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Legislative Council

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)

**Fifty-Eighth Parliament
First Session**

Wednesday 8 May 2024

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday 8 May 2024

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. Benjamin Cameron Franklin) took the chair at 10:00.

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.

Announcements

PROCEDURE COMMITTEE

The PRESIDENT (10:01): I take the opportunity to remind members that the closing date for submissions to the three inquiries currently being conducted by the Procedure Committee is Friday 10 May 2024. The three inquiries are examining procedures for dealing with disorder by members during committee proceedings; updating the standing orders to require respectful behaviour in the Chamber, particularly as they relate to sexism and racism; and giving of notices of motions under standing order 75.

NOTICE PAPER

The PRESIDENT (10:02): I advise members of a correction to the *Notice Paper*. Item (2) in the order of private members' business for today, private members' business item No. 923 standing in the name of the Hon. Emily Suvaal, should read:

That, the mover of the motion may speak for not more than five minutes, any other member may speak for not more than five minutes, and, if the motion is not sooner disposed of, debate be interrupted after 60 minutes to allow the mover to speak in reply for not more than three minutes.

I note it has been corrected in the *Notice Paper* and a proof will be uploaded to the web shortly.

Motions

TAMIL WOMEN'S GROUP INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY EVENT

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (10:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the Tamil Women's Group held a celebratory and reflective event on 14 March 2024 at New South Wales Parliament House in light of International Women's Day with many community members of the Indian diaspora, hosted by Ms Abigail Boyd, MLC;
 - (b) the event saw dance performances by Dhana's Dance Group and Little Diva's Dance Group, a Kalari performance by community members, and inspiring speeches by women from the community; and
 - (c) the event celebrated the diversity and richness of the Tamil and Dravidian diasporas in Australia and across the world, and the achievements of women from diverse multicultural communities, and provided an opportunity to reflect on the collective struggle of women across the globe in achieving justice, peace, equality and liberation.
- (2) That this House commends the work of the Tamil Women's Group and community members for their endeavours in promoting values of peace, unity, community and connection to culture.

Motion agreed to.

MESSAGE STICK ANNUAL BREAKFAST

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (10:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Message Stick hosted its annual breakfast to mark the sixteenth anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations on 13 February 2024 at Australian Parliament House, Canberra;
 - (b) the event was well attended by survivors of the Stolen Generations and their families, alongside politicians and members of the community;
 - (c) the event was also attended by:
 - (i) the Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP, Prime Minister;
 - (ii) the Hon. Richard Marles, MP, Deputy Prime Minister;
 - (iii) the Hon. Linda Burney, MP;

- (iv) Anne Stanley, MP;
 - (v) the Hon. Cameron Murphy, MLC;
 - (vi) Marjorie O'Neill, MP;
 - (vii) Professor Tom Calma, AO;
 - (viii) Jody Broun, CEO, the National Indigenous Australians Agency; and
 - (ix) Shannan Dodson, CEO, the Healing Foundation.
- (d) the commemoration of the 2008 National Apology was followed by the delivery of the Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Implementation Plan, outlining new and existing measures being undertaken to support Closing the Gap efforts.
- (2) That this House gives its thanks to Message Stick, the event organisers and speakers for their work in continuing to remember the Stolen Generations.

Motion agreed to.

NSW COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES QUEERS IN CONVERSATION EVENT

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) the NSW Council for Civil Liberties in association with Australian Lawyers for Human Rights hosted the event Queers in Conversation at the Burdekin Hotel, Oxford Street, on 27 February 2024;
 - (b) the Hon. Cameron Murphy, MLC, attended the event alongside members of the legal and LGBTQI+ communities; and
 - (c) the event was a great success, with attendees hearing from panellists:
 - (i) Dr Louise BoonKuo;
 - (ii) Rebecca Cushway;
 - (iii) Jess Hooley;
 - (iv) April Holcombe;
 - (v) Luc Velez; and
 - (vi) Charlie Murphy.
- (2) That this House notes its thanks to the NSW Council for Civil Liberties and Australian Lawyers for Human Rights for organising this important event.

Motion agreed to.

IRISH NATIONAL ASSOCIATION EASTER SUNDAY COMMEMORATION

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) the Irish National Association held its annual Easter Sunday Commemoration of the 1798 Memorial of the Irish Uprising on 31 March 2024 at Waverley Cemetery;
 - (b) the event was well attended by members and those from the Irish community, including the Hon. Cameron Murphy, MLC; the Hon. Michael Daley, MP, Attorney General of New South Wales; Dr Hugh McDermott, MP; and Rosie Keane, Consul General of Ireland in Australia;
 - (c) the event is held annually and commemorates those who died in the 1798 Irish Uprising, 1916 Easter Rising and 1981 Hunger Strikes; and
 - (d) this year's event included the laying of the wreath to Ireland's revolutionary dead, the reading of the 1916 Proclamation and the singing of the Irish national anthem, and the reading of a statement from Mary Lou MacDonald, Sinn Féin, by the Hon. Cameron Murphy, MLC.
- (2) That this House thanks the Irish National Association for organising a successful event.

Motion agreed to.

YOM HASHOAH COMMEMORATION

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (10:05): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) the Yom HaShoah Commemoration was held on Sunday 5 May 2024 and focused on remembering the Holocaust in Hungary;
 - (b) the event was attended by:

- (i) survivors of the Holocaust with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren;
 - (ii) Jan Anger, the son of Per Anger, Righteous Among the Nations, responsible for saving almost 100,000 Jewish lives;
 - (iii) church leaders;
 - (iv) community leaders;
 - (v) representatives of the Australian Labor Party Commonwealth Government, Senator Deborah O'Neill and the Hon. Matt Thistlethwaite, MP; and
 - (vi) representatives of the Liberal Opposition, Jenny Ware, MP, and Julian Leeser, MP.
- (c) the event was also attended by Liberal Party representatives from the New South Wales Parliament, including:
- (i) the Hon. Damien Tudehope, MLC;
 - (ii) the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, MLC;
 - (iii) the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC;
 - (iv) the Hon. Jacqui Munro, MLC;
 - (v) the Hon. Susan Carter, MLC; and
 - (vi) Mr Matt Cross, MP, member for Davidson.
- (2) That this House remembers that whole Jewish communities in Hungary were destroyed in the Holocaust and that in just two months in 1944 over 400,000 Jews were deported from Budapest, most to their deaths, simply because they were Jewish.

Motion agreed to.**NO'A ARGAMANI****The Hon. NATALIE WARD (10:05):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) on Saturday 7 October 2023 No'a Argamani was abducted along with her partner by Palestinian civilians and was later handed to Hamas militants, the abduction of which was videotaped by her captors where you can see No'a screaming, "Do not kill me", as she is dragged away;
 - (b) No'a is the only child of Yaacov and Liora;
 - (c) Liora used to live in China till she migrated to Israel for work in the 1990s, and Yaacov is a Jewish Iranian immigrant who arrived in Israel in the 1950s;
 - (d) due to cervical cancer, Liora was unable to have more children and, two years ago, Liora developed an aggressive stage 4 brain cancer and, while No'a had once looked after Liora, No'a can no longer; and
 - (e) as of today, No'a is part of the over 100 hostages still in Gaza with that number dwindling due to deaths in the care of Hamas militants.
- (2) That this House wishes for the safe return of the remaining hostages in Gaza back to Israel, to their families, to their friends, to their homes.

