



**New South Wales**

# **Legislative Council**

## **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)**

**Fifty-Seventh Parliament  
First Session**

**Tuesday, 20 September 2022**

Authorised by the Parliament of New South Wales



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# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

**Tuesday, 20 September 2022**

**The PRESIDENT (The Hon. Matthew Ryan Mason-Cox)** took the chair at 14:30.

**The PRESIDENT** read the prayers and acknowledged the Gadigal clan of the Eora nation and its Elders and thanked them for their custodianship of this land.

## *Addresses*

### **DEATH OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

### **ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III**

**The PRESIDENT (14:32):** I report that, on Tuesday 13 September 2022, the Usher of the Black Rod and I, accompanied by the Speaker and the Serjeant-at-Arms, presented to Her Excellency the Governor the Address of Condolence on the death of Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and the Address of Congratulation to His Most Gracious Majesty King Charles III, which were adopted by the House on Tuesday 13 September 2022.

## *Governor*

### **DEATH OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

## **Messages**

**The PRESIDENT (14:33):** I report the receipt of the following message from the Official Secretary to Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales:

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

Tuesday, 13 September 2022

The Honourable Matthew Mason-Cox MLC  
President of the Legislative Council of NSW  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear President,

I write at Her Excellency's command to advise that the motion of condolence passed by the Honourable Members of the Legislative Council following the death of Our Most Gracious Sovereign Lady Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second on 8 September 2022 has this day been conveyed to His Majesty King Charles the Third under Her Excellency's own sign manual.

God Save The King!

Yours sincerely,

Colonel Michael Miller RFD  
Official Secretary to the Governor of New South Wales

### **ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY KING CHARLES III**

## **Messages**

**The PRESIDENT (14:33):** I report the receipt of the following message from the Official Secretary to Her Excellency the Governor of New South Wales:

GOVERNMENT HOUSE  
SYDNEY

Tuesday, 13 September 2022

The Honourable Matthew Mason-Cox MLC  
President of the Legislative Council of NSW  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear President,

I write at Her Excellency's command to advise that the motion of congratulations passed by the Honourable Members of the Legislative Council following the accession to the Throne on 8 September 2022 of King Charles the Third has been transmitted to His Majesty under Her Excellency's own sign manual.

God Save The King!

Yours sincerely,

Colonel Michael Miller RFD

Official Secretary to the Governor of New South Wales

*Business of the House*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING AND SESSIONAL ORDERS: ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I move:

That standing and sessional orders be suspended to allow the moving of a motion forthwith relating to the conduct of business of the House this day.

**Motion agreed to.**

**ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I move:

That the conduct of the business of the House for today be as follows:

- (a) that debate on a condolence motion moved by a Minister on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II take precedence of all other business on the *Notice Paper* until concluded;
- (b) that members be able to give notices of motions by delivering a signed copy to the Clerks at the table or electronically by 4.00 p.m. for today only. Such notices will be entered by the Clerk on the *Notice Paper* in the order in which they would appear if given orally; and
- (c) that there be no debate on committee reports and Government responses this day.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Announcements*

**COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE 2024**

**The PRESIDENT (14:35):** As many members aware, in late August and early September I travelled overseas on behalf of the Legislative Council. The main purpose of my travel was to attend and participate as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association New South Wales branch delegate at the 2022 CPA conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia in Canada. I was accompanied by the Clerk, who presented a paper at the meeting of the Society of Clerks-at-the-Table—a very secret society, I understand—entitled *Practice makes perfect? (Or at least a little better.) Sessional orders as a vehicle for procedural reform in the New South Wales Legislative Council.* Last year the CPA New South Wales branch nominated to host the CPA conference in 2024.

On 26 August, the last day of the conference in Halifax, it was announced at the association's general assembly that the New South Wales bid to host the conference was successful, and the sixty-seventh Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference will be held Sydney in November 2024. This is the world's largest international parliamentary gathering, and the conference will bring some 750 delegates from 53 Commonwealth countries to our great State. I was also elected vice-president of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, which is a great honour for the CPA New South Wales branch. Following the conference, the Clerk and I travelled to London for meetings with the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to commence planning for the 2024 conference.

The Speaker and I also renewed the sister-State relationship between this Parliament and the California State Senate. This included the honour of addressing the State Senate from the Senate floor and a round of meetings, including with the Lieutenant Governor of California, the California Secretary of State and a large number of State senators. I also met with the international relations team from the National Conference of State Legislatures in Washington, DC. I am hopeful that we will be receiving a reciprocal visit from a large delegation from the California State Senate and California Assembly in December this year. My thanks go to the Hon. Wes Fang, who acted as President during my absence.

*Documents***NSW OMBUDSMAN****Reports**

**The PRESIDENT:** According to the Ombudsman Act 1974, I table the following special reports of the NSW Ombudsman:

- (1) Report entitled *Specialist homelessness services: helping people with high or complex needs*, dated 31 August 2022, received out of session and published on Wednesday 31 August 2022.
- (2) Report entitled *The COVID-19 pandemic: second report*, dated 7 September 2022, received out of session and published on Wednesday 7 September 2022.

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

**The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT:** I table a report of the Legislation Review Committee entitled *Legislation Review Digest No. 47/57*, dated 20 September 2022.

**SELECTION OF BILLS COMMITTEE****Reports**

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I table report No. 63 of the Selection of Bills Committee, dated 20 September 2022.

According to standing order, I move:

That the following bills not be referred to a standing committee for inquiry and report, this day:

- (a) Industrial Relations Amendment (Dispute Orders) Bill 2022 (accompanied by a Statement of Public Interest);
- (b) Crimes (Sentencing Procedure) Amendment Bill 2022 (not yet accompanied by a Statement of Public Interest);
- (c) Crimes Legislation Amendment (Assaults on Frontline Emergency and Health Workers) Bill 2022 (not yet accompanied by a Statement of Public Interest);
- (d) Health Legislation (Miscellaneous) Amendment Bill (No 2) 2022 (not yet accompanied by a Statement of Public Interest);
- (e) Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Animal Sentience) Bill 2022;
- (f) Scrap Metal Industry Amendment (Review) Bill 2022 (not yet accompanied by a Statement of Public Interest);
- (g) Workers Compensation (Dust Diseases) Amendment Bill 2022 (not yet accompanied by a Statement of Public Interest); and
- (h) Road Transport Amendment (Prohibition of U-turns and 3-point Turns in School Zones) Bill 2022.

**Motion agreed to.**

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

**The CLERK:** According to the Government Sector Audit Act 1983, I announce receipt of a Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General entitled *Effectiveness of the Biodiversity Offsets Scheme*, dated 30 August 2022, received out of session and published on Tuesday 30 August 2022.

*Committees***SELECT COMMITTEE ON PUPPY FARMING IN NEW SOUTH WALES****Reports**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of report No. 1 of the Select Committee on Puppy Farming in New South Wales entitled *Puppy farming in New South Wales*, dated August 2022, together with submissions, transcripts of evidence, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions, responses to an online questionnaire, questionnaire report and correspondence relating to the inquiry, received out of session on Thursday 25 August 2022.

**The Hon. MICK VEITCH (14:41):** I move:

That the House take note of the report.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE**

### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of report No. 88 of the Privileges Committee entitled *Consideration of disputed claims of privilege as referred by the Clerk under standing order 52B (September 2022)*, dated September 2022, together with correspondence relating to the inquiry, received out of session on Friday 2 September 2022.

## **PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - CUSTOMER SERVICE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of report No. 54 of Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Customer Service and Natural Resources entitled *Long term sustainability and future of the timber and forest products industry*, dated September 2022, together with submissions, pro forma documents, transcripts of evidence, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions, and correspondence relating to the inquiry, received out of session on Thursday 15 September 2022.

**The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (14:42):** I move:

That the House take note of the report.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 6 - TRANSPORT**

### **Reports**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of report No. 18 of Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport entitled *Privatisation of Buses*, dated September 2022, together with transcripts of evidence, submissions, tabled documents, answers to questions on notice and supplementary questions, responses to the online questionnaire and summary report of these responses and correspondence relating to the inquiry, received out of session on Tuesday 20 September 2022.

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (14:43):** I move:

That the House take note of the report.

**Debate adjourned.**

## **PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE**

### **Government Response**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 11 of the Public Accountability Committee entitled *Further inquiry into the regulation of building standards*, tabled 25 February 2022, received out of session and authorised to be published on Thursday 25 August 2022.

## **PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 2 - HEALTH**

### **Government Response**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 57 of Portfolio Committee No. 2 - Health entitled *Health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales*, tabled on 5 May 2022, received out of session and authorised to be published on Thursday 1 September 2022.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT**

### **Government Response**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 48 of the Standing Committee on State Development entitled *Animal welfare policy in New South Wales – First report*, tabled on 15 June 2022, received out of session and authorised to be published on Monday 12 September 2022.

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - CUSTOMER SERVICE AND NATURAL RESOURCES****Government Response**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 52 of Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Customer Service and Natural Resources entitled *2021 Inquiry into the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*, tabled on 10 June 2022, received out of session and authorised to be published on Monday 12 September 2022.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LAW AND JUSTICE****Government Response**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 80 of the Standing Committee on Law and Justice entitled *2021 Review of the Dust Diseases Scheme*, tabled on 10 June 2022, received out of session and authorised to be published on Monday 12 September 2022.

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 3 - EDUCATION****Government Response**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of the Government response to report No. 46 of Portfolio Committee No. 3 - Education entitled *Budget Estimates 2021-2022*, tabled on 22 June 2022, received out of session and authorised to be published on Monday 19 September 2022.

*Documents***CENTRAL BARANGAROO****Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 11 May 2022, I table documents relating to an order for papers regarding Central Barangaroo, received on Tuesday 16 August 2022 from the Deputy Secretary, General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of the documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Tuesday 16 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**NSW AGENT GENERAL TO THE UNITED KINGDOM****Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to an order for papers regarding the Agent General to the United Kingdom, received on Wednesday 17 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Wednesday 17 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table additional documents relating to an order for papers regarding the Agent General to the United Kingdom, received on Thursday 18 August 2022 from the Deputy Secretary, General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Thursday 18 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**SENIOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT COMMISSIONERS****Further Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Tuesday 9 August 2022, I table additional documents relating to a further order for papers regarding the appointment of the Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner, received on Wednesday 17 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Wednesday 17 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**Further Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Tuesday 9 August 2022, I table additional documents relating to a further order for papers regarding the appointment of the Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner, received on Monday 22 August 2022 from the Deputy Secretary, General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Monday 22 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**Further Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Tuesday 9 August 2022, I table additional documents relating to a further order for papers regarding the appointment of the Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner, received on Friday 26 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Friday 26 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**NSW BUILDING COMMISSIONER AND PROPERTY SERVICES COMMISSIONER****Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table additional documents relating to an order for papers regarding the NSW Building Commissioner resignation and Property Services Commissioner termination, received on Thursday 18 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Thursday 18 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**Correspondence**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table correspondence relating to an order for papers regarding the NSW Building Commissioner resignation and Property Services Commissioner termination, received on Friday 19 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service, providing details of the reinstatement of Mr John Minns to the role of Property Services Commissioner.

**Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table additional documents relating to an order for papers regarding the NSW Building Commissioner resignation and Property Services Commissioner termination, received on Wednesday 24 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Wednesday 24 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table additional documents relating to an order for papers regarding the NSW Building Commissioner resignation and Property Services Commissioner termination, received on Monday 5 September 2022 from the Deputy Secretary, General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Monday 5 September 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL****Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 22 June 2022, I table a return identifying documents received on Wednesday 24 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS REGIONAL SHOOTING COMPLEX****Further Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 23 March 2022, I table additional documents relating to a further order for papers regarding the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex, received on Wednesday 24 August 2022 from the Deputy Secretary, General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Wednesday 24 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE NSW****Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 11 May 2022, I table additional documents relating to an order for papers regarding school infrastructure planning documents, received on Friday 26 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Friday 26 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**FLOODPLAIN HARVESTING****Further Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to a further order for papers regarding floodplain harvesting, received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**EXHIBITED ANIMALS****Further Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to a further order for papers regarding exhibited animals, received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**TAFE NSW EQUINE COURSES****Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to an order for papers regarding equine courses at TAFE NSW Richmond, received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**TEACHER SHORTAGES****Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to an order for papers regarding the impact of teacher shortages, received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS****Correspondence**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table correspondence relating to an order for papers regarding government committee appointments, received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, stating that the relevant departments hold no documents covered by the terms of the resolution.

**NARRABRI GAS PROJECT****Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to an order for papers regarding the Narrabri Gas Project, received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Wednesday 31 August 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**NEW INTERCITY FLEET****Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 18 May 2022, I table additional documents relating to an order for papers regarding rail negotiations, received on Thursday 1 September 2022



from the Deputy Secretary, General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

#### **Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Thursday 1 September 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

#### **TAFE NSW CAMPUSES**

##### **Further Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to a further order for papers regarding the sale of TAFE NSW campuses, received on Wednesday 7 September 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

#### **Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Wednesday 7 September 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

#### **FORESTRY CORPORATION OF NSW**

##### **Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to an order for papers regarding the Forestry Corporation of NSW, received on Wednesday 7 September 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

#### **Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Wednesday 7 September 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

#### **DESIGN AND PLACE STATE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING POLICY**

##### **Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 22 June 2022, I table additional documents relating to an order for papers regarding Design and Place State Environmental Planning Policy, received on Thursday 15 September 2022 from the Deputy Secretary, General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

#### **Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the additional documents received on Thursday 15 September 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

#### **ANIMAL RESEARCH**

##### **Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 12 May 2021, I table a return identifying additional documents received on Thursday 15 September 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

#### **SYDNEY SUBURBAN STADIUMS**

##### **Return to Order**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of Wednesday 10 August 2022, I table documents relating to an order for papers regarding Sydney suburban stadiums, received on Friday 16 September 2022 from the Secretary of the Department of Premier and Cabinet, together with an indexed list of documents.

**Claim of Privilege**

**The CLERK:** I table a return identifying those of the documents received on Friday 16 September 2022 that are claimed to be privileged and should not be tabled or made public. I advise that pursuant to standing orders the documents are available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

**RESTRUCTURE OF THE TRANSPORT CLUSTER****Correspondence**

**The CLERK:** I table correspondence from the Department of Premier and Cabinet received on Thursday 25 August 2022 attaching correspondence from Transport for NSW, together with an updated index for return to order from 2019 relating to the restructure of the Transport cluster, requesting that the original index be replaced.

**CBD AND SOUTH EAST LIGHT RAIL PROJECT****Correspondence**

**The CLERK:** I table correspondence from the Department of Premier and Cabinet received on Thursday 25 August 2022 attaching correspondence from Transport for NSW, together with an updated index for return to order from 2019 relating to CBD and South East Light Rail, requesting that the original index be replaced.

**WESTCONNEX****Correspondence**

**The CLERK:** I table correspondence from the Department of Premier and Cabinet received on Thursday 25 August 2022 attaching correspondence from Transport for NSW, together with an updated index for return to order from 2019 relating to WestConnex contracts, requesting that the original index be replaced.

**NEWELL HIGHWAY****Correspondence**

**The CLERK:** I table correspondence from the Department of Premier and Cabinet received on Thursday 25 August 2022 attaching correspondence from Transport for NSW, together with an updated index for return to order from 2019 relating to Newell Highway government procurement contracts, requesting that the original index be replaced.

**SENIOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT COMMISSIONERS****Dispute of Claim of Privilege**

**The PRESIDENT:** I inform the House that as reported in the House on Thursday 11 August 2022, the Clerk received from the Hon. Daniel Mookhey a further written dispute as to the validity of a claim of privilege on documents lodged with the Clerk on 25 July 2022, 29 July 2022 and 1 August 2022 relating to the appointment of Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner. The Hon. Alan Robertson, SC, was appointed as an Independent Legal Arbiter, and has now provided his report to the Clerk.

I further inform the House that on 19 August 2022 the Clerk received from the Hon. Daniel Mookhey a further written dispute as to the validity of a claim of privilege on a document lodged with the Clerk on 2 August 2022. According to standing order, the Hon. Alan Robertson, SC, was appointed as an Independent Legal Arbiter to evaluate and report as to the validity of the claim of privilege. The disputed document was provided to Mr Robertson by the Clerk, and he has now provided his report to the Clerk.

**Report of Independent Legal Arbiter**

**The CLERK:** I announce receipt of the reports of the Independent Legal Arbiter, dated 17 August 2022 and 22 August 2022. According to Standing Order 52B, I further announce that:

- (1) The reports of the Independent Legal Arbiter, dated 17 August and 22 August 2022, were referred to the Privileges Committee.
- (2) On Wednesday 24 August 2022, the Privileges Committee resolved that the reports of the Independent Legal Arbiter be made public that day. According to Standing Order 52B, the reports are deemed to have been presented to the House and published by authority of the House.
- (3) On Wednesday 31 August 2022 the Privileges Committee resolved:
  - (1) That, in view of the report of the Independent Legal Arbiter, the Hon. Alan Robertson, SC, on the disputed claim of privilege regarding the appointment of Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner, dated 17 August 2022:

- (a) the committee orders that the documents received by the Clerk on Monday 25 July 2022, Friday 29 July 2022 and Monday 1 August 2022, considered by the Independent Legal Arbiter not to be privileged be published;
  - (b) the committee orders that the documents received by the Clerk on Monday 25 July 2022, Friday 29 July 2022 and Monday 1 August 2022 and identified in the schedule attached to the report, considered by the Independent Legal Arbiter not to be privileged, be redacted according to the schedule attached to the report and returned to the Clerk within 7 days; and
  - (c) that on receipt, the redacted documents be published.
- (2) That, in view of the report of the Independent Legal Arbiter, the Hon. Alan Robertson, SC, on the disputed claims of privilege regarding the appointment of Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner dated 22 August 2022:
- (a) the committee orders that the document received by the Clerk on Thursday 11 August 2022, being document 348, INSW.003.006.0314, considered by the Independent Legal Arbiter not to be privileged, be redacted according to the report and returned to the Clerk within 7 days; and
  - (b) that on receipt, the redacted documents be published.

I further announce that the Department of Premier and Cabinet, on behalf of the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade, lodged the redacted documents on Wednesday 7 September 2022. According to Standing Order 52B, the documents are deemed to have been presented to the House and published by authority of the House that day.

### **Dispute of Claim of Privilege**

**The PRESIDENT:** I further inform the House that on Thursday 15 September 2022, the Clerk received from the Hon. Penny Sharpe a written dispute as to the validity of a claim of privilege on documents lodged with the Clerk on 11 August 2022 relating to the appointment of Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner. According to standing order, the Hon. Keith Mason, AC, KC, was appointed as an Independent Legal Arbiter to evaluate and report as to the validity of the claim of privilege. The Clerk released the disputed documents to Mr Mason for evaluation and report.

### **Report of Independent Legal Arbiter**

**The PRESIDENT:** I report that the Clerk has received a report from the Independent Legal Arbiter, the Hon. Keith Mason, AC, KC, on the validity of a claim of privilege on documents lodged with the Clerk on 11 August 2022 relating to Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner. The report is available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

### **CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL**

### **Dispute of Claim of Privilege**

**The PRESIDENT:** I report to the House that on 2 September 2022 the Clerk received correspondence from the Hon. Mark Latham disputing the validity of a claim of privilege on documents lodged with the Clerk on 24 August 2022 relating to Castle Hill High School. Pursuant to standing orders, the Hon. Keith Mason, AC, KC, was appointed as the Independent Legal Arbiter to evaluate and report as to the validity of the claim of privilege. The Clerk released the disputed documents to the Hon. Keith Mason for evaluation and report.

### **Report of Independent Legal Arbiter**

**The PRESIDENT:** I report that the Clerk has received a report from the Independent Legal Arbiter, the Hon. Keith Mason, AC, KC, on the validity of a claim of privilege on documents lodged with the Clerk on 24 August 2022 relating to Castle Hill High School. The report is available for inspection by members of the Legislative Council only.

### **Tabling of Report of Independent Legal Arbiter**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** By leave: I move:

- (1) That the report of the Independent Legal Arbiter, the Hon. Keith Mason, AC, KC, dated 12 September 2022, on the disputed claim of privilege regarding Castle Hill High School, be laid upon the table by the Clerk.
- (2) That, on tabling, the report is authorised to be published.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **SYDNEY SUBURBAN STADIUMS**

### **Variation of Order**

**The PRESIDENT:** According to sessional order, I inform the House that on 17 August 2022 the Clerk received correspondence from the Deputy Secretary, General Counsel of the Department of Premier and Cabinet,

seeking agreement to vary the due date for an order for papers. The relevant member who moved the motion had not agreed to vary the order as requested by the Department of Premier and Cabinet but had agreed to the following variation:

- (1) Sydney Suburban Stadiums, instead of the requested due date of Friday 30 September 2022, the due date be Thursday 15 September 2022.

The question is that the varied terms of the order for papers be agreed to.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL**

#### **Report of Independent Legal Arbiter**

**The CLERK:** According to the resolution of the House of this day, I table the report of the Independent Legal Arbiter, the Hon. Keith Mason, AC, KC, dated 12 September 2022, on the disputed claim of privilege on documents relating to Castle Hill High School.

#### *Petitions*

#### **RESPONSES TO PETITIONS**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I announce receipt of a Government response from the Hon. James Griffin, Minister for Environment and Heritage, to a petition signed by more than 500 persons and presented by Ms Cate Faehrmann on 10 May 2022 concerning banning the release of balloons in New South Wales, received out of session and published on 18 August 2022.

#### *Notices*

#### **NOTICES OF MOTIONS**

**The PRESIDENT:** I remind honourable members that they are able to give notices of motions by delivering a signed copy to the Clerks at the table or an electronic copy by 4.00 p.m. for today only. Such notices will be entered by the Clerk on the *Notice Paper* in the order in which they would appear if given orally.

#### *Business of the House*

#### **POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS**

**The CLERK:** According to standing order, I advise the House of the following postponements:

- (1) Business of the House notice of motion No. 1, standing in the name of Ms Cate Faehrmann, postponed until Tuesday 11 October 2022.
- (2) Business of the House notice of motion No. 2, standing in the name of Mr Justin Field, postponed until next sitting day.
- (3) Business of the House notices of motion Nos 3 and 4, standing in the name of Ms Abigail Boyd, postponed until Tuesday 11 October 2022.
- (4) Matter of Public Importance notice of motion No. 1, standing in the name of the Hon. Mark Latham, postponed until Tuesday 11 October 2022.

#### *Committees*

#### **PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 2 - HEALTH**

##### **Membership**

**The PRESIDENT:** I inform the House that on 16 August 2022 the Clerk received advice from the Leader of the Government advising of the following change to the membership of the committee:

The Hon. Aileen MacDonald in place of the Hon. Chris Rath.

#### **PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 3 - EDUCATION**

##### **Membership**

**The PRESIDENT:** I inform the House that on 16 August 2022 the Clerk received advice from the Leader of the Government advising of the following change to the membership of the committee:

The Hon. Aileen MacDonald in place of the Hon. Catherine Cusack.

**PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 7 - PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT****Membership**

**The PRESIDENT:** I inform the House that on 16 August 2022 the Clerk received advice from the Leader of the Government advising of the following change to the membership of the committee:

The Hon. Aileen MacDonald in place of the Hon. Catherine Cusack.

**REGULATION COMMITTEE****Membership**

**The PRESIDENT:** I inform the House that on 16 August 2022 the Clerk received advice from the Leader of the Government advising of the following change to the membership of the committee:

The Hon. Aileen MacDonald in place of the Hon. Catherine Cusack.

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT****Membership**

**The PRESIDENT:** I inform the House that on 16 August 2022 the Clerk received advice from the Leader of the Government advising of the following change to the membership of the committee:

The Hon. Aileen MacDonald in place of the Hon. Catherine Cusack.

**Chair**

**The PRESIDENT:** I inform the House that on 16 August 2022 the Leader of the Government nominated the following member as Chair of the committee:

The Hon. Aileen MacDonald in place of the Hon. Catherine Cusack.

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON BARANGAROO SIGHT LINES****Membership**

**The PRESIDENT:** I inform the House that the Clerk has received the following nominations for membership of the Select Committee on Barangaroo Sight Lines:

Government:	The Hon. Lou Amato The Hon. Shayne Mallard The Hon. Chris Rath
Opposition:	The Hon. Adam Searle
Crossbench:	Ms Cate Faehrmann

**Chair and Deputy Chair**

**The PRESIDENT:** I further inform the House that, as stated in the resolution of the House establishing the Select Committee on Barangaroo Sight Lines, the Hon. Mark Latham is a member and Chair of the committee, and the Hon. Anthony D'Adam is a member and Deputy Chair of the committee.

*Announcements***PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER**

**The PRESIDENT (14:54):** I inform the House that, in accordance with section 6 of the Parliamentary Budget Officer Act 2010, Mr Stephen Bartos has been appointed as Parliamentary Budget Officer. Many of you may remember Mr Bartos from the two last election campaign periods.

**PARLIAMENT HOUSE EXECUTIVE CHEF VANESSA HARCOURT**

**The PRESIDENT (14:55):** I am very pleased to inform the House that last night the Parliament's executive chef, Vanessa Harcourt, was announced the winner of the New South Wales Chef of the Year award at the Restaurant and Catering Industry Association of Australia's 2022 Awards for Excellence. The Strangers' Restaurant was a finalist in two categories: formal contemporary Australian restaurant and tourism restaurant. Vanessa will be attending the Restaurant and Catering national finals for the Chef of the Year award on 24 October 2022. I am sure members will join with me in congratulating Vanessa and our talented parliamentary catering team. We all look forward to the publication of the long-awaited cookbook before Christmas. It will make a magnificent Christmas present.

*Condolences***DEATH OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II**

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance, and Minister for Employee Relations)**  
**(14:55):** I move:

That this House desires to place on record its sense of the deep loss to this State, Australia and the Commonwealth by the death of our beloved sovereign, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

From her accession on the death of her father, King George VI, on 6 February 1952, when just 25 years of age, until her death on 8 September 2022 at 96 years of age, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II served faithfully and tirelessly in fulfilling all her duties, including as Queen of Australia. In her Accession Day message, Her Late Majesty renewed the pledge first made on her twenty-first birthday, on 26 April 1947, in which, as the then Princess Elizabeth, she said in a radio broadcast to the whole of the Commonwealth:

I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service ...

As we mourn Her Late Majesty's passing over 75 years later, it is fitting to acknowledge that she honoured this pledge until her dying breath. May Her Late Majesty rest in peace until we meet again. On 2 June 1953, when Her Late Majesty was solemnly crowned in Westminster Abbey, she swore an oath to govern the people of Australia according to Australia's "laws and customs" and to do everything in her power to "cause law and justice, in mercy, to be executed in all" her judgements. On 4 February 1954 Her Late Majesty opened the third session of the Thirty-Seventh Parliament of New South Wales, noting in her speech:

This is the first occasion on which the Sovereign has been able to open a session of an Australian parliament. It is most fitting that this should take place in the Mother Parliament of Australia, which had its birth over one hundred and thirty years ago, and in a building which has served as a legislative Chamber for almost a century—ever since New South Wales was granted responsible government.

