500 submissions. Critiqued by a panel of 12 leading designers, architects, and art critics, Scott's sculptural glass piece entitled 'Beyond a Slippery Grip' formed part of the exhibition at the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid, Spain. His colourful piece combines traditional glassmaking techniques with painted elements, displaying the talent and vision that the international prize is renowned for. Congratulations Scott, thank you for sharing your talent with the world.

**ANNETTE AND ROB PEARCE**

**Mrs JUDY HANNAN (Wollondilly)**—Annette and Rob Pearce have been Wollondilly residents for many years, and their selfless contributions to the community have had a positive impact on so many people. Annette and Rob are members of organisations including Picton View Club, Fellow of Australia Writers NSW, F.A.W - Wollondilly Branch, Picton, Horticultural and Industrial Society Inc., One spot community Assistance Inc, Nangarin Book Club, Nangarin Executive and Project Grow Volunteers. It is only thanks to the contribution and hard work of volunteers like Annette and Rob that organisations like this can continue. They play a vital role in providing support and information, and facilitating connections between people. Annette and Rob's contribution has also been recognised with the awarding of the Citizen of the Year at the 2025 Wollondilly Australia Day

Awards in the Picton Botanic Gardens. I extend my thanks and congratulations to Annette and Rob for all that you do for Wollondilly, your efforts are greatly appreciated.

#### IVAN TRPOSKI

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)**—I rise to recognise the literary achievements and service of Mr. Ivan Trposki. Born in the village of Volino, he left Macedonia in 1968 to begin his journey to Australia. Ivan married Nada Ivanoska in 1967 and the couple would have a daughter named Bilijana in 1976. It would be in 1978 that Ivan would begin his contribution to Macedonian literature in Australia. In 1978 he became a member of the Grigor Prlichev Literary Society of Sydney and the Editorial Board of the magazine Occasion, also becoming a longtime librarian and archivist at the Grigor Prlichev Library, the first of its kind outside of Macedonia. He has authored numerous poetry collections including Surface Roots, The Chained Sea, Todorka, Restless Winds, and numerous others. His volunteering and contributions to culture have been recognised through several awards, including the NSW Senior of the Year for Community Charity, the Medal of Merit for Macedonia, and multiple lifetime achievement honours. Ivan remains an active member of the Macedonian community library in Arncliffe which he manages every Friday, giving back to the community the lifetime of learning he has acquired. I thank Ivan for his enrichment of Macedonian culture in my community.

#### SANS SOUCI PUBLIC SCHOOL DJAMU PROGRAM

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)**—I'd like to congratulate Sans Souci Public School on participating in the 2025 Djamu Indigenous Art Education Program, run by the Art Gallery of NSW. The Djamu program offers students a unique opportunity to take part in workshops led by Indigenous artists, exploring the stories, traditions, and techniques that shape First Nations art. This year's program was led by Pedro Wonacemirri, an acclaimed artist from the Tiwi Islands in the Northern Territory, who shared the rich cultural heritage of his community. Under Pedro's guidance, students created their own artworks using natural pigments and ochres from the Tiwi Islands. This hands-on experience not only developed their artistic skills but deepened their understanding of Indigenous perspectives and storytelling through art. By engaging in the Djamu program, Sans Souci Public School has shown a strong commitment to honouring and sharing Indigenous culture within the Rockdale community. Programs like this play a vital role in building cultural awareness and respect among our young people. Congratulations once again to the school, and especially to students Palmer-Jane, Acey, and Zoe for their involvement and achievements. You've made your school — and your community — proud.

#### SUPERINTENDENT PAUL DUNSTAN APM

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER (Rockdale—Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism)**—I would like to congratulate Superintendent Paul Dunstan for being given the Australian Police Medal and commend him for his ongoing service to my community. Paul was named as a recipient of the APM for the 2025 King's Birthday honours as the commander for the St George police area command. Born in central West NSW, serving and protecting the community was the only career Paul had his sights on. He commenced his career in 1994 and began a journey across various commands including Macquarie Fields, Surry Hills, Kings Cross, the Sydney CBD, and now proudly in St George. Paul describes his love of being able to aid the community in a variety of ways on a daily basis while also having the opportunity to work with the young and dynamic police force present in the St. George area. Paul has thoroughly enjoyed working with multicultural communities and should be commended for his efforts in reaching out to these communities, many of whom have previously had negative experiences with police in their home countries. I commend Paul Dunstan for his continuing efforts in ensuring the safety of my community and again congratulate him on receiving the APM.

#### VALE MAX GARTHE

**Ms KYLIE WILKINSON (East Hills)**—I acknowledge the passing of Max Garthe - a master jeweller, devoted family man, and treasured figure in the Revesby and Padstow communities - who passed away on 14th of June at the age of 88. For over six decades, Max was a fixture of our local area, first opening his Padstow store in 1972 before expanding to Revesby in 1976. A skilled watchmaker and jeweller from the age of 15, Max was renowned not only for his refined craftsmanship, but also for his kindness, humility, and unwavering dedication he showed to his loyal customers. He worked alongside his beloved wife Joan - the heart of their business - until her tragic passing in 1991. Together with their children Janette and Warren, and granddaughter Rachel, the Garthes created a legacy of trust and service that touched generations of families. Max gave much to the community, including generous donations of jewellery to local charities. A proud supporter of the Canterbury Bankstown Bulldogs, Max remained engaged, loyal, and ever-present on the local strip until his retirement in 2023. I extend my deepest sympathies to his family and loved ones.

### MACLEAN MANTA RAYS

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I would like to congratulate the Maclean Manta Rays Swimming Club and head coach Ruth Everuss on representing the Clarence Valley at the 2025 Australian Age Championships held at the Brisbane Aquatic Centre between April 10-18. 16-year-old Jett Burke from Gulmarrad qualified for eight individual events and three relays. Jett finished fifth overall and set a new PB in the boys 16 years 100m backstroke final, came eighth in the boys 16 years 200m backstroke final, achieving another PB, and placed 10th in the boys 16 years 50m backstroke final. He also managed to set a further two PB's when he finished 15th in the boys 16 years 100m butterfly final and 19th in the boys 16 years 100m freestyle final. 18-year-old Caleb Daykin qualified for two individual events and three relays, finishing with a new PB set during the boys 18 years 100m butterfly. 15-year-old Ian Burgess set a new PB in the boys 15 years 200m butterfly, while Hayden White, Jack Leeson and Hudson Batinovic also achieved success in the pool. 15-year-old Freya Meade qualified for three events but was unfortunately unable to compete due to injury. Congratulations to all on your success.

### TEAM AIDAN MOTHER'S DAY MARKET

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—Congratulations must go to Aidan Really of Team Aidan, a local not-for profit group, for his organisation of the annual Mother's Day Market fundraising event held at the Clarence River Jockey Club on May 11. Over \$15,000 was raised on the day, with proceeds going directly towards the purchase of fuel vouchers for cancer patients at the Grafton Base Hospital Oncology Unit who frequently need to travel long distances to receive treatment. Aidan was inspired to help make a positive impact on the lives of local families that have been affected by cancer after tragically losing his father to the disease almost five years ago. In addition to a great turn out of market stalls, the day featured kids face painting, dance performances by Studio One Dance Academy and an impressive line-up of classic and vintage vehicles and motorcycles on display. Donation buckets got a workout on the day, with the large crowd of generous Clarence Valley residents making contributions to a great cause. I congratulate Aidan, his mum Veronica and the entire team on creating such a successful event. Well done and I wish you just as much success for your future events.

### CONNECT YOU TOO

**Mr RICHIE WILLIAMSON (Clarence)**—I recognise the extraordinary efforts of the volunteers at Connect You Too, who were recently celebrated at a special morning tea in Iluka as part of National Volunteer Week. I extend my sincere appreciation to the many volunteers who give so generously of their time, compassion and community spirit. Under the leadership of Co-ordinator Kerry Little and with the guidance of a dedicated Board, Connect You Too delivered over 19,000 meals this year alone and clocked more than one million kilometres transporting clients — an achievement powered by over 250 years of combined volunteer service. Special recognition goes to the volunteers honoured through the Recognise and Reward program: Ray Hoad, John Nolan, Greg Starr, Debbie Thwaites, Leonie Lancaster, Peter Jarman, Tony Crupi, Dale Mackie, Terry Hill, Paul Bailey, Darryl Brotherson, Gren Little and David Anderson. Your service and the kind feedback from clients speaks volumes. I also thank the generous local sponsors — Harwood Hilton, Yamba Bowlo, Lawrence Tavern, Access Fuels and Coles — for supporting this important initiative. On behalf of the Clarence Valley, thank you to each and every Connect You Too volunteer. You are the heartbeat of our community, and your selfless service does not go unnoticed.

### HONOURS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—Congratulations to Mr Owen Fitzgerald and Dr Henry Gardiner, whose years of community service have been recognised with King's Birthday honours. As the long-term operators of the Laurel Hill Forest Lodge, Mr Fitzgerald and his wife Cathy have been stalwarts of the tourism sector until their retirement this year. Mr Fitzgerald has now received an Order of Australia medal for his years of community service, including for the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail. Mr Fitzgerald says his honour reflects the work of countless community members, not least Cathy who helped to make the rail trail a reality. Equally praiseworthy is the long commitment to Wagga Wagga by Member of the Order of Australia recipient, Dr Gardiner, who was recognised for his services to education and community organisations. A former dean and lecturer at Charles Sturt University, Dr Gardiner has acknowledged the amazing support of his late wife Margaret. His many achievements include training generations of teachers and principals, and his contribution to community groups and volunteer organisations. Mr Fitzgerald and Dr Gardiner have been outstanding servants to their communities and are more than worthy recipients of their King's Birthday honours. Congratulations and thank you to both.

### FISHY BUSINESS

**Dr JOE McGIRR (Wagga Wagga)**—With 100% water views and no charge to guests, Tumut's newest hotels are environmentally friendly with dine-in options, making them the perfect place to stay – if you're a fish!

The brainchild of Local Land Services, OzFish and Boys to the Bush Wagga, the "hotels" are structures submerged at the Tumut wetlands where they will become homes to native fish. The shelters, made of wood and rock, provide protection from predatory birds and introduced fish. All good hotels should offer an opportunity for romance, and that five-star touch has been provided by Col Locke and Tumut Potters Inc. who made ceramic tubes that will help fish to breed by protecting their eggs. Room service is on tap, with the hotels to create in-house food sources, assisting the return of threatened species to the waterway. Congratulations to Sean Graham from the not-for-profit OzFish, Cherie White and the team from Local Land Services, and Ben Walsh from Boys to the Bush with his crew of young helpers for making the idea a reality. We can look forward to a "no-vacancy" rate at these innovative hotels with the environmental outcomes to pay off in the months and years to come.

#### **KIM HATHERLY**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate local author Kim Hatherly of Gymea on the publication of her latest book, *The Gymea Story: The History of Gymea and Gymea Bay*. A skilled journalist, genealogist, and dedicated member of both the Sutherland Shire Historical Society and the Society of Australian Genealogists, Kim brings decades of research experience to her writing. Her passion for history and genealogy has led to several publications, including the award-winning paper *A Boy from Shoreditch*. A lifelong resident of Gymea, Kim combines personal insight with meticulous research in *The Gymea Story*. The book traces the early development of Gymea and Gymea Bay, from the first land leases through to the impact of major events such as bushfires, wars, and the Great Depression on local residents. Featuring more than 300 photographs, maps, and images—sourced from archives and private collections—it is a rich and valuable record of our local heritage. I commend Kim for her tireless efforts in preserving and sharing the story of our community, and for capturing the spirit of Gymea in such a thoughtful and engaging way.

#### **SUTHERLAND SHIRE JUNIOR CRICKET ASSOCIATION**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate the Sutherland Shire Junior Cricket Association [SSJCA] on another successful summer of cricket. As a cornerstone of the Shire's sporting life, the SSJCA provides hundreds of young players with the opportunity to develop their skills, build friendships and compete in a supportive environment. I was pleased to attend the Association's Annual Awards Presentation on Saturday 15 June, recognising the achievements of players during the 2024/2025 cricket season. This success would not be possible without the tireless work of the association's dedicated volunteers. I acknowledge committee members Matt O'Brien, Adam Fleming, James Young, Brad Abrook, Bryon Camin, Scott Phillipson, Steve Barry, Kirsten Benhaim, Glen Rooney, Stuart Gordon, Phil Jaques, and Nathan Haywood for their invaluable contributions. I also pay tribute to the association's life members in attendance Tom Croucher, Roy Amos, Bill Johnson, Rod Wheatley and Michael Mooney whose longstanding service has shaped the SSJCA into the respected organisation it is today. On behalf of our community, I thank the SSJCA for its ongoing commitment to junior cricket and for enriching the lives of local families through sport.

#### **ARSENIA GATZIASTRAS**

**Ms ELENi PETINOS (Miranda)**—I congratulate Arsenia Gatziastras of Sylvania on receiving the NSW Teachers Federation Award for HSC Excellence at the Public Education Foundation's Proudly Public Awards. As Sylvania High School's 2024 captain, Arsenia has demonstrated outstanding academic achievement and a deep commitment to her community. She achieved Band 6 results in all her HSC subjects—Advanced English, Biology, Advanced and Extension Mathematics, PDHPE and Community Studies, in which she placed equal first in the State. This exceptional accomplishment is a testament to her determination, discipline, and love of learning. Arsenia is a deserving recipient of the NSW Teachers Federation Award for HSC Excellence, which recognises NSW public school students who place first in a subject. Beyond the classroom and with the support of her wonderful parents George and Helen, Arsenia remained actively involved in youth groups and Greek dancing, exemplifying her strong sense of cultural and community engagement. Balancing academic excellence with extracurricular involvement, she has shown remarkable time management, leadership and drive. I commend Arsenia on her achievements and wish her every success as she embarks on a Bachelor of Speech Pathology.

#### **NEW ELECTED BOARD FOR PARRAMATTA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—Congratulations to the newly elected board of the Parramatta Chamber of Commerce. I was delighted to attend the AGM and see the election of the new team headed by continuing president Anthony Mazza. Congratulations also to Vice Presidents Alison Cui and Raymond Raad, continuing Treasurer Eric Tjoeng and to board members Rosa Bellissimo, Emilia Chechelski, Evelyn Gardis, Roy Halabi, Cawley Hennings, Hans Joachim, Yesh Mudaliar and Ash Yogachandra, who bring great experience to this board. The Parramatta Chamber of Commerce does important work in providing communication, connection and representation in the rapidly growing Parramatta business community. They are responsible for business networking opportunities, discussion forums and awards to help advance Parramatta's prosperity as the 2nd largest

economic centre in NSW. The Chamber of Commerce also bring Parramatta's businesses together to give back to the community, through the charity events. The new board will continue to bring experience, vision and dedication alongside the Chamber team. They support members and the small – medium business community, driving positive change and improving the representation of businesses in Parramatta. Congratulations to the new board and thank you for your continuing advocacy.

#### **BAND TOGETHER FOUNDATION FESTIVAL**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—The Band Together Foundation held its annual Band Together Festival at Riverside Theatres Parramatta on June 17th and 18th. This event provides students with an opportunity to learn and showcase their talent in a working theatre. I attended the showcase evening on the 18th with a high standard of performances from local bands alongside the showstopping Hot Potato Band. School bands from across Western Sydney were involved in the festival including some of our local school bands from Dundas Public School, Parramatta Public School, Parramatta East Public School, Parramatta High School and Cumberland High School. Band Together, founded last year by Martin Davison and Laura Demicheli, supports and nurtures young musical talent across Western Sydney through working to improve access to music education to children. The efforts of Band Together have gone above and beyond to encourage our young local musos. Their work has included organising concerts, providing access to equipment and financial support to families unable to afford music lessons and instruments. All proceeds from the festival go directly to the Band Together Foundation, helping the foundation cover festival costs and expand access to high-quality music education and performance opportunities for children.