Motion agreed to.**REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN) EARTHQUAKE****The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (10:06):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes, with great sadness, that the Republic of China (Taiwan) was struck by a magnitude 7.4 earthquake on Wednesday 3 April 2024.
- (2) That this House recognises the tragic loss of life caused by the natural disaster which killed at least 18 people and injured more than 1,100 others.
- (3) That this House further notes, with grave concern, the destruction of property and displacement of individuals, including two Australian citizens, Issac Sim Hwee Kok and Ann Neo Siew Choo, who are reportedly missing.
- (4) That this House sends its sincere and heartfelt condolences to the citizens of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and their incoming President, Dr Lai Ching-te, as well as the families of victims wherever they may reside around the globe.

Motion agreed to.**VANESSA PRINGLE FLORAL DESIGN, BATHURST****The Hon. WES FANG (10:06):** On behalf of the Hon. Sam Faraway: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
- (a) the Australian Small Business Champion Awards were held in Sydney on 12 and 13 March 2024; and

- (b) Bathurst-based small business Vanessa Pringle Floral Designs won the 2024 Florist category at the 2024 Australian Small Business Champion Awards.
- (2) That this House acknowledges that:
 - (a) Vanessa Pringle Floral Designs was founded in Bathurst in 2011 and continues to supply flowers to florist studios across the Central West;
 - (b) this is the second consecutive year Vanessa Pringle Floral Designs has won the Florist category at the Australian Small Business Champion Awards;
 - (c) in 2019 Vanessa Pringle Floral Designs won Business of the Year, along with six other awards at the 2019 Carillon Business Awards; and
 - (d) in 2024 Vanessa Pringle was awarded the highest honour in the Bathurst region by being named a Bathurst Living Legend.
- (3) That this House congratulates Vanessa Pringle and her entire team, including Rosie the labrador, on their back-to-back Florist category wins at the Australian Small Business Champion Awards.

Motion agreed to.

ROYAL BATHURST SHOW

The Hon. WES FANG (10:07): On behalf of the Hon. Sam Faraway: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the 155th Royal Bathurst Show was held on 12 to 14 April 2024; and
 - (b) the Bathurst Agricultural, Horticultural and Pastoral Association has been actively pursuing the development of rural life and industry since 1858.
- (2) That this House acknowledges that:
 - (a) the Royal Bathurst Show has long been regarded as the best show west of Sydney and boasts an average annual attendance of more than 25,000 people; and
 - (b) the annual show is organised and operated by the Bathurst Agricultural, Horticultural and Pastoral Association, a charitable community organisation which for 160 years has been promoting agricultural activities and all aspects of rural and country life in the Bathurst region.
- (3) That this House congratulates the Bathurst Agricultural, Horticultural and Pastoral Association President Colin McPhee, show secretary Brett Kenworthy, show councillors, volunteers and exhibitors for making the 155th Royal Bathurst Show the best show in the west.

Motion agreed to.

COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION BATHURST

The Hon. WES FANG (10:07): On behalf of the Hon. Sam Faraway: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 28 March 1924 the Country Women's Association [CWA] Bathurst branch was formed; and
 - (b) the CWA Bathurst branch celebrated 100 years of continuous service to the Bathurst community with a luncheon held at Abercrombie House on 24 March 2024.
- (2) That this House acknowledges:
 - (a) that the Country Women's Association has two branches in Bathurst, being the Bathurst Day Branch and the Bathurst Evening Branch, giving women in the Bathurst region the ability to contribute back to their community through a very worthy organisation; and
 - (b) the efforts and the ongoing commitment of the CWA Bathurst branches to their local community by supporting the Royal Bathurst Show, fundraising for the Daffodil Wig Library, running the Bathurst Driver Reviver on public holidays, and supporting a large range of local community events and organisations.
- (3) That this House congratulates Country Women's Association Bathurst branch president Helana Donaldson and all women involved within the CWA branches in Bathurst on their 100th anniversary and milestone.

Motion agreed to.

CENTRAL COMMERCIAL PRINTERS, BATHURST

The Hon. WES FANG (10:07): On behalf of the Hon. Sam Faraway: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 2 April 2024 Central Commercial Printers celebrated 50 years of being in business;
 - (b) Central Commercial Printers was formerly Copper City Printing, founded in Cobar in 1974 by Alan and Susan Wright and Lex and Edith Nash; and

- (c) in 1977 Copper City Printing relocated to Bathurst and was renamed Central Commercial Printers.
- (2) That this House acknowledges:
 - (a) that Central Commercial Printers is one of the largest family owned and operated printing businesses in the Central West, specialising in high-quality offset and digital printing, graphic design and signage solutions; and
 - (b) the contribution and support small businesses make towards local charities, sporting groups, local events and the Bathurst community.
- (3) That this House congratulates Peter Wright, Lisa Mallon and the entire team at Central Commercial Printers on celebrating their fiftieth anniversary of being in business and supporting the Bathurst small business community.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

WITHDRAWAL OF BUSINESS

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that the Hon. Sam Faraway has withdrawn private members' business item No. 947 standing in his name relating to the 80-20 funding model for State significant infrastructure projects.

Committees

REGULATION COMMITTEE

Reports

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I table the report of the Regulation Committee entitled *Delegated Legislation Monitor No. 3 of 2024*, dated 8 May 2024.

Documents

UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: According to standing order, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 7 May 2024.

Petitions

PETITIONS RECEIVED

Mount Warning

ePetition requesting the Legislative Council to call upon the Minister for the Environment to reopen the Mount Warning Summit track, which has been closed to all but select Indigenous males by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, received from **the Hon. John Ruddick**.

Motions

NO BODY, NO PAROLE LEGISLATION

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (10:25): I move:

- (1) That this House affirms its support for recognising that the "no body, no parole" laws in the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 passed in 2022 be recognised as "Lyn's law" in memory of Lynette Simms.
- (2) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Lynette Joy Dawson, nee Simms, was a Sydney woman who disappeared on or about 8 January 1982, leaving her two daughters and her husband, Chris Dawson;
 - (b) Lynette Simms' whereabouts were, and still are, unknown, but two coronial inquests found that she had been murdered;
 - (c) on 30 August 2022, Chris Dawson was convicted of Lynette's murder and sentenced to 24 years in prison with a non-parole period of 18 years for the murder of Lynette;
 - (d) prompted by the Dawson murder case in October 2022, the Government passed the "no body, no parole" legislation that required offenders to cooperate with investigators and disclose the location of victims' remains to have any chance of being released on parole; and
 - (e) for over 40 years, Lynette Simms' family have suffered the pain of not knowing what happened to her, and both of Lyn's parents passed away in 2001 not knowing what happened to their beloved daughter, without closure nor the ability to pay the proper respects to Lyn's memory with her children and family.
- (3) That this House calls on the Government to acknowledge that:

- (a) the Dawson murder case prompted the 2022 "no body, no parole" amendments to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999; and
- (b) in recognition of this, the New South Wales "no body, no parole" laws in the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999 should be known as "Lyn's law".