Measured in terms of recorded history these periods are short, but they cover a large proportion of the period of one hundred and sixty-six years since the first British settlement in Australia. Nowhere else has parliamentary democracy demonstrated more effectively its soundness and its adaptability to changing times and needs than in this young and rapidly advancing country.

Thirty-eight years later, on 20 February 1992, Her Late Majesty opened the second session of the Fiftieth Parliament of New South Wales, on that occasion observing:

The best guardian of freedom is democracy, and this Parliament, like all other Parliaments in Australia, stands in the proud tradition of democratic government. Each one of you, therefore, carries the heavy responsibility of representing the aspirations of your fellow Australians and of guarding their freedom.

For many families in New South Wales, Christmas was not complete without listening to Her Late Majesty's Christmas message. In 2014 the Queen spoke very personally about "the life of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose birth we celebrate today" as an inspiration and an anchor in her life. Her Late Majesty said:

A role model of reconciliation and forgiveness, he stretched out his hands in love, acceptance and healing. Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people of whatever faith or none.

Her Late Majesty was also head of the Commonwealth, a free association of 56 independent nations including Australia. While its history has its roots in the British Empire, it is now open to any nation committed to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all the people of the Commonwealth. Neither of the latest two members, Gabon and Togo, which joined in 2022, was ever a British colony. In 2018 Commonwealth leaders unanimously decided that while the position of head of the Commonwealth was not hereditary, at Her Majesty's death the Prince of Wales would become the head of the Commonwealth.

That is why in the address of congratulations passed by this House on Tuesday 13 September we congratulated and pledged our loyalty "to His Most Gracious Majesty Charles III, by the grace of God, King of Australia and his other realms and territories, head of the Commonwealth" and we prayed that "under divine guidance Your Majesty's reign may be long and happy, and that it will be marked by peace and prosperity throughout New South Wales, Australia and the Commonwealth of Nations". In the 1947 radio broadcast, the then Princess Elizabeth invited her contemporaries to join her in the resolution to serve the public good. She said:

But I shall not have strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me, as I now invite you to do. I know that your support will be unfailingly given.

I invite all members, regardless of their personal views on constitutional matters, on this occasion of condolence to His Majesty King Charles III and the other members of the royal family, to renew our individual commitment, like Her Late Majesty, to devote our best efforts to the service of the public good.

Now, controversially, as Minister for Employee Relations, I am responsible for the Public Holidays Act of 2010. In that capacity it fell to me to give formal effect in New South Wales to the call of the Prime Minister and

the decision of National Cabinet for a National Day of Mourning for Queen Elizabeth II to be observed on Thursday 22 September 2022 by declaring that day to be an additional public holiday for the whole of the State. On that day a national memorial service will be held at Parliament House in Canberra, with State and Territory leaders in attendance. The service will be broadcast live at 11.00 a.m., beginning with a minute's silence. This is an opportunity for everyone in New South Wales, wherever they may be at that moment, to take time to pause and reflect on the Queen's faithful service, an example that will be remembered for centuries to come.

I note that there was no similar public holiday for the National Day of Mourning for King George VI, for the simple reason that it happened to fall on a Sunday—11 February 1952. When His Majesty King George VI died, it was initially ordered that all New South Wales public offices would be closed on the day of the funeral, Tuesday 28 January 1936, that it be kept by the general public as a "close day of mourning" and that a memorial service be held at 3.00 p.m. that afternoon in The Domain. As this was during the Great Depression, His Majesty King Edward VIII expressed the wish that since the suspension of business activities would probably cause widespread hardship and loss, the day of the funeral not be kept as a National Day of Mourning in the United Kingdom, so no holiday was kept.

The New South Wales Premier then declared that public offices would also remain open, with two minutes of silence to be observed everywhere at noon. The memorial service in The Domain was rescheduled for 6.00 p.m. However, Friday 20 May 1910 was declared a bank holiday throughout New South Wales and observed as a day of public mourning for His Late Majesty King Edward VII, as Saturday 2 February 1901 had been a day of public mourning for Her Late Majesty Queen Victoria. To those who objected to the public holiday, I can only say that it has been 112 years since we last had such a public holiday. May it be many more years before the next such occasion. Long live His Majesty King Charles III.

**The PRESIDENT:** Before I call the next speaker, I note to members that I am keeping a speakers' list. Members can approach the chair. The order will be Government, Opposition and then crossbench members after leaders have spoken.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (15:05):** On behalf of the Labor Opposition, I express our sincere condolences and sadness at the death of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. We convey our sympathy to those who are mourning the Queen, including His Majesty King Charles III and other members of the royal family, especially those who have lost not only a queen but a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother. Her Majesty was the longest serving British monarch in history and Queen of the United Kingdom and other Commonwealth realms, including Australia, from 6 February 1952 until September 2022. She was the Queen for 70 years.

For 87 per cent of the people of New South Wales, she sat on the throne for their entire lives. They have known no-one else. In doing so, the Queen, her likeness and her quiet, stoic and dignified reign are embedded in our national history and identity. At a time in history when the individual is revered, the Queen was more than one individual; she was a symbol of Britain and the broader Commonwealth, a representative of a form of government much debated and a dedicated servant to all that her position entailed. She was at once known but at the same time deliberately unknown.

In February this year this Parliament marked the first time that any British monarch had celebrated a platinum jubilee. Her Majesty served for 70 years and 214 days. During her reign Her Majesty oversaw extraordinary social and cultural change throughout the Commonwealth. Think of what the world was like in 1952 and think of what it is like today. At the time of her accession on 6 February 1952, Her Majesty became a working mother. At the same time women had not yet won the right to remain employed after marriage, let alone after they had had children.

Queen Elizabeth II had no guide or plan for how she would undertake these duties with children; she just did it. Her Majesty was the first of our heads of State to ever visit Australia during their rule and she proceeded to do so on 16 occasions. On her first visit, shortly after her coronation, Her Majesty visited this very Chamber on 4 February 1954, becoming the first British sovereign to open an Australian parliament. In an address to welcome Her Majesty, Labor Party MLC Gertrude Melville said:

For us there is wonderful inspiration to be found in Your Majesty's ability to combine the duties of paramount office in our British Commonwealth with that of wife and mother.

Your example is a reminder to us all that society, as at present constituted, rightly demands women's more extensive interest or participation in public life.

It is clear that many things have changed and happened under her reign. She has borne witness to many significant events, good, bad, sad and often very challenging. Former New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark described her as a walking encyclopedia for the generations of leaders throughout the Commonwealth. Former Prime Minister Clark explained that, while the Queen would never offer unsolicited advice as a constitutional monarch, she would have such a wealth of experience that you could touch any button with Her Majesty and she would

know something about it. During her reign Her Majesty oversaw the appointment of 16 Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and 17 Prime Ministers in Australia. She worked with 170 other leaders, who she met and engaged with across the Commonwealth and the rest of the world. Following her coronation on 2 June 1953, Queen Elizabeth made the following statement in a radio broadcast:

Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust.

Let us remember that she spent most of her early life as third in line to the throne. She was not born destined to be Queen, but Her Majesty went on to set the standard for public duty and public service. Her dedication to public service was described by former Prime Minister Paul Keating as "a lesson in dedication to a lifelong mission in what she saw as the value of what is both enduringly good and right." It was a term of service unlike much else that is asked of anyone around the world. Keating also remarked, "It was more than one person should ever have been asked to do". But she did it with acceptance, wisdom and grace, sombre when required and with humour when the occasion presented itself.

As we express our condolences today during this time of mourning and reflection, I also pause to say with great respect that we should make space within our public discourse to listen to the voices of First Nations people. While Queen Elizabeth's reign oversaw substantial, defining moments for First Nations people and reconciliation in Australia—including the 1967 referendum, land rights and the drafting of the Uluru Statement from the Heart—during the same period, generations of Aboriginal children continued to be stolen and government policies put many First Nations people into intergenerational economic deprivation and disadvantage. The social and historical context of the role of the monarchy in Australia has reminded us of those unresolved issues between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in this country. We should be able to sit with that at the same time as mourning the death of our monarch.

Over 70 years Australia has observed Her Majesty evolve from a young Queen, thrust into a near-indentured lifetime of service, to a committed, dignified leader of the Commonwealth. Queen Elizabeth II was a consistent figure in our recent history, and we will not see her like again. Opposition members extend our sympathy to those who mourn Her Majesty and express our gratitude for her lifetime of dedicated service.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning) (15:11):** Serving for 70 years, Queen Elizabeth II became the only monarch most of us have ever known. As Leader of The Nationals, I mourn Her Late Majesty's passing and celebrate her extraordinary life of service and stability. I also make some comments on behalf of my family. My grandmother Meg Smyth, who passed away a few years ago, was a very staunch monarchist, and she just loved the Queen. She loved her style and everything about her, so it would be remiss of me not to mention my grandmother when I speak to the motion, and also my mum and my two aunties Jan and Pam.

Over the past couple of days, our family texts have been running hot. We all watched the funeral last night from different parts of the State, and my mum and my aunties told me that they remember my grandmother bringing them down to Sydney on the train from Gunnedah in 1963 when the Queen was visiting Australia. They stayed with Aunty Loris and had a great time, and it evoked a wonderful childhood memory for them. My grandmother would not have allowed the Queen to be in New South Wales without taking her daughters to see her. There is a message in that not just about fond family memories, which I am sure many people in the Chamber have, but also about strong women wanting to share the experience with their daughters. That was certainly what my grandmother was.

When we remember and acknowledge the Queen's life, it is very fair to say that over her reign she saw unprecedented social, cultural and technological change. She was not afraid to embrace that, modernising the monarchy from day one. Her coronation in June 1953 was televised, despite the opposition of then Prime Minister Winston Churchill. Millions gathered around TV sets across the world, many of them for the first time, to watch as Queen Elizabeth II made her oath. As the Hon. Penny Sharpe has mentioned, the Queen served numerous Prime Ministers and witnessed numerous US Presidents and seven popes during her time. She also consulted with 16 Australian Prime Ministers and 16 governors-general serving in her name. She was the patron of more than 20 Australian associations and charities.

As well as being the Queen, she was a mother, a wife, a grandmother and a great-grandmother—roles that she carried out with the same sense of vocation and human kindness as she did the role of monarch. In many ways Her Late Majesty stood amongst us and resonated with our experiences, and I think that is particularly true for those of us from the regions. As a mechanic during the Second World War, the then Princess Elizabeth worked alongside others and showed firsthand how to roll up one's sleeves and serve one's country. It is said that Princess Auto Mechanic, which is an endearing moniker she was given during the war, retained the ability to assess engine issues well into her 90s. She was truly unafraid of getting her hands dirty, which is something that we can all admire.



Famously, when the war ended, then Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret snuck out to join the VE Day celebrations, just like thousands of people right across this country, particularly in regional towns, dancing amongst the people and sharing in their ownership of such a momentous accomplishment for a Commonwealth that was on the brink of surrender just four years earlier. That confident, dutiful and witty spirit would come to define her steady reign.

Queen Elizabeth II was devoted to our service. As other members have said, she became the first reigning monarch to visit Australia, and it was estimated that three-quarters of Australians turned out to see her in person. In a dozen tours she saw every corner of the country, including visiting our State of New South Wales 12 times. She had a particular fondness for rural Australia, noting on tour in 2000 that she held a deep connection with our people, describing Australia as a "rugged, honest, creative land". The love for regional Australia was always repaid, and celebrations like our royal agricultural shows will continue to honour her legacy.

In the same way that Her Late Majesty remarked on her first tour of Australia that she was "proud to be at the head of a nation that has achieved so much", we will be eternally proud of the legacy that she has left and the inspiration that she has given to so many, particularly women and particularly those in the bush. Other members have remarked that Her Late Majesty also made history in this very Chamber, becoming the first sovereign in history to open an Australian Parliament. Crowds lined Macquarie Street to catch a glimpse of Her Late Majesty and her late husband, the Duke of Edinburgh.

Her life was not without unhappiness and troubles, but our memories of Her Late Majesty will be filled with that image of gently smiling dedication that she showed throughout her life. While her role in public life was tightly choreographed and she often had to keep a straight face, in her later years we were also given glimpses of Her Late Majesty's sense of humour. Many will remember that as part of her platinum jubilee celebrations in June, Her Late Majesty was filmed having tea with Paddington Bear in a sketch marking her 70 years on the throne. As the celebrations were about to begin, Paddington offered her his beloved snack, a marmalade sandwich, which, he said, he always keeps for emergencies under his famous red hat. "So do I", replied the Queen, opening up her signature black handbag and taking out one of her own.

As part of the opening ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games, who can forget when Her Late Majesty made a dramatic entrance with the help of another British icon, James Bond? I am sure Australians will also fondly remember when Hockeyroos Jayde Taylor and Brooke Peris were left stunned in 2014 when Her Late Majesty appeared to photobomb their selfie at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, smiling in the background of their picture. That image instantly went viral across the world. We will forever cherish those fond memories and many others, together with her tireless service and dedication.

Her Late Majesty will always be a role model for women across the world, including me. She came to the throne at a time when men still wielded all the power, and so was a vital role model—truly a woman in a man's world. Her commitment and dedication to her own job and to her role as a mother, a grandmother and a great-grandmother paved the way for other women to dedicate themselves to their careers while still having a family life. It is particularly interesting to talk about as the mother of daughters. When the Queen passed away, both my girls were certainly aware of her passing. My eldest daughter, Annabelle, who is nine, put it very poignantly when she said, "Mum, it'll be a long time before we have another queen again". That is a message for young girls—to know that there are female role models like Her Majesty that they can and should continue to look up to and hold in high esteem.

For me, the Queen is a shining example of how great change is made not by the noisiest or the most aggressive but through patience and determination. She had a profound belief in and deep understanding of her mission to make the world a better place whilst maintaining herself as a constant pillar of support and reassurance for her people in the UK, across the Commonwealth and across the world. At the time of her platinum jubilee, in a documentary called *Elizabeth: The Unseen Queen*—which was part-narrated by Her Late Majesty—she spoke the words of an Australian Aboriginal proverb, which are fitting words to reflect on at this time:

We are all visitors to this time, this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose here is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love ... and then we return home.

Whilst our Elizabethan era must sadly draw to a close, the Crown will welcome in a new era under King Charles III. We step into the future with both retrospection and anticipation. God save the King.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (15:18):** I also express my condolences on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Along with our leader in this place, I express the thoughts and the good wishes of the Opposition. I do so especially to her family, her children and her grandchildren. The loss of any parent or grandparent is deeply sad. It leaves a gap in the world that simply cannot be filled, and I acknowledge that many Australians will be feeling that loss now. I agree with the previous speaker, the Hon. Sarah Mitchell: That will especially be the case

in regional New South Wales and regional Australia, where the Queen visited on many of her tours around our country.

In a remarkable life, Queen Elizabeth was the longest serving British monarch. In a world where the pace of change seems relentless, the Queen was an almost singular constant. Over the seven decades and 214 days between her accession and her death, the United Kingdom changed dramatically. Her accession in 1952 was before the Suez crisis, and before many of the colonies of the British Empire went on to gain their independence. It was before the United Kingdom applied to join the European Economic Community in 1961 and then departed the European Union in January 2020—all under her reign.

The Queen served with generations of British Prime Ministers, including Churchill. She served with generations of Australian Prime Ministers, including Menzies. Our country changed too over that time. At the start of her reign, our largest export market was the United Kingdom. It is now China. At the start of her reign, 48 per cent of our citizens who were born overseas came from the United Kingdom. Now 48 per cent of our people have at least one parent born overseas, and almost a quarter of us speak a language other than English at home. Over those seven decades the New World did indeed become a new world. It will be unsurprising if discussion now turns in time to our future constitutional arrangements.

We also acknowledge today that the new world was built beside the world's oldest continuous civilisation. It is right that we first deal with our country's relationship with First Nations people. When it came to reflections on Her Majesty's contributions—I agree with the Leader of the Opposition here—as usual, Keating said it best when he said:

In the 20th century, the self became privatised, while the public realm, the realm of the public good, was broadly neglected. Queen Elizabeth understood this and instinctively attached herself to the public good against what she recognised as a tidal wave of private interest and private reward. And she did this for a lifetime. Never deviating.

I thank Queen Elizabeth II for her public service. I also thank her for her defence of the public good. I express my condolences to her family and to all those who mourn her loss. May she rest in peace.

**The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (15:21):** I acknowledge the assistance of Edwin Dyga from my office and his input into this condolence speech. Edwin is a true monarchist and royalist, to those who know him, and I thought it would be most fitting that he contribute to this occasion. It is a melancholy honour to speak on the condolence motion for the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I am probably a lot older than most in this Chamber—something sometimes to be proud of, maybe, and sometimes not. But I can vividly remember starting at school and learning the national anthem, as it was then, *God Save the Queen*. In every classroom, up above the blackboard, right beside the single radio speaker that was mounted on the wall, was a portrait of the Queen.

Of course, when I first started to work and earn money, it was our old paper notes. There was the old, reliable \$1 note with the Queen's head portrayed on it. I have proudly taken the oath to the Crown twice in my life, once when I was sworn into this Chamber in 2019 and previously, in 1982, when I was sworn in as a New South Wales police officer, swearing to uphold the law and peace on behalf of Her Majesty. To my understanding, only my colleague the Hon. Mark Latham, when he was sworn into Federal Parliament, and also Deputy President the Hon. Wes Fang, who swore an oath of allegiance when he was commissioned as an officer in the Australian Army, join with me in this unique position. As members can see, the Queen has been a constant in my life.

The Queen defined an era. In her reign of 70 years, she saw popes, Presidents and Prime Ministers come and go. Born on 21 April 1926, Elizabeth, Princess of York, was to be a living witness to history in some of its most turbulent times. From her infancy in the aftermath of the First World War, she witnessed the ravages of the Second World War, the Cold War that followed after it, the construction and dismantling of the Berlin Wall, the often-painful process of decolonisation, the Suez crisis, the United Kingdom's entry into the European Economic Community and later exit from the European Union, and the continued political and social transformation of England, Europe and the world.

I recall seeing an old photograph of her in the uniform of the Auxiliary Territorial Service, which was the women's auxiliary to the British Armed Forces in the Second World War. She turned 18 in 1944 and insisted on joining. I understand that King George prevented her from being given a special rank, possibly at her own behest, so she started as a second subaltern and was later promoted to junior commander, which is the equivalent of a captain. Elizabeth was a pillar of strength whom the public could always turn to and draw from in times of crisis and emergency. The press of the time endearingly dubbed her, as the Leader of The Nationals has already mentioned, "Princess Auto Mechanic" after she later completed a course in vehicle maintenance so she could be of direct practical use to the war effort. I point this out to illustrate that, from the beginning, her heart and mind were always with the people.

When the palace was bombed in the London Blitz, Elizabeth the Queen Mother was reported as saying, "I am glad we have been bombed. Now we can look the East End in the eye." When their country was under assault in the war, the people derived hope from the fact that their sovereign was with them, not just symbolically or morally, but in a very real, physical way. This is what Elizabeth gave them. It is something that is very difficult to quantify in economic terms, but it is doubtless one of the most important factors in maintaining morale on the home front. Yes, she was born into a position of privilege, but that privilege came with a responsibility few could shoulder, and she never let it get in the way of relating to her subjects, whoever and wherever they may be.

Queen Elizabeth became queen while touring Kenya, upon hearing the sad news of the death of her father, King George. She was only 25 at the time, and overnight became the head of the Commonwealth as well as head of state in the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, Pakistan, and Ceylon which is now Sri Lanka. Her presence on the national and international stage was subsequently marked by stoic resilience as well as grace. Indeed, Queen Elizabeth's grace has become somewhat emblematic. It goes without saying that, in an era of scandal, she has always carried herself with a regal demeanour that has been an example to heads of state the world over.

The Queen Mother was once asked what the most important thing was about raising children. She replied it was instilling in them a sense of manners. This is obviously one of the greatest virtues exemplified by Elizabeth II in her life of public service. It is perhaps the most recognisable thing that defined her relationship with the press and the common man in times of peace. Cynics occasionally parody this but, as we reflect on a news cycle that is routinely stained by the bad behaviour of public officials, I believe that, deep down inside, we all understand that the values Elizabeth II represented are fundamentally and inherently good. Her passing has created a void that will not easily be filled.

Many millions across the globe looked to the Queen as a symbol of stability and continuity. Even now, in her absence, we can see that her memory will be cherished. In a time when social change seems to be forever accelerating, that sense of continuity can be invaluable. It also cannot be forgotten that Elizabeth II and her family embody a people, its history, heritage and traditions in a very real and tangible form. This is an institution that harks back to time immemorial, before recorded history, from which we derive the legitimacy of our system of government, our law and the ancient liberties of our civil society.

It is we who are privileged to be able to take part in that tradition, here in New South Wales in this Legislative Council in 2022. In this sense, the monarch was and remains a fundamentally unifying symbol and institution: One that transcends political divides. I believe that it is for this reason that the institution has survived multiple republican challenges and will continue to do so in the near future. Queen Elizabeth II passed away at Balmoral at the age of 96 on 8 September. She has been succeeded by our current monarch, His Majesty King Charles III. May Elizabeth's soul be received into heaven, and long live the King.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth, and Minister for Tourism) (15:29):** It is a sombre but profound privilege to reflect on the service and sacrifice of Queen Elizabeth II, whose passing has generated both deep sorrow and shared reflection for the people of our State and nation. Queen Elizabeth did not choose to sit on the British throne. Her accession was predetermined by an entrenched system of historical inheritance and the abdication of her uncle King Edward VIII. While Elizabeth did not choose her title, she did make the choice to serve and to serve well. She is the longest serving British monarch in history, and she has touched the lives of millions of people around the globe. On her coronation in 1953, Elizabeth pledged that:

Throughout all my life and with all my heart I shall strive to be worthy of your trust.

She held to that commitment every day of the following 70 years. Elizabeth's dedication to her role was unwavering throughout her life, and it was the hallmark of her reign. It shone out through her authenticity, her integrity and in the relationship of trust she developed with the countries and communities of the Commonwealth. Here in Australia, Queen Elizabeth was the only reigning monarch to have set foot on our soil. She visited us a total of 16 times during her life, including a tour of New South Wales in 1954 through Sydney, Newcastle, Lismore, Casino, Dubbo, Wollongong, Bathurst, Lithgow, Katoomba and Wagga Wagga. This 1954 tour virtually stopped the nation and, coincidentally, became the first televised event in Australian history.

A deeply entrenched part of the Australian character that has crystallised over generations is that we understand and respect what it means to be given a job and to do that job properly. This is an idea to which we all aspire and that we have seen so poignantly through the selflessness of our citizens through recent floods and fires. It is an idea that the Queen embodied every day of her life. Speaking before the United Nations in 2010, Her Late Majesty hoped that, when judged by future generations, it would be her sincerity, her willingness to take the lead and her determination to do the right thing that would stand the test of time. I have no doubt that will transpire in the decades to come.

Service of this magnitude comes with extreme sacrifice. As one of the most disciplined public figures of the past century, Queen Elizabeth fulfilled her duties with determined detachment from the politics of the day and an abnegation of her private opinions. In this way, Elizabeth made an enormous sacrifice to the institution of British governance. She was, as noted by former British Prime Minister David Cameron, "a rock of stability in a world of constant change". This stability did not prevent the monarchy from adapting and responding to the changing values of global society. On the contrary, the stability emanating from the Crown was itself manifested in the Queen's pragmatic and measured responses to change.

First, Elizabeth coalesced the sacramental dimensions of the British monarchy with an acceptance that the title of head of state in the twenty-first century rests on more secular foundations. Second, Queen Elizabeth reframed the relationship between the United Kingdom and post-colonial states. When she acceded to the throne in 1952, there was talk of another mighty "Elizabethan age". Looking back, this idea was likely a product of colonial conceit—an impression that Elizabeth confronted by granting independence to dozens of colonial nations during her time as monarch. Partly to her credit, the United Kingdom continues to have strong diplomatic ties with a vast majority of these states. Third, Elizabeth was a source of continuity through the significant political change that has occurred in the United Kingdom.

As monarch, her first Prime Minister was Winston Churchill, with whom she worked closely during the Second World War. She saw her country and the world experience profound change through the convention-smashing sixties, the international political upheaval of the eighties and the technological revolution of the early twenty-first century. More recently, Elizabeth remained silent on the topic of Brexit and had been seated on the throne for 23 years before the current Prime Minister, Liz Truss, was even born. Last but not least, the Queen embraced technology as a new way of connecting to her constituencies. She sent her first email in 1976 and her first Instagram post in 2019. These improvements in technology worked both ways: She was able to communicate directly with us, but social media has also become a mechanism for society to better connect with her and her family. Our hearts broke when images of the Queen sitting alone at her late husband's funeral due to COVID-19 measures were trending last year. The change that she saw through her reign was so vast and the chasm between the worlds of 1953 and 2022 is so wide that it is almost impossible to consider that one figure was central to both. Ultimately, no-one can sum up the Queen's approach to change better than herself:

Change has become a constant ... and managing it has become an expanding discipline. The way we embrace it defines our future.

Indeed, over the past 10 days, Australians have stepped into a new chapter of our relationship with the monarchy. For longer than almost all of us in this House have lived, the Queen has been a constant, impervious and deeply reassuring presence on the British throne. Her passing has left a hole in our collective identity, forcing us to step across the border from a long period of certainty and surety into an unfamiliar and unwritten future. For this reason, I do not think many of us will forget what we were doing on the day we learnt that Queen Elizabeth had passed away.

That morning, I was holding a forum with primary and secondary school leaders in New England to discuss the nature and importance of leadership. The reflective and broad-ranging discussion that we subsequently had centred on her life and her values. For these children and so many like them throughout the world, the example that she set and the qualities she lived by were viscerally appreciated and understood. It is extraordinary to see the influence that Queen Elizabeth, a woman who was born in the roaring twenties halfway around the world, continues to have on the way that young people in regional New South Wales conduct themselves at school and in their community.

In conclusion, I simply say that no member of this Chamber, of this Parliament or of any Parliament will ever be expected to make the same sacrifices that Queen Elizabeth made for her country. Fundamentally, every one of us has made the voluntary decision to take the step into public life and lead. That was not a choice that was given to her. The legacy of Queen Elizabeth is a reminder that, regardless of how we become leaders, it is authenticity and a genuine, deep and abiding willingness to serve that will define us—just as it defined her for a lifetime. This is an incredibly sad time for the people of England and the people of Australia. As Queen Elizabeth herself once said, "Grief is the price we pay for love," and love her, we did. God save the King.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD (15:37):** I make a brief contribution on the condolence motion for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Other members have extensively canvassed her life and achievements over 70 years, and I will not repeat them. I acknowledge the contribution from the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Hon. Ben Franklin. It was a very dignified contribution. Instead, I speak from my unusual cultural background, as a person who was born in another Commonwealth country and constitutional monarchy, Canada, and also as a person who comes from a First Nations background. Much has been said in Australia and overseas about the monarchy and First Nations people. I also speak as the secretary of the New South Wales Parliamentary Friends of an Australian Head of State and as a person who voted for Australia to become a republic in November 1999. It is a matter of public record that I would like Australia, ultimately, to have its own head of state.