#### **FRANKY & CO PARRAMATTA**

**Ms DONNA DAVIS (Parramatta)**—I recently had a delicious tour of a local small business, Franky & Co. to see their efficient operations in Clyde. I'm sure you've seen their sweet treats on social media; they make some of the best donuts I've ever tasted in fact, there are two of these delightful bakeries in the Parramatta electorate along with a shopfront at Parramatta Westfield! Born and raised in Western Sydney, Frank Micali is passionate about the west. Starting out with little baking experience but a head for business, Frank built his sweet treats empire, and continues to open more locations, bringing his donuts and cakes to residents of Sydney with 23 stores, as well as supplying Accor and Commbank stadiums. Frank makes a point of employing Western Sydney residents and supplies many cafes across Sydney. It's always great to see a local small business succeed, and Franky & Co is a sweet example of entrepreneurship. I thank Frank and his team for delivering these treats across Sydney and I encourage everyone to make their way to your local Franky & Co for a coffee and donut!

#### **YOUNG ABORIGINAL LEADERS HONOURED THROUGH HISTORIC NSW PARLIAMENT PROGRAM**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the inspiring young Aboriginal leaders who participated in the inaugural Parliament of NSW Young Aboriginal Leaders Program, held from 17-20 June 2025 at Parliament House. Delivered as part of the Legislative Council's Bicentenary celebrations, this program empowers emerging Aboriginal leaders aged 18-25 from across NSW. I commend NSW Parliament for launching this meaningful program, which combines leadership development with deep respect for culture and Country. From learning about the legislative process to delivering speeches in the Legislative Council Chamber, participants are equipped to shape the future of their communities—and our state. To the young leaders who have taken part: Taylor-Lee Byrne, Stevie Carr, Eliza Darney, Arabella Flowers, Benjamin Harris, Sebastian Kelly-Toiava, Jayden Kitchener-Waters, Brittney Lavis, Braden Lyons, Malek Lyons, Jai McEwen, Billi Moss, Iyesha Roberts, Sam Russell, Lachlan Sibir, Jacob Smeaton, Mea-Mei Stanbury, Axel Wellings and Dre Wicks – you represent the future of Aboriginal leadership in NSW, and your presence in Parliament this week is a moment of pride for all of us. Your voices matter, your journeys are important, and your leadership will leave a lasting legacy. Congratulations on this significant milestone!

#### **MOSMAN CROQUET CLUB SHINES AS ALISON SHARPE WINS STATE CHAMPIONSHIP**

**Ms FELICITY WILSON (North Shore)**—I extend warm congratulations to Mosman Croquet Club for proudly hosting the 2025 NSW Women's Association Croquet [AC] Open Singles Championships from 23-25 May. This prestigious tournament welcomed talented players from across NSW and interstate, showcasing the strength and spirit of competitive croquet. A special congratulations to Mosman's own Alison Sharpe, who delivered an exceptional performance, winning every match and claiming the championship title by pegging out well before time in each game. Her precision and poise were remarkable and a source of great pride for the local community. Recognition is also due to strong contenders: Cammeray's Rosie Landrebe, and Joanne Brown, whose competitive spirit and skill kept the matches closely fought. Rosie was awarded runner-up on count-back, and Joanne's consistent performance added to the high calibre of play throughout the tournament. Celebrating its centenary last year, Mosman Croquet Club remains a treasured sporting institution on Sydney's lower North Shore.

Under the leadership of President Joanne Nimmons and Secretary Fidy Westgarth, the Club continues to foster excellence, community spirit, and a deep love for the sport. Congratulations once again to Alison and to all involved in this outstanding event!

#### **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS - GIIAN KLAPOS**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Giian Klapos, who was nominated in the category of Young Volunteer of the Year at the 2025 City of Ryde Volunteer Recognition Awards. Giian's volunteer work with the TAFE NSW Adult Migrant English Program has made a tangible and lasting impact in our community. By supporting newly arrived migrants to improve their English and build confidence, Giian has helped to lay the foundations for stronger social inclusion and smoother settlement in the Ryde Electorate. Her efforts reflect the very best of our community spirit - quietly serving, mentoring, and empowering others. Our diversity enriches the Ryde Electorate, and volunteers like Giian play a crucial role in helping every resident, regardless of their background, feel welcome and supported. Her nomination for this award is a well-deserved recognition of her compassion, generosity, and commitment to others. To Giian, thank you. Your work has helped make Ryde not only more inclusive but more connected. I commend you on this achievement and encourage others to follow your example of service. Congratulations once again, Giian Klapos, and thank you for all you have done for our community.

#### **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS - HUNTER KLOWSS**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Hunter Klowss on his well-earned nomination for Young Volunteer of the Year at the 2025 City of Ryde Volunteer Recognition Awards. Hunter has generously volunteered his time and expertise to upgrade and revitalise aging computer systems at Marsden High School. His efforts have not only extended the life of critical learning tools but have also ensured greater digital access for students and teachers alike. In an era where technology is essential for education, Hunter's innovative thinking has delivered real value - saving money and enhancing educational equity. His contribution speaks to the kind of future we want in Ryde: one where resourcefulness and community spirit come together. Hunter is a standout example of the next generation of civic-minded young people stepping up and making a tangible difference. To be nominated is a tremendous honour, and I commend Hunter for his leadership, service, and commitment to improving outcomes for his school and our broader electorate. Congratulations, Hunter. Ryde is proud of you.

#### **VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION AWARDS - IWA (INDONESIAN WELFARE ASSOCIATION) SENIOR GROUP**

**Mr JORDAN LANE (Ryde)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating the IWA (Indonesian Welfare Association) Senior Group on their recent nomination for Group Volunteer of the Year at the 2025 City of Ryde Volunteer Recognition Awards. Since 2009, the IWA Senior Group has uplifted our community through tireless volunteer service. Their regular events, social programs and practical support have fostered deep cultural connections and improved the well-being of countless older Australians, particularly those of Indonesian heritage. Their presence has been a shining example of how grassroots volunteering can build stronger, more inclusive communities. By helping seniors remain active, engaged and socially connected, IWA Senior Group not only enhances lives but also reflects the spirit of service that defines Ryde. Their nomination is richly deserved and reflects the esteem in which they are held. To all members of the IWA Senior Group - thank you for all that you do. Your contribution continues to make Ryde a better, more caring place.

#### **MR NAGUIB KALDAS AO**

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to sincerely congratulate Mr Naguib Kaldas AO on his recent recognition in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours List. Nick has been appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia [AO] for his distinguished service to international law enforcement and counter-terrorism leadership. For over 30 years, Nick served with integrity, humility and a profound sense of service in the NSW Police Force across a range of commands. In 2007, he was appointed as Deputy Commissioner where he directed the Specialist Operations and Field Operations Commands until his retirement in 2016. Beyond his service in the NSW Police Force, Nick has worked across a range of United Nations humanitarian and security portfolios including as Chief of Investigations for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. In 2021, Nick was appointed Chair of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicides where he led a important inquiry into the impact of national service on our veterans. He currently serves as Chair of the Multicultural NSW Advisory Board and the NSW Premier's Religious Communities Advisory Council. I sincerely congratulate Nick on this well-deserved recognition. I thank him for his distinguished service. I wish him and his family all the best.

### TWEED SES UNITS

**Mr GEOFF PROVEST (Tweed)**—On behalf of the Tweed Electorate I offer my heartfelt thanks to the incredible volunteer members of our three NSW State Emergency Service [SES] units in the Tweed who have attended thousands of call outs since the start of this year. The Tweed Heads unit has 77 active members and between 1 January 2025 and 5 June 2025 they attended 1490 incidents; the Tweed Coast SES unit has 39 active members who attended 511 incidents in the same time frame and the Murwillumbah unit has 54 active members who have attended 517 incidents between the start of the year and 5 June. The majority of these call outs have been the result of the significant weather events we have endured in the Tweed this year, the biggest being ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. NSW SES volunteers dedicate their time and energy to helping others during times of great need and the Tweed is grateful and thankful for these selfless and inspiring volunteers. Thank you to these volunteers for your support for your community, we appreciate you.

### LUCY'S PROJECT

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate, I recognise the national advocacy organisation Lucy's Project, which recently celebrated its twelfth anniversary. Founded by Anna Ludvik in 2013 and named for Anna's late daughter, Lucy, Lucy's Project aims to improve the safety of people and animals experiencing domestic and family violence through collaboration, advocacy, research and education. In May this year, they held a briefing for NSW Parliamentarians that clearly highlighted the intersections between domestic violence prevention and solutions and other areas of policy including housing and justice system reform. The Newtown electorate office has had the pleasure of working with Lucy's Project's CEO Monique Dam in relation to rental reforms relating to pets, and I wanted to put on the record our appreciation for all the important work she and her team undertake every day. I wish to specifically acknowledge Alison Waters, Belinda Oppenheimer, and Natalie Liotta for their contributions. On behalf of the community I congratulate Lucy's Project on achieving this significant milestone, and look forward to continuing to work together for many more years to come.

### FRANCES RUSH

**Ms JENNY LEONG (Newtown)**—On behalf of the Newtown electorate I recognise Frances Rush, who recently concluded 10 years of service as the CEO of the Asylum Seekers Centre in Newtown. Over the past decade, Frances has led a team of dedicated staff and volunteers to expand the Centre's reach and more than double the support they provide to refugees and people seeking asylum. Between 2015 and 2025 the number of people supported by the Centre has grown from 1,744 to 4,500 – an incredible testament to the tireless work of Frances and her team. In a time where global tensions, skyrocketing costs of living, and increasingly concerning xenophobic rhetoric and domestic policy are combining to make life even harder for refugees and people seeking asylum, the Asylum Seekers Centre is more important than ever. On behalf of the inner west community and so many beyond, I thank Frances for her dedicated, compassionate, courageous leadership over the past decade and wish her all the best for whatever comes next. I also thank the team at the Asylum Seekers Centre for their work and look forward to continuing to support their operations as their local member.

### STRATHFIELD COUNCIL 140 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to sincerely congratulate Strathfield Council on its 140th Anniversary, including celebrations which were held on Monday 2 June 2025. Since 1885, Strathfield Council has been a pinnacle of community, shaping the local area, providing essential services, and developing a strong sense of civic participation amongst local residents. Over the many years, the Council has guided Strathfield's growth from a settlement of 600 to a thriving, multicultural hub. I acknowledge and sincerely congratulate Strathfield Mayor Cr John-Paul Baladi, Deputy Mayor Cr Benjamin Cai, and as well as its Councillors, Cr Sandy Reddy, Cr Esther Kim, Cr Matthew Blackmore, Cr Rory Nosworthy and Cr Karen Pensabene. I acknowledge and thank all staff at Strathfield Council, led by General Manager Mr Michael Mamo, who work to deliver the best possible outcomes for the Strathfield community each day. Congratulations to Strathfield Council on this remarkable milestone. The Council and the community have demonstrated immense resilience, dedication, and passion for their local Council. I look forward to seeing the great work Strathfield Council staff and Councillors will continue to do for our shared community, and I wish them all the very best.

### MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY NSW

**Ms STEPHANIE DI PASQUA (Drummoyne)**—I rise to acknowledge Muscular Dystrophy NSW, a not-for-profit organisation based in Concord that provides support for individuals living with neuromuscular conditions. Since its establishment in 1957, Muscular Dystrophy NSW has provided vital support services that aim to empower patients to live a life of their own choosing. Its programs and advocacy work has fostered confidence and independence for people living with neuromuscular conditions. I acknowledge Muscular Dystrophy NSW CEO Jess Henry, Relationship Manager Patrick Roberts and all members of the Muscular

Dystrophy Board and staff for their role in providing important support services and programs for our community, and for people across NSW. I sincerely thank every staff member and volunteer for their unwavering commitment to supporting those living with muscular dystrophy, and their families. It was a pleasure to meet with Jess and Patrick earlier this month and to meet the incredibly dedicated team at Muscular Dystrophy NSW, who are working to support children with programs and camps, connecting people and their families, and ensuring everyone has access to the information and knowledge to thrive. I wish Muscular Dystrophy NSW all the very best.

### **KAREN AND GEOFF WICKS – BUSHCARE CHAMPIONS**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—I would like to recognise the extraordinary efforts of Geoff and Karen Wicks, two dedicated local volunteers who have spent more than 25 years caring for a bush care site along the GreenWay corridor in Leichhardt. Nestled behind Loftus Street and adjacent to the Light Rail line, this site is a vital pocket of urban biodiversity. It was designated as a biodiversity offset site during the Light Rail construction and is now supported by Inner West Council. Geoff and Karen's tireless commitment has helped restore native vegetation, improve habitat, and protect local wildlife—including the installation of nesting boxes for microbats. Their work exemplifies the power of long-term community stewardship in protecting and enhancing our natural environment. I have had the pleasure of meeting with them recently to discuss how we can ensure this precious area of land is protected now and into the future. Thank you to Karen and Geoff for your decades of determined service to our environment.

### **COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—I'd like to acknowledge the organisers and participants of the recent Community Climate Action: Glebe, Pyrmont, Ultimo and Haymarket event, which brought together local residents, experts and advocates to drive grassroots solutions to the climate crisis, share knowledge, and discuss how the community can reduce our impact on the environment. Attendees heard from an inspiring lineup of speakers: Jasper Webster from Pingala, who is leading solar projects for public housing residents; Tina Zamanos, a local resident and volunteer now benefiting from this work; Clarence Slockee from Jiwah, who shared insights on Country-centred design and cultural burning practices; Charlie Rodrick and Genevieve Kelly from Solar Citizens, who brought information on the benefits of solar and batteries; and Dr Sarah Niklas from UTS's Institute for Sustainable Futures, who shared the Energy Ready Toolkit. The event was made possible by a dedicated organising team: Megan Fletcher, Libby and Ross Hindmarsh, Glen Powell from Wesley Mission, Nick Grinpukel from UTS, and by City of Sydney for their support through a community grant. Thank you for giving our community an opportunity to learn, connect and take real action.

### **PLACE LISTENING TOUR**

**Ms KOBI SHETTY (Balmain)**—I'd like to recognise the recent PLACE Listening Tour event held in Glebe and Ultimo — part of a national initiative led by PLACE: Partnerships for Local Action and Community Empowerment. This important work brings together communities, service providers, and government to explore local solutions to systemic issues and strengthen place-based, community-led approaches to change. The Sydney event, hosted by UTS, focused on listening closely to the experiences of local communities in Glebe, Ultimo, and surrounds — especially around housing, education, health, and social equity. The day began with a smoking ceremony led by Uncle Les and continued with thoughtful contributions from community leaders and service providers, including Mitra Gusheh from Glebe Youth Service and Oscar Sanchez from Uniting Harris Community Centre. Special thanks to Lisa Aitken and Joey Shaw from UTS for their dedicated work behind the scenes to bring the event together. The day was grounded in respect, connection, and collaboration — culminating in a tour of the area and a community BBQ in Glebe. Thank you to everyone involved. Listening to communities is the first step toward creating lasting and meaningful change.

### **ROSLYN FOGG OAM**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to congratulate Mrs Roslyn Fogg OAM, who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours for service to the Indigenous community of Sydney. Mrs Fogg has served as Chair of Muru Mittigar, a Dharug-led Aboriginal social enterprise based in Penrith, since 2010 and as a Board Member and Cultural Advisor since 2007. Muru Mittigar means "pathway to friends" and lives out that vision by delivering practical support and services to the community. These include financial counselling, financial literacy workshops, no-interest loans, and access to food relief through OzHarvest. The centre also helps client's complete government forms and connect with support services and provides Employee Assistance Program mental health support to staff and their families. This work has helped thousands of families in Western Sydney to avoid eviction, escape pay-day lenders, leave unsafe situations, and access employment and education. Mrs Fogg also serves on Indigenous advisory bodies for Hornsby Shire Council



and the City of Parramatta and has been involved in the establishment of the Dharug Traditional Owners Group. I commend her outstanding service to our community.