The tragic tale of Lynette Simms' disappearance and the subsequent legal proceedings has unfolded before us, painting a picture of heartbreak, injustice and the enduring quest for the truth. Lynette was not merely a statistic; she was a daughter, a wife, a mother and a sister. She was—and is—much loved and her absence has left a void that time can never fill. After Lyn Simms' 1982 disappearance, her husband Chris Dawson's actions came under scrutiny. Despite two inquests in 2001 and 2003 suggesting foul play, no charges were filed. In 2018 investigations reignited with the establishment of Strike Force Scriven and media attention from *The Teacher's Pet* podcast.

Chris Dawson's December 2021 arrest led to a prolonged legal battle with charges formally laid in April 2022. His trial, highlighting the allegations of abuse and infidelity, concluded in August 2023 with Dawson being found guilty of Lynette Simms' murder. He was sentenced on 2 December 2023 to a maximum of 24 years with a non-parole period of 18 years. Following the trial, questions regarding the circumstances of Lynette Simms' murder and the current whereabouts of her body remain unanswered.

The Dawson case inspired a public push for law reform in New South Wales seeking a way to enforce the truthful disclosure of a victim's remains from a convicted homicide offender. A petition called for a no body, no parole law to be passed in New South Wales, as it has been in other States and Territories. It gained enormous public support, earning over 30,000 signatures. The law was proposed and subsequently passed through State Parliament on 13 October 2022. As an amendment to the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, section 135A requires:

Parole order must not be made where offender has not cooperated in locating victim's body or remains.

The passage of Lyn's law is not merely a symbolic gesture; it is a beacon of hope for countless families who have endured similar agonies. It stands as a testament to our commitment to justice and to our determination to ensure that victims and their loved ones are not forgotten in the annals of legal history. As we reflect on the significance of this motion, let us not forget the words of Lynette's brother Greg Simms, who spoke of the profound impact of her absence on their family.

We must also remember the anguish of Lyn's parents, Helena and Len Simms, and Lyn's brother Philip. They passed away without ever knowing the truth about the fate of their daughter and sister. In commemorating Lynette Simms through Lyn's law, we honour her memory and the memories of all those who have suffered similar fates. We affirm our commitment to justice, to compassion and to the pursuit of truth, even in the face of overwhelming adversity.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (10:29): This motion calls for section 135A of the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999, introduced by the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Amendment (No Body, No Parole) Act 2022 No 43, to be recognised simply as Lyn's law in memory of Lynette Dawson nee Simms. It is a call that we are happy to support. We call legislation by recognisable names for several reasons. It helps us know and understand what that law is, which is fundamentally important if we want to preserve the rule of law. In the same way that "Act No 43 of 2022" means nothing to anyone other than legal scholars, most of us also have no understanding of what is meant by "Victoria 63 and 64, chapter 12", but we understand exactly what that is when we call it by its unofficial but perfectly understandable name: the Australian Constitution. Similarly, it makes sense to call Act No 43 of 2022 "Lyn's law".

We name legislation to remember and to memorialise. Jack Beasley was only 17 when he was stabbed to death because his assailant had an undetected knife. His life is remembered in Jack's law, Queensland legislation which we soon may also see in New South Wales. We also name legislation to respect. For archaeologists, respect for the dead and ritual burial practices are important markers of civilisation. We all agree that the dead should be respected in death, as they were in life, and their bodies treated properly. We build memorials so we can remember the life that was shared with us and have a place to mourn.

These are the reasons why the no body, no parole law is important. It says to convicted murderers that we want to rehabilitate you and welcome you back into society, but social obligations are reciprocal and founded on mutual respect. You cannot restore the life you have taken, but you can provide some comfort to the family by giving them a body to bury. You can demonstrate your respect for life by providing that the life you have taken will be respected in death. If you are not willing to offer comfort for families and respect for the dead, it is a good marker that you are unlikely to be able to fulfil the reciprocity on which all of our social obligations are built. As such, you should remain excluded from society until you can demonstrate your capacity to live as a member of our community.

Lynette Dawson's family have no body to bury. They have no grave at which they can mourn. They have nothing of her to memorialise. Let this renaming be her memorial, and together let us all lay the foundation stone of Lyn's law—the only memorial we are currently able to offer to her life.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (10:33): The Government supports the motion. We take this opportunity to send our condolences to the family of Lynette Simms for a life lost. They have had a long fight for justice, with the unsatisfying and upsetting result of not being able to bury or memorialise their much-loved family member. I acknowledge the words of the Hon. Susan Carter. It is important to understand that it is not New South Wales practice to name legislation after individuals. However, there has been a growing practice for us to mention names when passing bills and informally talking about them in their context. That is why we are happy to support this motion today. In second reading speeches and informally in the media it has been a practice to refer to laws named after individual victims to put the reason for any change to the law in its context. At various times, the Parliament has decided to make changes to the law as a result of an event.

In the previous Parliament we passed the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Amendment (No Body, No Parole) Bill 2022 to amend the Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999. The language is technical, and the law can be challenging to find. We support the motion because talking about Lyn's law in the context of the no body, no parole amendment is something that the community understands. It was part of what drove the change in the law that we agreed to. In New South Wales the law requires the State Parole Authority to seek advice from police about whether an offender has cooperated with efforts to locate the remains of a victim. Where an offender has refused to cooperate, their parole must be declined. We hope that gives some comfort to those who are still waiting to bring their person home and bury them in an appropriate way.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (10:35): The Greens do not support the motion from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party. I acknowledge the deep hurt and suffering experienced by loved ones when the body of a victim of homicide is unable to be recovered. The pain would be unimaginable. Our opposition to this motion does not lessen our empathy and our compassion for people experiencing this grief. The motion recognises the murder of Lynette Joy Dawson as the catalyst for the no body, no parole laws, but it is distinctly lacking in evidence that these laws have encouraged people imprisoned for murder to come forward with the whereabouts of people who have gone missing, have died in unknown circumstances or have been murdered. When this legislation was introduced, The Greens' position was consistent with the views of criminology experts that these laws were unlikely to result in the recovery of bodies.