Members would not be surprised that, growing up in Canada in the 1970s, my republican views put me in a minority in English-speaking regions. In Quebec, the Crown has a completely different meaning. Members would be surprised to know that it put me in a minority within my own family and on my reserve where I grew up. My ancestors fought with the British against the Americans in the American War of Independence and the War of 1812. They did not fight for the British, but alongside them. My late father—a Mohawk-Ojibway-Mississauga First Nation—was a monarchist. My late paternal grandmother was a Mohawk First Nation. The Mohawks were British allies; they were not British subjects. My mother's family was from the United Kingdom, and its members were monarchists. In fact, before migrating to Canada as a war bride after World War I, our great grandmother, Emily, from Wales, was a servant in the home of British Prime Minister Henry Asquith. She used to insist that we all watched the Queen's Christmas Day message.

The First Nation Indian reserve where I grew up had an annual tradition each May to mark Bread and Cheese Day, which was linked to the royal family. The Mohawks would line up to receive a symbolic piece of bread and cheese to commemorate the sovereign, and our treaties and connections to the United Kingdom. Queen Victoria began an annual tradition of gifting blankets to my father's tribe for fighting with the British in the War of 1812 and in 1776. The custom ended in 1901 when Queen Victoria died. In 1924 the ceremony was revived with gifts of bread and cheese to commemorate the links between my First Nation ancestors and the British Crown. It is still part of the tribal calendar, only stopping during COVID. I lined up as a child. Everyone knew that bread and cheese was the symbol of our tribe's allegiance and alliance with the British Empire. Importantly, this was and remains a commemoration that we, as a sovereign First Nation, never surrendered to the United Kingdom, Canada or the United States.

Our First Nation grouping never saw the Crown as a coloniser. We always saw ourselves as a nation on equal footing with nations like the United Kingdom, France, the United States and, later, Canada when it was established. The Mohawks were extraordinary. They were farmers, cultivating corns, beans and squash. They lived in wooden communal houses known as long houses. They were so extraordinary that their government was in the hands of the tribes' women. Men were for warfare; women were logical and less likely to take lives. Therefore, the women were in charge of the government. Six generations ago, my ancestors on my grandfather's side—the Mississaugas—were part of a small group that signed a treaty with the then monarch of the United Kingdom. To this day, members of my childhood community march across the Canadian-American border on Canada Day, 1 July, and on the American Day of Independence, 4 July, to show that we are still sovereign nations. We are not subjects of the monarch, but we are allies of the monarch.

My younger brother still participates in those annual ceremonies. They are extraordinary to see: Participants wear traditional clothing and steadfastly refuse to acknowledge the border control guards, dismissing them with a wave of the hand as they walk across the border into the United States. They dismiss them again when they walk back across the border into Canada. When I migrated to Australia in September 1988, I brought those minority republican views with me. But views can mature and mellow over the years. Members may recall that on 14 February 2012 I spoke on the occasion of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee. I said then, and say now, as a republican, I hold deep affection and respect for Her Late Majesty. I was chided by someone within the New South Wales Labor Party for stating that position. I think I appeared on a calendar produced by the Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, poking me in the ribs about that.

Her Late Majesty oversaw many changes in Australia and the Commonwealth and shared in our nation's achievements and moments of difficulty. She was a revered figure and provided comfort and stability to millions. During her seven decades as queen, she visited Australia 16 times, including 12 visits to New South Wales. When I worked for Premier Bob Carr, I had the honour and privilege of serving on the committee that finalised the locations of her visit to New South Wales. We insisted that she visit a tiny community in western New South Wales—I am sorry I cannot remember its name. The entire community voted 100 per cent in favour of the monarchy, so we thought that community deserved a visit from the Queen. I digress. I admire her absolute commitment to her role as sovereign, to the rule of law and to representative democracy. We need only imagine how many times over 70 years Her Late Majesty must have held strong views on policies and decisions of the day but maintained unfailing discipline to remain independent.

Republican or not, I had and have genuine regard for Her Late Majesty. After all, disagreeing with the nature of an office should not prevent a mature person from admiring how an office holder has executed her duties under that same office. Similarly, a mature nation can distinguish between the personal respect that we may hold for members of the British Crown versus the legal question of whether the Crown should still be the apex of Australia's Government. While I believe Australians will naturally come to consider these questions following Her Late Majesty's passing, now is a time for reflection, not hard propositions. On that note, I agree strongly with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

Hence, while the British Crown remains Australia's and New Zealand's Head of State, I will afford that institution all due respect. That is why I attended the official proclamation of His Majesty King Charles III on 11 September on the steps of Parliament with my wife, Julia, and New South Wales Labor leader Chris Minns. We were the two sole Labor parliamentarians at the event. I thought it was important to do so, as it is important that I should today wish King Charles III the very best of health and success in his endeavours and duties as King. I thank the House for its consideration.

**Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE (15:46):** I am very pleased to take part in this condolence motion concerning Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. I, like many others in the other place, in Australia and around the world have felt extreme sadness at the passing of Her Late Majesty. The great admiration that I have always felt for Her Late Majesty will remain with me for the rest of my life. My fondest memories of Her Late Majesty are when, as a lieutenant of the 45th Infantry Battalion, I was selected as a member of her guard of honour during her first official visit to Australia in 1954. Members of the battalion stood 1½ metres apart, with rifles at hand, to keep order on the streets of Sydney at the time.

Millions of Australians lined the streets of Sydney for her visit. Afterwards, I was invited to the Trooping of the Colour in London and attended the Queen's garden party at Buckingham Palace. I met Her Late Majesty and her dear husband, Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh. As our longest serving monarch, Her Late Majesty was a symbol of unity, faith and consistency. Her Late Majesty was born on 21 April 1926. She passed away on 8 September 2022 at the age of 96. We are mourning with the royal family and the Commonwealth. Waves of great and terrible sadness are resonating throughout the whole world. Her Late Majesty passed away at her Scottish residence at Balmoral Castle. Buckingham Palace released the statement:

The Queen died peacefully at Balmoral this afternoon. The King and The Queen Consort will remain at Balmoral this evening and will return to London tomorrow.

Prime Minister Albanese said that the Queen served during the fastest changing period of the world in human history. Some of the global events she bore witness to are the start and end of World War II, the start and end of the Cold War, the United Kingdom's entry to and exit from the European Union and the advent of the internet. Fourteen Presidents of the United States of America, 15 Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and 16 Prime Ministers of Australia have shared in these events. There was the arrival of her four children, eight grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. In 2001 Her Majesty quoted English psychiatrist Colin Parkes when she stated, "Grief is the price we pay for love".

The Queen's funeral was held yesterday. More than 4.1 billion people across the world turned on their televisions to witness that grim and historic event. With grace and solemn attitudes, the members of the royal family farewelled Her Late Majesty for the last time. Her Late Majesty, as we know, was a devout Christian. As the English monarch, she was the head of the Church of England. However, her faith went beyond mere duty and protocol. Her Majesty the person was a true believer in the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is evident through her weekly attendance at Crathie Kirk, her love of hymns, her knowledge of the *Bible*, and her love and respect for all faiths. The Queen said in one of her annual Christmas messages:

Christ's example has taught me to seek to respect and value all people, of whatever faith or none.

Our prayers are with the royal family for their irreplaceable loss. We will never have another monarch like Queen Elizabeth II. I finish with a reading from the *Bible*, John 11:25:

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die."

May God bless the royal family and King Charles as our new monarch. Amen.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (15:52):** Less than two weeks ago Australians woke to the news that Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had passed away, aged 96. There is no doubt that her passing has had a profound impact on people not just across the Commonwealth but across the world. The news coverage over the last few days has been comprehensive. My family and I were glued to the television last night watching the service.

Officials estimate that some 750,000 people had lined up along the streets of London to pay their respects to the late Queen, who lay at Westminster before she was laid to rest at Windsor Castle last night. The Queen's funeral was attended by about 100 Presidents and heads of government as well as kings, queens and emperors from around the world. The event is predicted to have been watched by up to four billion people globally in what would have been the most watched event in history. It was an entirely fitting end to the life of an incredible woman. It was a beautiful, poignant Christian service. It was pleasing to see at that historic event her great-grandchildren, especially Princess Charlotte, who is part of the next generation of women.

Her passing brought to an end the reign of the longest reigning British monarch, which is an amazing feat in its own right but one that undeniably holds greater weight as a woman and particularly one who was unlikely to ever accede to the throne until her uncle, Edward VIII, abdicated in her father's favour in 1936. For 70 years Queen Elizabeth II reigned in a world dominated by men. Her accession to the throne in 1952 at the age of just 25 occurred at a time when most girls her age were discouraged from working outside the home and certainly were not commonly seen in leadership roles.

Think about the state of Britain when she first came to power. Seven years on from the Second World War, Winston Churchill was in his final years as Prime Minister; Britain launched its first nuclear bomb trial, using Australia's own Montebello Islands; tea rationing ended, for the first time since 1939; and a great smog blanketed London, killing 4,000 people. Over the next 70 years Her Majesty reigned through major global conflicts and economic, political and social crises. She was served by 15 British Prime Ministers, including three women, during her reign.

Her affinity with Australia was strong. In 1954, at the age of 27, she was the first reigning British monarch to visit Australia, travelling to 57 towns during her 58-day tour, in what was at the time the biggest event ever planned here. She returned to our shores 15 times during her reign. But her reign transcended the Commonwealth. She was the first British monarch to visit a communist country when she visited Yugoslavia in 1972. In 1986 she was the first British monarch to visit China. And in 1991 she was the first British monarch to address the United States Congress. Travel was always a priority and dominated much of her reign. Indeed, before she had even become Queen, she is known to have said:

... there is none of my father's subjects, from the oldest to the youngest, whom I do not wish to greet ...

This continued presence across the Commonwealth and the meaningful interactions it allowed between her and her people have surely contributed to the enduring success and cohesion of these nations. But throughout all of this and the management of a work schedule that, I am sure, many of us would find daunting, the Queen was managing also the responsibilities of being a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother of four and later a grandmother of eight and great-grandmother of 12. It is these responsibilities that are in many regards the most important. Princess Anne, the Queen's eldest daughter, once said of her mother's unwavering affection:

... we understood what the limitations were in time and the responsibilities placed on her as monarch in the things she had to do and the travels she had to make. But I don't believe any of us for a second thought that she didn't care for us in exactly the same way as any other mother did.

Perhaps it was this deep connection to and affection for family that truly humanised the Queen in the eyes of the broader public. A great story circulated following Her Majesty's passing from the great humanitarian and trauma surgeon David Nott, who met the Queen shortly after returning from the Syrian conflict in 2014. Mr Nott said of the encounter:

I don't know why it happened then, or why it should have been the Queen who breached the dam ...

My bottom lip started to go and all I wanted to do was burst into tears, but I held myself together as best I could. I hoped she wouldn't ask me another question about Aleppo. I knew if she did, I would completely lose control. She looked at me quizzically and touched my hand.

She then had a quiet word with one of the courtiers, who pointed to a silver box in front of her. I watched as she opened the box, which was full of biscuits. "These are for the dogs," she said ...

We fed the biscuits to the corgis under the table, and for the rest of the lunch she took the lead and chatted about the dogs, how many she had, what their names were, how old they were.

All the while we were stroking and petting them, and my anxiety and distress drained away.

"There," the Queen said. "That's so much better than talking, isn't it?"

The Queen was, quite simply, one of the most remarkable leaders in history. There is no doubt that she has and will continue to inspire so many people but, in particular, women. Her gender may have been irrelevant to her capacity to do her job, but it is entirely relevant when considering the success of her reign. By serving for more than seven decades with unwavering dedication, stoicism, composure and, might I add, much style, she has helped to normalise the notion of a successful female leader. In 2011 at the British Commonwealth Summit in Australia, the Queen remarked on the theme of the summit, which was Women as Agents of Change, saying:

It reminds us of the potential in our societies that is yet to be fully unlocked, and it encourages us to find ways to allow girls and women to play their full part.

She added:

We must continue to strive in our own countries and across the Commonwealth together to promote that theme in a lasting way beyond this year.

More than a decade on, this statement still rings true and is something we must continue to strive for. Across Australia, women are increasingly leading change and growth across every industry from finance to medicine, law to aviation, the public sector, our most successful startups and, of course, the heart of our communities—our sporting organisations.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! According to sessional order, proceedings are now interrupted for questions.

*Questions Without Notice*

**MEMBER FOR PENRITH**

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (16:00):** My question without notice is directed to the Leader of the Government and the Minister for Finance, and Minister for Employee Relations. Does the Minister support the return of Stuart Ayres to Cabinet?

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance, and Minister for Employee Relations) (16:00):** What an extraordinary question. There must be so many things that they can ask about such as how the Government is running in relation to policy issues and the first thing that pops into the mind of the Leader of the Opposition is to ask a political question about Stuart Ayres. Ask a question about policy. Because they do not have a policy. Not a policy position emerges from those opposite.

**The Hon. Anthony D'Adam:** Point of order—

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Minister will resume his seat. I have a predictable point of order from the Hon. Anthony D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The Minister is arguing the question. He needs to come back and address the question.

**The PRESIDENT:** Indeed. The Minister will directly answer the question or perhaps just resume his seat.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I acknowledge that the member felt compelled to interject on my brilliant oratory relating to the question. Maybe—just maybe—those opposite would understand, because they will never be in government, that decisions relating to who is in Cabinet is a matter for the Premier. It is not a matter for me; it is not a matter for anyone else; and it is certainly not a matter for the Leader of the Opposition. So the answer to the question is that it does not matter what I think. It is a matter of what the Premier thinks and what decision he makes in relation to Mr Ayres.

**OPAL CARD MACHINES**

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (16:02):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance, and Minister for Employee Relations, and Leader of the Government. How is the New South Wales Government responding to calls by union officials to engage in the sabotage of public assets?

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Point of order: That question contained argument.

**The PRESIDENT:** That point of view perhaps depends on where you stand in relation to the issue. Because I stand on both ends of that issue in trying to adjudicate on this matter, I ask the Minister to avoid any argument that might be prevalent in the question.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance, and Minister for Employee Relations) (16:03):** It grieves me to have to talk about this issue. There they are—the Alex Claassens supporters sitting opposite. They asked me about Stuart Ayres. When are they going to get Alex Claassens off the administrative committee of the Labor Party? Are they ever going to do that? They should take him off the administrative committee. The issue relates to the year of the strike, as announced by Mr Morey and carried out by Mr Claassens on behalf of the Labor Party by instructing Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] members and calling for the misuse of emergency equipment and the sabotage of public assets at train stations. This memo instructed members to disable Opal machines in any way possible, including by the misuse of emergency egress buttons. Anyone who has brought up a child has at some time given them a life lesson: Emergency equipment is only to be used for its proper purpose. To misuse it is irresponsible, often dangerous and in many cases illegal.

The Passenger Transport (General) Regulation 2017 provides a penalty of \$5,500 for any person who, without reasonable excuse, uses or interferes with any emergency equipment on a station. The memo issued by Claassens also gave a hotline number for members with less experience in sabotaging emergency and electrical equipment to call for instructions in those dark arts. In calling off the planned sabotage for now, Mr Claassens claimed that many members were looking forward to the upcoming action of turning off the Opal gates completely. Do those opposite really support this stuff? I have not heard one person from amongst those opposite



saying one word condemning this stuff. Do they support this stuff? They should stand up if they do. Good on you, Abigail.

This contrasts with an email I received last week from a train driver who had test-driven the Mariyung Fleet and helped establish that they were safe as configured. He urged us to put a fair and reasonable pay offer directly to the workforce and bypass the unrepresentative RTBU, which is what we intend to do. The contrast could not be clearer. We are a government that wants to end the strikes, put extra pay in the pockets of workers and bring world-class trains into service. That is our side. Labor and Claassens are denying workers a pay rise, pressuring them to threaten their livelihoods and safety with illegal sabotage and trying to keep our train technology in the twentieth century.

#### BEACHES LINK

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (16:06):** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Metropolitan Roads. Does the Minister accept that the Beaches Link project is paused, given Minister Stokes' comments that saying it is paused is "an absolutely fair characterisation"?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (16:06):** Thank you very much for a question on policy and a question on the eight motorways that the Perrottet Government has delivered or has in delivery. What a delightful question. I am pleased to be part of a government that does not just put out a press release like the Hon. Walt Secord, former communication director to the Premier. We have stood at projects that we have opened, including the road to nowhere—the M2, that those opposite said they would never build—NorthConnex, which they opposed; and all of the projects that we have not just announced but also delivered. I thank the Hon. John Graham for his interest because the New South Wales Government's vision for Sydney is of an integrated railway. Those opposite may well laugh but for us this is an important component.

**The Hon. John Graham:** Point of order: My point of order relates to direct relevance. The Minister is welcome to give some context, but it is a specific road and a specific question.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Minister has given a fair degree of context. I draw the Minister directly to answer the question, which is focused specifically on the Beaches Link project.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** What we know—

**The Hon. Rose Jackson:** I am in favour of you.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Minister has the call, not the Hon. Rose Jackson.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** We know for a fact that under those opposite the Beaches Link will never be built. Mr Minns has said that he will never, ever build anything on the northern beaches. He will never look after the people of the northern beaches because he does not believe that we need infrastructure anywhere in the northern beaches—one of the busiest roads in Australia. We have a vision for an integrated road network that gets people where they need to go. The Beaches Link and the Gore Hill Freeway Connection project—

**The Hon. John Graham:** Point of order—

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I think the Minister is coming directly to the question now.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** The Beaches Link and Gore Hill Freeway Connection project will revolutionise how people and goods move between the northern beaches and the rest of Sydney by providing an alternative to the Spit Bridge and Warringah Road corridors. I know because I travel on them twice a day, every day. I have sat at the Spit Bridge while it opens. This is a commitment that this Government has made and will continue to deliver. Since coming to government in 2011, the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals have overseen the biggest infrastructure program in the State's history.

**The Hon. John Graham:** Point of order: I take a point of order on direct relevance. There is a community that wants to know: Is this road paused? The Minister is refusing to acknowledge that—something her colleagues have not done.

**The PRESIDENT:** I uphold the point of order. The Minister will directly answer the question or resume her seat.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** In regard to Beaches Link, the New South Wales Government has been committed to this project for a long time and this commitment remains. I am absolutely committed in this House to ensuring it. Because we have the third part of the historic Western Harbour Tunnel—a historic third harbour crossing tunnel—underway. Stage one has been commenced and stage two will be shortly. The Warringah Freeway upgrade and the Beaches Link are the third part of that. We have a vision for Beaches Link. That

commitment remains. I cannot be any clearer. This Government announces our forward projects. We have megaprojects and \$112 billion of infrastructure projects, of which Beaches Link is a fundamental part. However, as a responsible economic manager, it is important that the Government considers. That is what we do on this side of the House.

Those opposite can go ahead and criticise because this is what the Government does as a responsible economic manager. We realise that there are global headwinds. There are global supply chain issues. Members on the other side of the House might giggle about it and might laugh about it. But the facts remain: We have the M6 underway. We have delivered NorthConnex and WestConnex. We will deliver the Rozelle Interchange. Those opposite should come with me. I have got mud on my boots from being down in tunnels that we are digging—*[Time expired.]*

#### GREYHOUND MILLION DOLLAR CHASE PRIZE MONEY

**The Hon. MARK PEARSON (16:11):** My question is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, representing the Minister for Hospitality and Racing. Will the Minister advise whether the Government is providing any of the prize money in the Greyhound Million Dollar Chase this year?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth, and Minister for Tourism) (16:11):** I very much appreciate the question. Of course, it is quite appropriate and, in fact, symbiotic because now, as Minister for Tourism, I have responsibility for Destination NSW, which has so many excellent events in this State.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** None in western Sydney.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There are many in western Sydney. I am extremely excited about all of those events. I will have to take the specifics of the question on notice because I do not have those details to hand. But I will certainly speak to my colleague the Hon. Kevin Anderson, who has responsibility of this matter, and provide a response to the House as quickly as possible.

#### BUDGET AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (16:12):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals in government are delivering on recent budget announcements for the people of New South Wales?

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning) (16:12):** I would love to. I am very excited. I thank the honourable member for his question. It is a fantastic budget; I was about to use an unparliamentary term there. It was a particularly fantastic budget for early childhood education. We saw amazing investments in the early years. In fact, it was a record budget for early childhood education, with \$15.9 billion over the next decade for the early childhood education and care sector.

**The Hon. Courtney Houssos:** All in the forward estimates.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** The member wants to talk about estimates. She did not ask me a single question about early childhood education in budget estimates, so she does not have a very good track record when it comes to this space. Our early years commitment consists of a \$5 billion Affordable and Accessible Childcare and Economic Participation Fund, a \$281.6 million workforce package, a \$376.5 million Brighter Beginnings package, \$1.4 billion in affordable preschool and \$5.8 billion for the introduction of universal pre-kindergarten—outstanding investments in our next generation. These reforms represent the commitment of the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals to build a brighter future and a stronger economy for New South Wales children and families.

**The Hon. Courtney Houssos:** Where are you getting the teachers from? Where are you going to find teachers? You cannot even staff our schools now.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** I hear those opposite talking about workforce. I am really excited and happy to talk about that.

**The Hon. Daniel Mookhey:** Barra's available. He's looking for a job.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** It is actually quite disappointing that those opposite are not listening to this and taking it seriously. We are talking about investing in a crucial workforce for the next generation.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! After some provocation, I call the Hon. Daniel Mookhey to order for the first time.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** The centrepiece of all of these reforms is our workforce. They are the pinnacle to delivering quality early childhood education. They are the faces and the educators that support our children, families and communities every day. We value what they do. Some 94 per cent of the early childhood workforce are women. As a government we are supporting people to gain entry into this valued profession as well as retaining and upskilling our existing workforce. We have a package of \$281.6 million for our early childhood workforce alone. We recently announced a record-breaking 439 successful scholarships as part of our 2022-2023 Early Childhood Education Scholarships Program. Each of the 439 scholars are either commencing or completing their bachelor-level degree. They are eligible for up to \$25,000 in support from our Government to help them complete their degree.

I was very pleased to visit Gumnut Cottage recently with the Premier and the wonderful local member, Victor Dominello, to make this announcement. We met with the lovely Samara, who is one of the successful scholarship recipients. Samara has been working in the early childhood sector for over 20 years and, thanks to this scholarship program, she will be supported to complete her bachelor degree. She is off to study at Charles Sturt University and I wish her all the best, knowing the positive difference that she is already making and will continue to make in the lives of many children. Samara is just one of more than 18,000 prospective early childhood teachers and educators who will be supported to enter the sector and boost their skills, thanks to this workforce package from our Government.

#### **TIMBER INDUSTRY AND FLOOD RELIEF**

**The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (16:16):** My question without notice is directed to the Hon. Sam Faraway, representing the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales. Given that timber harvest and haulage contractors have not qualified for previous flood support, resulting in many businesses closing, what guarantees will the Minister give this industry that the most recent flood relief announcements will include timber harvest and haulage contractors?

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:16):** I thank the member for his question that relates to my colleague in the other House, the Hon. Dugald Saunders, with regard to haulage contractors in the timber sector. As that question is specifically about those timber haulage companies and the support available to them, I will take it on notice and get back to the member in due course.

#### **CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL**

**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (16:17):** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. Castle Hill High School teacher Mr John Connell gave evidence at the inquiry into asbestos at Castle Hill High School on Monday 19 September. He said that he contacted the Minister's office six times about his concerns about asbestos at the school. Why were teachers and students ignored on numerous occasions and potentially exposed to deadly asbestos for years?

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning) (16:17):** I thank the honourable member for her question. In relation to these matters, I repeat at the outset information that I have already relayed in writing to the upper House committee that is conducting this inquiry. The Hon. Courtney Houssos is a member of that committee, so she would or should be well aware that very serious allegations have been made. They have been the subject of investigation by both the Department of Education's Professional and Ethical Standards unit and also SafeWork NSW. We need to make sure that we allow the appropriate authorities, particularly SafeWork, to do their jobs.

Its investigation, I understand, is still being finalised. So I am very conscious of the fact that I certainly do not want to say anything in this Chamber that might impede or have any impact on its investigation or any potential prosecution. I put that on record in answer to the first question that I have been asked by the Opposition in relation to this issue following the committee hearing yesterday. I am aware of the evidence that was given by those teachers and that they said they had contacted my office multiple times. I am also aware that the response back was that that response was delegated to the relevant departmental authorities, including, I think, the director of educational learning. That is my understanding.

We get large numbers of correspondence into our office. There are processes in place for correspondence to go back to people who contact us on a range of matters. I am told and advised that that is what happened in that particular instance. It was not that those messages were ignored or that those people did not get responses. It was that they were delegated for responses from departmental staff, which is the process that is followed in my office—and, I would imagine, in many ministerial offices—given the large number of correspondence items that we receive.

**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (16:19):** I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate that part of her answer where she spoke about the delegation of correspondence? Will she elucidate her answer

and explain whether that delegation of correspondence also occurred when the member for Castle Hill, Ray Williams, contacted her on 26 May and she gave an undertaking to him that an independent assessment would be undertaken at the school?

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning) (16:20):** Again, evidence was given by the member for Castle Hill, Ray Williams, yesterday. He made it clear in his evidence before the committee that he called me the day after he spoke to concerned residents in his electorate, so it was not a delegated response. As a colleague, Ray picked up the phone and raised his concerns.

**The Hon. Courtney Houssos:** He said you did not get back to him.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** If I could answer the question, we had a very thorough discussion that day. I also provided a briefing to him—I believe it was later that day—with the head of School Infrastructure, and more information was sent to him from my office. I spoke to Ray about it again a few weeks after, and I am sure that was raised by the member for Castle Hill in the hearings yesterday. I also make the point—and I think this is really important—that when there are concerns about asbestos and our local asset management units engage a licensed asbestos assessor, those investigators are independent hygienists. They are engaged externally from the department to provide expert advice on the management strategy.

I will be very clear and put on the record that they are not employed by the department but are engaged from an independent panel of hygienists. Independent people have been working at Castle Hill and giving expert advice as far as matters related to asbestos have occurred in that school community. As I said, I do not intend to provide a running commentary on a matter that is still the subject of an active SafeWork investigation. They are very serious matters, make no mistake about that, and any—

**The Hon. Courtney Houssos:** Yes, and that is why we are asking questions.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** If the member would be polite enough to let me answer the question, that would be really helpful. She is a constant interjector today.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Getting some backup from your people would probably help.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Minister has the call.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** Any inference from those opposite that the Government and I do not take this matter seriously is offensive. The reality is that we have had a Professional and Ethical Standards investigation into the allegations at that school. Again, all of the evidence was given by Department of Education officials yesterday at the hearing of the committee of which the Hon. Courtney Houssos is a member, so she would be well aware of that. The other point is that there is an independent investigation underway. [*Time expired.*]

#### REGIONAL HEALTH MINISTERIAL ADVISORY PANEL

**The Hon. WES FANG (16:22):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health. Will the Minister update the House on how the New South Wales Government is incorporating a breadth of experience and expertise in its approach to regional health?