#### **VIDYASAGARAN HARAN RAMACHANDRAN OAM**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I would like to recognise Mr Vidyasagar Haran Ramachandran of Castle Hill, who was awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours for his service to the community through a range of organisations. A long-time Rotarian, Haran has made an extraordinary contribution over more than two decades of service, particularly through the Hills-Kellyville Rotary Club and Rotary District 9685. He has led major international service projects across India, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, and beyond—delivering medical aid, education infrastructure, and community development initiatives to those most in need. His leadership has also supported Rotary Australia World Community Service and Rotary Foundation committees at a district level. Beyond Rotary, Haran has dedicated many years to supporting Australia's Hindu community, including service on the committee of the Sydney Sri Ayyappa Swami Temple and as a life member of the Hindu Society of Victoria. Haran's passion for service was deepened following a life-threatening injury in 2009. Since then, he has turned personal hardship into purpose, channelling his recovery into a lifelong mission of service, compassion, and international goodwill. It is my honour to congratulate him on this well-deserved honour.

#### **HARRY TONG, AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS DEBATING TEAM**

**Mr MARK HODGES (Castle Hill)**—I rise to recognise Harry Tong, an outstanding constituent from West Pennant Hills, who has been selected to represent Australia at the 2025 World Schools Debating Championships [WSDC]. A student at Knox Grammar School, Harry was chosen as one of only five students nationwide selected for the Australian Schools Debating Team. His selection followed a stellar performance at the National Schools Debating Championships held in Sydney this May, where he helped lead the New South Wales team to victory. He was subsequently selected through a competitive national squad camp held in Melbourne. In July, Harry will travel to Mexico City for a preparatory international tournament, before competing at WSDC in Panama City from July 22 to August 1, 2025. Harry has received Best Speakers honours at the Asia Pacific Schools Debating Championships, the Australasian Schools Debate Championships, and the International Debating Championships. His talent and commitment to critical thinking have made him a standout in Australian debating. Harry's achievements are a source of pride for our local community. I commend him and his family, and I wish him continued success as he represents both West Pennant Hills and Australia on the world stage.

#### **WAUCHOPE HIGH CO-CAPTAINS REPRESENT AT STATE**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—Over the past month, Tahniesha Donovan and Josie Boys have showcased their incredible skills in two different football codes, Touch Football and Rugby League, at the highest level of school sport in NSW. The dynamic duo co-captained the North Coast Open Girls Touch Football team at the CHS Selection Trials in Sydney. Their leadership, skill, and commitment stood out across the tournament, and both girls gave themselves a strong shot at CHS selection. While they narrowly missed out this time due to the fierce level of competition, their efforts did not go unnoticed. Representing the North Coast in such a tough field is no small feat, and their performances reflected the quality of athletes Wauchope continues to produce. Adding to her already impressive sporting resume, Josie Boys also took the field for the Northern NSW Open Girls Rugby League team at the CHS trials in Wollongong. What makes Josie's achievement even more remarkable is that she's now the first Wauchope High School student to reach this level in Rugby League since the trials began three years ago. They've done themselves, their families and their school proud.

#### **A BEACON OF PRIDE AMONGST CHAOS**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—As many of you know, many businesses in the Kempsey CBD were devastated during the March 2025 floods. It was a time of immense challenge, loss, and rebuilding. But amidst that chaos, one business gave me a moment of unexpected pride in a difficult time. During the first parliamentary sitting week, I wasn't able to attend in person. But by the second week, I made it to the chamber and finally into the members' dining room. Browsing the usual menu didn't excite me much, so I turned to the Members' Special. The moment I glanced at the page; a smile spread across my face. "Milly Hill Roasted Lamb Rack." Milly Hill is a proud local butcher in the heart of Kempsey. Despite being severely impacted by the floods losing fridges, equipment, and suffering extensive damage they managed to save all their meat and produce before the water hit. Through determination and sheer grit, the Milly Hill team still got their quality produce to Parliament House. It was a proud reminder of our small communities, strength, and resilience, reaching far and wide.

#### **BELLINGER VALLEY NORTH BEACH SLSC SUCCESS**

**Mr MICHAEL KEMP (Oxley)**—The Bellinger Valley North Beach Surf Life Saving Club has wrapped up a powerhouse season, celebrating a year marked by massive growth, tireless volunteer dedication, and

impressive competitive achievements. At their annual presentation night in Mylestom, the spirit of the club was on full display, a tight-knit team of locals stepping up to volunteer. With 54 qualified patrolling members now spread across four dedicated teams, the club is stronger than ever. A major highlight of the year was the club's hosting of the 2025 North Coast Branch Surf Life Saving Carnival, quickly dubbed the "carnival of the decade". It drew competitors and supporters from across NSW and showcased the club's capacity to deliver not only safety on the sand but high level surf sports as well. This is what community looks like, people giving their time, energy and passion because they care. They care about their beaches, about their neighbours, and about setting an example for the next generation. And because of that, the Bellinger Valley North Beach Surf Life Saving Club is thriving. Well done.

#### **CAPELLA NSW CRICKET TEAM**

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety)**—I would like to acknowledge and thank the Capella NSW Cricket team, for recently inviting me to an event they held in Campsie, prior to participating in the Oceania Nepali Sports Meet event in Perth. I would like to particularly thank Bikram Dahal of Capella Cleaning Services and the Capella NSW cricket team for organising the event, and also Binod Bahadur Kunwar and Karan Shrestha. It was a great event, and I was very happy to speak with the players of the Capella NSW Cricket team who worked incredibly hard to be selected for the Oceania Nepali Sports Meet event and were all very excited. Their selection is a testament to their experience, skill, hard work, and passion. The Oceania Nepali Sports Meet event is a wonderful event, exhibiting the best of the Nepali community in Australia. Cricket is a great sport, much loved in Australia and Nepal. I am glad the Capella NSW team were able to participate in the event, representing not only themselves, but also our local community. The Capella NSW team made the finals and finished as runner-up. They should be very proud of their achievements.

#### **TRIBUTE TO JELTJE JANSEN-BUIJTENDORP AND THE 1ST MT COLAH / MT KURING-GAI SCOUT GROUP**

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)**—I ask the House to join me in recognising Jeltje Jansen-Buijtendorp – affectionately known as Jellybean – who is stepping down as Group Leader of the 1st Mt Colah / Mt Kuring-gai Scout Group after more than a decade of dedicated service. Jellybean joined the 1st Mt Colah / Mt Kuring-gai Scout Group in 2012 with her children, Kai and Gwyneth. Since then she has served as a Cub Leader, Scout Leader, and most recently Group Leader. Over the past 13 years, her leadership, energy, and unwavering dedication has helped the Scout Group to thrive and inspired dozens of young people she led during that time. Her highlights as part of the Group include the 2017 Cuboree, the 2024 Australian Jamboree in Maryborough, and a particularly memorable Easter Camp where the Group proudly brought home a trophy for the first time. Thank you Jellybean for your outstanding service and the lasting impact you leave on the Hornsby Scouting community.

#### **KING'S SCOUT AWARD – ALYSSA EDEN**

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Alyssa Eden of 1st Hornsby Heights Scout Group on achieving the prestigious King's Scout Award, the highest honour a Venturer Scout can receive. Alyssa has been a member of the group since the age of 8. Since then, she has earned peak awards in Cubs, Scouts, and now Venturers, with each being a testament to her leadership, and determination. Alyssa exemplifies the values of resilience, initiative, and service that the King's Scout Award represents. In her pursuit of this milestone she learnt to Whitewater Kayak, participated in Hornsby Gang show, was a Unit Leader and achieved her Cert 2 in Workplace Skills and Outdoor Recreation. For her required Adventurous Journey, Alyssa led a six-day expedition through Tasmania, completing the renowned Three Capes Track. This is a very impressive achievement which caps off the 519 kilometres she has hiked and 95 nights she has camped in her scouting experience. I'm sure Alyssa will continue to be an outstanding Scout in her next chapter as a Rover with 2nd Normanhurst Rover Unit. Congratulations Alyssa on this achievement and thank you for your ongoing contribution to the Hornsby community.

#### **IZZY GOMEZ – MATILDAS DEBUT**

**Mr JAMES WALLACE (Hornsby)**—I ask the House to join me in congratulating Mt Kuring-gai soccer star Isabel Gomez, who made her debut with the Matildas earlier this month. Izzy joined the squad in front of over 25,000 fans in Canberra, playing her part in the emphatic 4-1 win against Argentina. Izzy's success follows an exceptional season with the Central Coast Mariners in the A-League women Competition. Izzy scored 7 goals during the season including the winning goal in the 2025 Grand Final, which led to her being awarded the Player of the Match. She is also already a favourite among soccer fans in Australia, having won the A-League Women's Fan Player of the Year in 2025. Izzy has maintained a strong connection to soccer in our area, having played for Mt Colah FC throughout her junior seasons. Today, alongside her A-League and national team commitments, she

continues to play for Northern Tigers FC in the National Premier Leagues NSW Women Competition. Congratulations Izzy – we can't wait to see where your sporting future takes you.

#### **ERIN LOWRY**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I'm so proud that Cranebrook local, Erin Lowry was named Trainee of the Year at the recent Department of Education's Western Sydney & Blue Mountains Regional Training Awards. Erin was acknowledged for her work as a stable hand. Erin was drawn to the intricate nature of equine genetics, completing Certificate III in Racing (Stablehand), and a double degree in Animal Science and Zoology achieving strong theoretical and practical aspects of animal care and welfare. "This training pathway further developed both my practical handling skills and knowledge of the industry to an advanced level. This course has provided me with a wealth of knowledge that has not only enhanced my understanding of horse welfare and care but has also made me a valuable staff member in the racing and stable environment. "Through hands-on training at Godolphin and in-depth study, I have developed advanced handling skills, allowing me to work confidently and competently with the best horses in the industry." Winners will represent their communities in their respective categories for the 2025 NSW Training Awards in September. These Awards recognise outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training sector, with this year marking the 70th anniversary for the awards.

#### **NBN FUNDRAISER**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I rise today to acknowledge and commend the outstanding efforts of the Nepean Business Network for their successful inaugural Casino Night Fundraiser in support of The Haven, Nepean Women's Shelter. Through the incredible generosity and collective goodwill of our community, an impressive total of \$57,631 was raised. These vital funds will directly assist The Haven in continuing their crucial work, providing safe accommodation and life-changing support services for women and children escaping domestic and family violence. This achievement would not have been possible without the unwavering support of event sponsors, including The Great Walk Foundation, Penrith City Council, Riverlands Therapy Services, Allianz Insurance, Elantis Premium Funding, MoneyQuest - Penrith, Tresami Managed IT Services, Stain Busters Carpet Cleaning & Pest Control, Hitchens Removals and Storage, 1st Choice Insurance Services, and Amity IT. Special thanks to The Tritones for their wonderful entertainment on the night. I also wish to acknowledge the generosity of those who participated in the auctions, raising an extraordinary \$17,700. The success of this event again demonstrates the strength, compassion, and unity of the Penrith community. My heartfelt thanks go to Julie Lonard, Secretary of the Nepean Business Network, and the entire team for another remarkable fundraiser.

#### **PANTHERS WOMEN'S INAUGURAL VICTORY**

**Ms KAREN McKEOWN (Penrith)**—I acknowledge the historic achievement of the inaugural Panthers Women's Rugby League team, who claimed an emphatic victory in their trial game, defeating the Dragons 32-4 at BEST Hub. This momentous occasion marks a new chapter for women's sport in our region. The Panthers women displayed exceptional talent, teamwork, and determination, setting the tone for an exciting Premiership season ahead. From Claudia Bush's precise playmaking to Abigayle Vakatawake's try-scoring brilliance, the team showcased skill and unity across the field. Players like Brooke Wilkins, Harmony Covacich, Chloe Palliser, and Danica Taitimu each contributed key moments that highlighted the depth and strength of this side. Their performance wasn't just dominant, it was inspiring. Importantly, this win is more than just a number on the scoreboard. It represents years of advocacy, investment, and growing momentum behind women's sport. The Panthers Women will become role models for the next generation of athletes, showing that opportunity, when met with talent and heart, can achieve incredible things. To every player, coach, and supporter: congratulations. Your dedication has made history. We look forward to cheering on as you continue your journey.

#### **MICHAEL BATE, AM**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I acknowledge and congratulate Michael Bate AM, President of Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club, who was appointed Member of the Order of Australia in this year's King's Birthday Honours. After more than 50 years of service to Surf Life Saving, Michael's leadership of Freshwater SLSC is commendable, and we are fortunate to have someone of his calibre at the helm of such a historic organisation. As a proven leader at Club, Branch, State and National levels, Michael has been a driving force behind the growth, professionalism and long-term stability of Surf Life Saving New South Wales. His work as a Director of Surf Sport and as a Board Member, aided by his business experience has helped shape the future of the movement and safeguard its financial sustainability. He is a Life Member of Freshwater SLSC, Surf Life Saving NSW and Surf Life Saving Australia, and a respected official who has overseen State and National championships with distinction. Michael's recognition is richly deserved. His sustained impact, both in and out of the water, has strengthened the Surf Life Saving both locally on the Northern Beaches, and across the State and country.

### **NORTH STEYNE SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB 118TH AGM**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, as North Steyne Surf Life Saving Club prepares to hold its 118th Annual General Meeting, I want to take this opportunity to recognise the club's incredible contribution to our community since its establishment in 1907. North Steyne SLSC is a beacon of dedication, courage, and service on the Northern Beaches. Its proud history reflects over a century of commitment to beach safety, lifesaving excellence, and fostering a vibrant community spirit. The club's members and volunteers are not only highly skilled lifesavers but also passionate locals who take on the roles of mentor, coach, and leader to the next generation of surf lifesavers as they pass through the ranks. The club's legacy is built on community and a steadfast commitment to protecting Sydney's most iconic beach. They support others by supporting each other. As proud Patron, I am honoured to work alongside the club's Executive and members as they continue this vital work. I look forward to attending the AGM on 20th July, to celebrate this important milestone and to acknowledge the exceptional service of North Steyne SLSC's dedicated volunteers.

### **FRESHWATER SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB 116TH AGM**

**Mr JAMES GRIFFIN (Manly)**—Mr Speaker, I would like to extend my warm congratulations to Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club on the occasion of its 116th Annual General Meeting. It is a great privilege to be Patron of this historic and much-loved club, and to be part of an organisation with such a rich legacy. Freshwater SLSC holds a special place in the history of Australian surf lifesaving and remains a vital part of our local community. All year round, the club's members commit their time, energy and skills to keeping Freshwater Beach safe while supporting the next generation of lifesavers through education, training and surf sports. It is a model of resilience, teamwork and community pride. I look forward to attending this year's AGM and continuing to work alongside President Michael Bate AM and the Club's executive, as well as the broader membership in the years ahead. Congratulations to the dedicated members and volunteers and all involved on this significant milestone and thank you for everything you do for the people of Freshwater and beyond.

### **BENDIGO ETTALONG 20TH BIRTHDAY**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—In the NSW Parliament, I'd like to congratulate Bendigo Bank Ettalong on the celebration of its 20-year birthday. I was honoured to join Community leaders from across the Peninsula at Ocean Beach Surf Club to celebrate this amazing milestone. It's been a fabulous history with staff and board members who have been there the whole time. From those early days where they were counting the stamps to save money with an increase to now over 3000 customers. Most importantly, Bendigo Bank is part of our community. They are family. They are one of us and we are one of them. As the big four continue to shut their doors across local communities, I encourage everyone to change banks to Bendigo as they give back to our community at a grassroots level. Thanks ever so much to the fabulous staff, past present and current directors, and the three managers over the 20 years – Toni, Peter, and Pat. The gorgeous Marie & Kim who have been there since the doors open, backed by Jackie, Julie, and Jess. Bendigo Ettalong is more than just a bank, it's part of the community. It's a part of you.

### **BRETT AND ANNA NEWCOMBE**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—A special thank you to two Central Coast heroes Brett and Anna Newcombe who have recently received a Pride of Workmanship award from Rotary Brisbane Water. The Newcombes have been recognised for their continuous and exceptional service in food distribution during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The Newcombes are founders of Mercy and Grace Ministries, which focuses on solving big issues such as food insecurity at a grassroots level. This organisation has become an essential resource for vulnerable families around the Coast. The Newcombes' unwavering dedication has not only provided countless meals to families in need, but they have also become an inspiration for others to start becoming more involved within our local community. Poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity are dire issues that have severely impacted our community. The Newcombes have exemplified how compassion and collaboration can offer support and hope for those in need. Their organisation has expanded beyond food distribution to offering educational opportunities and temporary accommodation to those experiencing homelessness. Anna and Brett's dedication to service is an inspiration to all and it is greatly inspiring to see people in our community come together to help those in need.