There is a good reason why legislation is not given names that do not describe the intent of the law. Legislation should be clear, immediately identifiable and precise, and this extends to its name. The name Lyn's law will not bring back Lynette Dawson but will forever ascribe a single, tragic murder over all others where the body of the victim has not been recovered. If all legislation with an emotional element were to be named for particular people, the laws of New South Wales would be filled with names that were not reflective of the content of the law, and a great many crimes would be tacitly ignored by naming schemes. The impact of the no body, no parole laws, beyond failing to incentivise any person to disclose the location of a body, have had a serious impact on people who might have been wrongly imprisoned.

I am particularly cognisant of the case of Keli Lane, a woman who is stuck in prison for murder and who has consistently maintained her innocence. She has assisted with police inquiries, but she cannot be released from prison. The Supreme Court justice who presided over Ms Lane's case has been on record as saying that the no body, no parole laws "shouldn't be applied willy-nilly to everybody who has been convicted of a murder charge". These laws were not passed in the best interests of our legal system, nor in the interests of the principles of justice. To canonise these laws in line with the experience of a tragically aggrieved group of people will diminish the experience of all people impacted by laws that should never have been passed. On this basis, we cannot support the motion. But, as I said, that does nothing to diminish our empathy and our compassion for the family who are suffering.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (10:39): In reply: I really appreciated the contribution from the Hon. Susan Carter and thank her for it, as well as that of the Leader of the Government in this place, the Hon. Penny Sharpe. I do not thank Ms Sue Higginson for her contribution. As usual, it was a typical cold-hearted, who-gives-a-stuff-about-anybody approach from The Greens. The reality is that we could not possibly have a result from changes to the law that only went through in June 2023. Obviously, and as usual, The Greens have not done their homework.

This is an important motion. It is the best we are going to get in this place, given that bills are not named. Contrary to what Ms Sue Higginson said in her contribution, this motion does not seek to have that happen, knowing full well that it just is not going to happen. No-one is looking to populate our laws with various names. However, names like "Lyn's law", "Jack's law" et cetera bring immediately to mind, for legislatures and the public,

what those bills are trying to achieve. It is very important that these, if you like, tags or short names focus on the actual injustices that are occurring, because the law is full of injustice. Even though we like to think it is just, it is not always the case. On that note, I commend the motion to the House.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (10:41): I move:

- (1) That this House acknowledges that domestic, family and sexual violence is an emergency that requires a whole-of-government and community response.
- (2) That this House notes that we must listen to the lived experience of victim-survivors and the expertise of the sector to inform urgent action to address this scourge.
- (3) That this House further notes:
 - (a) the Government's emergency investment of \$230 million over four years to advance a suite of preventative, early intervention and crisis response measures to put the safety of victim-survivors first, while holding perpetrators to account; and
 - (b) more needs to be done, and this is a first step the Government is taking to address domestic, family and sexual violence.
- (4) That this House recognises that the status quo must not continue and more work is required to protect women and children and ensure family safety.

Our Government is committed to seeing dramatic improvements in the rates of domestic, family and sexual violence. Too many lives have been lost and too many families have been broken because of domestic and family violence. It is a blight in our communities and a problem that deserves our Government's concerted attention and response. We will provide \$230 million over four years as part of an emergency package to enhance support for domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors and expand programs that reduce the rate of violence against women and children. The package covers crisis response, early intervention and primary prevention, in addition to funding for research and strengthening the sector.

The package includes \$48 million to roll out the Staying Home Leaving Violence program statewide and to expand the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Services Program; nearly \$24 million for specialist domestic violence workers within the justice system; and \$48 million to secure and increase funding for workers who support children accompanying their mothers to refugees. Importantly, these specialist workers support them, including with education and mental health measures. Some \$38 million has been allocated for the implementation of New South Wales's first dedicated primary prevention strategy, Pathways to Prevention. This will help develop a range of initiatives to address the drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence.

Also included in the package is \$8.1 million over four years for the All In early childhood pilot to prevent domestic violence by teaching young children about healthy relationships. A further \$5 million has been allocated for workforce training on the implementation of a newly developed risk assessment framework and quality standards. Some \$3.6 million has been allocated to expand Domestic Violence NSW, the peak body for specialist services in New South Wales. A further \$5 million in funding has been allocated for research into perpetrators and effective interventions. All this work will be informed by the lived experience of victim-survivors and expert advice to government, including from leaders in the domestic, family and sexual violence sector, who engaged directly with the New South Wales Cabinet last week.

Domestic, family and sexual violence is preventable. We cannot accept the status quo. This funding announcement is an important step towards doing better and recognising that domestic violence supports need to be applied not just from a crisis response perspective but with an eye to disrupting the cycle of domestic and family violence, early and permanently. In the coming weeks we will confirm and announce the details of a \$45 million package to improve bail laws and justice system responses, ensuring that, as a government, we are reviewing domestic violence supports and systems from every angle. The Government will also undertake further long-term reform to prevent domestic, sexual and family violence in New South Wales. We acknowledge that this is a first step and that we have a way to go.

I finish by again acknowledging the importance of the work of victim-survivors with lived experience. I acknowledge the Government's work in putting that at the centre of this support package and having it inform these measures. The input of victim-survivors is crucial to this reform. I encourage members to participate in this debate and in discussions regarding this reform in a way that is respectful and aimed towards the common goal to eradicate domestic, sexual and family violence. I commend the motion to the House.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (10:45): On behalf of The Greens, as our gendered abuse and violence spokesperson, I contribute to debate on this motion and thank the Hon. Emily Suvaal for moving it. The more attention we have on this issue in this place, the better. Particularly, I focus on the statement in paragraph (2) of the motion, namely that "we must listen to the lived experience of victim-survivors and the expertise of the sector to inform urgent action to address this scourge". Finally listening to victim-survivors, frontline workers and other experts is key to changing the status quo and turning this issue around. The fact is that neither the previous Coalition Government nor NSW Labor—either when in opposition or since being in government—have been listening to those with the expertise in these matters.

In 2019 the NSW Women's Alliance put forward a comprehensive package of reforms for all parties to consider. The Women's Alliance is a coalition of peak organisations and statewide specialist service providers with expertise in preventing and responding to sexual, domestic and family violence. Chaired by Domestic Violence NSW, it comprises the Aboriginal Women's Advisory Network, ACON Health, Financial Abuse Service NSW – Redfern Legal Centre, Full Stop Australia, Immigrant Women's SpeakOut Association New South Wales, Mudgin-Gal Aboriginal Corporation, Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association Australia, Muslim Women Australia, No to Violence, the NSW Council of Social Service, Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre, Women's Legal Service NSW, Women's Health NSW, and Youth Action.

These expert organisations have spent decades on the front line directly with victim-survivors and perpetrators. They have worked for decades gathering information, linking to organisations in other jurisdictions, working with academics and researchers, and trialling approaches and evaluating outcomes. They have worked together to develop policy and spent thousands of hours advising government and other bodies on what needs to be done if we are to prevent and adequately respond to domestic and family violence in our State. The package the NSW Women's Alliance put forward in 2019 was groundbreaking. Comprising 49 recommendations across six key areas, the detailed and costed Safe State package was put forward with a clear message: None of these reforms are more important than others. We must implement all 49 recommendations if we are to turn things around. In response, the then Labor Opposition accepted a mere handful.