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health) (16:22):** Where do I start? Firstly, I thank the honourable member for the question, and I am really excited to inform the House of our Government's approach. The Liberal Party and The Nationals in government have defined and created the portfolio of Regional Health—and what a portfolio we are working on. As this State's first ever Minister for Regional Health, I know our Government is committed to strengthening the health system in the regions. We want to make sure that every single person has access to outstanding care.

We are truly committed to listening to what is going on from the ground up so that we can work with our communities to deliver what is needed. To achieve that, the New South Wales Government recently announced, established and appointed the regional health advisory panel. The advisory panel draws on the experience of individuals from across the New South Wales health system, the public and private sectors, and regional communities. The appointed members come from all over New South Wales, chaired by Richard Colbran, who is the CEO of the NSW Rural Doctors Network. Richard is an advocate for regional health and is joined by 14 panel members, each with their own on-the-ground experience in a great breadth of areas.

The panel includes a midwife, a pharmacist, a GP, a local health advisory committee chair, an occupational therapist, mayors, nurses, medical educators and more. The knowledge and experience contained in the panel is immense, and it is really exciting. Our panel is made up of those with medical experience and a deep appreciation for regional New South Wales and its communities. I place on the record the names of our regional health advisory panel members: Mr Richard Colbran, Mrs Anna Barwick, Ms Karen Booth, Mrs Jo Caldwell, Ms Leone Crayden, Councillor Rick Firman, Mrs Louise Fox, Ms Laura Hand-Ross, Dr Warren Kealy-Bateman, Councillor Ken

Keith, Professor Jennifer May, Mrs Georgina Rosee, Dr Ayman Shenouda, Miss Meg Austin and Dr Anna Windsor.

The panel is tasked with identifying and outlining actions that can strengthen the rural and regional health system in New South Wales. Members will focus on community engagement and capacity building, workforce strategies, complex health service delivery and digital solutions in rural and regional areas. The first panel meeting will be held this Friday. I have already met with the chair of the panel last week to discuss the issues going forward, what we need to do, my expectations, working together as a group to push forward the rural health plan to address the recommendations from the inquiry and, most of all, to hear from people on the ground to ground truth and ground test all of our policies moving forward. I am incredibly excited to bring in the expertise of those panel members to assist the New South Wales Government in shaping the future of regional health in this State.

#### AGEING AND DISABILITY COMMISSION

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (16:25):** My question is directed to the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services. Given that the Ageing and Disability Commission is chronically underfunded and will be unable to fulfil its statutory functions next financial year under its current projected budget, as revealed by the commissioner during the recent budget estimates hearings, what actions has the Minister taken since budget estimates to secure the funding that the commission needs to function in the manner intended by this Parliament when it passed the enabling legislation?

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services) (16:26):** I thank the honourable member for her question. As explained at budget estimates, the commissioner has the funds required to continue his requirements and his statutory responsibilities for the next financial year. We will be working with him to move forward into future budgets.

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (16:26):** I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate how her answer responds directly to the question as to what actions she has taken since budget estimates to secure that funding?

**The Hon. Damien Tudehope:** Point of order: To use the word "elucidate" does not mean the question is in order. The supplementary question reframed the previous question, which the Minister has answered.

**The PRESIDENT:** The question did not seek an elucidation of the answer of the Minister. In that regard, I rule it out of order.

#### CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (16:27):** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Education and Early Learning. The member for Castle Hill, Ray Williams, has called for an independent audit of Castle Hill High School to reassure the school community that the buildings are safe. Will the Minister conduct that audit?

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning) (16:28):** I refer to the answer that I gave earlier in response to the Hon. Courtney Houssos, but I am happy to put it on the record again and make the point very clear. Whenever we encounter known, assumed or suspected asbestos material on a school site, there are very clear guidelines detailed in the Department of Education's asbestos management plan. The school must contact the local asset management unit, which will in turn engage a licensed asbestos assessor. They are independent hygienists who are engaged externally from the department to provide expert advice on the management strategy. They are not employed by the department and, as I said, they are engaged from an independent panel of hygienists.

In terms of the specifics of the work that has been done at Castle Hill, again, I thought the Department of Education staff who appeared before the committee yesterday certainly made it clear that the school is safe and that we have undertaken the appropriate processes that we needed to in terms of asbestos management in that school community. I think it was very well covered, as I said, by the Department of Education officials who were there yesterday. As I said, the further issues concerning the alleged matters relating to 2016 are currently under investigation by SafeWork.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (16:29):** I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate her answer with respect to how she proposes to manage the concerns that the community still has, given that it has lost all confidence in the capacity of the department to properly manage the asbestos issue in Castle Hill?

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning) (16:29):** As I said, this is a matter that the Department of Education canvassed quite extensively in its appearance before the committee yesterday. Certainly, since 2020, a large amount of work has been done at Castle Hill to remove and remediate

asbestos. Again, that was highlighted quite extensively yesterday. Air monitoring has also been conducted at that school to give assurances that the school is safe. As I have said before, I understand that there are certainly concerns about the allegations back in 2016. We need to let SafeWork do its job. We need to make sure that it is able to do that and is not hindered in any way by the actions of this Parliament or any parliamentary committee. We take that very seriously.

But the school community can certainly have confidence in knowing that all appropriate asbestos remediation work has been carried out. There have been a number of instances where members of the school community have been given advice about the asbestos management work that is happening at that school. As I said earlier and reiterate now, the allegations of 2016 are very concerning. I have made that clear on the public record. But we need to let SafeWork do its job and complete its investigation. Then we will be able to make further comment.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (16:31):** I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elaborate on her earlier answers and explain, in particular, how the Government's introduction of its Local Schools, Local Decisions policy empowered the former principal of Castle Hill High School to do basically whatever she wanted, to walk off the reservation with no monitoring, no checking of any of the protocols on asbestos at that school, endangering over 5,000 staff and students over a five-year period? When will this Government finally put some boundaries and responsibilities around principals so they do not have open slather on not only learning programs but also work health and safety?

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning) (16:31):** There is a bit in that question. First of all, as the member would be aware, Local Schools, Local Decisions is no longer a policy. We now have the School Success Model, which has replaced Local Schools, Local Decisions. I will not go into the specifics of allegations against a former principal in this Chamber because, as I have said and as I reiterate yet again, I do not in any way want to hinder the work that SafeWork is doing or any activity that it may be investigating.

Regarding the work that we do to support principals, generally speaking—the member was quite general about the management and running of a school—we are the Government that set up School Infrastructure NSW. We have regional asset management units that provide support to principals. Earlier this year we also announced an expansion of the number of asset services officers to provide support and oversight to help deal with maintenance matters and any issues that may arise. We are certainly investing in this space so that we can further release principals from not only the maintenance and the workload that it generates but also facility management and other school infrastructure-related tasks. It is important that we have more departmental support and more opportunities for oversight. That is certainly something that our Government has put in place.

#### WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD (16:33):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence. Will the Minister update the House on how the Coalition's decade of delivery continues to provide record infrastructure investment in western Sydney?

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (16:33):** I thank the Parliamentary Secretary for Western Sydney. He is a diligent member who knows all these roads and has seen all these things being built. I thank him for his interest and hard work. It is no secret that during the past 11 years the Liberal-Nationals Government has transformed New South Wales to set up a brighter future for New South Wales families. We have a decade of delivery; those opposite have a year of protest. Through our decade of delivery, we built roads across the city and across the State to ensure that people can move more freely and easily, and that our major freight routes are open to ensure our food and produce can be marketed and distributed across Australia and the globe.

Unlike those opposite, who are more concerned with getting their union mates re-elected—Alex Claassens is up for re-election this month, so watch out because they will all be speaking to Alex and getting him re-elected—and who are happy to stand silently by while the entire public transport network is shut down, we know we are getting on with the job of building and delivering projects to drive New South Wales forward. They just stand by. That is why on 19 August I was excited to join the Premier and the local member for Mulgoa, Tanya Davies, to announce the commencement of major construction on the new M12 Motorway. Western Sydney is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia, and the New South Wales Government is building to secure the future of future generations.

Construction of the new \$2 billion toll-free—toll-free!—M12 Motorway is underway, with work commencing to provide the crucial east-west link between the M7 Motorway at Cecil Hills and The Northern

Road at Luddenham, as well as access to the future western Sydney international airport which is another thing that we are building. The M12 will be a major addition to Sydney's road network. By 2036 it is expected to be used by up to 52,000 vehicles a day, saving motorists up to 16 minutes' travel time between the new airport and the M7. Those opposite do not want to hear this good news. They are just not interested.

The New South Wales Government is investing record funding in major road upgrades across western Sydney to ensure commuters spend less time in traffic and more time doing the things that matter to them most. Over \$76 billion is being invested over the next four years into world-class projects that will not only stimulate the economy and increase employment—so we are the party of the worker—but will also shape cities and benefit communities for generations to come. Our Government is securing a brighter future for New South Wales. It is important to note that while the Opposition leader, Mr Minns, is comparing victim-survivors of domestic violence to people who choose to smoke, our Government is getting on with the job of Premier Perrottet and this Government delivering for the people of New South Wales.

**The Hon. Mark Latham:** Mr President, I ask that the Minister table the notes she is reading from, written for her by her staff, so that the Parliament can analyse answers written by unelected people and given in the Chamber. Can she table the notes and the other material written on there?

**The Hon. Natalie Ward:** It's in *Hansard*.

**The Hon. Mark Latham:** A Minister should be able to answer without reading out other people's material.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order!

### MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY SERVICES

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (16:37):** My question is directed to the Minister for Mental Health, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor. In its submission to the inquiry into ambulance ramping, the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists states:

... it is a constant challenge for emergency department staff to find a safe path for patients such as admission to an inpatient bed, or home with appropriate community supports in place. These dangerous delays and negative experiences are an indicator of widespread system problems across acute psychiatric and community-based mental health care—

Does the Minister accept that her Government's failure to provide enough mental health beds is one of the biggest pressures on our emergency departments?

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health) (16:37):** I thank the honourable member for her question and acknowledge her real and genuine interest in mental health. This Government has invested more in mental health services than has been invested at any other time in the State's history. But I realise it is not all about dollars. The member's question referred directly to situations in our emergency departments when there are higher wait times and difficulty in getting people through.

We know that two of the biggest issues facing the New South Wales health system are the fact that we have people in aged care who should be in aged-care residential facilities because it is the best thing for them and the best place for them to get their care, and also because of the high level of NDIS patients who are taking up beds in our hospitals. Those issues are causing two blockages on the way through. That is why we need to work with the Federal Government to make sure that we can resolve those issues. That is what we are doing. We are doing that, and I can only talk about what is happening now. I have been the Minister for Regional Health for the past year and the mental health Minister for the past three years.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** So you take no responsibility for the failures of the last nine, then?

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Minister has the call.

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR:** What we know through demonstrated evidence is that the best place for people to be supported, in terms of their mental health, is outside of acute care units while they can. When they need an admission to a mental health facility or a mental health ward, it will be available to them in New South Wales. That is absolutely what we say and what we do. We have seen more beds and more services. The Mental Health Commission, which is an independent body of government, has stated in its strategic plan, Living Well, that the investment needs to be in primary care services for mental health patients so that they are supported in the community, surrounded by their families and surrounded by a web of support. Our aim is to keep them out of an acute mental health admission. When that does happen, there are beds available and people will absolutely be seen.

We know that the worst place for people to be when they are in an acute phase of their mental illness is an emergency department because it is very busy and chaotic and not conducive to their good health. That is why we

have programs like Safe Haven, which we have rolled out right across New South Wales as part of the Towards Zero Suicides strategy. It has been incredibly successful, so successful that we have rolled it out in the Northern Rivers as a response to the floods. I know that does not relate to the question, but that is what we are doing. These new and innovative models of care provide places so that people do not have to present to emergency departments. We have seen a great reduction, particularly on the Central Coast, through the Police Ambulance and Clinical Early Response program. That is mental health clinicians working with police officers on the ground, making sure that diversion to the emergency department does not have to happen.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (16:41):** I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate the part of her answer where she said that there are beds available, when stakeholders like the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists suggest that it is the lack of mental health beds that is the issue? Is the Minister suggesting that this stakeholder is incorrect? It and other stakeholders say that because of the lack of mental health beds in New South Wales they cannot get people out of those emergency departments and that is what is leading to bed block.

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health) (16:42):** I thank the honourable member for her supplementary question. As I have said very clearly, in New South Wales we now have more mental health inpatient beds than we have ever had before. But the issue is—and the clear, demonstrated evidence tells us—that the investment needs to be in community mental healthcare services. But when patients require a hospital admission, we will do absolutely everything in our power to ensure that they get that. I have not seen what the honourable member refers to in terms of the college. I work really closely with the college. I take advice from the college. Our adolescent mental health teams are a direct policy result of working with the Australian college of psychiatrists. That is what I do, and I think my reputation shows that I do that. I have not seen that exact quote, but what I will say is that we have more beds.

There will be days when there are bigger stressors on the system, but I stand by the fact that we have invested more in mental health in this State than we have ever seen. That means more services, more beds and more direct focus on mental health. It is wonderful that we are talking about mental health in the way that we are and that people feel that they are able to seek help. All of the stakeholders, all of the people who work in mental health and I work so hard to make sure that we can avoid presentation through an emergency department because we know it is not conducive to good care for those patients. But on some days and in some situations, that is where people need to go to access care. We will look after them and they will be cared for in our system. I am very proud of every single person that works in our mental health system, both private and public.

**The Hon. WALT SECORD (16:44):** I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate the part of her answer where she said that elderly patients who should be in aged care and NDIS patients are taking up vital hospital beds? How many of those beds were taken up by those two groups in the last Bureau of Health Information quarter and what steps is she taking to address that?

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health) (16:44):** I need to be very clear that when I say "taking up beds", every person, regardless of who they are, deserves to have a bed and to be cared for in New South Wales if they require that care. In terms of the honourable member's question in regard to actual numbers in the Bureau of Health Information report, to be exact I will have to take that on notice. But I have been very open about this, and I was very open with the last Coalition Government. Anyone who knows me knows that I do not hold back.

When the Coalition was previously in power, I was extremely outspoken about the situation that is facing us in aged-care services, particularly in rural and regional communities and particularly in my community where recently Southern Cross Care shut down the only aged-care facility in Bombala. People from that community now have to travel great distances. People who used to have lunch and dinner with their loved ones can no longer do that because they are hours away. I have been very open and very public about this because it is not who we are as a nation. I have already met with the new Federal Government, which I must say has been very conducive and very open to this, and I am very transparent about that. I look forward to working with them.

I am working very hard with the local Federal Labor member in Eden-Monaro to make sure that we get these services back where they belong. The same organisation walked away from the community in Harden. It must end, and it must end now. We will not see those aged-care people without the services that they require. They are in multipurpose centres and down in Bombala they are inpatients. I want them to be in aged-care facilities that are suited to them, that respect who they are as human beings and that ensure they get the care they need. That is exactly what we will continue to do. I look forward to working with the new Federal Government on making sure that we can get better outcomes in aged care.



### MILLER SOCIAL HOUSING COMPLEX

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (16:46):** My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services. Given the Government forgot to pay the power bill for a western Sydney public housing block, plunging its residents, including many elderly people and people with mobility issues, into darkness, what steps has the Minister taken to work with the Minister for Homes to ensure the wellbeing of tenants and to ensure that this never happens again?

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services) (16:47):** I thank the honourable member for her question. I can advise the House that the power to the common area of the social housing complex in Miller, in the south-west of Sydney, was disconnected by energy providers on 22 August 2022. The Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] became aware of the issue on 26 August 2022 and reported the matter to the NSW Land and Housing Corporation [LAHC] for resolution. On 8 September the Department of Communities and Justice became aware that the common area remained without power and escalated the matter to LAHC for urgent follow-up.

I note that the absence of power related to the common areas of the complex. I am also advised that power was restored to the common areas on 9 September. I understand that LAHC has informed DCJ that the bills for the property were inadvertently being sent to a vacant office space in the complex which was previously tenanted by DCJ. I also understand that LAHC has now provided the power company with the correct forwarding address. The department has contacted the tenants of the complex and extended a sincere apology for any distress caused by the outage. Furthermore, I have spoken to my department and asked them to look further into it to ensure that this is an isolated event.

### FORCED ADOPTIONS APOLOGY

**The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT (16:48):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister update the House on how the tenth anniversary of the apology for forced adoptions in New South Wales is being acknowledged?

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services) (16:49):** I thank the honourable member for his question. Ten years ago today, both Houses passed a motion of apology to all who were subjected to forced adoptions by the State. This apology, led by Premier O'Farrell, acknowledged the traumatic effects of those practices on the lives of tens of thousands of mothers, fathers, adopted people and their families. Earlier this morning I attended a commemoration for this anniversary organised by the Memorial Consultation Committee and the NSW Committee on Adoption and Permanent Care. I acknowledge Reverend the Hon. Fred Nile for his attendance and his consistent advocacy on this important issue.

It was an honour to address those gathered and to take the opportunity to renew our commitment to those affected and announce that the New South Wales Government is planning to build a permanent public memorial. It will serve as a place of active remembrance and provide a central place for those affected by forced adoption to gather and reflect. The unveiling of the memorial will take place in September 2023 to coincide with the eleventh anniversary of the apology. Today I reaffirm the apology made on 20 September 2012 and offer my deepest and sincerest apologies on behalf of the New South Wales Government. We have not forgotten the past wrongs. It is my hope that the memorial will ease some of the pain that forced adoption practices have caused and reframe the next steps forward as a community in upholding this commitment.

Forced adoptions led to thousands of women in New South Wales being persuaded, manipulated and even coerced into accepting that adoption was in the best interests of their child. We know that these practices were profoundly wrong, and we should not pretend that an apology alters what happened or can lessen the pain. However, our continued acknowledgement of these historical wrongdoings and what mothers endured acts as a powerful catalyst for healing, for raising awareness and for action and change. In 2012, following the apology, the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals Government abolished minimum fees for accessing information for birth parents and adopted people. In recognition of the pervasive intergenerational impacts of forced adoption practices, in May 2022 the Government extended this commitment and removed fees for all applicants seeking to access adoption information through the Adoption Information Unit.

The elimination of fees will support and improve access for all people in New South Wales seeking to reconnect relationships separated by forced adoption. In 2020 we further removed barriers for the adoption process, and the Parliament passed legislative amendments to enable integrated birth certificates in New South Wales, which have been available since November 2020. At this morning's gathering, I reaffirmed the apology made on 20 September 2012 and offered my deepest and sincerest apologies on behalf of the Government. I reaffirm that same commitment to the House today.

### BRUMBY WELFARE

**The Hon. EMMA HURST (16:52):** My question is directed to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, representing the Minister for Environment and Heritage. Last week 11 brumbies in Kosciuszko National Park were shot dead near Kiandra. A number of pregnant horses spontaneously aborted, and trails of blood have been reported near the scene, suggesting the horses did not die immediately. Will the Minister explain why this shooting took place in wild horse retention areas under the management plan, where brumbies are meant to be retained, and while there are still many brumby rehomingers willing to take in these horses and give them a loving home?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth, and Minister for Tourism) (16:52):** I thank the honourable member for her question. I know it is an area that she has a deep and abiding interest in. The New South Wales Government acknowledges that there is obviously strong community interest in wild horse management in Kosciuszko National Park. It is a very sensitive and difficult issue for everyone. The Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan, adopted in November 2021, is designed to find a balance between protecting the heritage value of the wild horses and maintaining the exceptional conservation values of our State's largest national park.

The plan was developed after extensive engagement with the community, scientists, animal welfare experts and Aboriginal stakeholders. I will take on notice the specifics of the question that I have been asked today, representing my colleague the Minister for Environment and Heritage, in order to provide an appropriate and detailed answer that addresses the seriousness of the question that was asked. I will provide a response to the House as soon as is practical.

### RURAL HEALTH STAFF

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (16:54):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional Health. How does the Minister respond to rural and regional community concerns that Victoria is set to poach thousands of future New South Wales nurses and midwives with free degrees, generous scholarships and better working and hospital conditions?

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health) (16:54):** I thank the honourable member for his question. As the honourable member may be aware, I recently did an ABC Radio interview with a Federal Labor member of Parliament and Dr Mehreen Faruqi, who is now the Deputy Leader of The Greens and who used to sit on the crossbench in this Chamber. We talked about the Labor Government's announcement about funding HECS fees for nursing students, which directly relates to the member's question. I said that I commended them. I think any policy to help people to enter the health workforce is a really positive one. I am happy to acknowledge that. There is a gentleman called Bruce Chapman, who I think used to work within the Labor Party.

**The Hon. Courtney Houssos:** No, he never did.

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR:** No? I am sorry. The person who instigated the HECS development for the Federal Government at the time—do members opposite want to listen or not?

**The Hon. Tara Moriarty:** No.

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR:** You don't want to hear it, do you? It is disappointing when I know my stuff, isn't it? It's really disappointing.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! It is not helpful for members to be conducting a discussion across the Chamber. It is getting difficult to hear the Minister. The Minister has the call.

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR:** As I was saying—

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

**The PRESIDENT:** I call the Hon. Tara Moriarty to order for the first time. I call the Hon. Daniel Mookhey to order for the second time. The Minister has the call.

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR:** What Bruce Chapman said was paying HECS fees was not the best way to attract people. I will explain that to members opposite. The issue is not getting people into nursing to do nursing. The issue is about having the places for those students to do their practice placements with nurse educators who can take the students through all of those procedures in a competent way so that they are really confident when they go through their placement program. The New South Wales Government is placing extra funding into having nurse educators in our system for that exact reason.

A long time ago, when I did my first year at "Gozzy Hozzy", we had a little red stripe on our badge so that everyone knew we were beginner practitioners, and we had nurse educators who worked those shifts with us and

took us through the new procedures. That is exactly what the Government is doing. Also, through our workforce incentive scheme we can grant up to \$10,000 in payments per year. If someone is paying back their HECS fees at about \$3,500 a year, they will still have extra money to choose what to do with it. They might want to use it for moving fees, for general costs of living or for further education. The New South Wales Government, through its workforce package for rural and regional New South Wales, is using all of these modalities to ensure that it can look at workforce increases.

I seek an extension of time.

**Leave not granted.**

### **SOUTH COAST INFRASTRUCTURE**

**The Hon. PETER POULOS (16:58):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. Will the Minister inform the House about how the Government is securing a brighter future for families living on the South Coast by building infrastructure that makes their daily lives easier?

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (16:59):** I thank the honourable member for his question. The Liberal-Nationals Government is securing a brighter future for New South Wales through its record \$19.4 billion investment into regional roads and transport infrastructure over the next four years. This Government is building what matters to make a difference to people's daily lives and make their lives easier, particularly for families in New South Wales. After a couple of false starts due to weather, we have officially opened the new Batemans Bay bridge. The new bridge is making the commute along this stretch of road significantly safer, reducing travel times and strengthening our supply chain, as my colleague the Hon. Natalie Ward said earlier.

The Princes Highway along the South Coast was notorious for accidents and congestion during peak holiday periods. Imagine heading to the beach for a long weekend in bumper-to-bumper traffic, with the kids in the back nagging, "Are we there yet?" I was told that I was one of those kids once upon a time. It has all changed because this Government came into power, and it is fixing the Princes Highway after those opposite neglected it for 16 years and didn't invest a cracker into it. We had a plan to build what matters to the people of this State and to the people of the South Coast, and it is ensuring that their daily lives and daily commutes are easier.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Are you going to stand with Gareth and have some photos taken? Mr Poulos has been getting his photo taken with Gareth.

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY:** Members opposite are interjecting. Batemans Bay is in a Labor electorate, and they are whingeing and interjecting on an answer about investment in their own electorate. They have no chance in March if they are going to criticise investment in their own electorate.

**The Hon. Damien Tudehope:** Point of order: I think my point of order is self-evident.

**The Hon. John Graham:** You had to stop him.

**The Hon. Damien Tudehope:** No, I had to stop you guys.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Minister has the call.

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY:** Since coming to government, we have committed \$5.15 billion, in partnership with the Commonwealth, to upgrade the Princes Highway from Albion Park to the Victorian border. It is \$5 billion more than those opposite ever did. We have already opened the Albion Park Rail bypass, the Gerringong bypass and the Foxground and Berry bypass. By the end of next month, the 10½-kilometre Berry to Bomaderry duplication will be fully completed. We are building the new Nowra bridge, which will provide a new four-lane bridge over the Shoalhaven River, upgraded intersections and additional lanes on the Princes Highway. Members opposite hate this.

On Monday I announced the plan for the southern connection for the Milton Ulladulla bypass, with full designs to be revealed over the coming months. We are duplicating sections of the Princes Highway from Jervis Bay Road to Sussex Inlet Road, and we are building the Moruya bypass. We are delivering for the South Coast, whether or not we hold the Bega electorate. We will deliver for all of regional New South Wales, unlike the select agenda those opposite have.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** The time for questions has expired. If members have further questions I suggest they place them on notice.

**MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCY SERVICES**

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health) (17:02):** I have an answer to the supplementary question asked by the Hon. Walt Secord about numbers. As at 3 August 2022, there were 519 aged-care inpatients in New South Wales health facilities, with 327 exceeding their estimated date of discharge. There were also 557 NDIS inpatients.

*Supplementary Questions for Written Answers*

**MILLER SOCIAL HOUSING COMPLEX**

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (17:03):** My supplementary question for written answer is directed to the Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services. Will the Minister elucidate her answer and advise the House how many public housing buildings have had electricity or water turned off because of unpaid utility bills by the New South Wales Government, and provide a list of their addresses?

*Questions Without Notice: Take Note*

**TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS:** I move:

That the House take note of answers to questions.

**CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL**

**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (17:04):** Yesterday we heard shocking revelations about asbestos exposure at Castle Hill High School. For years, as asbestos dust was raining down on students and staff, the department failed to investigate. We heard from teachers and parents. We heard from teachers who had logged complaints on the internal complaints system for years, with no response. We heard from parents who have been left in the dark and have resorted to GIPAA requests and reading calls for papers produced to this Chamber of Parliament to get answers. We are being careful not to jeopardise SafeWork or the Professional and Ethical Standards investigation, but people must be held to account for the deadly exposure that can occur as a result of asbestos in our public high schools. The department tried to explain it away and say that it was the fault of a few senior staff, but we heard that the education Minister and the department were told about this issue time and again, and they failed to act.