### **WORDS ON THE WAVES**

**Ms LIESL TESCH (Gosford)**—I was privileged to be part of the opening of the Words on the Waves Writers Festival, which celebrated its fifth year on the Central Coast with a new attendance record. Visitors were up 20 per cent on the previous year and the main program was sold out; a mark of the popularity and reach of the festival where words, ideas and culture were illuminated under this year's theme, burning bright. Held from 28 May to 1 June at venues across the Peninsula and Coast, the program featured such luminaries as Nikki

Gemmell, Jane Caro, Kate Grenville, Steve Vizard and Peter Grete. Of particular pride to festival organisers is the Book Launch Program, which showcased Central Coast writers at free events, with seven authors launching their works, up from three in the first year. As Parliamentary Secretary for Disability Inclusion, I am thrilled local author Casey Gray launched her Easy Read book, Lennie's Gift. Casey makes books for adults with intellectual disability so they can enjoy reading her stories about love, friendship and adventure. With such a diverse range of talent on the Coast it is no wonder the festival is making waves.

#### **MARGARET BATEMAN - HIDDEN TREASURE – HONOUR ROLL 2024**

**Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to recognise and honour rural women volunteers who give so much back to their communities here in the Mid North Coast. Margaret Bateman has been a member of and served in three organisations in the Port Macquarie district for close to thirty years each, a combined 90 years of membership and service. Marg is regularly described as a stalwart of the Zonta Club of Port Macquarie, the Port Macquarie Women's Golf Club, and of The Nationals party local branches. However, Margaret is much more than a member, Margaret is passionate about good administration of these organisations and in 2023-24, was the Secretary of all three. Her volunteering with Zonta Club of Port Macquarie has been her passion and has driven much activity to make a difference for women and girls, including assisting local girls through Zonta's young women in leadership award and the young indigenous woman award, fund raising for local women's organisations, the Birthing Kit Foundation of Australia and Zonta's international programs. I thank Margaret for her passion for getting in and getting things done to help these organisations.

#### **MACKILLOP COLLEGE OUTSTANDING SPORTING SUCCESS**

**Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to recognise the recent outstanding sporting success of many students at MacKillop College, Port Macquarie. It has been a bumper term with several students selected in either the NSW Combined Catholic Colleges team or NSW All Schools teams through their individual representative sporting pathway, truly outstanding results for students in a regional area. Congratulations goes to: Lily Mosely, Milla Swain, Arlia Morris - competing at the Australian Secondary Schools Rugby League Championships in Townsville. Ben Romer & Blake Collins - Basketball Team competing in Sydney. Oto Ryan – AFL competing in Albury and NSW All Schools under 15's on the Gold Coast. Indigo Duncan - Cross Country in Sydney. Cooper Dawson & Bianca Harrison – Swimming in Sydney. Lane Jordan - Open Girl's Cricket team in Sydney. Rocky Mann and Tobias Rowlett - U15 Rugby League Team in Sydney. Eddie Coombes - Golf Team in Forster and NSW All Schools Open's Golf Team in Dubbo. Tobias Toohey - Hockey Team in Newcastle. Bianca Harrison - NSW All Schools Swimming Team in Brisbane. The level of success is testament to the students' talent and determination to pursue their sporting aspirations.

#### **KAREN MCKAY - OAM**

**Mr ROBERT DWYER (Port Macquarie)**—I rise today to recognise an amazing Camden Haven local, Mrs Karen McKay, whose 40 years of dedication to early childhood education was honoured with an Order of Australia Medal [OAM]. When Karen first started at the St Joseph's Early Childhood Centre in 1980, it operated between 9am to 3pm, four days a week with 25 children. As the community needs evolved, so did the service, to operate five days a week, 7.30am to 5.30pm and caring for an ever-increasing number children. Karen's dedication to ensuring each child from the preschool was fully prepared for their next step in education was unwavering. Her goal was not only the child's academic readiness, but also their social and emotional growth. My three children attended St Joseph's and we appreciate the support Karen provided to us. Karen mentored our eldest daughter during her gap year working at the centre and she is now studying to become a teacher. Our community holds her leadership, care, and commitment in high regard. I'm honoured to congratulate Karen on receiving an OAM and thank her for her guiding generations of children in their formative years.

#### **METRO ASSIST - GALA DINNER REFUGEE WEEK CELEBRATION**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate the team from Metro Assist, who recently held their Gala Dinner as part of the Refugee Week 2025 celebrations. I would like to commend everyone involved in making this event such a success. The gala brought together community leaders, service providers and individuals from all walks of life to honour the experiences and contributions of refugees and asylum seekers in New South Wales. For decades, Metro Assist has supported newly arrived individuals and families through essential settlement services, education, employment pathways and advocacy. Their work is an example of the role community organisations play in helping people rebuild their lives to start afresh in New South Wales. I commend Metro Assist for hosting this special event and for continuing to support those who seek safety and opportunity in our state. Specifically, I would like to recognise CEO of Metro Assist, Nina Shahi, as well as Board Chair, Richard Wonders. Their efforts remind us of the importance of compassion and community, values that are at the heart of New South Wales.

**PROFESSOR MAX LU AO**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise to congratulate the new sixth Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Wollongong, Professor Max Lu AO. Professor Lu is an internationally recognised chemical engineer and nanotechnology researcher with over 35 years of experience in academic leadership, research and industry engagement. He has served as President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey in the UK since 2016, following senior leadership roles at the University of Queensland, including Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). He has a long-standing connection with UOW, having chaired a review of the University's Global Challenges initiative and receiving an Honorary Doctor of Science in 2018 for his outstanding contributions to chemical engineering and higher education. Educators like Professor Lu are so important to shaping the future of our universities, whilst also driving innovation and inspiring the next generation of students and researchers. UOW is the choice of Universities for many of my local constituents, so I have no doubt that Professor Lu will serve them all well in this role. Once again, I congratulate him on this appointment and look forward to seeing his leadership guide the University over the coming years.

**SLEEPING ROUGH IN RIVERWOOD WITH GEORGES RIVER LIFE CARE**

**Mr MARK COURE (Oatley)**—Speaker, I rise today to recognise the team from Georges River Life Care, who are hosting their Sleeping Rough event in Riverwood on 27 June, to raise funds for people facing homelessness, domestic violence and financial hardship. This is something that I am incredibly proud to be taking part in again this year, as I have done for a few years now, as I join more than 100 other people who have signed up to sleep rough in Riverwood for the evening. Over the past 12 years, Georges River Life Care has raised over \$250,000, which has been used to fund emergency relief, legal aid and outreach programs in the local area. Thus far, all participants have raised more than \$15,000, which is a fantastic effort from everyone involved. I hope that this number continues to grow in the leadup to the event. I would like to thank Chairman Andrew Scipione AO and CEO, Karen Power and the entire GRLC team, for all the fantastic work they are doing in this space. I am looking forward to joining everyone on 27 June!

**TESSA WHITTLE**

**Mr ALEX GREENWICH (Sydney)**—Today I pay tribute to the outstanding contribution of Teresa Whittle, who died on 24 May. Tessa was working as a social worker when she met City of Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore. They both impressed each other and when Tessa retired, she volunteered in Clover's office answering phones, arranging mail-outs and filing. She was professional and meticulous – the only person trusted to do the filing – and was considered a member of the team. I was touched when she agreed to continue in the office after I became Member for Sydney and quickly saw her competence. She was always fun to be around and had interesting stories from her life in the UK, India and early years in Australia, revealing inner strength and a rebellious spirit. Tessa also volunteered her services as a Justice of Peace once a week. Tessa will be remembered as intelligent, kind and charming. Together with current and former staffers Tammie, Roy and Leanne, we thank Tessa for her dedication to community and send our condolences to her family.

**NORTHERN BEACHES LOCAL BUSINESS AWARDS 2025**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On 11 June 2025 we marked the Northern Beaches Local Business Awards. The awards bring together our community. In particular, small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities and have become a part of the social fabric. The innovation, creativity, resilience, and friendliness of our local businesses is what makes them great. I am proud to recognise the great work of local businesses across the Northern Beaches and congratulate all award recipients. I recognise the businesses in the Davidson electorate that were award recipients or finalists – Hello Plumbing Belrose winning Outstanding Plumbing Services award, Zimmer Biomet Australia Belrose winning Most Inclusive Employer award, Energize Health Club Frenchs Forest winning Outstanding Fitness services, Acrotec Belrose being a finalist for Outstanding Professional Services, and Adairs Belrose being a finalist for Outstanding Home Style/Furnishings. Thank you for all the work that you do in our local community.

**MARIAN STREET THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—Marian Street Theatre For Young People [MSTYP] is a key feature of our performing arts community. MSTYP is one of the oldest continually operating children theatres in Australia. Since, being inaugurated in 1969 MSTYP has provided our young people with the ability to explore their creative thinking, collaboration, and imagination in a fun-filled environment. Over 50 years, the MSTYP has completed over 4,000 performances to 300,000 people. The over 1,000 students that attend MSTYP's weekly classes, workshops and holiday programs enjoy the experience to develop their craft. They run drama classes, public speaking workshops, stage combat, Shakespeare workshops, musical theatre, and ensemble classes. I recognise the staff Jessie Lancaster, Isobel Ellis, Fay Ji, teaching staff and committee members Giselle Beale and Ashleigh

Ho. Thank you for your support of the young people in our community that have a passion for performing arts and drama. I look forward to continuing to work with Marian Street Theatre For Young People to ensure they remain a key figure of our performing arts community.

#### **NORTH SHORE MUMS SMILES2U: 10 YEARS IN 2025**

**Mr MATT CROSS (Davidson)**—On Saturday 26 July 2025, we celebrate 10 years of North Shore Mums Smiles2U. They provide comfort and support to parents, carers, and children during their time in hospital. Over the past decade they have proudly provided care packages, smiles bags, cancer care packs, and comfort to patients across 16 hospitals. I encourage residents in our community to support this wonderful charity by donating funds or gifts, workplace fundraising, volunteer to pack or handout packs, or participate in their upcoming fundraising events. I recognise Founder & Managing Director Michelle Key, Director Sarah Bates, Marketing Coordinator & Administrator Natalie Miles, Director - Secretary/Hope Bag Coordinator Helena McMahon, and Events & Finance Michaela Doyle. Thank you for your commitment to our community and working to make a positive difference. Congratulations on your 10-year milestone and I look forward to continuing to work with you long into the future.

#### **BRIAN MONK**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Brian Monk, from Haywards Bay, who has received a service award for his 35 plus years of volunteer service to Warrigal. Mr Monk was appointed as director in 1988 and then became Vice Chairperson of the Board. Brian is passionate about volunteering, having been involved in various community groups and committees over the years. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to acknowledge Brian's years of service and dedication to Warrigal, a remarkable achievement.

#### **DR JUDY MULLAN**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Dr Judy Mullan who has received a service award for her 25 plus years of volunteer service to Warrigal. Since her appointment as a director in 2000, Judy has made a profound impact through her dedication and leadership. As Director of CHRISP, Deputy Director of ISPRN, and an academic at the University of Wollongong's School of Medicine, she has tirelessly championed health research and education. With qualifications in Pharmacy, the Arts, and a PhD in Public Health, Judy brings vast knowledge and compassion to her roles. A registered pharmacist and Fellow of the Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia, she now generously volunteers with Warrigal aged care as a Member of the Care Governance Committee. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to acknowledge Judy's years of service and dedication to Warrigal, a remarkable achievement.

#### **JOAN BURKE**

**Ms ANNA WATSON (Shellharbour)**—I would like to acknowledge the achievement of Joan Burke who has received a service award for her 25 years of volunteer service to Warrigal. Joan Burke is a dedicated Warrigal Volunteer who has worked tirelessly for Warrigal. Joan is exceptional in her generosity and commitment to enhancing the lives of Warrigal residents and clients and she provides invaluable support and positively impacts upon the lives of older people in our communities. On behalf of the Shellharbour electorate, I would like to acknowledge Joan's years of service and dedication to Warrigal, a remarkable achievement.

#### **KOOROORA TENNIS CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—It was a pleasure to join in the celebrations at Kooroora Tennis Club in Roseville to mark the renewal of its 10-year lease and the resurfacing of its courts. Established in 1948, Kooroora has long been a vibrant part of our local community. Its name—meaning "happy meeting place"—perfectly captures the spirit of this much-loved club. Thanks and congratulations go to Club President Helen Ackerman, the committee, the hardworking tender team and the many dedicated members and friends who contribute to the club's success. Their efforts have ensured Kooroora remains a welcoming and inclusive place for players of all ages and levels. It was also great to see support from Willoughby City Council, including Mayor Tanya Taylor and Councillor Angelo Rozos, who joined the celebration. As Patron of the club, I am proud to recognise this milestone and look forward to another decade of tennis, connection and community at Kooroora.

#### **VITA HEALTH CLUB**

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—On 10 June, I had the pleasure of visiting Willoughby's newest health and wellness destination—Vita Health Club on Penshurst Street. Founded by local resident Damien Giardina, Vita is more than just a gym—it's a thoughtfully designed community space that blends fitness, recovery and connection. From the state-of-the-art indoor and outdoor training areas to the infrared sauna, Odin ice bath and the welcoming Café Vita, every detail reflects Damien's attention to detail and commitment to holistic health and

community wellbeing. It was great to meet Damien and see firsthand how much care and effort he's invested into creating a space where people feel supported and inspired. The club's focus on inclusivity, personalised coaching and community engagement is already making a positive impact. Congratulations to Damien and the entire team at Vita Health Club. It's always exciting to welcome a new small business to Willoughby—especially one that's helping locals feel stronger, healthier and more connected.

#### CHINESE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL 10TH ANNIVERSARY

**Mr TIM JAMES (Willoughby)**—I was honoured to attend the 10th Anniversary Service of the International Chinese School, held at St Thomas' Anglican Church in North Sydney on 1 April 2025. Since opening in 2015 with just eight Kindergarten students in a church hall in Chatswood, the school has grown into a thriving and faith-filled learning community on its own campus in St Leonards, now home to over one hundred students. The anniversary celebration was a moving and joyful occasion, highlighting the school's commitment to academic excellence, Christian values and cultural inclusion. It was a privilege to hear reflections from students past and present, witness heartfelt musical performances and celebrate the vision of leaders like Principal Alastair Walker and Board Chair Alban Wong Too-Yuen. Congratulations to the entire school community—staff, students, parents and supporters—on this important milestone. Your growth and impact over the past decade have been remarkable, and I look forward to seeing the school continue to flourish in the years ahead.

#### KATAPULT DANCE

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—Katapult Performing Arts is a wonderful dance studio in Avalon that is training the next generation of talented performers from Pittwater. Led by passionate and dedicated owner Katja Davis-Raiss, Katapult is more than a place to learn dance - it is an important pillar of the Avalon community. Katapult encourages young people of all ages to explore their individuality and build confidence through the performing arts. Katapult offers a broad range of classes including RAD ballet, jazz, lyrical, contemporary, hip hop and musical theatre. Through this diverse program, Katja and her team of talented teachers foster an environment where inclusivity, encouragement and artistic expression thrive. Their commitment to nurturing self-expression and teamwork is evident in every class, performance and studio interaction. Whether students aspire to dance professionally or simply find joy in movement, Katapult ensures that every child feels valued and supported. The studio plays a vital role in the cultural life of Avalon Beach, contributing to the wellbeing and development of young people and strengthening community connections. I commend Katja and the entire Katapult team for their tireless dedication to supporting the performing arts facilitating a positive impact on the Pittwater community.