The fact is that Labor members were not listening to victim-survivors and the sector in 2019. They were not listening in 2022, when 220 domestic and family violence organisations and advocates wrote an open letter begging them not to pass the Coalition's deeply flawed, perpetrator-friendly version of a coercive control bill. They have not been listening in the past 12 months as the sector has continued to press them to delay implementation of that offence to ensure that it does not make matters worse. They were not listening in 2023 when the alliance again put forward a plan entitled Action to End Gendered Violence. Again, the sector spent thousands of hours pouring its expertise into a comprehensive strategy to address domestic and family violence in our State. Again, Labor members did not listen.

They were not listening throughout 2023 and into 2024 when the sector told them about women being turned away from refuges and when so many of us contacted them about women sleeping in cars and tents in car parks. They were not listening when we told them that they need to be providing long-term secure funding for frontline services so that services can plan for the future and workers can enter roles without needing to worry about losing their jobs every year, and so precious time and resources are not wasted writing grant applications.

They were not listening when the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] told them that the policing system in New South Wales is not safe for victim-survivors. They were not listening when the Auditor-General joined with the LECC to call for police accused of domestic violence offences to be investigated by someone other than a colleague from within their local area command. They were not listening to disability advocates who told them that domestic violence services are inaccessible, increasing the risk for women with disability. They were not listening to First Nations people calling for fully funded First Nations controlled community organisations to provide culturally and systemically safe responses to domestic and family violence in First Nations communities.

They were not listening when the sector told them we cannot wait for new refuges and that we need to be expanding existing refuges to meet urgent demand. They were not listening as the entire community sector was loudly calling for the Government to take a far more serious approach to the housing crisis, including a massive reinvestment in public housing and more dedicated women's refuges. Listening means more than just hearing the words; it means acting on those words. Will Labor members be listening now? I really want them to. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (10:51): I thank the Hon. Emily Suvaal for bringing the motion before the House. The Coalition supports the motion. Its members are very aware of the urgency of the matters. The increase in deaths of women caused by their intimate partners—by someone who supposedly loves them—should be an urgent priority for all parties. An increase in violence against women does not happen instantaneously; it builds over time. As a former Minister for Women's Safety and the Prevention of Domestic and Sexual Violence—and

"prevention" was a word chosen very deliberately to have a focus on prevention—domestic violence, safety and security was the Coalition's priority and continues to underscore the Coalition's purpose. We may do it in different ways in this Parliament but it is very clear that we are absolutely committed to resolution and to ensuring that we are focused on this, and we support the Government in being so.

With the challenge of responding to domestic violence yet again on the agenda, it would be remiss not to acknowledge some of the work undertaken and put in place by the former Coalition Government to progress this important area. While I acknowledge the package the Government has put forward and the work that has been done, I will hold back my final thoughts until we see how that is able to be implemented, and I hope it is. We have seen this week the lack of progress, sadly, in delivering the Commonwealth-funded domestic violence workers. To date, only five have been hired of the 118 who are funded right now. While I have firsthand experience dealing with the bureaucratic challenges in seeking funding and implementing it from the bureaucracy into communities, that lack of progress is concerning and I hope the Government is addressing it quickly.

All too often women stay in violent relationships because they have nowhere else to go. While the Government is taking some steps forward, I believe it is important to recognise some of the work the previous Government did to address this particular issue. The sector told us addressing domestic violence was a priority, and we listened to that. In October 2021, the New South Wales Coalition Government announced a new record State funding of \$484.3 million over four years for housing and supports for women and children experiencing domestic and family violence. That package was to expand women's refuges, supporting another 2,900 women and children annually. That was 75 new refuges, almost doubling the number in New South Wales. It is important to recognise that program. That was to keep people safe and give them somewhere to go to rest and recover. Was it the ultimate response? Is it long-term housing? No, but it is somewhere safe to go. With that Core and Cluster program—I still cannot stand the name; I want to call it Home and Hub, but it does not matter what we call it—let's get people into safe places.

The Coalition brought in landmark laws—an Australian first—criminalising coercive control in intimate partner relationships, which we know is a red flag for domestic violence homicide. That followed a lengthy and intensive inquiry in this House. While we may not all agree on the implementation, I think it is a landmark of this Parliament to have passed that legislation to address the issue and raise awareness of it. We reformed the apprehended domestic violence orders [ADVO] system. We doubled default ADVO length to two years. We introduced the new strangulation offence, which is another red flag in domestic violence.

We invested \$18 million for new audiovisual facilities in courts to provide safe spaces for victim-survivors to give evidence in a safe environment and support their best evidence. We provided over 80 safe rooms and 150 remote witness rooms in courthouses so victim-survivors could give that evidence in a less traumatic surrounding. We had the landmark affirmative consent laws in Make No Doubt, introduced five new jury directions to address common rape myths and invested \$8 million for court-appointed questioners and 24/7 support for the New South Wales Domestic Violence Line.

We know there needs to be a comprehensive and holistic response. We know there is more to do. We support efforts to do that. However, I acknowledge that the tranches of funding under the Core and Cluster program were important. I hope the Government continues to deliver those. I will be interested to hear where they are up to. I acknowledge the complexity in responding to domestic and sexual violence in New South Wales. That is why the Liberal-Nationals proposed a three-point initial bail response to deal with that immediately, including expanding the use of electronic monitoring devices. We know that they work and they keep women safe. They prevent perpetrators reoffending. We also propose expanding the grounds for staying the granting of bail for serious personal violence charges. There is much more to do. The status quo cannot continue. More work is required. We will be very active in ensuring that happens from this Parliament.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (10:56): I support the motion moved by my colleague the Hon. Emily Suvaal. This is a particularly important topic for this Parliament to be discussing at the moment. One of the phrases often used when it comes to domestic and family violence is "Enough is enough". I do not like that phrase because it leaves open the implication that there is an acceptable number of times that this type of behaviour can happen and that we have only crossed some boundary after a certain point, and that is not true. Enough is enough in the first instance when this kind of behaviour occurs.

It was enough when Jill Meagher was brutally murdered in 2012. It was enough when Dannielle Finlay-Jones was murdered. It was enough when Lilie James was murdered. It was enough when Kristy Armstrong was driven off the road. That is a mere handful of the hundreds of women murdered over the past few years as a result of male violence against women. That is only the homicides. That does not even speak to the disabilities, the acquired brain injuries, the trauma, the assaults and the many other examples of unacceptable behaviour that often do not reach the headlines of a homicide. I know why the phrase "Enough is enough" is used; it is an effort

to try to draw a line in the sand and have a step change to say, "This is the moment." But it is important to say to women that there is no acceptable level of male violence against women in the community.