This should not come as a surprise. For years we have been asking questions in this place about asbestos in public schools. In this place and in budget estimates, we have asked the Minister 121 questions about asbestos in public high schools. We have consistently been told that there is nothing to worry about and that there is a process in place. We now have a real-life example of how this Government's policies have failed. They have failed to protect teachers and students, and asbestos has gone undiscovered and the issue has not been investigated. There has been a complete failure of this Government's signature policy—Local Schools, Local Decisions. This policy pushed everything on principals to be not only education leaders but also building and site managers. This was clearly never going to work and we now have a real-life example of why it has failed so poorly.

Worst of all, this scandal has shown us the culture of secrecy and cover-up within the Department of Education under this Government. We know that there is no safe level of exposure to asbestos. It has deadly consequences. Just this week we heard about a case in Victoria, where Jasmine Thomas was diagnosed with terminal mesothelioma at the age of 27 because of exposure to asbestos when she was at primary school. We cannot allow this to occur in New South Wales schools. I thank those parents and teachers who have been fighting for years. We will continue to fight with them.

**CASTLE HILL HIGH SCHOOL**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (17:07):** The horrors of what has happened at Castle Hill High School speak for themselves, but we have to understand the core problem in our schools relating to what I believe to be the most disastrous policy ever introduced in this country and possibly internationally—Local Schools, Local Decisions. It basically said, under Piccoli and following Ministers, that principals always know best. A principal in a school can be running lousy learning programs that run against the evidence of classroom practice. The department just says, "They're out there; they know best."

A principal, which is what happened at Castle Hill, can be totally cavalier, reckless and negligent about basic rules, guidelines and procedures for asbestos management. In this instance, the department, under Local Schools, Local Decisions, said, "They're out there; they know best. We're not here to second-guess or check on what a principal does." Yesterday we found out that not a single principal in New South Wales has been checked by the department to see that they have read and understood the asbestos management plan issued by the

Department of Education, nor have they been checked to establish whether they have completed the basic webinar as an element of training.

This is a laissez-faire policy that basically allows any principal to run away with any level of incompetence and negligence. That is the sad story of what has happened at Castle Hill. The pressing issue in education policy for the next election, and I particularly urge this upon the Labor Opposition, is to replace Local Schools, Local Decisions with some basic guidelines as to what a principal and a school must be. In the quality of learning programs and classroom practice, the evidence base is clear. The Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, international research and authorities like John Hattie have said what needs to happen in a classroom for quality teaching. In work health and safety, there must be certification procedures, so that principals know exactly what their responsibilities are, and minutes of work health and safety committees must be checked by the department to see that the basics are being undertaken.

At Castle Hill High School, for 11 work health and safety committee meetings in a row, no attempt was made to find the results of the tests that had been done on the asbestos raining from the Human Society and its Environment staffroom. If they had checked emails or bank accounts, they would have found it was a positive test and there was an asbestos crisis at the school. For 11 meetings in a row, nobody—not the principal or the deputy principal—did anything. Incredibly, in interviews with SafeWork NSW, both of those individuals said they had never read the Asbestos Management Plan. This is a direct product of a government that introduced the Local Schools, Local Decisions open slather, with no checks, monitoring or procedures in place. It has been replaced by the School Success Model, but what does that mean for work health and safety? It means absolutely nothing. These things have to be implemented. We need policies that replace Local Schools, Local Decisions with accountability for principals and do not allow them open slather.

#### OPAL CARD MACHINES

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (17:10):** I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Finance, and Minister for Employee Relations to the question of how the New South Wales Government is responding to calls by union officials to engage in the sabotage of public assets. The Minister referred to a directive from Alex Claassens, a union apparatchik to whom many of those opposite—including the shadow Treasurer and the Opposition Whip—have expressed gratitude for helping them get their seats. In that directive, Mr Claassens wanted to be alerted if, after an act of sabotage was carried out, any person came to a station to restore equipment to its proper working order—something Claassens described as "adverse action". What a perverse and reprehensible attitude to emergency and electrical equipment, and to public assets. Such sabotage is illegal. It carries a \$5,500 fine.

In his latest directive calling off the planned sabotage, for now, Mr Claassens claimed that many members were looking forward to the upcoming action of turning off the Opal gates completely. This contrasts with the attitude of many responsible railway employees, including a train driver who recently wrote to the Premier. That driver, who has 10 years train-driving experience, had, as he put it, been "fortunate" to test drive the Mariyung trains. It helped establish that these trains were safe as configured. But it is not just the train drivers who are saying this in correspondence to the Premier. We know that these trains are safe because the regulator has said they are safe. Mr Claassens, in many ways, has been at the centre of these strikes, but we need to look a little bit deeper in terms of the multiple trade union members who sit on Labor's administration committee. I would like to know this: When was the last time that Chris Minns picked up the phone to Alex Claassens? When is he going to sack Alex Claassens from the administrative committee?

I look forward to those opposite disassociating themselves from Mr Claassens. I look forward to Chris Minns removing Mr Claassens from Labor's administrative committee. I look forward to the Labor Party disaffiliating the Rail, Tram, and Bus Union and returning all of the affiliation fees and donations that it has received over many years, which has helped Labor members get elected. With that in mind, I think we need to hold those responsible for the strikes to account—and it is those sitting opposite. [*Time expired.*]

#### ROUSE HILL HOSPITAL

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (17:13):** I take note of the answers provided to my written questions on notice Nos 6,449, 6,450 and 6,451 about the long-promised Rouse Hill Hospital, also known as the Rouse Hill Health Service. Back in November 2014 the then health Minister, Jillian Skinner, along with former Premier Mike Baird, announced that Rouse Hill "deserves a first-class hospital". It has been nearly eight years since that first announcement of a health service facility in Rouse Hill and, recently, yet another site has been chosen. This was after two previously announced sites were scrapped. No-one has clearly explained why it has taken three goes to find this new site or why it is preferable. Eight years on and there is still no construction activity or even an indication of what services will actually be provided, let alone a firm commencement date.

The Rouse Hill Health Service was first promised in 2014 as part of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals 2015 re-election campaign. In 2017, members opposite announced that construction was due to start in 2019, even though a suitable site had still not been found. Despite the 2014 promise, there was no budget allocation for the Rouse Hill Health Service until the 2018-19 New South Wales budget, with \$75 million out of the announced \$300 million being allocated for 2018-19. Yes, that was the last budget before the 2019 election. A coincidence? The 2019-20 budget papers show that less than \$2 million had been spent. The long-promised Rouse Hill Health Service then became part of yet another election cycle, as one of the 2019 election promises of the New South Wales Liberal-Nationals. A pattern is beginning to emerge: a new location, a new promise, a big announcement for Rouse Hill, and every time just prior to an election.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge, from tender to construction to opening, took about 10 years. The Rouse Hill Health Service is no Sydney Harbour Bridge. Despite the promises and the passing of the years, there is no tender, no construction, let alone an opening date. This is despite the Western Sydney Local Health District being predicted to experience the greatest increases in demand for acute health services of any part of New South Wales, with an increase of 91 per cent by 2032. There is no health service in sight, but I bet there will be another announcement about the Rouse Hill Health Service from this Government, yet again, in about two months from now—history repeating itself. For anyone who believes the Government again this time, without signed contracts, I have a bridge for sale they might be interested in buying.

### VACANT PUBLIC HOUSING

**The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (17:16):** I take note of the answers provided to written questions Nos 9355 and 9356 by the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes, as well as the answer provided to question on notice No. 9360 by the Minister for Families and Communities. Recently I asked the Minister for Family and Communities how many people are on the waiting list for public housing. The number she told me was 49,928, of which over 5,000 are deemed a priority. Nearly 50,000 vulnerable people are out in the community awaiting assistance with their housing needs.

I then asked the Minister for Planning, and Minister for Homes: Over the five-year period between 2016 and 2021 how many new homes did the Government add to its portfolio of social housing stock? The answer was an additional 2,257. I thought, "That's not enough, but at least it's something." However, I then asked the Minister how many homes the Government disposed of in the same period. The answer the Minister provided was 3,269. I am no mathematical genius, but even I can work out that is a loss of over 1,012 dwellings over the five-year period. What we have here is a government going around in hard hats and high-vis making announcements that it is supposedly tackling homelessness and delivering social and public housing programs. The Government promotes an image of building new homes when, in reality, it is disposing of more than it is building. The Government's announcements are nothing more than a carefully constructed mirage.

The Government is quick to claim success but, as we consistently find, any level of scrutiny will unearth a completely different picture to that which it is attempting to display. We must not lose sight of the fact that, rather than increasing the public housing stock, Government-held social housing has been reduced and all the while there are 49,928 people on the waiting list for public housing. They are the State's most vulnerable people and should be the Government's priority. I urge the Government to commit to an honest, open and transparent program to increase housing stock for Government-held social housing in order to address the needs of our State's most vulnerable residents.

### RURAL HEALTH STAFF

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (17:19):** I speak on an answer given by the Minister for Regional Health, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, regarding rural, regional and remote health. It is important to give some context to the answer given today because if one took on face value everything that was said, one could be persuaded to believe that everything is being handled very well and in a very considered way and we just need to sit back and allow things to unfold and things will get better. This Government was elected in March 2011. Nine and a half years after this Government took office, on 27 August 2020 Portfolio Committee No. 2 self-referred an inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales.

During that nine and a half years, the phrase "regional, rural and remote health" was very rarely heard in this or the other House. It was not a basis of Dorothy Dixier questions from the Government because it was not on its radar. From time to time there were questions from the Opposition, but the response was, "You're crying wolf. Things are in pretty good shape. Sit down and be quiet." Nine and a half years had to transpire before the committee attempted to prise open and look at the situation in rural, regional and remote New South Wales. What an extraordinary can of worms was discovered.

Members would know that the inquiry produced 44 recommendations, of which the Government has agreed to support 41, for which we are grateful. But it is important that the Government get cracking and get those recommendations implemented. At the recent budget estimates hearing where the Minister appeared, when pressed about a timetable for the implementation of these recommendations of support or support in principle, no timetable was given. Her position was, "We've done really well. You should be very pleased with 41 out of 44." But there was no timetable provided with respect to the implementation of those recommendations. The Government can do much better, and it should.

### OPAL CARD MACHINES

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (17:22):** I take note of the answer given by the Leader of the Government, regarding the ongoing train strikes. Those opposite raise this issue at every opportunity in every sitting week because they want this dispute to be protracted so that it takes attention away from the dismal performance of their tired, 12-year-old, scandal-ridden, hopeless Government. Let us rewind and recite some of the things that have happened in this dispute.

Only 10 per cent of the train network was shut down by the rail union because it did not want to inconvenience the public. Then the Government exacerbated the situation and said, "We can't run the rest of the network, so we'll shut down the whole network", in an attempt to turn the public offside. The rail union then withdrew the action and came back and said, "We're going to restore trains to full service and turn off the Opal machines so that people can get free travel." Guess what? The Government did not like that because the travelling public was about to get its trains restored to full service and free travel, so the Government objected to it at the Fair Work Commission. Now we see the spectre of the Government coming in here again, trying to blame the union for what is, in essence, a safety issue.

I will relay to those opposite, just in case they think this is a joke, an incident that happened recently. It was relayed to us by the member for Wyong, our colleague in the lower House, David Harris. I will read it out. Those opposite might want to listen to this because it is the essence of the dispute. The Government has made the deed contingent on the enterprise agreement; they will not fix the trains unless the enterprise agreement is signed off. There has been a lot of criticism of rail unions lately who have been taking action. Their actions are motivated by safety. Here is an example given by the member for Wyong:

Jamie is a reluctant hero.

He is a train guard and he heard a sound that is not normal as the train was pulling away from the station, the sound of moving ballast.

His instincts immediately told him something was wrong.

He used the emergency stop function on the train.

It turned out it was a young person's leg being run over.

He located them under the platform with their hand over their mouth so they would not make a sound.

He took charge of the situation and organised for the trains to be stopped, emergency services en route while tending to the young person.

Train guards are important on intercity train services that stop at unmanned stations.

The point is that the CCTV cameras, which those opposite want in the trains without train guards, would not have picked up that particular incident. Because we have guards and because the union has fought for those guards to be there, those are the sorts of incidents that they are preventing. Those opposite should be ashamed of themselves for coming in here and blaming those unions for what is, in essence, a safety issue. [*Time expired.*]

### MILLER SOCIAL HOUSING COMPLEX

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (17:25):** I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Families and Communities in relation to the incident out at Miller. People who live in public housing are some of the most vulnerable people in our State. They require the safety net of government housing to put roofs over their heads. They rely on the New South Wales Government as their landlord. In my office, I hear a lot of feedback about some bad landlords in New South Wales. There are some great ones too. It turns out the scummiest landlord in New South Wales is the New South Wales Government. It is so incompetent that it cannot even pay a power bill, as residents of Miller found out.

Months and months ago the Department of Communities and Justice moved out of its office at the Miller social housing complex and failed to tell the electricity company, so the bills kept being sent to an empty office. Bill after bill was unpaid, such that eventually the electricity company disconnected the power, which happens when you do not pay your electricity bills. That happened on 28 August. Residents immediately notified the Department of Communities and Justice because all of the common areas, such as the car park and the stairs, were

in darkness. Residents said, "We felt it was unsafe to leave our flat. The stairs were pitch black. It was dangerous. It was like a cave. I didn't want to open my door."

Nothing happened. There was no response. A resident said, "I rang every day, all of the agencies. There was no answer from any of them." Finally, on 8 September, almost two weeks later, desperate residents called again. "Why aren't any of the lights in our common area working? This has been going on for two weeks." The Department of Communities and Justice finally managed to get some urgency out of the Land and Housing Corporation. Someone realised this was just a stuff-up due to their incompetence. The bill was paid and the lights were turned back on.

Talk about not being able to get the basics right. We should be able to rely on the Government for some things, and this issue is squarely in that area. As I said, these residents are elderly and have mobility issues. They rely on the Government as their landlord to keep the lights on and the water running. This tired, out-of-touch Government is so hopeless that it cannot even pay an electricity bill and leaves residents in public housing at risk of falling down stairs and feeling unsafe in their car parks because the lights are not working. We need an apology to these residents and an assurance that this will never happen again.

### MILLER SOCIAL HOUSING COMPLEX

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (17:28):** I take note of answers given today by the Minister for Families and Community Services. The Minister outlined to the House the circumstances that led to that incident and the steps that have been taken since that incident. It is an unfortunate situation, but we need to turn as well to some of the great things happening when it comes to our social and affordable housing stock in New South Wales. I know the Hon. Rose Jackson has been hearing the feedback from the community as well, and particularly from stakeholders within that sector, in terms of the \$1.3 billion in new funding that has been allocated to the Land and Housing Corporation across New South Wales to bring forward planned property renewals, deliver new social homes and bring forward maintenance and upgrades to existing social homes. That is not just here in metropolitan Sydney but also, particularly, in regional communities that have been flood impacted. The budget this year included \$812 million for housing and homelessness services, including funding to the Land and Housing Corporation to deliver more than 1,200 new social homes, upgrade over 12,000 social properties and create 1,000 affordable vacant land lots for sale to build private homes.

**The Hon. Rose Jackson:** You sold 3,000.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The Hon. Rose Jackson says we sold 3,000. Guess why we sell? So we can build more. It is about asset recycling. It is about increasing the assets. On 16 October 2021 the New South Wales Government announced a further \$830 million package, which included \$80 million for the Land and Housing Corporation to fast-track more than 1,400 new social homes across New South Wales. More recently, the 2023 budget housing package included a \$300 million capital maintenance program to rejuvenate 15,800 social homes, keep 445 from becoming untenable, deliver 120 new homes through the Together Home Transition Program and extend the life of properties.

In 2021-22 the Land and Housing Corporation delivered over 500 new homes, which was a 26 per cent increase on the previous financial year. A further 562 new homes were committed in 2021-22. This is in addition to the delivery of business-as-usual funding and stimulus for repair and maintenance programs to existing dwellings. The additional delivery of social housing dwellings is dependent on the collaboration and shared investment by the Commonwealth community housing providers and other relevant stakeholders. There are the challenges that the Hon. Rose Jackson highlighted in question time today—challenges that, as the Minister outlined in her response, her department is actively undertaking to address. More importantly, there is so much happening in the social and affordable housing space, which has been spearheaded by this Government.

### TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Hon. LOU AMATO (17:31):** I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Education and Early Learning on scholarships for early learning educators. Almost \$11 million in the New South Wales 2022-23 budget has been invested to deliver scholarships to support early learning educators in entering the workforce or boosting their skills. Across the State, 439 scholarships are being awarded to support staff supply for the early childhood education and care sector. Every successful applicant will be awarded up to \$25,000 under the 2022-23 Early Childhood Education Scholarships Program and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Early Childhood Education Scholarships program. One-third of all successful scholars live and work in regional and remote areas across the State.

We are continuing to deliver for early childhood educators with our record funding. The New South Wales Government has committed \$15.9 billion to deliver a brighter future for every child in New South Wales through a revolutionary transformation of early childhood education, child development and women's economic



participation over the next decade. I thank the Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health and Minister for Mental Health, who spoke about the excellent work the New South Wales Government is doing in incorporating a breadth of experience and expertise in approaching our regional health system. I thank the honourable member for her update to the House. I congratulate the Minister and the Government on this outstanding announcement. They are truly listening to those working on the ground, who live and breathe the health system, so we can work with our communities to deliver everything they need.

That is one of many incredible initiatives from the New South Wales Liberals and Nationals, which demonstrates they are truly committed to strengthening the health system in the regions. It was the New South Wales Government who created the regional health portfolio and appointed Bronnie Taylor as New South Wales' first ever Minister for Regional Health. Labor still does not have a shadow Minister. In April 2022 we established a Regional Health Division to ensure strong advocacy and a single point of contact for regional health issues. The New South Wales Government released its response to the regional health inquiry two months early, supporting or supporting in principle 41 of the 44 recommendations. We have delivered major funding boosts to strengthen the regional health system.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Deferred Answers*

#### **BRUMBY WELFARE**

In reply to **Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE** (9 August 2022).

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth, and Minister for Tourism)**—The Minister provided the following response:

Control of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park occurs in accordance with the adopted Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service [NPWS] commenced on-ground implementation of the plan in February 2022.

NPWS records the age category of wild horses trapped in the park as part of control operations.

Control is undertaken in strict compliance with standard operating procedures that take into account advice from the RSPCA and other animal welfare experts. These procedures are also consistent with Australian and State legislation, policy and guidelines. The standard operating procedures provide for the highest animal welfare outcomes for all wild horses, including pregnant mares and foals.

#### **BRUMBY WELFARE**

In reply to **the Hon. MARK PEARSON** (9 August 2022).

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN (Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth, and Minister for Tourism)**—The Minister provided the following response:

Control of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park occurs in accordance with the adopted Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan.

As outlined in the plan, reproductive control is a potentially viable option where horse densities are low, and when the objective is to gradually reduce the population further or maintain it at a low density. Currently, there are no reproductive control methods available that are highly effective, easily delivered, affordable and do not alter the behaviour or physiology of horses in some way.

Reproductive control options, and developments in scientific understanding, will remain under consideration by the Government over the long-term as the wild horse population moves towards the target level and as a complement to other control measures.

#### **GUN SAFE SERVICE**

In reply to **the Hon. ROBERT BORSACK** (9 August 2022).

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning)**—The Minister provided the following response:

I am advised:

Since the Dealer Platform was launched in October 2020 there have been four occasions of outages. On each of these occasions the application did not "crash" but was taken down while work was performed to prevent data loss. The system was down for less than 12 hours on two occasions, and less than 29 hours for the other two.

In the instance of an outage, paper-based registers are still available to the dealers, if required, as an interim measure to allow them to fulfill their legal obligations under section 45 (3) of the Firearms Act 1996.

The NSW Police Force's Digital Technology and Innovation Unit provides the current and future support for system integrations, data storage and other system requirements.

**MAITLAND HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT**

In reply to **the Hon. PETER PRIMROSE** (10 August 2022).

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health)**—The Minister provided the following response:

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's [AIHW] Admitted Patient Care 2020-21 Report provides information on the number of admitted patient days by age group and sex, States and Territories.

In 2020-21, persons 65 and over accounted for 50 per cent of the admitted patient bed days in New South Wales public hospitals, and 53.2 per cent in New South Wales private hospitals. More information is available on the AIHW website:

<https://pp.aihw.gov.au/reports-data/myhospitals/sectors/admitted-patients>.

**PARVOVIRUS**

In reply to **the Hon. EMMA HURST** (10 August 2022).

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (Minister for Regional Transport and Roads)**—The Minister provided the following response:

Matters in relation to parvovirus vaccines for dogs entering council pounds should be referred to the Minister for Local Government.

**SCHOOL PERFORMANCE TARGETS**

In reply to **the Hon. MARK LATHAM** (11 August 2022).

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning)**—The Minister provided the following response:

Reports for both 2020 and 2021 Check-in assessments are publicly available on the CESE website at:

Research reports ([nsw.gov.au](https://nsw.gov.au))

Attendance data for Semester 1, 2022 is not yet publicly available as it is still being validated.

School level attendance data from Semester 1, 2019, 2020 and 2021 is currently available to the public on the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority [ACARA] My School website at:

<https://www.myschool.edu.au/>

**RAIL SERVICES DISRUPTION**

In reply to **Reverend the Hon. FRED NILE** (11 August 2022).

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—The Minister provided the following response:

I am advised:

Bus operators across most contract regions have significant staff (driver shortages) and ongoing staff absenteeism due to COVID.

This has led to the bus operators operating in Greater Sydney making changes to the daily working timetable by reintroducing dynamic timetabling. This is where operators are scheduling services that provide the highest demand and reduce corridors with higher frequencies without needing to cancel trips from the service timetable.

A dynamic timetable provides the customer with certainty to plan their trip as this is available on all the Transport Apps. Services will return to normal timetabling once significant driver shortages and staff absenteeism due to COVID are resolved.

Regarding the provision of services, travel beyond Mascot is available through the existing bus network.

**BOURKE INDIGENOUS CHILDREN**

In reply to **the Hon. MARK LATHAM** (11 August 2022).

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services)**—The Minister provided the following response:

I am advised:

The Department of Communities and Justice [DCJ] Bourke Community Services Centre [CSC] supports the needs of vulnerable children, young people and families on a daily basis.

Bourke CSC deliver both child protection and out of home care services. Bourke CSC is part of the Bourke Grouping, which also incorporates offices at Nyngan, Cobar, Brewarrina and Walgett. Bourke Grouping also covers the small outlying communities of Wanaaring, Enngonia, Weilmoringle, Goodooga and Louth. In addition, the Mobile Child Protection Unit [MCPU] based in Dubbo also provides outreach support across the grouping.

Youth Action Meetings [YAMs] were initiated by the New South Wales Police Force in the Central North Police District (Bourke) area to provide a coordinated approach to addressing the needs of children and young people aged between 10 and 17 years, who are at risk of becoming either a victim or an offender of crime.

DCJ is also a partner with the Bourke Maranguka Community Hub, funded under the Justice Reinvestment Strategy; this service provides a soft entry point for families to access information, referral and support from services in Bourke.

DCJ staff attend a daily check-in facilitated by police and held at the Maranguka Community Hub site to discuss matters arising in the previous 24 hours and any coordinated service responses that may be required as a result.

The department also:

- Works together with its partner agencies in Bourke to support children, young people and families at risk.
- Funds a range of support services to promote parenting and life skills, child development and positive family functioning.
- Contracts Uniting to deliver Permanency Support Preservation Service, an intensive two-year home-based program with 24/7 support for families whose children are at risk of imminent removal and placement in out-of-home care. (Note: contract covers all of Western New South Wales).

Mission Australia is contracted to deliver Family Preservation Services, a less intensive voluntary program keeping children and young people at home with their families by providing effective interventions and activities to reduce vulnerability, de-escalate risk, and improves all areas of child safety welfare and wellbeing. (Note: it covers Bourke, Brewarrina, Coonamble and Walgett LGAs).

Specialist homelessness service run by CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes supports young people, adults and families, including women escaping domestic and family violence who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This service has a strong focus on supporting Aboriginal people. (Note: it covers Bourke and Cobar local government areas [LGAs]).

The Family Connect and Support Service run by Uniting is a voluntary family program providing a tiered response of core service elements including (but not limited to) information and advice, comprehensive assessment, proactive outreach, short term case planning and coordination, and active holding to vulnerable children, young people and families in New South Wales. (Note: it covers all Western NSW and Far West).

Bourke Family Support Service run by CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes supports families with children aged 0-12 years providing parent education, supported playgroups, peer support, school readiness programs and individual support. (Note: this is Bourke specific).

Did Ya Know run by NSW Outback Division of General Practice supports agencies assisting vulnerable Aboriginal families. This program promotes parenting patterns through assisting organisations and networks to plan, coordinate and support communities. (Note: it covers Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett LGAs).

Bourke Youth Centre run by Police Citizens Youth Clubs NSW Ltd support children and young people aged 4-24 years by providing individual support, diversionary and skills development programs through drop-in centre, holiday and after school programs. (Note: this is Bourke specific).

### *Written Answers to Supplementary Questions*

## **PARENTAL EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT**

In reply to **the Hon. MARK LATHAM** (11 August 2022).

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (Minister for Education and Early Learning)**—The Minister provided the following response:

The Student and Parent Experience Directorate has engaged with parents and carers to support the development of a parent and carer engagement framework since its establishment in 2022.

Insights from the survey referred to by the honourable member are publicly available here:

<https://education.nsw.gov.au/news/latest-news/parents--and-carers--engagement-with-their-child-s-education>.

Engagement on the survey included:

- 451 parent and carer responses to public engagement through the Department of Customer Services, Have Your Say public platform
- 71 parents and carers in interviews and focus groups
- 51 attendees at a Parents and Citizens Federation of Associations NSW co-hosted webinar

The directorate has also engaged with a range of peak organisations to support its qualitative research, including but not limited to:

- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group [AECG]
- Ethnic Communities Council
- Family Advocacy
- Gifted NSW
- Isolated Children's Parents' Association
- My Forever Family
- Parents and Citizens Federation of Associations NSW
- The Smith Family

As the directorate moves to support the implementation of the Parent and Carer Framework, it will continue to engage with parents and carers across New South Wales through a range of mechanisms.

### MINISTER FOR METROPOLITAN ROADS

In reply to **the Hon. WALT SECORD** (11 August 2022).

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence)**—The Minister provided the following response:

Nil.

### *Condolences*

### DEATH OF HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

**Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (Minister for Metropolitan Roads, and Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence) (17:34):** I will resume where I left off before question time. Across Australia women are increasingly leading change and growth in every industry, from finance to medicine, law and aviation; in the public sector; in our most successful startups; and in the heart of our communities, our sporting organisations. We know how much the Queen loved sport and the outdoors, especially with her horses. The prosperity of our country hinges on our ability to inspire and support the women of Australia to move into leadership roles. It is our responsibility to scrutinise the opportunities that we are currently presenting them, both inside and outside of politics. The passing of Her Majesty gives cause for reflection on this need.