#### EMMA OLSON-KEATING

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—I would like to congratulate the female winner of the annual Janice Mason Memorial Swim, Emma Olson-Keating. This great swim takes place at Mona Vale beach in winter where hundreds of brave swimmers descend, ready to face the cold water. While we had some wonderful winter sun for the event, there is no doubt that the water the swimmers competed in was icy and challenging. Winning during these conditions is a true testament to Emma's skill. Emma demonstrated exceptional endurance, resilience and sportsmanship completing the 1-kilometre swim at a time of 16 minutes 23 seconds. This is an outstanding achievement that Emma should be very proud of. This special event is organised by Friends of Bongin Bongin and honours the memory of Janice Mason. Janice was like so many others in Pittwater, often braving the cold ocean water early each morning with a group of friends. I would like to congratulate Emma and all those who participate in the memorial swim, it's a reflection of the true spirit of Pittwater and a wonderful community event.

#### ANDREW AURICCHIO

**Ms JACQUI SCRUBY (Pittwater)**—Since 1979, Lucky and Pep's Pizzeria has been a cornerstone of our Newport community. They proudly serve delicious, handcrafted pizza and pasta that help to bring people together. For over four decades, Andrew Auricchio has cooked the pizza that our community loves so much. Through this time, Andrew has remained committed to the traditions that make the pizza at Lucky and Pep's so special, using only the freshest ingredients and time-honoured recipes. Andrew has been part of countless meal creations and is known for his utmost care to ensure that the customer is satisfied on every occasion. He enjoys seeing how happy the food at Lucky and Pep's makes his customers feel. Andrew knows that the loyal Newport customers are the heart of the business and he has been incredibly grateful for their continued support over the years. I'd like to thank Andrew for all his hard work to make the community of Newport so happy and I'd like to wish him all the best in his retirement.

#### MR ANDREW WARDEN – KINGS BIRTHDAY HONOURS

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vaucluse)**—I would like to recognise Mr Andrew Warden AM for being awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2025 Kings Birthday Honours List. Mr Warden received this



honour for significant service to cancer health and research, and to the community. Mr Warden has been involved with Leukaemia Foundation, Lymphoma Australia, Rare Cancers Australia, Cancer Institute NSW, and the International Waldenström's Macroglobulinemia Foundation (IWMF). Separately to his work in cancer health and research, Mr Warden has been a Member of the NSW Rural Fire Service since 2007. In 2021 he was recognised with the NSW Premier's Bushfire Emergency Citation. On behalf our community, I extend our sincerest congratulations to Mr Warden on this worthy recognition.

#### **ANTHONY SURTEES AM – KINGS BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vacluse)**—I would like to recognise Mr Anthony Surtees AM for being awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in the 2025 Kings Birthday Honours List. Mr Surtees received this honour for significant service to the support and advocacy of technological and charitable entrepreneurialism. Having held senior positions at Yahoo!, Laava, Zeetings and Brandscreen, Mr Surtees has made an immense contribution to our community and to industry. Mr Surtees has also been the Chair of the Entrepreneurs Programme Committee, since 2013 for the Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources. He is the President of the Stanford Australia Association and was the Vice President from 2000-2019. He has also been a Director of the Menzies Foundation since 2018. On behalf our community, I extend our sincerest congratulations to Mr Surtees on this worthy recognition.

#### **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR GRAHAM NEWSTEAD AO – KINGS BIRTHDAY HONOURS**

**Ms KELLIE SLOANE (Vacluse)**—I would like to recognise Associate Professor Graham Newstead for being awarded an Officer of the Order of Australia in the 2025 Kings Birthday Honours List. Associate Professor Newstead received this award for his distinguished service to colorectal surgical medicine and training, to bowel cancer awareness, education and prevention, and to professional societies. Associate Professor Newstead was first made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2005. He has been a Medical Director of Bowel Cancer Australia since 2014, Chair of the Bowel Cancer Foundation since 2010, and Chair of the International Council of Coloproctology since 1990. Having practised at Prince of Wales Hospital throughout his life, and as the former Head of Colorectal Surgery, Associate Professor Newstead has had an immense contribution to our community. On behalf our community, I extend our sincerest congratulations to Associate Professor Newstead on this worthy recognition.

#### **STAR STRUCK**

**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 congratulate everyone involved in Star Struck 2025 for delivering the biggest and most successful show yet. Remixed Volume 33 brought together over 4200 students, more than 500 teachers, and four completely sold-out performances at the Newcastle Entertainment Centre. It was a truly unforgettable celebration of talent, teamwork and the power of public education. Presented by the NSW Department of Education, Star Struck is an annual performing arts showcase that gives students from across Newcastle, the Hunter and Central Coast regions the chance to shine. From Kindergarten to Year 12, students wowed audiences with incredible performances in dance, drama and music. Star Struck is more than just a show. It provides meaningful opportunities for students to build confidence, develop new skills and share their passion for the arts. It brings together young people from all kinds of schools and backgrounds to create something truly special. A huge thank you to every student, teacher, parent and supporter who made this year's event such a success. Your hard work and enthusiasm are what make Star Struck so magical. Congratulations to all the schools who took part.

#### **COUGHLAN'S SWIM CENTRE**

**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 congratulate Coughlan's Swim Centre, which this month is proudly celebrating 30 years of service to the Lake Macquarie community. Since officially opening its doors on June 3, 1995, Coughlan's Swim Centre has been a place where thousands of local families have introduced their children to the water in a safe, welcoming and community-focused environment. Founded by Leanne and Peter Coughlan with the support of Les and Dorothy Lazarus, the centre began with the simple idea of creating a small learn-to-swim pool. Over the years, that vision has grown into a thriving institution that now welcomes approximately 3000 children each week. The centre's strong community values have remained at its core, teaching multiple generations of families the life-saving skill of swimming. In recent years, Leanne and Peter have begun stepping back from day-to-day operations, with family members Hayley, Michael, Katie and Tyler proudly continuing the legacy and taking on greater leadership roles. A special 30th anniversary celebration was held this month to mark this incredible milestone. Congratulations to everyone at Coughlan's Swim Centre on reaching this achievement and thank you for your ongoing commitment to our community.

### NOVATRIALS

**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 acknowledge the exciting arrival of Novatrials, a \$5 million clinical trials facility set to open in Charlestown this August. This is a significant milestone for the region, bringing world-class medical research and new healthcare opportunities to our community. Novatrials will operate a phase 1 clinical trials facility, the first of its kind in Newcastle. It will include 31 inpatient beds, an on-site laboratory, pharmacy, infusion lounge, consulting rooms and an infectious disease room. The site will also support phase 2 and 3 clinical trials, testing new medicines and therapies with the potential to change lives. Importantly, Novatrials will provide early access to new treatments for patients in our region and help retain and attract top clinical researchers, scientists and industry partners. The facility is expected to create around 50 local jobs and support meaningful career pathways for graduates from the University of Newcastle and other institutions. This is an extremely important step forward for local healthcare, research and innovation. I look forward to seeing the impact Novatrials will have on our region and congratulate all those involved in bringing this project to life.

### WING COMMANDER STUART BRIESE, CSM

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to Wing Commander Stuart Briese for his recognition in the 2025 Kings Birthday Honours. Stuart was awarded the Conspicuous Military Medal for his outstanding achievement in advancing Australian Defence Force space power through contributions to space domain foundational thinking, education and training. Starting as an Air Battle Manager in 1992, he has served in several roles within the Australian Defence and Royal Australian Air forces, totalling to over 30 years. As space operations advisor to HQ 41 Wing, Stuart strives to contribute to the development of Australia's civil, commercial and defence space enterprises. Stuart's dedication to advancing Australian Defence Force space power is truly commendable, and I look forward to seeing the incredible impact he will continue to make.

### SISTER CARMEL MOORE, OAM

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Congratulations to Sister Carmel Moore for her recognition in the 2025 King's birthday Honours for her continued service to the Catholic Church of Australia. Sr Carmel spent more than three decades in several roles within secondary teaching as a Sister of St Joseph, before founding the Living Waters Meditation Centre at The Junction. The program has been running for almost 30 years, with about 800 participants taking time to connect with their true selves in the centre's weekly meditations. Now 90, Sr Carmel has handed over administration of the centre, but is still actively involved in its activities. I thank Sr Carmel for her dedication to the Catholic Church, education and community.

### MICHAEL SCANLON

**Mr TIM CRAKANTHROP (Newcastle)**—Michael Scanlon has devoted many years as a journalist to the Newcastle Sun and Newcastle Herald as a weekly history columnist and published author. At this year's King's Birthday Honours, Michael was awarded Medal of Order for his service to the media as a journalist, and to community history. His history column, operating for almost 25 years, is dedicated to salvaging forgotten stories of Newcastle's past. In 2006 he was honoured with a lifetime achievement award for his consistent achievement and devotion to journalism. With 60 years of devotion to the community and history of Newcastle, Michael is truly worthy of this medal.

### HUNTERS HILL P & C

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to recognise and honour the amazing and dedicated work of some of the Executive and Convenors of the Hunters Hill Public P & C who tirelessly work to create a better school environment for students and teachers alike. Performing Arts Convenor Rachel Evans who has built up the music program from 30 kids and three tutors to a program which now has over 100 students involved, 16 tutors and 6 ensembles. Canteen Convenor Linda Scocca who took over the canteen and completely overhauled it, bringing it in line with new safety and health standards, allowing the canteen to go on to be a highly used resource which also makes a good profit for the P&C. Secretary Jennifer Edwards who has over many years undertaken many roles quietly behind the scenes that have enhanced the school. Events Convenor Odysse Christou who has brought boundless energy to our significant calendar of events, enhancing the school community and also raising substantial funds for the P&C to invest in the school. I commend their efforts to this House and express the gratitude of our Hunters Hill community for those efforts.

### OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE, GLADESVILLE PARENTS AND CITIZENS EXECUTIVE

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to recognise and honour the amazing and dedicated work of the Our Lady Queen of Peace, Gladesville Parents & Friends Executive who tirelessly work to

create a better school environment for students and teachers alike. I would like to acknowledge the President Amy Satara, Vice President Christina Maldjian, Secretary Ben Horne and the Treasurer Darius Panasko. I commend their efforts to this House and express the gratitude of our Gladesville community for those efforts.

#### **HUNTERS HILL HIGH PARENTS AND CITIZENS EXECUTIVE**

**Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS (Lane Cove)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to recognise and honour the amazing and dedicated work of the Hunters Hill High Parents & Citizens Executive who tirelessly work to create a better school environment for students and teachers alike. I would like to acknowledge the President Rachael Hurrell, the Vice Presidents Phil Hurrell and Darshini Heaney, Treasure Genevieve Pham, Secretary Craig Mitchell, Executive Members Inbal Luft and Jennifer Perez, Events Coordinator Jo-Hanna Adam and Communications Coordinator Samantha Maas. I commend their efforts to this House and express the gratitude of our local community for those efforts.

#### **SALLY GOULD - PARAMEDIC**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise the excellent work of Sally Gould, a dedicated paramedic of 14 years. She has been working as a paramedic at Kogarah station, one of the busier parts of Sydney, regularly managing a high volume of calls from diverse patients in variety of situations. She was drawn to the fast-paced and unpredictable nature of the job, where you never know what will be in store next. For Sally, enormous job satisfaction comes from saving lives and providing end of life care, giving people comfort and dignity, no matter what they are going through. She is appreciative of the medical services now available, as earlier in her career, paramedics would have to either decide that the patient didn't need assistance or take them straight to the hospital. In modern times, there is variety of services that may be suitable to a patient, Sally now having the option not to take the patient to hospital and instead link them with other more suitable services so they can stay at home. I commend Sally Gould in her 14 years as a paramedic and applaud her for her service to the wider community.

#### **RACHEL FITZHARDINGE - WINGED CREATURES EXHIBITION**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise the works of Rachel Fitzhardinge, who hosted an excellent exhibition of local wildlife in the Winged Creatures Exhibition at Hurstville Museum and Gallery. Rachel has always been fascinated by natural ecosystems and the flora and fauna that inhabit them with her photos, capturing the beautiful and intriguing behaviours that animals can exhibit. Ms Fitzhardinge's dedication extends to waiting hours for a single photo that is taken in a fraction of a second. She can encounter native insects which she races to photograph before they fly off. While she documents these creatures, she gets to know the wonderful locals in an area and learns the local knowledge and behaviours of native creatures. The photographer also works with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and the National Parks Association of NSW, contributing to research, wildlife conservation and habitat protection. The result of this is a comprehensive and high-quality exhibition that accurately depicts various wildlife in their native habitats, showcasing their natural traits. I would like to recognise the works of Rachel Fitzhardinge who hosted an exhibition of local wildlife in the Winged Creatures Exhibition at Hurstville Museum and Gallery.

#### **KINGSGROVE COMMUNITY CAFE FOOD VAN**

**Mr CHRIS MINNS (Kogarah—Premier)**—I would like to recognise the Kingsgrove Community Café Food Van and the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre for its support for vital programs and services. The Café Food Van is operated by the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre which is a registered charity that provides many different types of support programs for grandparents, parents and children including first aid training, playgroups for children and senior support groups. 100% of the Community Café's profits goes towards funding the support programs while also providing the community with cheap food, drinks, coffee and desserts. The Café also provides catering and hosts cultural events while also setting up near schools to provide treats for children and coffees for parents waiting for their kids. The Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre uses the Kingsgrove Community Café Food Van in many of the events it hosts bringing the community together to try multicultural food and support people in need. Once again, I would like to recognise the Kingsgrove Community Café Food Van and the Kingsgrove Community Aid Centre for its support for vital programs and services.

#### **BOB TRESEDER**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge the life of Robert "Bob" Treseder of Narromine, who passed away recently at the age of 87. Born in Narromine, he spent his early schooling years attending Narromine Public School, before finishing his schooling at Manly Public. Bob was destined to return to Narromine to be part of the renowned family business, Narromine Hardware, working alongside his father. What began as a job quickly became a passion, working in the store and completing his building apprenticeship through the business and honing his skills in bookkeeping and signwriting. Never driven by money,

but service, he took pride in knowing every customer's name and job. Deeply community-minded, Bob joined the local fire brigade in 1966 and went on to serve for forty-seven years. He was always ready to answer the call, day, or night, without hesitation. In 1985, he was proudly appointed Deputy Captain. Throughout his career he was awarded numerous NSW Fire Brigade medals, including those for good conduct, long service, and national clasps. His commitment to the community was further honoured in 2013 when he was named Narromine's Citizen of the Year. Vale Bob Treseder, thank you for your service.

#### **CELIA EDWARDS**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge local Trangie resident, Celia Edwards, who has been awarded life membership of the St Vincent de Paul Society. Affectionately known as "Vinnies" the Society provides vital services within our communities, including being a familiar part of the retail landscape to serving as a first point of contact for those seeking emergency assistance. Celia is a long time volunteer with Vinnies at the Trangie store. She devotes much of her time to ensuring that residents can shop locally, with access to affordable, quality, pre-loved clothing, and household goods. St Vincent de Paul Regional President, Anne Burns, presented Celia with her life membership badge during a special Volunteers Week celebration held at Trangie's Imperial Hotel. Celia, thank you for your commitment and dedication to not only Vinnies but also the Trangie community. Without passionate individuals like yourself who are devoted to giving back, these fundamental services would not be accessible.

#### **CALLUM HUTCHISON**

**Mr DUGALD SAUNDERS (Dubbo)**—Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Narromine teen, Callum Hutchison, who has been named a finalist in the 2025 Western NSW Regional Training Awards in the School-Based Apprentice/Trainee of the Year category. Callum is currently undertaking a sports traineeship with Creating Chances, an organisation dedicated to empowering young people through the power of sport. As part of his traineeship, he is completing a Certificate III in Sport, Aquatics and Recreation. In addition to his traineeship, Callum proudly serves as a School Captain at Narromine High where he demonstrates strong leadership and a passion for making a positive impact. A wonderful role model for not only his peers, but the wider community, Callum is already making a remarkable impact. He plays an active role in delivering weekly rugby and resilience building sessions through programs like Tackle Life, which is a collaboration with NSW Rugby. On Friday afternoons, you'll find Callum sharing his time and energy with a group of preschoolers at Banana Club, helping them discover the joy of rugby, building confidence, and most importantly have fun. Congratulations on this achievement Callum! It is well deserved acknowledgement of your dedication, compassion and leadership.