The moment that we are having right now is a great opportunity for us to come together and have a conversation about how we can do better, which everyone across this Parliament recognises that we have to do. Critical, to me, is whether we are capable of using this moment to deliver a step change that is lasting. Are we capable of using this moment to fundamentally change how we approach these issues so that we are not constantly caught in this cycle of incremental change and doing things a little bit differently? The focus, the media, members and the spotlight then move on and it takes another tragedy to draw us back to this conversation. Can this moment be the one where we break that cycle, for which we are ultimately responsible as lawmakers? I really hope that it is.

I think that the efforts that have been made at times are challenging because this is a parliament and accountability is really important. It is also incredibly important that questions are asked and answers are given about how we can do better, but fundamentally there has been a spirit of approaching this in a collective way to deliver lasting change that moves beyond the cycle of the spotlight being put on and off this issue. I am very hopeful the Government's funding represents real progress. I will briefly talk about optimism for progress, which is what this motion is really about. People sometimes think, "God, this issue is so intractable and wicked." There are brief moments where we talk about it and do things but then everyone moves on until we are dragged back to it. It is two steps forward and one step back, and I get overwhelmed by that as a Minister who is a change maker and has responsibility in this area.

I finish by reminding members that it was in this place in 1980—not that long ago—that rape in marriage was criminalised. In the lifetimes of some members—not myself—rape in marriage was criminalised by this place. New South Wales was the first State to do it, but nationally we did not reach full criminalisation of rape in marriage until 1992. I was alive then. This is a difficult reality to confront, but it speaks to progress. I am hopeful that this moment can represent an effort towards progress on this issue. I thank all those who have participated in these difficult discussions in a spirit of coming together.

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the Parliament students from Walcha Central School who are participating in the Legal Studies and the Legislature program conducted by the Parliamentary Education and Engagement team. They are guests of the member for Northern Tablelands, who just gave an outstanding valedictory speech in the other place. They are all very welcome. I welcome to the Parliament students from St Paul's Catholic College in Booragul, who are guests of the member for Lake Macquarie and who are also participating in the Legal Studies and the Legislature program. They are all very welcome. I take a moment to welcome and acknowledge guests of the Hon. Courtney Houssos from Revenue NSW, who are present in the public gallery today: Hayley McIntosh, Jackie Martin, Alexis Scott, Lorraine Condor, Alexis Partridge and Alicia Pitt. I also acknowledge Sienna Forrest, who is not from Revenue NSW but is also very welcome.

Questions Without Notice

SPECIALIST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKERS

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (11:01): My question is directed to the Leader of the Government. In a Senate estimates hearing held on 14 February 2024, in answers to questions from Senator Liddle it became clear that not a single domestic violence worker of the 500 Commonwealth-funded workers was yet on the front line in New South Wales. In her evidence, the acting group manager of Women's Safety, Ms Amber Shuhya, said:

All states have informed us that they are on track for meeting their worker targets this financial year.

When were the first five of New South Wales' 118 target workers on the front line and how many will be on the front line by 30 June 2024?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:02): I thank the member for his question. I know this has been the subject of some discussion, so it is appropriate. The Federal Government's allocated funding is for specialist domestic violence workers, who we know are needed—and they were needed yesterday. The advice I have is that the program in New South Wales is rolling out right now, which the Hon. Rose Jackson explained in quite a lot of detail yesterday in question time. I inform the House that five specialist workers have commenced and a further four have been recruited. The advice the Government has is that while the tender for the contracts that will be let is live, those positions are expected to be filled by September 2024.

As members opposite would be aware, and as the Hon. Natalie Ward referenced in her very good contribution to debate, there are bureaucratic challenges—some call them bureaucratic challenges; some call them the need for the Government to be transparent and follow proper process—in relation to the way grants and tenders operate and the criteria under which the money is sought. So five workers have commenced and a further four have been recruited, the tender is live, and the Government expects to have the positions filled by September 2024, which is not a moment too soon. The other point I make is that as this is happening, the Government also needs to address workforce challenges across the entire domestic violence workforce.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Point of order: I thank the Minister for her considerate answer, but the question specifically asked when the first five of the target of 118 workers will be at work and how many will be at work on 30 June 2024?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I thank the Leader of the Opposition. I will have to take the detail of that on notice, but I am happy to provide it to the House.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (11:04): I ask a supplementary question. Is it the practice of the New South Wales Government to inform the Commonwealth that it is on track to meet targets under the national partnership agreements knowing that it is not actually on track to meet those targets?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:05): I suspect there is an allegation of a crime there, but I do not think any crime has been committed. The Government is rolling out what is needed and it is on track to deliver what the State is getting from the Commonwealth by September 2024. I accept that some would say that this has been too slow, but this Government's practice is to tell the truth and be open and transparent about the way in which these things are rolling out, and it will continue to do so.

CRITICAL MINERALS MINING

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (11:05): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Natural Resources. Will the Minister please update the House on the exciting future that critical minerals and high-tech metals mining has in New South Wales?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (11:06): I thank the member for the excellent question. It is an exciting time for critical minerals and high-tech metals in New South Wales. I acknowledge the Minister for Energy's excitement as well, because she knows, as we all do, how important critical minerals are for the State's clean energy future. New South Wales has 21 out of the 31 nationally identified critical minerals, and I am delighted to provide this information to the House because this week is Minerals Week. On Monday I announced the latest and largest ever release of geospatial survey data, which mapped one-sixth of the State using eight aircraft. There is some fantastic file footage if members are interested.

That mapping is being used to find critical geological formations and underground water resources to provide important information for our explorers and pioneers working in critical minerals. Currently, about 4,000 people are employed directly in the critical minerals sector, mostly across the Central West and the Far West. The Government wants to encourage the industry to develop so it can provide the copper for our batteries, the silver for our solar panels—for now, at least—the rare-earth minerals, the cobalt, the scandium, the molybdenum and so much more that will be needed for the State's clean energy future. The announcement on Monday was in partnership with Geoscience Australia.

I welcome today's Federal Government announcement to map the entire country with similar mapping, the information from which is a really important way that governments can work in partnership with investors and explorers to foster the critical minerals and high-tech metals industry. It is a great approach that the Government certainly wants to encourage. Over the past couple of weeks I have been doing a range of work, including going to the University of New South Wales to talk about the skills the State needs. The university told me that it has seen a 400 per cent increase in enrolments since 2019, when it started emphasising the great critical minerals and high-tech metals opportunities in their mining school.

I was also out at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation to see the world-leading and pioneering research that it is doing with rare-earth minerals using products from New South Wales. Now is a fantastic time for critical minerals mining in New South Wales, with amazing opportunities for the community and explorers that the Government wants to encourage. Happy Minerals Week, everyone.