During the Queen's final visit to Australia in 2011, she was greeted in our nation's capital by Australia's first female Governor-General, our first female Prime Minister, and the female Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory. One of her last acts of public service, mere days before she passed away—a typical woman, working to the last minute—was to appoint Liz Truss as the United Kingdom's new Prime Minister and third female leader. It was a poignant end to her service. While her passing signals the end of an era, we can take comfort in knowing that her enduring legacy will undoubtedly continue to inspire women and men across the world. I extend my most sincere and heartfelt condolences to His Majesty King Charles III and the members of the royal family. In addition I acknowledge and thank Erin Forster for her excellent work in assisting me today.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (17:36):** Sadly, the Queen's remarkable 70-year reign has ended. Her passing at age 96 closes an era of British and Commonwealth history forever associated with the name Elizabeth. It was indeed the second Elizabethan era. She was a constant in all our lives, a point of stability, resoluteness and inspiration. I will tell one story to the House. My son Oliver, aged 22, came home from his part-time job on that Thursday night when it was announced that the Queen was under medical attention, which was code for saying she was dying. I said to him, "Oliver, the Queen's dying." The young man responded, "I didn't know she was allowed to." It was a statement of how permanent she was in the minds of a generation who knew no-one else in that role and could not contemplate someone else in that role. It was not just people of our generation who knew the Queen as a constant; younger ones did as well, to the point where they could not contemplate her death and her replacement as the monarch.

I believe that a good life comes from finding a cause and purpose greater than oneself and getting lost in things like public and community service. The Queen did that through a full life of service to Britain, Australia and the other nations of the Commonwealth. She was a product of the World War II generation, who took the view of "Stay calm and carry on". She had a reputation for resilience that I believe is more important than ever. To lose her is to lose one of the great elements of that greatest generation—those who battled through World War II, literally, and left a better society, postwar, for so many of us. In that respect, it is important to remember that the Queen became the monarch through a twist of history.

Her uncle David, the Prince of Wales, then Edward VIII and subsequently the Duke of Windsor, wanted to marry a divorcee and was not allowed to, so he abdicated. This brought the Queen's father to the throne and then the Queen herself as a young woman. So this was never a position that she sought, wanted or necessarily had a long preparation for. At the time of her accession to the throne, many doubters thought it would be a disaster. She proved them all wrong with a remarkable 70 years of service, where, incredibly, there were only two possible flaws through that period: the delayed public mourning of Diana after her death and the dispute with Thatcher about South Africa. For someone to serve in that role for 70 years and have two contested, possible flaws is a remarkable record. Imagine any member of this House living up to that high standard of excellence in public service. She was unique in that regard and so universally admired on that basis.

We admired her with feelings of respect and affection. A special person has been lost as we mourn and convey condolences to her family. Most of all, we give thanks for a life that meant so much to so many people.

In that regard the Queen was the first monarch of the mass media generation. It is true that many people believe that they know those who appear on the television in the living room, even though they have never met them in person. This explains the extraordinary outpouring of mourning, loss, affection, tears and emotion for the Queen. So many people around the world felt that they knew this woman well because she had appeared in their living rooms and was a figure of great respect and affection. That explains what has been an incredible period of mourning.

This event may surprise some. I must say, the level of public grief and reaction does not surprise me, because it is probably one of just five events in my lifetime where one remembers automatically where one was and how one felt about it when one heard the news. Kennedy's assassination, the moon landing, Diana's death and September 11—the passing of the Queen and the funeral last night are certainly in that category. We will never forget where we were, how we felt about it and, most particularly, how we felt about her. It was remarkable for someone of her generation to be the first mass media monarch and to be so flawless in the performance of her duties—perhaps the last normal person in that position. The Queen herself reflected on an annus horribilis with some of the subsequent generations in her family, who are a bit dusty. But I have always thought that the Queen must be a normal person because she had such an amazing affinity and affection for horseracing. That is an Australian criteria, is it not? One is very normal if one loves the track and she did in spades.

We mourn her passing. We note her remarkable service. There were 15 British Prime Ministers who had audiences with her on a weekly basis: Churchill, Eden, Macmillan, Douglas-Home, Wilson, Heath, Wilson again, Callaghan, Thatcher—those two remarkable women together in the room for over a decade—Major, Blair, Brown, Cameron, May, Johnson and then Liz Truss. There were, coincidentally, 15 Australian Prime Ministers through the same period—not with the regular audiences and dialogue, of course, that she enjoyed with her British heads of government. It was a life like no other; it was a life that we will never see again in its totality, its service, its honour, its respect and its emotion, felt by so many people around the world. I join in supporting this motion of condolence with every heartfelt feeling that I have for a woman who deserves nothing but respect and admiration.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (17:42):** I join with much of the world in commemorating the life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom, Australia and the other Commonwealth realms. I say "much of the world" in recognition of the fact that Her Majesty's Commonwealth realms span 15 countries, making the recent outpouring of grief truly worldwide. As head of the Commonwealth she also led the Commonwealth of Nations, an association totalling 56 States from Antigua to Zambia. To say that her death is humanity's loss would not be an understatement. I will speak on Her Majesty's service to each of these 56 States and those beyond. Her service to, love for and defence of the Commonwealth tell a powerful story of a servant Queen who selflessly devoted her whole life to others.

As a member of the Commonwealth Day Council, her role in the Commonwealth is particularly close to my heart. The Commonwealth Day Council aims to promote the Commonwealth of Nations in line with Her Majesty's vision: being a bastion of good governance, human rights and world peace. Any leader knows that to build a genuine association as broad and impactful as the Commonwealth of Nations a unifying foundation is required. Where better to find a solid foundation than in the rock of Her Majesty, who at the age of 21 proclaimed, "I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong"?

Rarely has such a promise been so well kept. Her life was indeed long and, as promised, she stood unwavering in her service to the last. How remarkable, as my colleague the Hon. Natalie Ward said, that just two days before her passing she continued in the performance of her royal duties by swearing in the United Kingdom's new Prime Minister, Liz Truss. Her Majesty will be remembered for this lifelong dedication to service, the solid foundation upon which the Commonwealth she loved could prosper. Indeed, the Commonwealth was dearly treasured by Her Majesty. Many Australians vividly recall their personal witness to one of her 16 visits to Australia throughout her reign. She is the only reigning monarch of Australia to have set foot on Australian soil. I cast honourable members' minds back to Her Majesty's second visit to Australia in 1963. The Prime Minister at the time, Sir Robert Menzies, best extolled the visit in his address to Her Majesty:

You today begin your journey around Australia. It is a journey you have made before. You will be seen in the next few weeks by hundreds and thousands and, I hope, by millions of your Australian subjects. Mothers will hold their children up to look at you as you go by, and they themselves, and their husbands will have a look at you as you go by.

Sir Robert continued:

... every man, woman and child who even sees you with a passing glimpse as you go by, will remember it - remember it with joy, remember it in the words of the old seventeenth-century poet who wrote those famous words –

"I did but see her passing by

And yet I love her till I die"

It is also well known that, at the very moment when she acceded to the throne, Her Majesty was amidst a Commonwealth tour in Kenya. Her Majesty made the intentional effort to visit as many nations and peoples as possible, touring at least 117 countries worldwide, far beyond the scope of the Commonwealth alone. I quote her coronation day speech:

I have behind me not only the splendid traditions and the annals of more than a thousand years but the living strength and majesty of the Commonwealth and empire; of societies old and new; of lands and races different in history and origins but all, by God's will, united in spirit and in aim.

Her heart for world peace, united in spirit and in aim with the Commonwealth and beyond, shone brightly in her annual Christmas broadcasts and countless official speeches, including to the UN General Assembly. For one person to share such a profound vision with all countries worldwide, including by personally visiting more than 100 herself, is a mighty feat in and of itself, let alone doing so repeatedly for more than 70 years. Her Majesty deeply loved the lands and peoples of the Commonwealth, seeking, in the words of her 1972 Christmas broadcast, a "wider family of nations" of the belief that "the things they have in common are more important than the things which divide them". In cherishing and providing stability for the Commonwealth, Her Majesty also carried the burden of maintaining its integrity.

Often debate surrounds the constitutional monarchy model of government, a structure shared by many of the Commonwealth's nations. Her Majesty exemplified the best of constitutional monarchy, demonstrating that the Crown is important, not for the power that it wields but for the power that it denies others. During the past couple of weeks, I have thought about our constitutional monarchy here in Australia, the role of the Crown and the role that Her Majesty played for over 70 years. I found myself recently rereading Sir Robert Menzies' memoir *Afternoon Light* and turning my attention to his very important chapter titled "The Crown and the Commonwealth". Her Majesty was a very young monarch when Sir Robert Menzies was the Prime Minister. He writes:

In a Monarchy like ours, the focal point is also an office, the Crown, now occupied by a woman, the Queen. Her actual powers are small; she acts upon the advice of her Ministers, whose views are, on political occasions such as the Opening of Parliament, expressed by her, but not attributed to her. She never enters the political lists. Rooted as her office is in the deep soil of history, enduring as it has proved through the great shocks of political and military and social events, it enjoys the respect of all but a handful of her people. The Queen is seen, in all the countries within her allegiance as the fountain of honour, the protector of the law, the centre of a Parliamentary system in which she makes and proclaims statutes 'by and with the advice and consent' of Parliament. True, all of these things are, if you like, a matter of form. Even the Royal prerogatives are now defined by the law and are exercised in accordance with it. But no amount of cold analysis can destroy the basic fact that the Crown remains the centre of our democracy; a fixed point in the whirl of circumstance. This great and practical truth is seen most clearly on historic occasions.

What can be affirmed beyond doubt is Her Majesty's sustained and graceful stewardship of constitutional monarchy over the past 70 years of Commonwealth history, avoiding political interventions and ruling in line with the will of the people. Time and again she sought to unite the people of the Commonwealth into her reign. Her Majesty did so one last time with the invitation list for her state funeral, including civilian representatives from all Commonwealth nations. In addition to our Prime Minister, 10 Australians were invited to attend. Her Majesty's selfless custodianship of the Crown across the Commonwealth will be an unfailing model for generations of monarchs to come.

I was a little emotional last night when watching Her Majesty's funeral, as I was when I signed the condolence book at Government House. Her Majesty's funeral was not mere pomp and pageantry. To billions of people around the world, it provided an opportunity to grieve, it provided consolation in sorrow and it provided sublime beauty to redeem our suffering. The legacy of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II will always be as a Queen who served, a Queen who loved and a Queen who upheld the Commonwealth with steadfast resolve. With the same sincerity with which Her Majesty devoted her whole life to the service of others, I offer my heartfelt condolences to His Majesty King Charles III. I am confident that His Majesty will continue his mother's legacy of service, love and integrity in his new role as King. Vale, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and God save the King.

**The Hon. LOU AMATO (17:53):** The passing of the sovereign Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II almost seems unreal. Until the recent accession of Prince Charles as King Charles III, most of us had never known another head of state. I can still remember singing *God Save the Queen* as a young boy at school assemblies, until it was replaced by our national anthem back in 1974. Her Majesty's reign over the Commonwealth spanned two centuries. To my knowledge, no one person has served the peoples of the Commonwealth—and, indeed, the world—for such a long period.

Her Majesty not only served the Commonwealth with distinction but also provided us with a feeling of stability in an ever-changing world. Her presence offered the world a stable foundation for the betterment of society. Without stable government, a society deteriorates and the dignity and freedoms of the individual are lost. Our own system of government has championed a society founded on the backbone of democracy. Her Majesty

has maintained the sovereignty of our States and Territories as head of state, and we are thankful that we as a nation are a shining example of democratic freedom and prosperity.

Though our grief at the passing of Her Majesty is great, we are grateful for her lifetime of service and commitment. We offer our deepest condolences to the royal family for their loss. We pray that God will grant them strength and guidance in the days to come. We congratulate King Charles III on his accession to the throne, and we pray that his reign will be blessed with prosperity and peace on earth. On 2 June 1953 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, placed the crown of King Edward upon the head of Queen Elizabeth II and proclaimed:

Be thy head anointed with holy oil: as kings, priests, and prophets were anointed. And as Solomon was anointed king by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet, so be you anointed, blessed and consecrated Queen over the Peoples, whom the Lord thy God hath given thee to rule and govern, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Thus began the reign of the reluctant Queen Elizabeth II. Her Majesty once confided to her riding instructor that she would have preferred to live the life of "a lady living in the country with lots of horses and dogs", yet Her Majesty lived an exemplary life of a true Queen who served her people with unwavering commitment. It is my personal belief that Her Majesty's reluctance to accede to the throne came from her humility and deep spiritual connection with her faith. Her Majesty knew at her coronation she was anointed to serve not only her people but, more importantly, her faith. Only now at her life's conclusion, when the record of her deeds is set in stone, can we fully appreciate the person she was. Even in her reluctance and possible self-doubt, she never wavered in her duty. Her Majesty took her faith seriously, and I truly believe her faith was the guiding light that truly made her a Queen.

What can we learn from the example of her life? How can her legacy help us to move forward in our own lives? In this modern world, many of us have turned away from the belief in something greater than ourselves. Her Majesty achieved greatness because she began her reign with humility and believed in something greater than herself: her faith.

During the Her Late Majesty's coronation, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, asked her, "Will you, to the utmost of your power, maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel?" She promptly replied, "All this I promise to do." Immediately after saying those words, Her Late Majesty proceeded to the altar in the Abbey Church of Saint Peter at Westminster and laid her right hand upon the Holy Gospel and proclaimed once more, "The things which I have here before promised, I will perform and keep. So help me God."

The great lesson in life that Her Late Majesty has taught us is that we too can feel reluctant to take on life's many challenges but we can be comforted in knowing that no matter how big the responsibility we are not alone. Her Late Majesty has taught us that though the task ahead may seem greater than ourselves, there is something greater to give us strength and endurance—our faith in a loving and eternal God. Her Late Majesty commenced her earthly reign in faith. Although she is no longer with us, she will endure for all time with the God she so loved.

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (Minister for Families and Communities, and Minister for Disability Services) (18:00):** I extend my sincere condolences to His Majesty King Charles III and the royal family, who are mourning the loss of not only their Queen but also a dear family member. I express the deep sadness we share following the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. For over 70 years the Queen reigned with an unwavering and steadfast sense of duty. I give thanks for Her Late Majesty's extraordinary life. She has been a constant and very real part of our lives, which is why so many across the world have mourned her death and felt such an emotional impact. Following her accession to the throne on 6 February 1952 after the unexpected death of her father, King George VI, she became a sign of stability and strength for all Australians.

Her Late Majesty was the first reigning monarch to visit our country. Her 1954 visit was the single biggest event ever organised in Australia. Around three-quarters of the population turned out to catch a glimpse of their Queen. It is fitting to recall that in 1954 this House was honoured when the Her Late Majesty became the first monarch to open an Australian parliament. She noted that it was "most fitting that this should take place in the mother Parliament of Australia". Her Late Majesty pledged to serve all of her people and to maintain the precious principles of constitutional government that lie at the heart of our Westminster tradition.

After her first visit in 1954, the Queen toured Australia 16 times and always drew huge crowds who followed her enthusiastically and greeted her wherever she went. When I was around 20 years old, I had the honour and pleasure of meeting her at Admiralty House. I recall how impressed I was with her ability to engage so well with people from all walks of life and, in particular, with how genuine she was when she talked to us. I was particularly chuffed when she commented on my hat.

Throughout her reign of over 70 years, Her Late Majesty oversaw enormous change, including independence for nearly all countries in the British Empire. Through her commitment and dedication, she brought into reality the Commonwealth of Nations, which makes up around one-third of the world's population—an association of 56 countries working towards shared goals of prosperity, democracy and peace and tied together

through shared history and tradition. The monarch acts as a focus for national identity, unity and pride and gives a sense of stability and continuity. The world is a better place because of that leadership, which we should all treasure and preserve. The late Sir Roger Scruton aptly said:

The constitutional monarchy is the light above politics, which shines down on the human bustle from a calmer and more exalted sphere.

On 21 April 1947, Her Late Majesty's twenty-first birthday, she made a now famous promise to her peoples, which was broadcast from Cape Town in South Africa. She said:

I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

Clearly, Her Late Majesty maintained her dedication to duty throughout her service to the Commonwealth. That duty extended to her charitable work. She was the patron of over 600 charities, military associations, professional bodies and public service organisations, supporting young people, wildlife and the environment. In her official message, released on the eve of the seventieth anniversary of her accession, Her Late Majesty renewed her 1947 pledge to devote her life to our service. She ended her message in her typical selfless style by signing it, "Your Servant, Elizabeth R".

The world has never seen and likely is never to see again a monarch with the strength, humility, dedication and devotion to duty and service that we have seen in Her Late Majesty. But I am sure that King Charles III will be inspired by his mother's commitment to duty and service. He has made a promise to serve "with loyalty, respect and love". Like his mother before him, no doubt he will also be inspired by the sacrificial life of Christ, who said that he "did not come to be served but to serve".

As a humble woman of faith, the Queen spent her life in service to her people. She kept that promise to the very end. In her first act as Queen at the age of 25, she laid her crown down at the high altar of Westminster Abbey and began with a silent prayer, declaring her allegiance to God before anyone gave allegiance to her. After 70 years on the throne, she now lays her earthly crown at the feet of the king of kings, whom she most ably and humbly served. May God rest her soul.

**The Hon. PETER POULOS (18:05):** I reflect solemnly on the passing of our constitutional monarch, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, at the age of 96 years. Yesterday I attended Government House to sign the condolence book in memory of Her Late Majesty. In addition to the significant and touching expression of heartfelt praise from across the globe, I recorded my own personal sentiments, which honoured, with much affection and gratitude, the selfless and unwavering service of Her Late Majesty towards the Commonwealth of Nations, in particular, Australia and the people of New South Wales.

Similarly, I extend my condolences to His Majesty King Charles III, his siblings, the extended royal family and those amongst us who have been personally touched by and who grieve at the loss of Her Late Majesty, who distinguished herself during her incredible 70-year reign. Earlier this year she commemorated the platinum jubilee. In doing so, she became the first British monarch to celebrate such a momentous and historic milestone. She remained dutiful throughout that period, having become Queen at the age of 25. The course of her life dramatically altered following the extraordinary abdication of her uncle King Edward VIII, after which she never wavered.

Her Late Majesty visited Australia on 16 occasions and, importantly, toured New South Wales some 12 times. With much aplomb, Queen Elizabeth excelled at attending public engagements. She connected with huge, jubilant crowds of admirers and wellwishers wherever she went. She also visited regional New South Wales. As the Parliamentary Secretary for Wollongong and the Illawarra, I note that Her Late Majesty visited Wollongong in 1954 and 1970. As has been fondly highlighted, during her visit to Wollongong in 1954 Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, visited notable locations, which included the Wollongong Showground and Wollongong Town Hall.

During her tour of central Wollongong, the Queen travelled along Crown, Smith and Corrimal streets. It is estimated that some 120,000 people came out to get a glimpse of her. Later that very day, the Queen would travel by train to Bulli. Some 26 years later, in 1970, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II would visit the Illawarra on a second occasion. She was accompanied by the late Duke of Edinburgh and their children, Prince Charles and Princess Anne. The visit culminated with the Queen disembarking at Port Kembla harbour from the royal yacht *HMY Britannia*.

Of historical significance, Her Late Majesty granted the title of lord mayor to Ernie Ford, signifying the heightened and official city status afforded to Wollongong. As the Liberal provincial MLC for the St George region and the Sutherland shire, I note that in 1954 the Queen was greeted by a thunderous reception as multitudes lined the streets along the motorcade tour through the St George suburbs, including along President Avenue and towards the intersection of the Princes Highway and Rocky Point Road in Kogarah. In the Sutherland shire, the



royal entourage was greeted by a magnificent arch erected at Sylvania, before the motorcade delicately navigated towards Sutherland due to the significant crowds assembled to greet and cheer the Queen.

In 1970 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited Kurnell for the re-enactment of the 200th anniversary of the arrival of *Endeavour* and Lieutenant James Cook. On that occasion, it is estimated that some 50,000 people converged on Kurnell to observe the royal party. Following this encounter, and reinforcing the Queen's incredible work ethic, she visited James Cook Boys Technology High School and Moorefield Girls High School in Kogarah, where 560 school captains from across New South Wales greeted her with much enthusiasm, as reported at the time by the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* newspaper.

With the death of the sovereign, flags across our great State of New South Wales have been at half-mast for 10 days, and a national memorial service and public holiday has been declared for this coming Thursday. Last evening, our time, a projected global audience of four billion people watched the poignant and splendid regalia associated with the state funeral of Her Late Majesty. I note that on 4 February 1954, as has been previously outlined by several speakers, this historic Legislative Council Chamber hosted Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who at the age of 28 became the first British sovereign to open an Australian parliament. On the occasion of Her Majesty's address to both Houses of the New South Wales Parliament, she made the following opening remarks:

Honourable members of the Legislative Council and members of the Legislative Assembly, I am very pleased that I am able to speak to you in person on the occasion of the Opening of the Third Session of the Thirty-seventh Parliament of the State of New South Wales. My long-cherished hopes of visiting, with my husband, my people in Australia are now being realised.

During the long and continuous reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Australia has had 17 Prime Ministers, from Liberal Sir Robert Menzies to the present Labor Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, and 18 New South Wales Premiers, from Labor Joseph Cahill to today's Liberal Premier, Dominic Perrottet. Whilst our democratic institutions can at times preside over tumultuous change, the monarch reinforces continuity.

Her Late Majesty officially opened the Sydney Opera House in 1973. It was a truly fitting and appropriate tribute that it be illuminated to honour her. Australia's longest-serving Prime Minister and founder of the Liberal Party of Australia, Sir Robert Menzies, established a special affinity with the late monarch. During Queen Elizabeth's visit to Parliament House in 1963, Sir Robert Menzies conveyed his attachment to the institution of the monarchy and admiration towards the Queen when he expressed quite famously, "I did but see her passing by, and yet I'll love her till I die." In 1977, a year before his death, the Queen invested Sir Robert Menzies as a Knight of the Order of Australia.

Over the past few weeks the world has admired the stoicism and endurance of His Majesty King Charles III. Like his late mother, who visited Greece before she acceded to the throne, and his late father, Prince Philip, who was born in Greece and signed his name with the Greek letter "pi", His Majesty King Charles III is recognised as a Hellenophile and attended the bicentennial anniversary of the Greek independence commemoration. He has also frequented Mount Athos and expressed genuine engagement with Orthodox adherents. In fact, King Charles III's own paternal grandmother, Princess Alice, converted to Greek Orthodoxy and later founded a nursing order of nuns. I note this specifically because of my own Greek heritage and commitment to my Orthodox faith.

During the Second World War, Princess Alice courageously sheltered Jewish refugees in Athens and for her efforts was recognised as Righteous Among the Nations by Israel. Her Late Majesty profoundly embraced her Christian faith and the role of Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England, a title bequeathed since the reign of King Henry VIII. Queen Elizabeth had—and I anticipate King Charles III will continue—interfaith dialogue, tolerance and understanding. As King Charles III embarks on his new reign, I wish him godspeed. May the memory of Her Late Majesty be eternal. Vale.

**The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (Minister for Women, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for Mental Health) (18:19):** It gives me great pleasure to join the debate on the condolence motion for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who, at the age of 96, was the longest reigning woman in history and a role model for so many women across the globe. She exemplified dignity in female leadership, and she paved the way for women and girls everywhere in a phenomenal way. She did so by her actions and by how she held herself and the example that she set for so many over the course of her 70-year reign. She served the people and not herself. There is a massive lesson for all of us in that to remember why we are here and why we were chosen—and what the Queen did and her dedication to that.

Queen Elizabeth did not put herself first. She put her people first and she put the countries of the Commonwealth first—I imagine, sometimes at great personal cost to herself. But the fact is that she saw a sense of duty as a serious and noble thing, and she certainly executed it in the most incredible fashion. Her leadership style was strong. It was calm and steady. Queen Elizabeth was a female leader in what was—and is still to some degree—a male world. It definitely was a male world when she acceded to the throne—and some would say that sometimes and in some fashions it still is. She proved that she could effectively lead and also be a mother, which

the Hon. Sarah Mitchell also referred to in her contribution. I think that is really important because there is nothing greater than setting an example by your own actions, by your own words and by your own deeds. That is exactly what the Queen did. Regardless of how one feels personally about the monarchy, the Queen showed that women could hold very powerful positions.

Like many others, last night I spent the evening paying my respects to Her Late Majesty from a distance, watching her funeral and taking in the significance of this point in history. The procession and the ceremonial aspect of the funeral was quite extraordinary and a reflection of the life and contributions of Her Late Majesty. What really has struck me in everything that has happened recently, and with the way that the funeral service was conducted after Her Majesty died, is the strong sense of tradition and ritual. I think sometimes in our modern world we have lost a great sense of that. Some would say that we have lost that because we do not have the same belief in faith that once existed throughout our communities. With that comes a lovely sense of ritual that can be extremely comforting to so many. I think that this really embodied who the Queen was. She saw the value in tradition and the value in ritual. There is so much richness in that.

Alan Sparkes, an incredible human being who used to be a Mental Health Commission deputy commissioner and is also part of the rare group of people who have received a medal for valour, was at the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II. He said, "I took away many things from the honour of being part of the chivalry and gallantry procession during the funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. The ceremonial aspect was, as you would imagine, extraordinary. The respect extended to decorated members of the Commonwealth was phenomenal, especially when the President of the United States of America was asked to pause his and his wife's entry into the abbey until myself and the other gallantry recipients walked past. But the most impactful moments were to see King Charles III, the Queen Consort and members of the royal family walking behind the Queen's casket as they walked past me. The sadness was etched deep. The other most significant moment was when the 2,000-plus strong congregation rose to their feet and sang with all their might *God Save the King*. May God bless you, Queen Elizabeth, and long live the King."

Alan Sparkes is a tremendous Australian and someone I am very proud to say that I know. He has contributed so very much. The essence of the words in his post really demonstrates how he felt and, more importantly, how so many of us feel and how tradition gives people that sense of comfort. The gravity of the farewell to our monarch and the sadness of the moment was indeed etched deep. Even watching from a great distance here in Australia, to see and hear a congregation of 2,000 people sing *God Save the King* was a moment our generation will remember for the rest of our lives. I have always been a really big fan of the monarchy. I particularly loved Princess Diana as I was growing up. I might even mention that in year 9 I copied one of her haircuts. I think that the royals are so exceptional and so dignified, and we have a wonderful sense of our form of government in this country with our constitutional monarchy.

The legacy of Queen Elizabeth will live on for hundreds of years. The Hon. Sarah Mitchell spoke about her children. I am proud that my children were also moved. I am not sure if they are monarchists or not—I think one is and one probably is not, which is the status quo. But I think it is a wonderful thing. I am proud, as an Australian, to be part of it. I thank you, Queen Elizabeth II, for what you have done for women. The example that you have shown us has been absolutely extraordinary and I, for one, am very grateful. I welcome the fact that we are able to debate this motion in the Legislative Council this evening. It is really important that we have had the opportunity to do so, and I am very grateful.