#### **BRAD NICOLL**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Brad Nicoll ran 27 laps (1.6km per lap, making 43.2km) of Lambton Park on 21 June starting around 8am, raising funds via MND NSW for the support and education of people and their families living with Motor Neurone Disease. Brad's father Robert was diagnosed with MND in 2024. This disease affects motor neurons and nerve cells responsible for controlling voluntary muscle movements like walking, talking and swallowing. As motor neurons progressively die, muscles weaken and waste away, leading to a decline in movement and independence. 27 months is the average life expectancy after being diagnosed with MND and every day two Australians are diagnosed with the disease – with no known cure. This run, with a small supportive crowd and some fellow runners, was a great way for Brad to help the cause. Over the years, Brad has completed two marathons and several other shorter events, so he was ready for this. MND NSW provides support, equipment, information and education to patients, family and health care professionals and fundraising is vital to their work. A cause close to his heart, Brad raised \$5,718. Well, done, Brad!

#### **CALLAGHAN COLLEGE WALLSEND CHESS**

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—Talented Callaghan College Wallsend students have recently been competing with in local chess tournaments. The Interschool Chess Challenge Local Heats, run by the Sydney Academy of Chess, at Bishop Tyrrell Anglican College, saw Dave P, Dene P, Rahul R and Hunter S placed 3rd overall in the Secondary Qualifying Schools. They also made it to Round 2 of the NSW Junior Chess League by overcoming Belmont Christian College on April 11, but after trying hard, they were pipped at the post by Hunter Valley Grammar School on 16 May. The team is due to compete with St Mary's College Gateshead on 7 June. Callaghan College Wallsend is proud of the boys' efforts, teamwork, and sportsmanship. The team will now progress to the semi-finals, a wonderful achievement that reflects their strategic thinking, focus, and teamwork. Well done to all players in the team - I admire your skill and determination. Best of luck for the challenges of the rounds ahead!

### JOHN HUNTER HOSPITAL SCHOOL

**Ms SONIA HORNER (Wallsend)**—June 13-14, 2025, for the second time, saw students from the John Hunter Hospital School (JHHS) virtually involved in the 33rd Star Struck showcase via pre-recorded video performances. Though being unable to join in person, they appeared among 4,200 students at a sold-out Newcastle Entertainment Centre. Star Struck "Remixed", all about inclusivity, celebrated choreography, staging, storytelling, dance, drama, music, vocal performance, rock band, orchestra and massed choir. 500 teachers from 150 public schools across the region were led by a team of entertainment professionals in creative reinvention, combining classic and contemporary ideas. Some of the students at JHHS were hooked up to IV, in wheelchairs and sitting in hospital beds. Amy Kurtz, Principal of JHHS, contacted Star Struck Operations Manager Casey Smith to see if her students could be involved. Preparation began in Term 1 after receiving the choreography, and short clips were put together. Teacher Catherine Crowley edited a final cut which was sent to the Star Struck team. Well-being, connection, self-expression, and confidence were key to the students and their parents. These special young people have made memories to last a lifetime.

### HELEN STUCKINGS INSPIRATION HAIR 40TH ANNIVERSARY

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—Congratulations to inspiring Maitland icon, Ms Helen Stuckings, for recently celebrating 40 remarkable years of her business, Inspirations Hair Design, proudly serving the Maitland community since 1985. At just 19 years old, and still an apprentice, Helen opened the salon with a bold dream and a pair of scissors. Four decades later, she's still on High Street - styling, mentoring, and making generations of clients look and feel their best. Some of her earliest customers still sit in her chair today. Her story is one of passion, perseverance, and family. Inspired by her father Robert, who joined the salon in 1988 and became a much-loved stylist in his own right, Helen has built a business rooted in connection and care. She's trained countless apprentices and reminds us all of the deep value of the trades. Hairdressing, as Helen says, isn't just a job - it's about changing lives one haircut at a time. I commend Helen and her team for their dedication, creativity, and her four decades of service to the Maitland community. Thank you, Helen!

### MADELEINE HUNT

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—Congratulations to an inspiring young East Maitland local, Madeleine Hunt, who has earned a place on the Australian team for the upcoming Asian Muay Thai Championships in Vietnam. Just 18 months ago, Maddie walked into Muay Fit Gym looking to improve her self-defence skills. Today, she stands as a national champion, with six wins and a gold medal from the national titles in Queensland to her name. Her rapid rise in the sport is extraordinary, and it's powered by passion, discipline, and three-hour daily training sessions - often followed by mentoring young fighters. Balancing life as a vineyard manager and musician, Maddie brings tenacity and heart to everything she does. To be selected for national representation so early in her career speaks volumes about her natural talent and determination. I also pay tribute to her coaches, Jason and Sarah Konig, and the community at Muay Fit Gym for fostering a culture where fighters like Maddie can thrive. We wish Maddie every success as she competes, and celebrates her 27th birthday, in Vietnam later this month. She is an inspiration to women across Maitland. Go Maddie!

### MAITLAND ALL ABILITIES NETBALLERS

**Ms JENNY AITCHISON (Maitland—Minister for Roads, and Minister for Regional Transport)**—Congratulations to the Maitland's All Abilities netball team, who secured Silver at their very first State Titles this year. With only six weeks of training, and just 30 minutes of actual match play due to recent floods, this team of eight players stepped onto the court with courage, unity, and boundless enthusiasm. Their performance in the All Ability State Challenge exceeded every expectation - an absolute triumph. I commend the coaching duo, Leanne and Meg Jackson, for their care and commitment, and I acknowledge Maitland Netball Association's unwavering support, especially that of secretary and team manager, Ms Pennie Lieb. The entire netball community rallied behind these athletes, with sidelines packed and hearts full. This silver medal is not just a celebration of sporting talent but of inclusion, perseverance, and what's possible when everyone has the chance to play. I look forward to seeing Maitland's All Abilities program grow in the years ahead, and I congratulate these athletes for representing our community with such heart and determination. Well done to all!

### FORMER MEMBER FOR BALLINA DONALD LOFTUS PAGE, OAM

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—I WISH to congratulate my former Parliamentary colleague, The Honourable Don Page, on being awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the King's Birthday Honours List. His OAM was for service to the Parliament of New South Wales, and to the community. Don, who now lives in Byron Bay,

served as State Member for Ballina from 1988 until 2015. He was Minister for Local Government and Minister for the North Coast from 2011 until 2014 and was Assistant Minister for Roads and Transport from 1991 until 1992. Before that, he held several Parliamentary secretaryships – planning and housing, transport and tourism, public works and roads, and to the Deputy Premier. Don served as Deputy Leader, National Party of Australia, from 2003 until 2007. Always the gentleman, Don could work in a bipartisan manner for the benefit of his electorate, the Northern Rivers region and regional New South Wales. Since 2016, Don has been Chair of Regional Development Australia (RDA) Northern Rivers, carrying on strong advocacy for our region at State and Federal levels. He is a Life Member of Australian Seabird Rescue and a former patron of many community organisations.

#### **GEOFFERY PAUL WOTHERSPOON, OAM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—I WISH to congratulate Geoffrey Wotherspoon, of Girards Hill, on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the King's Birthday Honours List. Geoff received his OAM for service to postal history and philately. In philately, Mr Wotherspoon has been President of the Richmond River Philatelic Society for more than 30 years, and an adjudicator, referee and certifier at national level for the same period. Since 1983, he has been a member of the Australian Commonwealth Collectors Club, and is one of its Fellows and a member of the National Workshop team. In relation to postal history, Mr Wotherspoon did a wonderful job of organising the Centenary of Australia's first official airmail flight re-enactment on 26 June, 2020. As Lismore MP, I was on hand to watch pilot Bill Finlen take off from Lismore in a Gypsy Moth plane with a delivery of commemorative envelopes and stamps bound for Casino and Tenterfield. On the original 1920 flight, pilot Frank Roberts was at the helm of his Tiger Moth. Mr Wotherspoon spent three years researching Per Aerial Mail – Australian's first air mail flight sanctioned by and under the instruction of the Postmaster-General, published in 2019.

#### **JOANNE COOPER, OAM**

**Ms JANELLE SAFFIN (Lismore—Minister for Small Business, Minister for Recovery, and Minister for the North Coast)**—I WISH to congratulate Joanne Cooper, of Goonellabah, on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in the King's Birthday Honours List. Joanne received her OAM for service to the community through service organisations. Mrs Cooper has held several leadership positions with Inner Wheel, Rotary International – District Secretary 2020-2023; National Conference Co-ordinator 2017; President Lismore Club 2017-2018 and 2004-2005; Secretary Lismore Club 2013-2014; and Council Member Inner Wheel Australia Board 2012-2013. She is the Vice-Chair and Public Officer of Lords Taverners Northern New South Wales and chaired this charity from 2019 to 2023. With Rotary International, Mrs Cooper is a Paul Harris Fellow and served as President of Lismore Rotary Club from 1999 to 2000. She has worked in Administrative Support within Southern Cross University's Faculty of Business, Law and Arts since 2007. Civic-minded, Mrs Cooper was a member of Lismore City Council's Sister City Advisory Group from 2022-2024; has held various executive positions with Kadina High School and Goonellabah Public School Parents & Citizens Associations and with Care-Ring Children's Centre Management Committee. In the Girl Guide movement, she has been a Brownie and a Venturer Leader. I thank Joanne Cooper for her community service.

#### **PETER BUGDEN SHOALHAVEN SALARIED OFFICER 2025**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—Peter Bugden has served the community with distinction as a firefighter with Fire and Rescue NSW since 2002. Based at Nowra Station, Peter responds to fires, hazardous materials incidents and rescues while also playing a crucial role in community education and prevention. Over the years, Peter has developed specialist skills in rescue, urban search and rescue, first aid, and community engagement. Beyond operational duties, Peter has shown extraordinary compassion and leadership in supporting fellow firefighters facing mental health challenges—many of whom do so quietly. With deep empathy, lived experience, and unwavering commitment, Peter has become a trusted mentor and an inspiring role model for those navigating recovery. Peter also gives back through sport, for more than two decades, Peter has volunteered as a rugby league coach and relay team leader. Peter is currently guiding the Under 11 girls from St Georges Basin Public School, leading them to the state finals 2024. In recognition of Peter's selfless dedication and extraordinary service, Peter was named Shoalhaven Salaried Officer of the Year 2025. This honour reflects not only courage and professionalism but also Peter's deep compassion for others and unwavering commitment to our community.

#### **LESLEY HARPER, SESCO VOLUNTEER OFFICER OF THE YEAR**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—I am proud to recognise and honour Lesley Harper, recipient of the Shoalhaven Volunteer Officer of the Year Award proudly presented by Rotary. Lesley is a remarkable and compassionate leader whose calm presence has been a guiding force during natural disasters. As a shift leader in Red Cross evacuation and recovery centres, Lesley supports evacuees with registrations, psychological first aid, and access to vital services and grants - offering care when needed most. Lesley's dedication goes well beyond emergencies. Lesley serves as Vice-President and Assistant Secretary of the Milton-Ulladulla and Districts Red

Cross Branch, where she actively participates in fundraising and community outreach. Lesley also creates beautiful wreaths for Anzac and Remembrance Day services, drawing on her skills as a florist. Perhaps most heartfelt is Lesley's work with the Red Cross Trauma Teddy Program. Lesley lovingly assembles, fills, and finishes thousands of teddies to comfort children and adults alike - locally, nationally, and internationally. In 2023, Lesley was awarded for 15 years of outstanding service. Lesley's quiet strength and selfless dedication continue to inspire our community. Congratulations Lesley – and thank you for all that you do for our community.

#### **SHOALHAVEN POLICE OFFICER OF THE YEAR SERGEANT PAUL HOYER**

**Ms LIZA BUTLER (South Coast)**—Sergeant Paul Hoyer has been recognised with a Rotary award for outstanding service to the Shoalhaven community. Thirty-four years of dedicated service to the people of New South Wales - including the last decade in the Shoalhaven - have established Sergeant Hoyer not only as a respected police officer but also as a valued community leader. The leadership displayed by Sergeant Hoyer during the devastating Black Summer fires of 2019/2020 demonstrated unwavering commitment to community protection and support for emergency management efforts during one of the region's most challenging times. In Sergeant Hoyer's role of General Duties Supervisor for the South Coast command, Paul leads each shift with professionalism, and integrity and plays a key role in mentoring and developing the team. Known for "old school" policing that is firm, fair, and focused on holding offenders to account, Sergeant Hoyer has earned deep respect from colleagues and community members alike. This Rotary Award stands as a fitting recognition of loyalty, service, and enduring contribution by Sergeant Paul Hoyer to the South Coast. Congratulations Paul.

#### **INDEPENDENT TAMIL WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On 29th March, I was pleased to join the Independent Tamil Women's Association to celebrate their 1st Anniversary in Wentworthville. An emerging grassroots organisation, the Independent Tamil Women's Association (ITWA) unites Tamil women from across our Western Sydney community. Providing a safe and welcoming hub, it connects women from our Tamil diaspora to form friendships, network and offer support. Through yoga and zumba classes, support with job applications, workshops to teach economic empowerment, support for victims of domestic and family violence and community celebrations, the ITWA are connecting and empowering women. This milestone celebration marked a year of dedication and unity. Featuring moving speeches, delicious cuisine, a dance performance called 'My Life is in my Hands' and even a 'Now and Then' fashion show, the Anniversary celebrated timeless Tamil culture in our modern world. The event demonstrated that within their first year, the ITWA has become a strong voice for women in our Western Sydney community. Congratulations to Sulojana Nadarajah, Chair, and the dedicated Executive Committee, volunteers and members on a successful first year! I thank you for your efforts to support our community, and look forward to your continued growth in the years come.

#### **ROTARY DISTRICT 9675 - MUNA**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—I had the pleasure of hosting Rotary District 9675's Model United Nations Assembly (MUNA) in the Parliament of NSW on 7th June 2025. This year's MUNA connected Students from across NSW to participate in lively debates, as representatives of world nations. Outstanding students from the Illawarra, to the Eastern suburbs, the Inner West and of course, from our Western Sydney community, gathered to debate the core challenges facing our world today. Mirroring complex issues that have been recently debated by the United Nations, the students delivered insightful speeches and brokered considered solutions to Assess Food Insecurity, Combat the Glorification of Neo-Nazism and Manage Risks of Nuclear Proliferation. Through their spirited debates, the student delegates demonstrated thoughtful diplomacy, respectful collaboration, a proactive approach to problem-solving, and an impressive knowledge of their designated nations. I congratulate the students on their integrity and critical thinking during the MUNA. With such thoughtful and engaged young leaders at the helm, our future is in capable hands. I thank District MUNA Tammy Hatch and the dedicated parents and teachers for organising this successful event. Thank you to Rotary NSW and District 9675 for continuing to empower young people in our community.

#### **SYDWEST MULTICULTURAL SERVICES - REFUGEE WEEK**

**Dr HUGH McDERMOTT (Prospect)**—On Tuesday 17th June, I was pleased to join our Western Sydney community for a conversation on Refugee Rights, Responsibilities and Belonging hosted by SydWest Multicultural Services and the Western Sydney Migrant Resource Centre at West HQ. More than 1 million people from refugee backgrounds have together made an extraordinary contribution to modern Australia, across generations and professions, having persevered through tremendous hardship. The conversation on humanitarian intake and settlement experience was held on behalf of the Western Sydney Region Settlement Consortium and supported by Blacktown City Council. At the event, Dor Achiek, Head of Settlement Services, Settlement Services International, and Adama Kamara, Deputy CEO, Refugee Council of Australia spoke about their experiences as former refugees from South Sudan and Sierra Leone respectively. The keynote address was delivered by Madeline

Gleeson, Senior Research Fellow, Andrew & Renata Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW Law. Thank you to Elfa Moraitakis, CEO, Clement Meru, Settlement and Community Services Manager, and all the amazing staff at SydWest Multicultural Services for this important event. I am proud to live and work alongside refugees and migrants from so many faiths and cultures who call Western Sydney home.