The PRESIDENT: Before I call the Hon. Sarah Mitchell, I remind the Hon. Sam Farraway and the Hon. Penny Sharpe that if they would like to have a chat, they are welcome to do so anywhere else in the building.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (11:09): My question is directed to the Minister for Homelessness, representing the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. After the Far West Community Legal Centre announced on 2 February that it will be closing its doors on 31 July, what steps, if any, has she taken to ensure that future service delivery arrangements are in place for the women of Broken Hill under the Staying Home Leaving Violence program, which is designed to prevent homelessness as a result of domestic violence?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:09): I thank the honourable member for her question. She is no doubt aware that the funding for community legal centres is a matter for the Commonwealth. I know that a range of community legal centres have expressed concern about the imminent expiration of their contracts. They have raised that with me. Not only do those community legal centres assist women leaving domestic violence but they also do a range of work in housing and homelessness. That has been brought to my attention in the context of those contracts expiring soon. They are Commonwealth-funded contracts. I understand that the Commonwealth is exploring opportunities to continue funding and that Attorney-General Dreyfus has that under active consideration.

I put on record that the New South Wales Government expects the Commonwealth to continue its funding arrangements for those critical services in our State. There really are no excuses for the Commonwealth to step back from its end of the bargain at this time, particularly on community legal services, which the Commonwealth funds. We call on the Commonwealth to continue doing that so that important work can continue. In specific answer to the member's question about what we are doing to support that, we have just announced \$48 million to expand the Staying Home Leaving Violence program. It is an important State-based program but was not available statewide, but just this week I was pleased to announce tens of millions of dollars more to make it available statewide.

We have recognised that there are service gaps. Where those programs are our programs, funded by us, we are stepping and leaning into that. We are announcing millions of dollars to try to fix that problem. It is not going to be fixed overnight, but we are doing that work. That does not let the Commonwealth off the hook. That does not mean the New South Wales Government has to step in and not only fund programs such as Staying Home Leaving Violence, but also take on the responsibility for all the community legal centres. That is not going to work. We are under the pump for our programs, and we know we need to do more, but the Commonwealth has got to come to the party. As I said, I have been made aware of this previously and will continue to advocate to the Commonwealth that this is a partnership between us. This is a crisis moment. We have announced that we are doing more. The Commonwealth should not leave community legal centres in the lurch when that funding expires in June.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (11:12): I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for her answer, but I ask that she elucidates that part of her answer where she indicated that Staying Home Leaving Violence is a State Government funded program. Who will be delivering that program in Broken Hill? Will she guarantee that new delivery arrangements will be in place by 31 July so that there is not a gap in service for that community?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:13): We announced the funding on Monday, so I do not think anyone would reasonably expect that I, representing the Minister, or indeed the Minister herself, would know the detail of who is delivering those additional funds in every single part of New South Wales. I think anyone can reasonably expect that when you announce new funding, it does take some time. I agree that it should not take as long as it has taken for the domestic violence workers; I have accepted on the record that it has been too slow. The increase to the Staying Home Leaving Violence funding was announced on Monday. I do not even want to take the question on notice because I think the answer is we do not know exactly yet, on Wednesday, who will be delivering those services in each and every part of the State.

However, I say to the honourable member that I accept the premise that we do not want service gaps, particularly in our rural and regional communities. We have to look at why the rollout of the domestic violence support workers has been too slow, learn those lessons and get on with it. The point that the member raises is a valid one. In a community like Broken Hill, we cannot have lifesaving programs like Staying Home Leaving Violence being unavailable. I will take on notice the question about whether we have a path forward for Broken Hill in relation to the funding announced on Monday, but, as I said, everyone can accept it may take a bit of time to finalise delivery partners for those kinds of programs when the money was only announced a few days ago.

LAND CLEARING

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (11:15): My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture. Prior to the election last year, the Minister's party committed to stopping runaway land clearing. Noting the extremely bleak New South Wales biodiversity outlook report released today and, since the election, the fact that 95,000 hectares of land will have been cleared—an amount consistent with the preceding four years of Coalition Government and an area equal to 350 times the size of the Sydney CBD every year, or 640 football fields every day—what has she done to meet her election commitment to end runaway land clearing?

The Hon. Bob Nanva: Point of order: The question is out of order under the standing orders and in breach of the rules around anticipation. It is anticipation of private members' business item No. 955 on the *Notice Paper*.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order. The question is out of order.

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (11:17): My question is addressed to the Minister for Roads. Will the Minister update the House on infrastructure investment in Western Sydney?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism) (11:17): I thank the member for her question. I begin by acknowledging that the past few weeks has been difficult. We are all feeling that as we return to Parliament this week. That is why I was happy there was good news on Monday as we were able to welcome the Federal Government to Elizabeth Drive in Western Sydney to happily receive the news about \$1.9 billion to be allocated in the Federal budget to Western Sydney. The Treasurer and the Government are hopeful—certainly, I am hopeful—that when Federal budget day comes, there will be more money on top of that \$1.9 billion commitment for those areas of New South Wales outside of Western Sydney.

The Treasurer gave members some flavour for that, but it was a real boost to the priorities of the New South Wales Government. Think about the jobs created, as the development applications that are queueing up along Mamre Road start to come into play. Those applications are now able to be actioned as \$500 million of Federal money flows into Mamre Road stage two. For the airport precinct—and the pressures on that precinct are well publicised—this will mean money into Elizabeth Drive and Richmond Road. That funding allows us to open up those crucial roads around the airport precinct.

The Government's number one priority is housing. Some of the investments in Western Sydney—particularly Garfield Road East and Appin Road, and the initial work on Spring Farm Parkway stage two—will unlock the potential of the housing agenda for New South Wales. That is good news. I have to say I was a bit disappointed by the reaction of the Opposition yesterday to the Treasurer's retelling of that good news. I was not disappointed with a capital "D" like the Treasurer was with the Federal Government; I was just small "d" disappointed with the reaction.

I say to Opposition members that we joined with them and the rest of the House in fighting for New South Wales infrastructure funding. When the good news comes, we expect a little bit back the other way and a little bit of cheer and happiness that New South Wales has won out of that announcement on Monday. We are hopeful that there is more on the way. We will be opening the Federal budget papers on budget day and we are hoping there will be more funding for other parts of New South Wales. I am confident that there will be more and I hope that good news will be welcomed by the Opposition.

The PRESIDENT: While I understand that all of the interjections were made in good humour, I remind members that interjections are disorderly at all times.

ANIMAL CRUELTY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Hon. EMMA HURST (11:21): My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture. The events of the past month have been a sobering reminder of the link between animal cruelty and domestic violence, after it was revealed that the murder of Molly Ticehurst was preceded by the killing of her 12-week-old puppy. Violence against animals is often a precursor and dangerous warning sign of violence against humans, but it can only be identified and prosecuted early before it becomes human violence if the enforcement of animal cruelty laws is properly funded. Will the Government commit to fully funding and providing oversight mechanisms to the enforcement of animal cruelty laws in New South Wales as a measure to keep both humans and animals in our State safe?