**The PRESIDENT:** I will now leave the chair. The House will resume at 8.00 p.m.

**The Hon. WES FANG (20:01):** I recognise the great loss of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. On 8 September we lost an incredible leader with the passing of Her Late Majesty. I pass on my sincere condolences to her family, to the people of the United Kingdom and also to all members of the Commonwealth for the loss of the longest reigning female monarch in British history. The royal family has had a long and deep connection with the military. As the Hon. Rod Roberts outlined, I had the opportunity to swear allegiance to the Queen and to proudly wear the Queen's commission as an army officer. When I was serving, I would often reflect that, when I would salute somebody or somebody would salute me as an officer, it was not the person they were saluting; it was the rank that was bestowed upon us by the Queen. That is what they were respecting, in much the same way as we do in this Chamber. The position of Her Majesty or His Majesty is something sacred and very much a part of who we are as a nation. It is an acknowledgment of the monarchy and all that it has represented over the years.

Mr President, as you know and as I have discovered, being in the privileged position of a Presiding Officer in this place, you and I, the Assistant President and all the Deputy Presidents have had the opportunity to sit just in front of the chair where Her Majesty sat for the opening of Parliament in 1954. We often say that we walk in the footsteps of great people. It is never lost on me, every time I take the chair, that Her Majesty was sitting just behind there. When we come into this place, we all walk in the footsteps of an amazing leader, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

As the Hon. Walt Secord noted, all the history and the dates have been acknowledged by other speakers. I particularly acknowledge that during the 1954 visit the Queen had the opportunity to visit my home town and the duty electorate that I am lucky enough to represent, Wagga Wagga. The Queen drew thousands of people during that visit. The Queen and Prince Philip led a parade through the town, and local paper *The Daily Advertiser* stated that Her Majesty had captured the hearts of people from all walks of life. How true that statement was. Not only then but also now, as we look upon the events of last night and the fitting tribute that was Her Majesty's funeral, we see she continued to capture people's hearts to the very end. It is the mark of a great leader that they can dedicate themselves so selflessly and diligently to public service. As somebody who has had the opportunity to swear my allegiance to the Queen on two occasions, let me bid my fond farewell to Her Majesty and say very proudly to the Chamber, and to the people of New South Wales, God save the King.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (20:07):** "All the film people in the world, if they had scoured the globe, could not have found anyone so suited to the part." That was the assessment of Sir Winston Churchill of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II within a year of her accession to the throne. Those words are even more true today, as we stand assembled at this solemn hour 70 years later, sadly at the end of the second great Elizabethan age. She was not born to the throne but somehow fate marked her for it. For the first 10 years of her life, while a member of the royal family, she was down the line of succession, until the abdication of King Edward VIII caused the Crown to transfer to her father, King George VI. From that moment, her world changed and her path becoming one of the greatest monarchs the world has ever seen was set in train.

Only a few short months ago we had the privilege of marking Her Majesty's platinum jubilee, a celebration that has been achieved by no other British monarch and a reign that has only been surpassed globally in recorded history by the Sun King, Louis XIV. Throughout her more than 70 years on the throne, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been a constant in all of our lives. It was only 11 days ago that we awoke to the news that our sovereign was no longer with us. In a mark of how much our age has transformed in that time, it came to me by a news alert that popped up on my phone at about 5.30 that morning. The day we had dreaded had finally come, and the news had been passed to the world in such a different fashion from the way in which it had been passed before. It came through television, through text, on the radio and on the internet—means of communication that were not available when the Queen's father died. Communication protocols were in place as part of Operation London Bridge. They were meant in many ways for another time, but they were protocols that have sustained us to this day and that the world has been captivated by.

No other monarch has lived a life like hers. Hers was a life in full view, the most famous person in the world for the longest amount of time. She acquitted this immense and, for most, unbearable duty with aplomb, never putting a foot wrong. Her life of service was shared through the world. We revelled in the highs from her wedding and those of her children and grandchildren; we shared in the celebrations for her coronation. Sadly, we shared in the lows, with the funerals of her beloved father, mother, sister and husband, and now her own. Her life was shared like no other. She was the most photographed person in history. Her first public photo was published weeks into her life in the arms of her mother in 1926. Her last photo was taken at Balmoral for the world to see only two days before her passing.

In that life shared, we felt as if we came to know her. She was the extension of our own mother or grandmother, the monarchical matriarch of the Commonwealth. This explains much of the large outpouring of grief and respect evident on the streets of Edinburgh, London and Windsor, and the outpourings of tribute evident in New South Wales as well, where thousands have paid homage at Government House in condolence books and made the pilgrimage to see a picture of the Queen adorn our Opera House, a building that is the symbol of Sydney and that she opened on 20 October 1973. She has traversed the radio, television, internet and social media ages. She endured the tabloid media, the paparazzi, 24/7 news and the Twitterati. No matter the age, her loss cuts deeply across all generations as she is the only monarch that most of us have ever known.

While her reign has been one of permanence, she oversaw great change in the royal family and throughout the Commonwealth nations. During her reign she saw the United Kingdom fashion a new place in the world and, with it, a new relationship for the Commonwealth, overseeing the expedited transition from empire to Commonwealth that had been commenced under the reign of her father, King George VI—a free Commonwealth of associated nations, which now includes two countries that were never part of the British Empire, and more are looking to join.

The success of monarchs through history have largely been viewed through battles won and territory gained. That is not the case with Her Late Majesty. The mark of her success has been in her service and stability and providing certainty at a time that has seen so much transformation in the nations where she is sovereign and across the Commonwealth of Nations that she presided over. Her reign saw the transformation of Australia's place in the world from a country of a little under nine million people, which saw itself as British to the bootstraps when she ascended to the throne, to the most successful multicultural nation on this earth today—a country of more than

25 million people, of which nearly half have a parent born overseas, that is more than capable of standing on its own two feet in the world.

She was the first reigning monarch of Australia to visit our shores, stepping foot for the first time on Australian soil a little under a kilometre from Parliament House at Farm Cove in 1954, when more than a million people turned out to greet her. During that visit, more than 75 per cent of Australia's population took to the streets to see her. As members know, she was no stranger to Australia, having visited our shores on 16 occasions and our State on 12 occasions, even opening this Chamber on two of them. Picking up on the comments of the Hon. Wes Fang relating to the chair, I have a photo in my office of the Queen opening Parliament in 1954. I look at it often and imagine what the people who were assembled in this Chamber would have thought at the time and the great honour for them to have their monarch, on the first to visit Australia, opening this Chamber.

The first time I came to this Chamber, I think, was on Australia Day when I was a child. I remember being taken on a tour and being shown the seat that was reserved for the Queen. I remember looking at it with awe and, of course, wanting to sit on it. We were told by the attendants—and I have never been able to work out whether this is true or not, and I have never dared to try—that an alarm was fixed to the throne and that if anyone apart from Her Majesty was to sit on it, the alarm would go off. I still dare not tempt fate but suspect that it might have been a story told in the Chamber at the time to stop seven- or eight-year-olds like me from jumping on the throne. Sir Robert Menzies later famously remarked in his address to the Queen in 1973:

All I ask you to remember in this country of yours is that every man, woman and child who even sees you with a passing glimpse as you go by, will remember it - remember it with joy, remember it in the words of the old seventeenth-century poet who wrote those famous words—

"I did but see her passing by  
And yet I love her till I die"

Many Australians have stories of their encounter with their monarch, Queen Elizabeth II. I visited my grandmother the other day and asked her if in that year in 1954 she went, and she said of course she did. There really was no other option but to go and see the Queen. My grandmother cannot really recall seeing much except for her passing, but she will remember it now until the day—hopefully she will not die anytime soon, but I fear that the time might be near too. The love affair between Her Late Majesty and Australia has been mutual and, as many members have reflected, it has not been just reserved for the capital cities. The Queen traversed our great State from the beach to the bush, with visits to Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange, Tamworth, Newcastle, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong, just to name a few. In her address at the Sydney Opera House in 2000, she said:

Whatever the future may bring, my lasting respect and deep affection for Australia and Australians everywhere will remain as strong as ever.

No doubt, as our own Governor found recently, affection for her is still very strong and her affection was very strong indeed to the end of her days. She was a monarch who loved her people throughout the world. She was a monarch with deep affection for the people throughout the Commonwealth, whether they were in the United Kingdom, the nations of which she remained sovereign, or the nations that were bound together as part of the broad Commonwealth family—an institution she guided and steered throughout her reign and that will no doubt be one of her greatest legacies.

Her Late Majesty was famously a woman of faith. She was the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, the Defender of the Faith, a role vested in the British monarch since King Henry VIII but which she relished like no other. She was an overt Christian and in her passing is no doubt comforted in the love of God and received into His eternal kingdom. The constancy of her faith saw her preside over changes well. She was the first English monarch to visit a Roman Catholic cathedral since the Reformation, visibly healing the Catholic and Protestant divide in bringing together the faiths as part of one Christian family.

This is a legacy that she extended to other faiths as well and one that I am glad to see His Majesty King Charles III has already set on building upon, pledging his role as monarch as one of protecting all faiths. The Queen famously developed a friendship with evangelical preacher the Reverend Billy Graham, an ordained Southern Baptist minister, inviting him to preach at St George's Chapel in Windsor in 1955 and on many subsequent occasions when he visited the United Kingdom. Each year with the Queen's Christmas message she would reflect on the Christmas story and the example that Jesus played as her Lord and saviour. In her first Christmas message in 1952 she requested:

... pray for me ... that God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve Him and you, all the days of my life.

Indeed, her Majesty did that, doing her duty until her death, as we all saw with that image of her receiving the new UK Prime Minister Liz Truss two days before her passing. I have no doubt that she has been met by the Lord with those words of Matthew 25:21:

Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

Members of this place have spoken most eloquently on the inspiration provided by Her Late Majesty to women around the world. She was such an inspiration to my family that my daughter Colette derives her middle name, Elizabeth, in homage to Her Late Majesty. Just as Her Majesty took on the name Lilibet from her family, my name for my daughter is Letty Betty, or Let Bet for short. As a child of the 1980s, having a female monarch was not an unusual concept. In fact, growing up I looked to the UK, with the presence of Her Majesty and at the time Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher as models that showed that women could achieve with great aplomb much more than men in many ways. It has often been said that the British do queens well. In a list that includes Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Victoria, it is no short statement to argue that there is none better than Her Late Majesty.

While she was our monarch and occupied the greatest office of State, she was indeed too a daughter, sister, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. As her people, we saw glimpses into that world. But we cannot imagine the grief that her family, the royal family, are feeling through this period. While we all get to grieve in private when we lose a loved one, we have seen in recent weeks that there is no private grief for the royal family. Four billion people around the world turned their eyes on them at the funeral procession, watching every step that they took. To our sovereign, His Majesty King Charles III, and to all of the royal family, we express our deepest and sincerest of condolences. We join them in their grief but could never imagine the challenges that they encounter at this time.

While we reflect on the life of Her Late Majesty, we also look in admiration to the reign of King Charles III. At the moment Her Late Majesty passed her last breath, His Majesty King Charles III acceded to the throne as our monarch—the new King of Australia. The head on the coin will soon go from facing right to facing left, with King Charles III to take his rightful place on our currency. I have had the great fortune of meeting our new King when he was the Prince of Wales and speaking to him about this place—as I know you have as well, Mr President. It is my hope—as I am sure it is your hope—that he will be here to join us in the not-too-distant future, as he has done before and as his mother did in 1954 and 1992. At this sad moment we look forward to happier days ahead with His Majesty's coronation and reign—which, as the anthem goes, should be "happy and glorious".

As I started with a quote from Sir Winston Churchill, I feel it is fitting to end in the same way. On Her Majesty's coronation, her first Prime Minister remarked:

Here at the summit of our world-wide community is a lady whom we respect because she is our Queen and whom we love because she is herself.

No doubt those words grew truer as the years drew on. She was loved and respected by her people throughout the world simply as "The Queen". Vale, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and God save the King.

**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (20:21):** I make a contribution to the debate on the condolence motion for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and pay tribute to the life of enormous service that she gave—more than 70 years of class and dignity as the Queen of England. That life of service was certainly on display for us when, only two days before her death, she swore in the new UK Prime Minister, Liz Truss. We celebrated her platinum jubilee earlier this year. But it is worthwhile noting that when Queen Elizabeth became Queen, on 6 February 1952, she was a 25-year-old woman with two small children. Today that is quite common, but 70 years ago there were no women in the New South Wales Parliament. There had previously been three members in the Legislative Assembly and two members here in the Legislative Council. But at that point there were no women in the Chambers of Parliament, let alone on the world stage. She charted her own course as a young woman and a young mother, becoming an absolutely beloved figure around the world.

There is a lot of talk now about authenticity in politics, but it is quite remarkable to think about a young woman at 25 years of age, 70 years ago, trying to find that balance. I understand there would have been plenty of nannies and assistants around, so it is perhaps not like a 25-year-old with two small children today. But to find her own way to do that with such class, grace and dignity, when the stakes are so very high, is quite remarkable. That in itself is worth reflecting on. Others have mentioned that she became the first reigning monarch to visit us in Australia, and that was part of how she found her own way through that extraordinarily difficult role. She visited our shores 16 times, as others have reflected, opening this Parliament and the Opera House. The history of this city and this country is so intertwined with the 70 years of her reign, and she has become a constant figure of stability through a time of immense change.

It is worth reflecting that Queen Elizabeth became the Queen only seven years after World War II, and her coronation was the first time that a television broadcast reached a larger audience than radio. Just to put that in context, it is also worth reflecting that the first television broadcast in Australia did not begin until 1956. At the time that the Queen was coronated, and even when she became Queen, telegrams were more common than televisions. Yet over the arc of that reign until today—when we have iPhones, artificial intelligence, virtual reality

and cryptocurrency—she has been a constant figure of stability and reassurance for so many. The outpourings of affection across the globe really go to that figure of stability that she has been able to maintain through this time of immense change. It is obviously very well known that the Queen had a passion for racing, which Australians really liked. I have also heard that she had quite the love of cricket, which I share with her. But despite living a life of incredible privilege, that ability to stay in touch and stay in contact with people, and to share those passions that so many do, would have helped keep her grounded through her long period as our monarch.

I only want to speak briefly tonight and, in ending, I extend our condolences and deepest sympathies to her family—to His Majesty King Charles III and to the royal family. At the same time as the outpouring of public grief for the figure that we feel that we knew as Queen Elizabeth II, they are mourning the loss of their mother, their grandmother and their great-grandmother. This time of intense grief for them is playing out in the public eye, as it always does.

Some of the most memorable moments for me over the past 10 days have been the tributes that the family have paid, whether it is the silent vigil of the Queen's children and grandchildren at the vigil of the Princes or even when they walked as part of the funeral procession last night our time. As we all know, no matter how long, full and well lived a life is, we always wish for more time with our loved ones. There is no doubt that her family would be feeling that now. With those brief words in support of this motion, I thank Her Late Majesty for her lifetime of service—for the class, dignity and grace with which she conducted herself. May she rest in peace.

**The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT (20:26):** In February 1954, in her early twenties, my late grandmother Wilma jumped in the back of an old truck at Gum Flat—which is out near Euchareena, in between Orange and Wellington. Joining her in the back of the truck were her brothers and sisters, and a big mob of cousins as well. Apparently, about a dozen of them jumped in the back of the truck and headed along to Dubbo—dirt roads in those days, of course, between Euchareena and Dubbo.

The trip was obviously a huge adventure for the Trudgett family at the time. They were off to see the newly crowned Queen on her first visit to Australia. It would have been a rough old trip on, no doubt, a very hot February day. But they apparently did catch a glimpse of the Queen and Prince Philip, as did a reported three-quarters of the population of the country during that visit. From that time up until 8 September 2022, 70 years on, Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has been a steady and reliable constant in our lives.

The Queen's passing and the Queen herself obviously meant many different things to many different people. We have seen some lovely tributes here today, which I have really enjoyed being able to sit and listen to. But for me, growing up in regional New South Wales, I have spent a lot of time in clubs and halls throughout the regions—be it the RSL, the bowling club, the tennis club, the CWA hall, the community hall or even our school halls. All were adorned with portraits of Queen Elizabeth. I must say that the quality of those portraits varied, from photocopied photos in cheap frames through to grand portraits, but each provided a reassuring presence in those places as the portrait overlooked the activities.

When I think back to those halls, I think about an oversized urn making way too much noise, packets of assorted biscuits or other snacks on decorated plates with Glad Wrap, or even homemade cakes in massive Tupperware containers. They would write their name on it, just optimistically hoping that that Tupperware container would not make it into the stockpile underneath the cabinet. All those scenes were overlooked by the portrait of Her Late Majesty.

A great deal of symbolism surrounds Her Late Majesty and the royal family, which has been evident in the past couple of weeks. Having lost that reassuring connection with so much of our past, the symbolic connection to our past will be felt right across regional New South Wales. For me, it is the Country Women's Association halls, the books and paper clippings at my grandparents' and the story of Granny heading off to Dubbo in the back of a truck to catch a glimpse of the Queen back in 1954.

Recently I learnt of another family member's royal viewing—my Uncle David on the other side of the family. In Orange in 1970, with a bunch of flowers in hand, he rushed out to reach the Queen's motorcade as it sped past his house. Obviously with a tight schedule to meet, the flowers were rejected at the time by the fast-moving motorcade. But David persisted, running several blocks into town to finally deliver the flowers, which had been handpicked from his mum's garden, to one of the Queen's handlers. These experiences—the old books, the newspapers, the story of when Granny saw the Queen, singing the national anthem *God Save the Queen* and the time Uncle David was nearly run over by a Rolls Royce—are all echoed across regional New South Wales. They are symbolic of a time gone by and are memories that we must ensure we hang onto. I cannot help but imagine what Her Late Majesty would have meant to my grandmothers in particular in the 1950s and 1960s—a young woman and a young mother to boot in such a powerful position who held it with such grace and dignity.

Whatever our political views and whatever future constitutional path we may take, we cannot help but admire and respect Her Late Majesty and the leadership she demonstrated with rarely seen style and poise. While we are remembering her life, I recall a visit in 1970 from the Queen and Prince Philip to Hawkesbury Agricultural College [HAC] in Richmond. Obviously that was before I was there, completing my agriculture degree under the banner of the University of Western Sydney. I am proud to wear the college tie today in recognition of that visit. Of course, it was a great honour for the college to have the Queen visit. Principal Doman wrote in the HAC journal at the time "That the college is to be honoured by a visit from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is a compliment not just to us here present but to all our predecessors who have erected an edifice, presumably of royal notice."

Most of my learnings about that visit come from a book by Bruce Braithwaite titled *Challenge & Change: The History of Hawkesbury Agricultural College 1966-1991*, which states, "It was indeed an historic day, heralding the first visit of the reigning sovereign to the Hawkesbury district. Included in the itinerary of the Queen and Prince Philip was a private visit to the college on Thursday 30 April 1970. Students, staff and their families gathered at the oval for the occasion." While there, the royal couple inspected Arab horses and dairy cattle on the oval and visited the beef cattle section to view pedigree stock and talk to the students. Prince Philip even had a cheesemaking demonstration at the college dairy.

We have heard a lot about Her Late Majesty's sense of humour, so I hope she wouldn't mind an amusing sidenote. In a contribution to the book, former staffer Joyce Dinan wrote, "The Minister for Agriculture demanded that a long-haired student be removed from the crowd. Questioned, the student was found to be a ministerial photographer." Some other silly behaviour was associated with that trip. The *HAC Ironical* included an alternative itinerary, printed under the name "The Skulking Wit". That itinerary for "Queen Liz and Prince Flip" included an inspection of an honour guard of chickens, a fly-by of a squadron of bees in formation and the viewing of a student demonstration and riot. It was also advised that student door-openers were not to accept tips and that the visit would be concluded with three cheers of "You bloody beaut, Your Majesty".

While I will not offer those three cheers myself, I will thank Her Late Majesty for her service, pass my condolences on to her family and take the opportunity to reflect on our history and heritage, which I am sure others will also take the time to remember. Having lost my own grandparents in recent years, I also offer my condolences to William, the new Prince of Wales, and to Prince Harry, who have lost not only their Queen but also their beloved grandmother. When it comes to public service, Her Late Majesty will long be held as the gold standard for those to follow. Her selfless dedication to her role and the humility with which she undertook it will always inspire. Whatever views we hold about the monarchy, we must count ourselves lucky to have had Her Late Majesty as the head of the Commonwealth for the past 70 years. We will never see another like her.

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (20:34):** I contribute to debate on this condolence motion, which expresses our profound sorrow on the death of our beloved sovereign Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, a truly remarkable woman who served for 70 years as the Queen of Australia. For most of us, Her Late Majesty is the only monarch we have ever known. When talking with family and friends, the overwhelming feeling I have had is that one of life's great constants is gone. The length of her reign was unprecedented in not only the short history of modern Australia but also the long history of Britain. That constant can be measured in many ways. During her time as our monarch, Australia had 16 Australian Prime Ministers and 16 Governors-General, our population almost tripled and she visited our State 12 times. Over the past 70 years the world underwent widespread social, economic and technological change, including here in Australia. But during the reign of Her Late Majesty, we enjoyed great peace and political stability. As the Premier said on her passing:

Her Late Majesty will forever be connected to pivotal moments in our State's history. She officially opened the Parliament of New South Wales in 1954, Sydney Opera House in 1973, Parramatta Stadium in 1986, and Darling Harbour in 1988.

On her first trip to Australia, Her Late Majesty toured the City of Newcastle with the Duke of Edinburgh. They arrived by train at Newcastle station and were officially welcomed at City Hall before visiting No. 1 Sportsground, BHP steelworks, Stockton and Newcastle Airport. The headline that day in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* was "Queen Enchants Newcastle". More than one-quarter of a million people, well in excess of half the region's population at the time, came out to see Her Late Majesty that day. The paper paints a picture of a town that turned out to see their Queen. It stated that "spontaneous outbursts of cheering by thousands of people of all ages, most of them waving flags, marked the royal progress", that "every doorway and window was filled with people who joined in the cheering" and that "hundreds of small craft were on Newcastle Harbour as the royal barge carried the Queen and the Duke to Stockton".

On that journey to Newcastle, Her Late Majesty travelled by train. At Gosford and Wyong stations, local residents gathered to catch a glimpse of the royal train. The crowd, estimated to be in the vicinity of 10,000, was the vast majority of the population of the Central Coast at the time. Many had slept overnight in the rain alongside the train line to get a spot from which to catch a glimpse of the Queen. The train reportedly slowed down to just eight miles per hour while the Queen and Duke stood on the rear balcony to allow her loyal subjects to get a

glimpse and experience the magic of monarchy. Her Late Majesty made a further three visits to Newcastle—in 1970, in 1977 to open the Newcastle Art Gallery and in 1988 to open Queens Wharf. Unfortunately, I never had the opportunity to see Her Late Majesty, so I did not get to experience the sensation aptly recalled by Sir Robert Menzies, which my colleagues have mentioned.

Personally, I will remember Her Late Majesty for her service, sacrifice, grace, dignity and humour. She was patron of over 500 organisations in her lifetime, from charities and military associations to professional bodies and public service organisations. She was also a war veteran. Just 13 years old when World War II began, she was an important morale booster for children who had been billeted away from United Kingdom cities that were under bombing attacks throughout the war. In the final year of the war, she joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service and learnt basic motor mechanics and how to drive a lorry. Apparently, she retained those mechanical skills throughout her life. Like her husband, Her Late Majesty was very fond of Land Rovers and could often be seen driving her Range Rover near Balmoral.

In addition to her public roles, Her Late Majesty was also the wife of Prince Philip. She was the mother of our new King, Charles III; Anne, the Princess Royal; Prince Andrew, the Duke of York; and Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex. She had eight grandchildren, including our future king, William, Prince of Wales, and was a great-grandmother of 12. Queen Elizabeth set a very high standard and strong precedent for future kings and queens of Australia. As monarch, she reigned Australia with a distant, almost imperceptible hand, leaving us and the Executive Government to our own devices.

I believe this, along with her service, sacrifice, grace, dignity and humour, is the reason why Queen Elizabeth II maintained such strong personal support in Australia and why the monarchy has always been, and continues to be, very favourably viewed in this country. I make a few remarks on the past two weeks since the death of Queen Elizabeth II. We expected the United Kingdom to experience a public outpouring of grief and deep mourning. However, I think the emotion that many Australians have experienced has taken them by surprise. Our emotion may not necessarily have been expressed through tears and sadness, but it is clear that the vast majority of Australians have been moved by the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

As I have already expressed, the admiration that the Queen enjoyed in Australia was particularly high. However, on a personal level, watching King Charles III and his siblings—and Prince William, Prince Harry and their cousins—we all can relate to the private grieving that they are going through. I offer my condolences to the King and his family. I thank them for sharing the Queen with us for over 70 years and for allowing us to share in their grieving for their matriarch and our monarch over the past 10 days. At the age of 21, then-Princess Elizabeth declared:

... my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service ...

I doubt she comprehended at that time how soon she would be the sovereign, and how hard and long she would have to work to honour that vow. But I say at this moment that she did honour it, and we admire her for it. Finally, I pay tribute to the King. He has had a long and demanding apprenticeship, and I admire him for the poise and dignity that he has displayed over the past two weeks and over the past 70 years. I am looking forward to the reign of King Charles III. I do hope that he will join us and sit in the chair behind you, Mr President, in two years' time when we commemorate the Legislative Council's forthcoming bicentenary. God save the King.

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (Minister for Regional Transport and Roads) (20:41):** Today, in Australia's oldest Parliament, we take the opportunity to mourn the passing of an incredible leader. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II took the throne at just 25 and went on to become the longest reigning monarch, Australian sovereign and leader of the Commonwealth of Nations, which she successfully helmed for seven decades. Queen Elizabeth served with dignity, courage and, above all else, a steadfast commitment to serving the people of the Commonwealth. Queen Elizabeth's 70-year reign was a foundation of stability in Australia against the backdrop of 16 Prime Ministers, numerous wars and conflicts, economic growth and decline, natural disasters and a global pandemic.

As the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, it would be remiss of me not to mention the Queen's 1954 visit to Australia, including to my home town of Bathurst, on transport provided by New South Wales Government Railways. The royal train took the Queen from Sydney to Newcastle on 9 February 1954. Then Her Majesty returned from a visit to Wollongong by train from Bulli to Sydney on 11 February and from Bathurst to Sydney on 12 February. For those who are interested, the Governor-General's carriage and one of the locomotives that hauled the royal train in 1954 can be seen today, preserved at the Transport Heritage NSW Rail Museum.

As the former president of the Bathurst Agricultural, Horticultural and Pastoral Association, which runs the Royal Bathurst Show, I touch briefly on how the show became a royal show because it embodies the deep interest and commitment that Queen Elizabeth had towards Australia and its regions. In 1992 it was suggested within the Bathurst Show society that approval ought to be sought to include the word "royal" within the title of



the annual agricultural show, which had been running since 1862. A request was ultimately drafted and sent by letter to Her Majesty. After many months the association was resigned to the fact that it was not to be, until a reply by letter from the Governor-General informed the association that Her Majesty had approved the use of the name "Royal Bathurst Show".