#### **BREE ZAVEC**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I commend and congratulate Year 10 Nepean Christian School student Bree Zavec for her amazing achievements of representing NSW in the U16 Girls Baseball Team and being nominated as 1st Grade Rookie of the Year by Baseball NSW. Bree's success in the sport of baseball is a testament to her outstanding skill and dedication. I am excited to follow her journey in baseball and have no doubt she'll continue to excel in the sport. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I wish Bree Zavec continued success in baseball and in all her endeavours.

#### **MULGOA RURAL FIRE BRIGADE**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I thank and commend the Mulgoa Rural Fire Brigade for their recent visit to Nepean Christian School in Mulgoa, in which they taught Year 5 students how the Brigade prepares for and fights bushfires. The students also experienced the opportunity to use the fire hose and to sit in the back of the truck. The session formed part of the students' 'Living in God's World' unit on bush fires. It is wonderful that the students were able to learn from the experience and expertise of the Mulgoa Rural Fire Brigade. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I recognise and thank the Brigade for all the outstanding work they do in protecting our lives, livestock and property from fires and for educating the community.

#### **WILLIAM HUNT**

**Mrs TANYA DAVIES (Badgerys Creek)**—I congratulate and commend local Mulgoa Rise motorcyclist William Hunt on his first-place result in the first Qualifying Round for the Yamaha R3 Series. Unfortunately, when competing in Race 1 of the Road & Race SuperSport 300 Series, William crashed and was taken to hospital for examination. He was unable to return to the track that weekend although he still managed to be ranked 13th for the Series in R3 and 23rd in SuperSport 300. On behalf of my electorate of Badgerys Creek, I wish William a full recovery and continued success in motorcycling and in all his endeavours.

#### **THE KING'S BIRTHDAY 2025 HONOURS LIST - MAJOR MALCOLM WAYNE BOTFIELD (RETD)**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—I am honoured to extend my sincere congratulations to Major Malcolm Wayne Botfield (Retd), a resident of North Rocks, on being honoured in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours List. This prestigious recognition reflects his outstanding contributions through service to veterans, which have enriched our local community. Major Botfield's dedication and unwavering commitment to his community exemplify the very essence of civic responsibility and excellence. His efforts have not only effected meaningful change in individuals' lives but have also encouraged others to engage actively in community development. Such national recognition serves as a testament to the profound impact that individuals from our community can have. It underscores the importance of service, leadership, and the difference one person can make. On behalf of the Epping community and as the local Member of Parliament, I commend Major Botfield for this remarkable achievement. May this honour inspire continued dedication to the betterment of our society. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved accolade.

#### **THE KING'S BIRTHDAY 2025 HONOURS LIST - MR SALIM (PAUL) MOUSSA**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—I am honoured to extend my sincere congratulations to Mr Salim (Paul) Moussa, a resident of Carlingford, on being honoured in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours List. This prestigious recognition reflects his outstanding contributions of service to the community through social welfare roles, which have enriched our local society. Mr Moussa's dedication and unwavering commitment to his work with people exemplify the very essence of civic responsibility and excellence. His efforts have not only effected meaningful change in individuals' lives but have also encouraged others to engage actively in community development. Such national recognition serves as a testament to the profound impact that individuals from our community can have. It underscores the importance of service, leadership, and the difference one person can make. On behalf of the Epping community and as the local Member of Parliament, I commend Mr Moussa for this remarkable achievement. May this honour inspire continued dedication to the betterment of our society. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved accolade.

#### **THE KING'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS LIST - MRS BINDI SHAH**

**Ms MONICA TUDEHOPE (Epping)**—I am honoured to extend my sincere congratulations to Mrs Bindi Shah, a resident of Cheltenham, on being honoured in the 2025 King's Birthday Honours List. This prestigious recognition reflects her outstanding contributions of service to the community through a range of roles, which



have enriched our local society. Mrs Shah's dedication and unwavering commitment to her work with people exemplify the very essence of civic responsibility and excellence. Her efforts have not only effected meaningful change in individuals' lives but have also encouraged others to engage actively in community development. Such national recognition serves as a testament to the profound impact that individuals from our community can have. It underscores the importance of service, leadership, and the difference one person can make. On behalf of the Epping community and as the local Member of Parliament, I commend Mrs Shah for this remarkable achievement. May this honour inspire continued dedication to the betterment of our society. Congratulations once again on this well-deserved accolade.

#### **CANTON BEACH SPORTS CLUB**

**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)**—Canton Beach Sports Club celebrates 70 years of history by holding a special bowls day and a barbecue. The Club was founded under the name of Toukley District Bowling Club on March 28, 1955, by a group of members, led by Vince Holmes who was elected as the first president. Members actively participated in the construction of the first green, completing the work through working parties in the late 1950s. By April 1958 one green had been formed, a fibro shed measuring 24m by 14m had been built as a clubroom and machinery shed and on April 16, 1958, the green was officially opened. The Club grew to such an extent that it now has three well-maintained greens and a clubhouse of considerable size, having been extended several times. Now, as part of the Wyong Leagues Club Group since 2008, it has been modernised and is currently being renovated to meet the needs of the bowlers and its social members. The Club serves as an important gathering place, fostering a sense of camaraderie and belonging by many providing a hub for local events, fundraising, and social activities.

#### **IRENE HARTEN**

**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)**—I would like to recognise Irene Harten on this special milestone celebrating her 100th Birthday at the Hakea Grove Aged Care, Hamlyn Terrace. The evening brought family together coming far and wide including South Australia, Victoria, Queensland, the Central Coast and other parts of NSW. Ms Harten has three children along with six grandchildren, and twelve great grandchildren. Ms Harten came to Australia from Jakarta in 1954 with her husband and first daughter. They initially lived in Mission Beach, northern Queensland, on a banana farm. A hundred is a milestone of magnificent memories and marvellous moments. I wish Irene Harten a Happy 100th Birthday.

#### **THE GLEN FOR WOMEN**

**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)**—The Glen for Women based at Wyong Creek received \$25,000 from The Rotary Club of Gosford fundraising efforts at the annual 25th Anniversary Children's Festival Razzamatazz event, held at Niagara Park Stadium in April 2025. The Razzamatazz event includes three shows presented on the day with more than 1,400 people being entertained by a variety of popular acts which include juggling, magic, and comedy. The Glen for Women \$25,000 donation will be used to purchase a vehicle to transport clients to medical appointments, casual work, family catch ups and counselling sessions. The Glen for Women Aboriginal rehabilitation centre officially opened on 30 August, 2023. The women centre has a capacity of 40 clients and runs a 12-week program, a much-needed facility in the community for women to connect to a supporting and safe environment.

#### **CHARLOTTE, JUNIOR COUNTRY CUP WINNER**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—I wish to extend my heartfelt congratulations to Charlotte on her outstanding achievement as the first-ever winner of the Junior Country Cup of the Camden Country Feis. Charlotte's success is a showcase of her talent, dedication, and passion for Irish dancing — and marks a historic moment as the inaugural recipient of this prestigious award. The Junior Country Cup, proudly donated and presented by Diane Yeates of Macarthur Home loans, recognises rising young dancers who exemplify excellence, grace, and commitment to their craft. Charlotte's performance captured the spirit of the Feis — celebrating culture, community, and the incredible skill of our young people. To be named the first winner of this award is no small feat, and it speaks volumes about her determination and hard work. A huge thank you to Diane Yeates and Macarthur Home loans for their continued support of local events and for championing young talent in our region. The introduction of the Junior Country Cup has added a special legacy to the Camden Country Feis, and Charlotte has set a high standard for future recipients. Congratulations, Charlotte — we are incredibly proud of you!

### **HAMISH GOES TO THE NINJA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS**

**Mrs SALLY QUINNELL (Camden)**—On behalf of the Camden community, we extend our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Hamish, who is proudly representing Australia and our local area at the Ninja World Championships in Dallas, Texas. Competing on the world stage is no small feat. Hamish's dedication, strength, and perseverance have led him to this incredible opportunity — one that showcases not only his personal athletic excellence but also the talent and determination within our community. Hamish has shown the kind of resilience and passion that defines a true champion. To be selected to represent your country is an extraordinary achievement, and to do so while carrying the spirit of Camden with you is something we are all incredibly proud of. You are an inspiration to young athletes across the region and a shining example of what hard work and community support can achieve. As you take on the world in Dallas, know that your entire community is cheering you on every step of the way. Good luck, Hamish — you've already made Camden and Australia proud!

### **LEE BAINES**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Lee Baines as the Lake Mac Awards recipient of the Senior of the Year and Volunteer of the Year Awards. Lee is a dedicated and impactful leader and volunteer with Marine Rescue Lake Macquarie, whose contributions have left a lasting mark on both the local and broader boating communities. Since joining Marine Rescue in 2017, Lee has authored the highly acclaimed book 'Lake Macquarie and its Coastline', which has raised over \$100,000 for the organisation, furthering its mission of marine safety. His leadership, deep passion for the water, and unwavering commitment to safety have significantly elevated the region's profile while enhancing marine safety standards. A steadfast volunteer, Lee continues to actively contribute by offering training, conducting rescues, and inspiring others to get involved in community service. Through his innovation and dedication, Lee has become a driving force in strengthening the community's spirit and fostering a culture of safety on the water. Congratulations Lee, you a deserving recipient of these awards and a credit to our community.

### **TROY HAM**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Troy Ham 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. Troy, a member of Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club, received a silver medal in the 30-34 Swim. 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 Warren 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.

### **WARREN THOMSON**

**Ms YASMIN CATLEY (Swansea—Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter)**—Speaker, I rise to acknowledge Warren Thomson 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. Warren, a member of Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club, received a silver medal in the 60-64 Double Ski alongside John Gifford. 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 Warren 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.

### **REBECCA HAMBROOK OF COWRA RECEIVES 2025 WESTERN REGIONAL TRAINING AWARD**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—Rebecca Hambrook of Cowra was recognised as a Vocational Student of the Year at the 2025 Western NSW Regional Awards in Orange recently. Rebecca is studying a Certificate IV in Community Services whilst working at the Weigelli Aboriginal Corporation, which provides

local support and rehabilitation services. Rebecca's story is inspiring. She has overcome addiction, incarceration, and childhood trauma and is using her lived experiences as a support worker and advocate for First Nations and rural people. Her Certificate IV in Community Services now enables her to support clients with medication, utilise gentle art therapy, and make education more accessible by transporting them to TAFE. Looking to the future, Rebecca hopes to earn a Bachelor of Social Work degree. She is already working to further her vocation, currently pursuing a Diploma in Alcohol and Other Drugs. I am always inspired by stories such as Rebecca's. She is a guiding light, and I hope she inspires many to follow in her footsteps.

#### **MUTTAMA HALL'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—One hundred years of community events, love, and laughter meant the 100th Anniversary of the Muttama Hall could not go unnoticed. The Muttama Hall Centenary Committee President, Robert Flint, and his team, Anne Last, Cathy Last, Hillary Connors, Eliza butt, Emily Flint, Sarah Ingold, Kate Last, Trevor Glover, Bill Buckley, and Sam and Lien Puddicombe, did a fantastic job. The evening saw diners enjoy a meal reminiscent of the first meal at the opening of the Hall. Danny Whitehead, President of the Cootamundra RSL Sub-Branch, was guest speaker. The night featured stories by individuals with remarkable life connections to the Hall. Frances Watts, Stephen Willis, Bill Salter, Peter Coggan, Warrick Ingold, Bruce Macgregor, Ian Briggs, and Richard Last all took attendees for a walk down memory lane. Sunday saw hundreds making the trip to Muttama Village to enjoy the family fun day. With over 50 stallholders, there was something for everyone to enjoy, and the live music added to the atmosphere. It was my pleasure to join Mayor Abb McAlister, Michael McCormack MP, and Marie Willis, Muttama's oldest former resident, as she cut the Hall's 100th Anniversary Cake.

#### **GRAHAM SCHOOL RESTORATION CELEBRATION**

**Ms STEPH COOKE (Cootamundra)**—I rise today to recognise the extraordinary community spirit shown at the recent celebration of the restoration of the historic Graham School. Almost 130 people gathered to mark this memorable occasion, many travelling from as far as Sydney, Bathurst, and Canowindra. Former students, teachers, families, and even a 95-year-old woman who attended the school in the 1930s joined in, highlighting just how deeply this place is cherished. Opened in 1884 and closed in 1966, Graham School was once the heart of rural life. After decades of disuse, it has now been beautifully restored, thanks to the tireless work of Landcare members and community volunteers. Their efforts transformed a derelict building into a beacon of local heritage. It was truly a privilege to be part of this heartfelt day, a day full of shared stories, laughter, and deep community pride. I commend all those involved, especially Jan Hyde for preserving not only a building, but the legacy of education, connection, and rural resilience that Graham School represents. It was a day to remember and a triumph for local history.

#### **MUNRO FAMILY**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Munro family of Booroomooka Angus Stud, for taking out two of the top honours at the 2025 Teys Australia Angus SHOOT-OUT, announced at the awards dinner, as part of the Zoetis AngusEXPO and World Angus Forum. Hugh and Juliet Munro were winners of the overall team performance award, whilst their son Sinclair Munro was honoured with being the winner of the best feedlot team performer, also placing 2nd in the overall team performance category. I congratulate the Munro family on these impressive awards, with 64 teams competing in the SHOOT-OUT this year, accounting for 320 head from producers around Australia, seeing Booroomooka Stud ultimately rewarded for their Angus quality and excellence among their peers. I commend the Munro family on the commitment each generation has given to the development of the Angus breed. The stud was founded in 1926 by Gordon Munro, respective father and grandfather of Hugh and Sinclair, with each generation taking up presidency with the Australian Angus Society and Sinclair being the current president. I commend the Munro family for their significant and valuable contribution to the cattle industry and to Australian Agriculture.

#### **RECOGNITION OF JAN LEMON, OAM**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise Glen Innes local Jan Lemon on being honoured with an Order of Australia medal (OAM), as part of the 2025 King's Birthday celebrations. The honour celebrates integrity, commitment and compassion for others with Jan embracing these attributes, being awarded for her enduring and tireless service to the community, volunteering across many organisations and groups. I congratulate Jan on this outstanding and well deserved achievement, as well as being named on the NSW Hidden Treasures Honour Roll, which follows decades of voluntary service and leadership roles with: the Glen Innes and District Australia Day Committee; Glen Innes Highlands Lioness-Lions Club; Glen Innes Show; Relay for Life; Combined Service Emergency Fund; also a presenter with 2CBD & STA FM community radio; along with Glen Innes Basketball Association where Jan has also been awarded life membership. I commend Jan on her

commitment to the Glen Innes community, voluntarily giving generously of her time and expertise for the benefit of others. Your valuable contribution enriches and strengthens our community and are greatly appreciated.

#### **WALCHA QUOTA CLUB**

**Mr BRENDAN MOYLAN (Northern Tablelands)**—I recognise the Walcha Quota Club Inc on celebrating their 50th anniversary recently. The club was chartered in 1975, with their mission to advocate to empower women to establish strong families and communities, to ensure children's fundamental needs are met and stay and succeed at school, fund deaf and hard-of-hearing resources, inspire future leaders, and to support families in poverty worldwide. I congratulate the club on this terrific milestone, with thanks to both past and present members, especially Wendy Galvin and Simona Spry the only remaining charter members. Special thanks to those continuing in their forebearers footsteps, including: President Janice Rizzi, Secretary Julie Yates, Treasurer Pam Makeham, Vice-President Diane Bazley and club Directors Chris Hamel and Lyn Smith. Over the years this group has held longstanding fundraising activities, with funds used to initiate or support projects, purchase needed supplies for distribution, along with donations to charities and organisations aiding the community. I commend all involved in the club for giving voluntarily of their time and effort to help others, with their hard work and commitment underpinning the longevity of the organisation. Thank you for being an inspiring example of selfless community spirit, which is valued and appreciated.