We will probably never know whether what tipped it over the edge was the fact that the Bathurst Show had been since its inception a regional show, highlighting excellence in agricultural endeavour from across the western portion of the State, with exceptional competition across a broad range of livestock and non-livestock sections; whether it was that in its early heyday it was larger and more popular than the Sydney royal show; or whether it was Her Majesty's memory of her visit to Bathurst in 1954, standing in the 1892 grandstand addressing the masses of schoolchildren, wellwishers and dignitaries. But the Bathurst Agricultural, Horticultural and Pastoral Association councillors and members are committed to hosting the thirtieth "Royal" Bathurst Show, the only royal show in regional New South Wales and one of only four non-capital-city royal shows.

It is stories like that which highlight Her Majesty's commitment to Australia and the way in which she was able to drive positive social impact in not just the cities but regional centres as well. Last night we watched the state funeral of Her Majesty the Queen at Westminster Abbey. It was a funeral of exceptional ceremony and personalised touches. It was there where she was married in 1947 and where her coronation took place in 1953, along with countless other memorable moments. Indeed, it is a place of special significance and a fitting place to pay tribute to Britain's longest serving monarch. Billions of people from across the nation, the Commonwealth and the world paid tribute to the extraordinary life and reign of the Queen in their own way. For most of us, she was the only ruling monarch in our lifetime; for me, that is certainly the case. She was a figure of stability and perseverance; a mother, grandmother and great-grandmother; and a leader who kept her promise to dedicate her whole life to the people of the Commonwealth.

We honoured Her Majesty by partaking in the UK's National Moment of Reflection with a minute's silence. It was an opportunity for us to reflect on the remarkable life and legacy of Her Majesty the Queen one last time. We commemorate the life she dedicated to duty, to public service and to the good of her people. In fact, it is interesting to note that the Queen was patron to more than 600 charities and organisations during her lifetime. It was touching to see the thousands of flowers laid on Cambridge Drive at Windsor Castle as Her Majesty's coffin made its final journey to St George's Chapel for the committal service. It was a true showing of the lives she touched in such a unique way. The Queen was laid to rest with her late husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, alongside her father, King George VI; her mother, Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother; and her sister, Princess Margaret. Our thoughts are with the royal family, our new monarch, King Charles III, and the people of the United Kingdom at this time. God save the King.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance, and Minister for Employee Relations) (20:47):** In reply: I thank everyone who has contributed to this motion of condolence. The sentiments displayed show the House in its best light. The passing of Her Majesty and the impact that she has had on Australia—and, in many respects, the world—give evidence to the impact that this remarkable woman has had throughout her lifetime. In my earlier contribution, I highlighted her commitment to service, which was the hallmark of the commitment that she gave as a young princess and with which she followed through all her life. The contribution of Her Majesty has been different for everyone. Everyone has a different story to tell of the impact that she had on their life.

Whether she was going to a sheep farm in Dubbo or to the opening of the Opera House, participating with Australians in the contribution of that iconic building, those things have shown a deeply human person, one might say without airs and graces, who participated in the culture of Australia as she committed to do when she was at her coronation. I don't know if the word is "coronated". There is some dispute about that. At her coronation, the Queen committed to respect the cultures of the countries of the Commonwealth. That she came to Australia on so many occasions, and came to this building and House on so many occasions, is testament to the fact that she loved this country, participated in its life and valued its people. She valued the people of New South Wales and Australia. Our democracy, in many respects, has been enlivened by her ability to participate in it.

One thing that people often remark about is the sense of humour that this woman had. Some members told stories of her sense of humour. My wife was relating to me the other day an occasion when the Queen was at Balmoral and had gone for a walk with one of the gamekeepers on the grounds. An American tourist there went over to the gamekeeper and asked, "Does the Queen live near here?" The gamekeeper said, "Yes, she does, in fact". He asked, "Do you work here?" The gamekeeper said, "I work for the Queen, yes". The American tourist asked, "Could I have a photo with you?" He then turned to the Queen and asked, "Would you take the photo for us?" She said, "Sure, I will take the photo." She proceeded to take the photo. The American tourist then asked, "Would you like to be in a photo with us?" The Queen said, "Oh, that would be very nice." When the American

tourist had gone, she turned to the gamekeeper and said, "I wonder if, one day, he will look at that photograph and say, 'Gosh, look at who I was photographed with.'" It shows what a remarkably human person she was.

The people who went to the Queen's funeral say something about her. Other members also mentioned this. Certainly, her love of horseracing is well documented. Gai Waterhouse was invited to the funeral personally by the palace, as was the trainer of Winx, Chris Waller. The fact that she engaged with those horse trainers and would ring them herself on Saturday nights after a racing carnival to check out the horse that the trainer had been training shows her remarkable ability to say, "I'm a person of the people. I don't get other people to do my inquiries for me."

I thank all the members of the House. Today has been an excellent day for us to reflect on the contribution that Her Majesty has made. I know that you, Mr President, were at Balmoral leading up to her passing. It must have special relevance for you to have been there at such a proximate time to her passing. I think, for all of us, it has been a day where we reflect on the important people in our lives and the contributions that the Queen has made to our families, to this country, to this State and to this Parliament. I thank all members for the contributions that they have made. I commend the motion to the House. God save the King.

**The PRESIDENT:** I ask members to stand in their places to show their support for the condolence motion expressing our profound sorrow on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

*Members and officers stood in their places as a mark of respect.*

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Bills*

### **SCRAP METAL INDUSTRY AMENDMENT (REVIEW) BILL 2022**

#### **First Reading**

**Bill received from the Legislative Assembly, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Damien Tudehope, on behalf of the Hon. Sarah Mitchell.**

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance, and Minister for Employee Relations) (20:54):** I table a statement of public interest to accompany the bill as is required by the standing orders of this House.

**Statement of public interest tabled.**

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I move:

That standing orders be suspended to allow the passing of the bill through all its remaining stages during the present or any one sitting of the House.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I move:

That the second reading of the bill stand as an order of the day for the next sitting day.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Adjournment Debate*

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

### **PACIFIC CONNECT FORUM**

**The Hon. WES FANG (20:57):** The International Centre for Democratic Partnerships Ideas Exchange brings together the most active members of the Pacific to share new ideas, discuss progress on current projects and broaden personal and professional networks. Through collaboration, relationship building, empowerment and affinity, participants from Australia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Tonga discussed ideas to forge new Australia-Pacific partnerships in a way that builds lasting connections for Australia with emerging Pacific leaders. Whilst Acting President, I had the pleasure of delivering the welcome address at this year's Pacific Connect forum and met with some incredibly impressive leaders from our Pacific neighbours.

Australia and its Pacific neighbours have always been linked by the breadth and depth of security, trading, diplomatic, cultural and sporting links. Pacific Connect and other multidisciplinary forums offer industry and

private groups unique opportunities to collaborate on ideas and innovations. Never has it been more important that we continue to build these relationships. Pacific Connect has a particular focus on technology and innovation and seeks to utilise new Australia-Pacific partnerships to work towards solutions for development challenges in the Pacific region. By building new, enduring connections for Australia with emerging Pacific leaders, Pacific Connect fosters important friendships where democracy is encouraged and flourishes.

With travel restrictions over the past two years, the 2022 forum represented the first time since 2019 that we were all able to be in the same room together. Throughout this time, we all adopted new strategies to remain connected, and a reset was pressed as to how we continue building relationships in a world without face-to-face contact. Pacific Connect explores these ideas and how the innovations born out of COVID-19 can be applied to business moving forward for the betterment of the Australian-Pacific partnership. As many would know, the New South Wales Parliament is a proud member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's twinning program, with the Bougainville House of Representatives and the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. Like all strong relationships, twinning is built upon the foundations of collaboration and understanding, and it puts people first.

Over the years, twinning activities have helped our partners to navigate common challenges as they strengthen their parliaments. In turn, these relationships have offered us an invaluable opportunity to reflect on our own practices and procedures. However, with travel restrictions preventing delegations, we had to adapt and evolve our methods to the changing world around us. The New South Wales Parliament introduced the Twin Peaks online series, which features blog posts and videos outlining the program, and introduced the Speaker of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. Just recently, in May and June, the deputy clerks of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands and Bougainville House of Representatives shared their experiences with a wider audience. For those who have not yet seen the series, I would encourage you to do so. It is exceptionally worthwhile.

COVID-19 forced us to innovate and presented us with a new way of looking at opportunities for greater involvement and strengthening our bond. In a similar vein, Pacific Connect participants aim to utilise technologies to enable collaboration, information sharing and the promotion of Pacific Islander individuals, organisations and stories. I was particularly pleased to see that the 2022 program had a specific focus on empowering and promoting Pacific Islander women. Through workshops, strategic engagement, networking and seed funding opportunities, Pacific Connect brought together entrepreneurs from Pacific Islands nations and connected them to like-minded Australian businesses to begin new partnerships. It was timely that I had just returned from the National Party's women's council in Griffith days before I delivered the opening address.

Our women's council is a means of encouraging more women in regional areas to run for Parliament and become active in policy and politics. These types of forums, whether they be Pacific Connect or our women's council, are vital and represent an important platform to empower women to leadership positions in business and in politics. I congratulate Pacific Connect for their efforts in promoting entrepreneurial Pacific Islander women and connecting them with Australian opportunities. It was my great privilege to welcome delegates of Pacific Connect to the New South Wales Parliament. I pass my congratulations on to the International Centre for Democratic Partnerships for organising this event. By continuing to build strong relationships, we forge new pathways for cooperation between Australia and our Pacific Islands neighbours well into the future.

#### **WOMEN'S ABORTION ACTION CAMPAIGN**

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (21:02):** Tonight I inform the House of a group that has just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary. It started off as a very small group of women, and over many years it grew to be bigger and smaller at various points in time. It is a living example of what a small group of dedicated people can do to make change in our State. On Saturday 3 September feminist activists gathered in Concord to commemorate and celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Women's Abortion Action Campaign [WAAC]. It was 50 years ago, in August 1972—I was two years old at the time—when a small group of feminists met at Sydney university as part of the women's liberation movement. Their focus was to campaign for safe, legal and free abortion on demand.

They wanted the repeal of abortion laws from the Crimes Act 1900 that could see women or the doctors that assisted them fined and jailed for up to 10 years. These activists also demanded free, safe contraception and an end to the disgraceful practice of forced sterilisation. Out of this meeting, the Women's Abortion Action Campaign was formed. This dedicated group, called WAAC, met regularly at Women's Liberation House and made the case for a woman's right to choose what was in her best interests when it came to if, when and in what circumstances she would have children. For over 50 years WAAC made banners, wrote newsletters and became expert badge and sticker makers. They did poster runs, organised rallies, joined rallies, wrote submissions, lobbied politicians and took to the streets every time access to reproductive health care was under threat. As many in this place would know, that has been several times every decade.

These tenacious, committed and creative women not only participated in protests but found ways to practically support women who needed their help. WAAC members were instrumental in establishing non-directive pregnancy counselling services, raised funds for people who could not afford to get an abortion and supported the establishment of feminist-run clinics. They are still doing this work. WAAC volunteers have provided safe passage to people who used to be harassed when entering reproductive health clinics. They have mentored and supported pro-choice MPs, including this grateful one standing here tonight and many others. They have urged us to keep up the fight for the decriminalisation of abortion and the introduction of safe access zones. They built alliances with other pro-choice medical, legal and feminist groups.

In the peaks and troughs of a half-century campaign, they never gave up hope for change nor belief that they could make a difference. The gathering in Concord was a wonderful celebration of this milestone. Stories were told of WAAC throughout the decades, from the early days of collective decision-making by people of different political philosophies and a commitment to change through to the successful campaigns to introduce safe access zones and decriminalise abortion in New South Wales in 2019. There was recognition of those who had gone before, the harm that had been caused, the people who had died and those who had been forced to live with stigma and shame. There was recognition that even though we have made change, and the change has been pronounced in the past couple of years, there is still so much work to do to ensure that there is access to safe, legal and affordable abortion for every person who needs one.

It is still the case in New South Wales that access is not guaranteed for every person who needs an abortion. It is still the case that it costs way too much money for way too many people, and people are making choices that they would not make if this was not the case. It is still the case that for women to access this incredibly important and life-saving health care, they need to run the gauntlet of a private health system with high fees and a lack of access. Because of the ongoing work and activism of the women from WAAC—and they are a small group these days—hundreds of thousands of people in New South Wales have had their lives changed for the better. I thank the incredible activists from WAAC. I thank them for deciding to care about reproductive rights. I thank them for their commitment, tenacity, creativity and wisdom. Change is possible, and their contribution over five long decades made it happen. Long may they continue. We hope that the celebrations in the future are to reminisce, not to keep up the fight.

#### TIMBER INDUSTRY

**Mr JUSTIN FIELD (21:06):** I make some reflections on the recent report of the parliamentary inquiry that looked into the future of the timber industry in New South Wales. Broken a little bit by COVID restrictions, the committee travelled around New South Wales and into most of its forest areas, both the softwood plantation areas and native hardwood areas across the North Coast, South Coast and further inland. It was a good opportunity to go and see the status of the forests and the timber industry. This inquiry was happening in the context of the incredibly destructive 2019-20 fires, which burnt through 50-odd per cent of native forests across New South Wales and had a catastrophic impact on softwood plantations.

It is estimated that about 25 per cent of softwood plantations were impacted by fire. They were not all destroyed; some of that timber was able to be recovered. But there was a substantial impact, particularly on the native forests on the South Coast. The consequent impact on softwood timber, in particular, for housing construction has been immense. The impact on our native forests' ability to recover whilst logging has continued in some of these badly burnt forests was up for discussion and consideration by the committee. It is an important step forward to have a tripartisan committee chaired by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party and made up of Government members, both from the Liberal Party and The Nationals, with myself coming from more of an environmental perspective.

Whilst there was not a clear agreement to exit from native forest logging, there was an important recommendation that came from the inquiry that the Government does a cost-benefit assessment on native forest logging in New South Wales and look at where the biggest bang for buck is. I do not want to put it in economic terms, but what is the most valuable use of our forest resources? We heard from many participants in the inquiry, those groups and individuals that made submissions and gave evidence, that there is a lot of value in leaving our forests standing. A recent study by Frontier Economics found that stopping native forestry in the southern and Eden areas would produce an economic benefit to the State of approximately \$60 million whilst also reducing net greenhouse gas emissions by almost one million tonnes per year over the next 20 years. There are also great recreational and nature-based tourism opportunities in our public native forests.

That is in deep contrast to the declining demand for hardwood timbers, in large part driven by the unsustainable harvesting in the past, which has left very few large timbers available for the native forestry industry. I think a lot of members would be surprised to learn just how much of our public native forests are very low value woodchip products. Woodchip turned into tomato stakes is not really a future that makes sense for a lot of people

when we know our forests were so badly impacted by the fires. We also know that New South Wales is a global extinction leader, in large part driven by land clearing and deforestation across the landscape.

One of the other important findings from the inquiry was the criticism of the Government's failure to respond to or even make public the Natural Resources Commission report. The report was commissioned by the Government to chart a course for the future of our public native forests—to raise questions about what sort of logging can occur, if at all, given the impact of the fires. The Government has sat on that report for well over a year now. It has failed to make the report public, it has failed to respond to it, and the inquiry—quite reasonably and responsibly—criticised the Government strongly for that. It made it difficult for the committee to make some really clear findings.

In particular, I want to point out the significant effort made by many across the community. Communities have been devastated to see the fires and then also by how quickly forestry was championed back into some of our most badly burnt forests. Many members of these communities have taken time out from their campaigning to raise awareness about the impacts of forestry, to make submissions to the inquiry, to be at hearings and to engage with the committee members. They made a substantial contribution to the inquiry that informed our considerations and helped us craft what is quite a balanced report. I do not agree with everything in it, but it charts an important way forward for this industry.

### HUNTER REGION PROJECTS

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (21:12):** I point out some recent announcements across the Hunter, demonstrating that the New South Wales Coalition Government is securing a brighter future for that region. Earlier this week the Minister for Regional Health, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, and I announced that the \$111.5 million Cessnock Hospital redevelopment is yet another step closer with the appointment of a project team. The New South Wales Government is committed to delivering enhanced health services closer to home and futureproofing care for the wider Cessnock community. An experienced team of project managers, architects and cost managers who have worked on a range of health infrastructure projects in metropolitan and regional areas have been engaged to progress the master planning for the Cessnock Hospital redevelopment to ensure the best possible healthcare solutions are delivered for the region.

The appointment of the project team is a key milestone in the advancement of health care for Cessnock and will ensure that we can move ahead and deliver the best possible hospital to support the health needs of communities in Cessnock and surrounding areas now and into the future. The immediate focus for the redevelopment team includes commencing the master planning for the hospital, with the first plan expected to be released later this year. This is an exciting project for the entire Cessnock community. The Coalition is committed to ensuring that the hospital has the latest facilities to meet the increasing and changing healthcare needs for one of the fastest growing inland areas in the country.

The Clinical Services Plan for the Cessnock region is also being finalised by the Hunter New England Local Health District. It will inform the services, facilities and future time lines of the redevelopment. As we progress planning, there will be opportunities for staff, clinicians and the community to be involved in shaping their hospital. This week the Government also released concept designs and architectural renders for the Newcastle Education Campus. The campus will be located on the main Newcastle High School site and will include 37 new permanent learning spaces, five new support learning spaces, a new library, a multipurpose facility, a canteen and science laboratories. The concept designs help us imagine what the Newcastle Education Campus will look like. It will provide first-class facilities that will benefit the local community now and for years to come.

Teachers have provided valuable feedback, which has helped in the design of an inclusive, collaborative and inspiring environment where students are nurtured, known and enabled to thrive in their learning years. I am happy to report that the State-significant development application is currently being prepared and will be lodged in late 2022, when the community will have the opportunity to provide feedback. Over the next four years the New South Wales Government is investing \$8.6 billion in school infrastructure, continuing its program to deliver 160 new and upgraded schools to support communities across New South Wales. This builds on the more than \$9.1 billion invested in projects delivered since 2017, a program of \$17.7 billion in public education infrastructure.

Finally, two local tennis clubs have benefited from New South Wales hosting the ATP Cup following the awarding of grants in round 3 of the NSW ATP Cup Tennis Legacy Fund. Soldiers Point Tennis Club received \$11,300, which will enable the replacement of 12 light fittings at the courts with LEDs. This will save the club money, reduce the environmental impact and produce better light. The new LEDs will last longer and will be safer to change. Learmonth Park Tennis Club received funding of \$10,000, which will enable the club to implement a court booking and payment software system via the internet, and install a new electronic keypad entry and integrated automated lighting for night bookings. Using this system, the club is aiming to increase participation by 35 per cent.

Those two clubs were among 24 tennis clubs, associations and councils across New South Wales that have shared in more than \$347,000 in round 3 alone from the NSW ATP Cup Tennis Legacy Fund. In collaboration with Tennis NSW, the NSW ATP Cup Tennis Legacy Fund has invested more than \$2.4 million in new programs and facilities across New South Wales. The grants ensure that the ATP Cup leaves a legacy for local community tennis. As well as inspiring local juniors to play the sport, the ATP Cup is also leaving a legacy that will benefit local tennis for years to come. I congratulate the recipients and look forward to seeing these projects delivered.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE (21:17):** While there is now some reported softening in the New South Wales housing market, given the sharp escalations in price over many years, housing in Sydney and in many places across the State remains unaffordable to many, including those with good jobs and ongoing work. In 1970 it took around 4½ times the average pre-tax earnings to buy a house, which was then around \$18,000. In 2020 the average house price in Sydney was over \$1.1 million—that is more than 12 times the average income. In 2021 the city's median house price was \$1.31 million—14 times the average income. A Domain real estate report in January this year indicated the median cost of housing in Sydney is now around \$1.6 million—17 times the average income.

It is, therefore, unsurprising that many working people cannot afford to buy a home, at least not one within a reasonable distance from their work. As a result, many of our key workers—doctors, nurses, police, paramedics, firefighters, those in retail, hospitality and other vital industries, and other workers with similar incomes—simply cannot afford to buy a home. The market and governments are failing the next generation of Australians wanting their own home. It is even worse for those who are seriously economically disadvantaged and need access to public or social housing.

The NSW Land and Housing Corporation [LAHC] is a public trading enterprise which was once budget funded but which now, essentially, has to generate its own income to build new social housing and maintain its own properties, chiefly through selling assets and dissipating the overall amount of resources for social housing in the State. The NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment *Annual Report 2020-21* states that LAHC has more than 125,000 dwellings valued at over \$50 billion, with several hundred million in rental income. In 2011-12, when I was shadow Minister for housing in this State, the Land and Housing Corporation had more than 143,000 social housing dwellings. Even allowing for the transfer of assets to the non-government sector, it is clear there are fewer social housing dwellings in New South Wales per capita than there were a decade ago, while need has sharply increased.

One proposal to address these issues is to create a fit-for-purpose government land and property agency that can adapt to the different phases of the property cycle, increase the government-owned stock of social and affordable housing, and develop innovative and sustainable market housing. At the same time, this proposal will solve the continuing issue of funding for the social housing maintenance backlog and revitalising social housing. Landcom is the New South Wales government-owned developer. In the past, it developed and sold land and housing packages to those who could not get home mortgages in the usual way. Under the current Government, it master-plans land and sells those blocks to developers to build homes and sell into the market.

I propose that New South Wales merge the assets and responsibilities of the Land and Housing Corporation and Landcom, creating a new State-owned corporation called Homes for NSW, resulting in a fit-for-purpose government property organisation that will support the property industry during different phases of the economic cycle. Homes for NSW would be given a mandate to leverage the housing assets and rental income streams to deliver an increased portfolio of social and affordable housing, available to key workers and those in the same income brackets. It would use commercial and trading activities to address the social housing maintenance backlog and increase social housing as well as affordable housing stock. This organisation would deliver urban transformation projects, using best practice design and a focus on environmental and social outcomes, and put sustainability and innovation at the forefront of housing supply to support the delivery of energy-efficient and climate-resilient housing.

The amalgamation of these two agencies into one super State-owned corporation would streamline the approach to housing delivery, eliminate tensions between different government organisations and deliver a highly skilled workforce that could respond to changing government priorities in a coordinated and planned manner. Homes for NSW would be a critical component of a Labor government's response to housing affordability challenges in New South Wales.

Addressing housing affordability through the delivery of diverse and innovative market housing, coupled with an increase in affordable rental housing and social housing, will have wideranging social, economic and environmental benefits. Housing unaffordability is a risk to economic productivity and labour force participation. Labour market mobility, participation and employment rates are constrained when there is a shortage of affordable

homes accessible to employment opportunities. Costs associated with urban congestion increase as a result of the mismatch between housing, employment opportunities and public transport.

A fit-for-purpose government property organisation would support the property industry during downward phases of the cycle by creating a pipeline of development opportunities on government-owned land. Homes for NSW would be structured so that it could respond to market failures and ensure a continued supply of housing, even during economic downturns. This would complement NSW Labor's previous commitment to deliver a minimum of 25 per cent affordable housing on government-owned land. These were things I developed when I was a shadow Minister, and I hope that the next Labor government takes them up.

#### **RICKY "DOUGIE" HAMPSON JR**

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON (21:22):** First Nations people should note that, with the permission of the family, I will mention a person who is deceased. In August last year Kamilaroi and Dunghutti man Ricky Hampson Jr, known as "Dougie", presented at Dubbo Base Hospital in severe pain, with an elevated heart rate and what he articulately expressed as a ripping and popping feeling in his stomach. He was sedated with a cocktail of opioids. When he woke up, he was sent home and told to drink water. A few hours later, he was dead. Someone at Dubbo Base Hospital saw Dougie and did not give him the care he deserved. A simple scan would have saved his life. Unlike others', Dougie's birthright meant that his life was not valued enough to receive a scan, an X-ray or a full examination to see what was happening. A simple scan would have saved his life.

Dogie died of perforated ulcers—a preventable death. Dougie is another blak death, in the hands of this State's system, that should never have happened. Dougie's life mattered. He was only 36 years old. He was a much-loved father of eight, a grandfather, a son, a brother and a friend. His father, Rick Hampson Sr, his mother, Lidia Chatfield, and his younger sister, Anita, have been fighting for justice since the day he died. They describe, with tears in their eyes and pain in their hearts, that Dougie was a beautiful and loving soul. He was the joker, the life of the party. When Dougie presented at hospital, as part of the intake he admitted that he was an occasional cannabis user. When the hospital checked Dougie's next of kin, it was falsely listed as a correctional centre. His next of kin were the many loving members of his family and community. They were nearby. They were not called. Had they been, they would have been there with Dougie.

Dogie's family believe that Dougie's life was ended brutally by a racist system, and so do I. I know that, if I had walked into that hospital, bent over in pain, saying I could feel a tearing and a popping pain in my stomach, I would have received a different level of care, a higher level of care. I would not have even been asked if I had been a drug user. Even if I had admitted to being an occasional cannabis user, I would still have received the treatment that Dougie should have received. I would have been scanned, and my life would have been saved. I know this to be true because this has happened to me.

Dogie's father said, "I can't believe that, in Australia, someone as young as my son could be denied proper care at a hospital and would die from a ruptured stomach ulcer." Nor can I. Since Dougie's death, his family has been on a quest for justice and change. Dougie's family and the good folk at the National Justice Project called for a coronial inquest. In July this year, almost a year after Dougie's death, Dougie's father and sister came to Parliament House from Dubbo and held a press conference, directly calling on the Attorney General for a coronial inquest into Dougie's death. A petition with over 13,500 signatures, calling for a coronial inquest, was presented here at Parliament House.

Finally, just two weeks ago, the New South Wales Coroner confirmed that there will be an inquest commencing next year. Dougie's grieving father has said, "The system must change nationally to prevent avoidable deaths. The inquest is desperately needed, not just to give our family the answers we deserve but to make change to our country's health system. So many of our people continue to die avoidable deaths, and no-one has ever been held accountable. We want accountability for the way my son was treated. Without accountability and repercussions, this is going to keep happening."

We need reform urgently. This place's inquiry into health outcomes and access to health and hospital services in rural, regional and remote New South Wales by the health committee, which tabled its report earlier this year, found that First Nations people's experience with the health system is racist and discriminatory, and it called for reform. We needed reform before Dougie died. Nothing can bring Dougie back, but may the legacy of his death be that we see serious reform, including Aboriginal liaison officers in hospitals 24 hours a day and a clear mechanism of accountability for when State employees who are responsible for keeping people safe do not do so. Be it for hospitals, schools, prisons, police or child protection, the State's failing systems must change. First Nations people are dying in the hands of the State. First Nations people need culturally appropriate services like everyone else. New South Wales remains a racist, brutal, colonial State. It has failed Dougie and his grieving family and community. Nothing can bring Dougie back. Dougie's life mattered. Things need to change.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Wes Fang):** The question is that this House do now adjourn.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The House adjourned at 21:27 until Wednesday 21 September 2022 at 10:00.**