#### **COPACABANA AND AVOCA BEACH BRIGADE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It was an honour to recently attend the Volunteer Appreciation Day and District Medal Presentation for our NSW Rural Fire Service, Central Coast District last month. Mister Speaker, our firefighters do so much more than fighting fires. They are often the unsung, humble heroes in our community, which is why I am pleased that we had the opportunity to acknowledge their service during the presentation day last month. From car crashes and hazardous material incidents to natural disasters and community education, they really are prepared for anything and they are ready to help anyone, anywhere, anytime. Mister Speaker, I would like to acknowledge Kurt Pressley who has served the Copacabana & Avoca Beach Brigades who was recently was awarded the 10 years active service Long Service Medal and the 1st Clasp as part of the District Medal Presentation. Congratulations Kurt on this wonderful recognition of your 21 years of service and thank you for your ongoing dedication to serving and protecting our community.

#### **JOSEPH ARENA - COPACABANA BRIGADE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It was an honour to recently attend the Volunteer Appreciation Day and District Medal Presentation for our NSW Rural Fire Service, Central Coast District last month. Our firefighters do so much more than fighting fires. They are often the unsung, humble heroes in our community, which is why I am pleased that we had the opportunity to acknowledge their service during the presentation day last month. From car crashes and hazardous material incidents to natural disasters and community education, they really are prepared for anything and they are ready to help anyone, anywhere, anytime. I would like to acknowledge Joseph Arena of the Copacabana Brigade who was recently was awarded the 10 years active service Long Service Medal as part of the District Medal Presentation. Congratulations Joseph on this wonderful recognition of your 10 years of service and thank you for your ongoing dedication to serving and protecting our community.

#### **CHRISTIAN MARSHALL - AVOCA BEACH BRIGADE**

**Mr ADAM CROUCH (Terrigal)**—It was an honour to recently attend the Volunteer Appreciation Day and District Medal Presentation for our NSW Rural Fire Service, Central Coast District last month. Our firefighters do so much more than fighting fires. They are often the unsung, humble heroes in our community, which is why I am pleased that we had the opportunity to acknowledge their service during the presentation day last month. From car crashes and hazardous material incidents to natural disasters and community education, they really are prepared for anything and they are ready to help anyone, anywhere, anytime. I would like to acknowledge Christian Marshall of the Avoca Beach Brigade who was recently was awarded the 10 years active service Long Service Medal and the 1st Clasp as part of the District Medal Presentation. Congratulations Christian on this wonderful recognition of your 22 years of service and thank you for your ongoing dedication to serving and protecting our community.

#### **WILLIAM RIKARD-BELL**

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, Orange is recognised as one of Australia's leading wine areas with high-calibre winemakers linked to the area. Today I wish to congratulate the latest to be recognised with a national industry honour. William Rikard-Bell has been named the 2025 Young Gun of Wine, topping a list of 50 of Australia's best up-and-comers who are keeping the industry flourishing by infusing the creativity that makes Australian wines unique. Mr Rikard-Bell started his winemaking career in Orange before moving to

the Hunter Valley where a life-altering event changed his course. An explosion, which killed two workmates and resulted in third-degree burns to 70 per cent of his body, forced some soul-searching and he returned to Orange and the slopes of Mount Canobolas, to perfect his craft. Fast forward to 2015 and the chance offer of some outstanding pinot noir grapes led to the creation of the Rikard label. He now has his own vines and is continuing to hone his skill in tune with the characteristics of each vintage. At 44 and with his label nearing its 10-year anniversary, Mr Rikard-Bell was caught off guard by the Young Gun award but it is none-the-less deserved. Congratulations.

#### JACINTA AND ANDREW DEAN

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge the work of Jacinta and Andrew Dean, who in June this year wound up their long tenure as postmasters at Cudal. For 20 years, Jacinta and Andrew have been the familiar and helpful faces at Cudal's post office, providing a friendly face and attentive ear or just a chat. From parcels to paperwork, Jacinta and Andrew have been a vital cog in the working life of Cudal's residents, keeping the lines of communication open and streamlined. The couple are also known for going above and beyond for the community, through drought, bushfire and of course, flood. Their empathy and care for the well-being of their community has been a feature of the tenure at the Post Office while they have also lent their support to a number of community events. The regard with which Jacinta and Andrew are held by the Cudal community was emphasised by the well-wishers who dropped in to the say goodbye on their final day at the Post Office on June 1. I thank Jacinta and Andrew Dean for their service and support to the people of Cudal and I wish them well.

#### JENNY BENNETT

**Mr PHILIP DONATO (Orange)**—I wish to acknowledge the work of Jenny Bennett, who has retired after a 19-year career as the Executive Officer of the Central NSW Joint Organisation. Jenny has been a wonderful supporter of the 11 councils involved in the CNSW JO, including the LGAs of my electorate of Orange - Cabonne, Orange, Forbes and Parkes councils. After serving as a councillor on Mudgee Council for five years from 1999, Jenny went on to lead the Central NSW Regional Organisation of Councils (Centroc) as its Executive Officer. This took her through to the position as Executive Officer of the Central NSW Joint Organisation. Under Jenny's stewardship, CNSWJO has delivered a nine to one return on investment to its member councils, an astonishing achievement which has Central placed as a leader among other joint organisations. Another highlight on an impressive list was the 2009 Water Security Study which garnered an Australian Engineering Excellence award. Indeed, water security has been at the forefront of many of the CNSWJO initiatives under Jenny's leadership, along with health, transport, infrastructure, energy, and disaster resilience. During her tenure Jenny has worked tirelessly for central NSW and I thank her on its behalf.

#### HORIZON THEATRE

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety)**—I wish to congratulate the Horizon Theatre in Wiley Park for their recent performance 'A Night of Fun and Beauty'. Last year I had the opportunity to visit with my colleague, the Member for Bankstown Jihad Dib MP, to support the important work of our talented local artists. Founded in 1997, the Horizon Theatre is a non-profit local performing arts organisation which specialises in visual theatre and puppetry. It has received many awards, and Horizon's Co-Founder and Artistic Director, Maddy Slabacu has brought her rich experiences performing in international stages, right into our local area. Maddy and the team deliver performances with passion, hard work and dedication, and have mentored generations of young Australians who have grown into outstanding artists. Art is entertainment and enables all of us to relax and wind down. Horizon Theatre has brought art into our local community and continues to inspire community members of all ages. It creates a sense of community spirit. I congratulate Horizon Theatre on their excellent work in the local area, which will further our community's passion for art.

#### TRIPOLI AND MENA ASSOCIATION

**Ms SOPHIE COTSIS (Canterbury—Minister for Industrial Relations, and Minister for Work Health and Safety)**—I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of Tripoli and Mena Association in Lakemba. Tripoli and Mena are a community not-for-profit welfare organisation which provide a wide range of programs that are specifically tailored to meet the needs for the Arabic-speaking community. Many services offered by Tripoli and Mena focus on caring for both the elderly and young children, including Child Care Centre, Community Aged Care as well as other programs for adults. Indeed, 'cradle to grave' services for the community. Many Arabic-speaking residents in the local community have been supported by Tripoli and Mena. Tripoli and Mena offer a sense of warmth and belonging, and ensure that the Arabic-speaking community receive the care and assistance they need. A few months ago, I also had the pleasure of visiting and presenting certificates to mothers who proudly completed the 'Introduction to Make-up' course – a partnership delivered by TAFE NSW

and Tripoli and Mena. Congratulations once again. My electorate has an ageing, multicultural community and an increased demand for community and welfare services. That is why the work of Tripoli and Mena Association is so important.

#### **LONG YARN LUNCH - GUNNING**

**Mrs WENDY TUCKERMAN (Goulburn)**—I rise to recognise the Long Yarn Lunch held in Gunning on 23 May. The event brought local men together for an afternoon of connection, reflection, and open conversation — with a focus on well-being and support. It created a safe space to discuss the importance of mental health and community connection. Guest speaker Mat Rogers, former NRL and Rugby Union star, shared his personal journey and challenges with remarkable honesty. His openness resonated deeply with attendees and helped break down barriers around mental health conversations. Importantly, the event also raised funds for the Gunning District Community Health Services. Combined with previous men's and women's lunches, more than \$300,000 has been raised in total — a remarkable contribution to local health services. I commend organisers Luke Dowling, Campbell Basnett, Veronica Leon, Melinda Medway, and Vikki Basnett for their leadership and commitment. With over 160 attendees, the Long Yarn Lunch was a powerful reminder of the strength found in community and conversation.

#### **WINGHAM FLOOD HUB**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the wonderful efforts of the volunteers at the Wingham Flood Hub, based at the Wingham Baptist Church. In the aftermath of the recent floods, these individuals have provided essential support to our community, offering food, clothing, furniture, appliances, and pet supplies to those affected. Beyond material assistance, the Hub has become a place where residents find comfort and understanding during challenging times. The generosity of donors, both local and from afar, has been instrumental, ranging from online grocery deliveries to daily arrivals of much-needed items. I extend my sincere gratitude to every volunteer and donor who has contributed to the Hub's operations. Thank you for helping our community move forward.

#### **OLD BAR BEACH RSL SUB-BRANCH**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to acknowledge the Old Bar Beach RSL Sub-Branch for stepping up to support veterans and others in the community following the recent floods. In the days after the disaster, donations began arriving from outside the area. With nowhere else to go, the Old Bar Pirates change room became a temporary flood hub. The sub-Branch helped coordinate access to essential items, manchester, bedding, household goods and food allowing anyone affected by the floods to come and collect what they needed. While the demand for assistance has been steady rather than overwhelming, the generosity behind the scenes and the efforts to make these goods available reflect the strong community spirit that exists in Old Bar. As the football season begins and the premises are cleared, I want to thank the Old Bar RSL Sub-Branch and all involved for making good use of the space and making a difference in the lives of locals doing it tough.

#### **MATTHEW DILOSA**

**Mrs TANYA THOMPSON (Myall Lakes)**—I would like to recognise Matthew Dilosa from Marine Rescue Forster Tuncurry on his appointment as Duty Watch Officer. Matthew was recently presented with his epaulettes by Unit Commander Geoff Anderson. In addition to this new role, Matthew also serves as a Duty Radio Operator and is the editor of the unit's in-house newsletter, The Bosun's Pipe. He's someone who is always ready to put his hand up and take on what's needed to help the team operate smoothly. Duty Watch Officers play an important part in each shift, overseeing operations in the radio room and ensuring procedures are followed. It's a position that requires knowledge, confidence, and clear decision-making, especially during rescue operations. Matthew is known within the unit for his reliability and positive attitude. His efforts help keep the unit running efficiently and the boating community safe. I thank Matthew for all that he does and congratulate him on this well-earned appointment.

#### **DR PETER KILLEY**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Doctor Peter Killey retired in May this year after practising for more than four decades, 35 of those years spent working with patients in the Bathurst region. Testimony to his loyalty, 25 of those years working at the Kelso Medical Centre where he was held in the highest esteem by the people who put their trust in his knowledge and judgement to heal their ailments. Doctor Killey first came to Bathurst after working all across Australia including Perth, Dubbo and Launceston .... and even in Zimbabwe at a mission with the Zulu people. But it was helping people that Dr Killey will be best remembered and it's this that he describes as the "take home" reward for someone in his profession in general practice. And as for a parting message for good health to the community he's served for so long: "Eat your greens, don't smoke, limit alcohol, get regular

sleep". Many thanks for all you have done for the people of Bathurst Dr Killey, you certainly deserve to be able to put your feet up and have a well-deserved break.

#### **SUZANNE BEED**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Small business is at the backbone of any community and this certainly applies to Suzanne Beed. Suzanne has been a stalwart of the Bathurst Central Business District at the helm of well-know local business Sheer Indulgence. However, unfortunately all good things come to an end and with retirement beckoning for Suzanne, she is set to close the doors her business after 27 years. During her time owning and running the business, Suzanne has seen it all, selling lingerie and shapewear to her loyal customers with her expertise in the industry meaning that even with a quick glance being able to steer women in the right direction for a correctly fitting bra. As a mastectomy bra and prosthesis fitting specialist, Suzanne's expert skills and professional advice will now be gone and this loss will leave a void in the community as there is no one else in the city who can do this. In retirement Suzanne plans to spend more time with her family and deservedly so. Congratulations and thank you Suzanne Beed, your contribution to the city of Bathurst has been greatly appreciated. Enjoy your retirement.

#### **JUDY DOULMAN**

**Mr PAUL TOOLE (Bathurst)**—Congratulations to Bathurst local Judy Doulman who has been named a finalist for VET Trainer/Teacher of the Year. Judy has been educating learners for 31 years in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. Her drive to empower individuals through education has led her to hold various roles, including Trainer Assessor, Training Coordinator, and RTO General Manager. Judy's qualifications span from Certificate II to Vocational Graduate Certificate, proof of her commitment to remaining current and providing training tailored to her learners' needs. With expertise across diverse industries such as Business, Government, and Food Safety, Judy has been a strong advocate for VET, even serving as Chairperson of the Western NSW Training Awards Committee for nine years. She believes in a holistic approach to education, engaging all stakeholders to foster successful learner outcomes. Judy has displayed her commitment to continuous improvement, seeing change as an opportunity for growth such as the integration of artificial intelligence in education. Her lifelong dedication to learning and teaching reflects her belief that education is the key to empowerment for individuals and communities alike. Congratulations Judy on this well-deserving acknowledgement.

#### **BANKSTOWN SES UNIT**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to thank the Bankstown SES Unit for their incredible work during the recent floods that occurred in NSW. The Bankstown SES Team's courage, commitment, and selfless service made a real difference when our community needed their help. In the face of rising waters and unpredictable conditions, the Bankstown SES Unit worked tirelessly, day and night, to keep people safe in flooded areas by protecting properties and supporting those in distress. They assisted with responding to every call with professionalism and compassion, often putting the needs of others ahead of their own. They did not hesitate to step into danger and worked tirelessly in difficult conditions to provide critical assistance and comfort to those in need. Their presence offered reassurance, hope, and practical support to residence when it was needed most. The Bankstown SES Unit are more than emergency responders, they are community protectors, everyday heroes, and an inspiration to us all. Their actions during the recent floods reflect the very best of what it means to serve. Our heartfelt thanks to the team for their hard work and dedication presented during a tough time, assisting everyone affected by this natural disaster.

#### **DINNER WITH PEOPLE MAKING A DIFFERENCE - BANKSTOWN SPORTS CLUB**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—Bankstown Sports Club hosted their event, Dinner with People Making a Difference. This event was a heartfelt evening dedicated to honouring the incredible organisations and volunteers who go above and beyond in supporting the local community. This special event brought together 108 attendees from 38 different community groups, all of whom give their time, energy, and compassion to causes that make a real difference in people's lives. Guests were treated to a delicious meal and the chance to connect with others doing similar work across the Bankstown, Cumberland and Hills Shire LGAs. Throughout the night, attendees heard brief but meaningful speeches from Bankstown Sports Club and the Community Manager, Michael Hanratty. There were also other heartfelt sentiments highlighting the efforts of volunteers across our communities. It is wonderful to see people from various organisations and volunteering roles learning from one another and making connections on how their organisations could potentially collaborate on projects in the future. The theme for this year's National Volunteering Week is 'Connecting Communities' Thank you, Bankstown Sports Club, for your fantastic work and the time you put into this event.

**SECOND BITE - NSW FLOODS**

**Mr JIHAD DIB (Bankstown—Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, Minister for Emergency Services, and Minister for Youth Justice)**—I would like to thank the Second Bite Team for their incredible work and support during the NSW floods. Their steadfast support in helping those affected is admirable and it brings a sense of hope and resilience in our community during these challenging times. Second Bite is Australia's largest free food rescue organisation, with operations in every state and territory delivering nutritious food free of charge to those in need. The organisation was established in 2005 and has continued to assist people who are in need. Over this period, they have provided over 350 million meals to different charities. During the recent floods there were more than 30,000 people isolated or made homeless; farms, streets, towns, businesses, their ways of life devastated and destroyed. Second Bite partnered with other organisations, packing and distributing 14 pallets which consisted of 700 emergency hampers to those who were caught up in the floods. They also supplied the groceries, dry goods and contents for the flood hampers. I would like to thank Daniel Moorfield, the Chief Executive Officer of Second Bite for the life changing work that they do to assist the vulnerable during tough times.

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