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:22): I thank the member for this important question. It is an important question at any time but it is particularly important now, given the subject that we have all been

contemplating after the horrific circumstances that have occurred over the past couple of weeks, which unfortunately occur far too often. The honourable member is correct to say that we know there is a link between people abusing animals and violence towards humans. The police are actively dealing with this issue. I note that they have taken significant action by arresting someone for horrific behaviour over the past couple of weeks. I congratulate them on being on top of the issue. We understand that there is a link between animal cruelty and violence against humans, and that must continue to be addressed.

I also have responsibility for dealing with animal welfare issues inside of the Government, as has been pointed out as part of the question. We are committed to reviewing the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and how the framework for animal welfare is dealt with across the board. That work is underway. As part of that work, we have a commitment to consider how funding is provided to enforcement agencies, which currently includes funding from the New South Wales Government to the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League. Of course, the police also deal with animal welfare enforcement issues. That is currently being considered as part of the commitment that we have made to look at the funding arrangements more broadly. I will have more to say about that soon. We are working through our budget process so I will not talk about that at this point, but it is an important question. I am mindful of this issue and take it seriously. Having the appropriate resources in place for enforcing animal welfare laws in New South Wales is a key focus of mine.

SPECIALIST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKERS

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:24): My question is directed to the Minister for Homelessness, representing the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. In relation to the 118 domestic violence workers for which the New South Wales Labor Government received Commonwealth funding in June 2023 and December 2023 on the basis that they would all be in place by 30 June 2024, when will the 113 domestic violence workers yet to be recruited all be in place and actually providing services to women experiencing or at risk of domestic violence?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:25): I thank the honourable member for the question. My understanding, as was indicated in the answer given by the Leader of the Government, is that we have been given advice that all of those workers will be in place by September this year. I am advised that that is consistent with the time line that was agreed to by New South Wales and the Commonwealth. I am advised that the contracts were signed in September last year, and that that is when the agreement was finalised between the Commonwealth and New South Wales.

I am sure members understand that those agreements have set time lines for delivery. I am advised that New South Wales is on track with that time line and that by September this year all those positions should be filled. As I indicated yesterday, the contracts for those positions, not the final recruitments, are in the process of being agreed to now. I am advised that the contracts will be finalised by June and that the recruitment will be finalised by September.

As I am sure the member can understand that recruitment process is being done with our contract NGO partners. Between those few months it depends on the area and whether there is any specialty. I am advised that some of the agreement with the Commonwealth specifies particular communities that need to be supported by those workers. Sometimes it is First Nations people, sometimes it is LGBTQIA+ people and sometimes it is rural and regional people. The advice that I have been given is that there is some specification in the agreement between New South Wales and the Commonwealth in relation to the particular communities those workers are supporting, and that may impact their recruitment process.

Accepting the fact that this is a valid question and that this has not happened as quickly as anyone would have liked, the advice I have is that by September this year all of those positions should be filled. That cannot happen soon enough. Everyone wanted this support to be in place as quickly as it could. The consultation and detailed work took time to ensure that these desperately needed workers are being delivered where they will make the most difference—to communities that have high demand. That consultation is being finalised now. I am advised that the contracts are almost done and the recruitment will be done by September this year, consistent with our agreement with the Commonwealth.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:28): I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for her answer and for her commitment to this work. She spoke about the agreement with the Commonwealth. Will she elucidate her answer to help us understand when the New South Wales Government informed the Commonwealth that the 118 domestic violence workers it had committed to have on the front line by 30 June 2024 would not be on the front line until September 2024?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:28): I hope the member understands that I am answering these questions representing the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. However, my understanding from the advice I received and our agreement with the Commonwealth is that the contracts will be finalised by June this year. As I have already indicated, the expectation is that that deadline will be met. I am advised that the recruitment of the workers by September this year is consistent with the agreement that we have made with the Commonwealth. That is the advice that I have. In terms of dates and details and communication with the Commonwealth, I do not have that information on me. However, on the advice that I have, it is not true to say that we have not met the agreed time line with the Commonwealth. I am advised that the agreed time line with the Commonwealth has contracts to be in place by June and that there is a subsequent recruitment period for the individuals who will be performing those roles.

VEHICLE NOISE

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (11:30): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for the Environment. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to reduce the impact of noisy vehicles in Bayside and Wollongong?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:30): I am pleased to have this question, and I thank the honourable member for raising it. Of all of the correspondence that comes into my office, among the top three issues is the impact of noisy vehicles in local neighbourhoods—people keeping their neighbours up at night on a regular basis. I was surprised, when we were looking at our correspondence recently, about how important this issue is, and the Government is committed to taking important action on it. The interest in the community is high. We are about to trial noise detection devices in the City of Wollongong and in Bayside—two areas that have a particular problem relating to what is colloquially known as "car hoons".

This is not a trivial issue. The number of requests that I have had from MPs across the Parliament for this kind of technology to be brought to them is extremely high. Before members have a go at it, they might want to talk to their colleagues downstairs, who are desperate for this technology. The trial will work out how we can measure these things. The use of roadside noise camera technology is a new development. It is currently being used by authorities overseas in cities like London and New York. In a similar way to how a speed camera detects the speed of a vehicle, a roadside noise camera measures the noise levels of a passing vehicle and records a short video of the event.

The Environment Protection Authority has finalised the procurement to purchase these noise cameras. We are working with both those councils, Transport for NSW, New South Wales police and the local community to identify the best locations, and we expect to put them in place around July this year. There has been significant interest in this issue. As of 3 May, after a fortnight of asking people where they think these cameras should be placed, we have had 876 suggestions of where they should go. There is huge community interest. We need to work through technical issues, but this is new technology that will mean that people can deal with what is a serious issue in our local communities. This issue has a high degree of impact on people's quality of life, and we hope that we can address it into the future. I look forward to reporting on the trial as we roll it out.

ROSEHILL RACECOURSE

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (11:33): My question is directed to the Leader of the Government, in her capacity representing the Premier. Why is the Government proceeding with an unsolicited proposal [USP] for Rosehill racecourse when Standing Order 52 documents show that the Government itself initiated not only the USP process but also the proposal for the full sale of Rosehill and construction of 25,000 new dwellings? Further, at pages 5 and 6 of the New South Wales Government USP guidelines, it states that to be accepted the proposal must be unique and also contain a commercial proposition for the Government.

The Hon. Bob Nanva: Point of order—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: The motion is about a committee. I am not asking about establishing a committee.

The PRESIDENT: Has the member finished the question?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: There is an attempt to say that the question is anticipating something that I am not anticipating.

The PRESIDENT: I understand. I will not hear the point of order until the member finishes the question.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Again, the privatisation of Rosehill racecourse does not qualify. Why is the Government breaching its own guidelines, developed for probity and integrity reasons, and accepting and assessing this so-called unsolicited proposal?

The Hon. Bob Nanva: Point of order: Mr President, I ask that you rule the question out of order in that it anticipates private member's business item No. 921, which is up for debate in the Chamber today.

The Hon. Mark Latham: To the point of order: If I was anticipating the establishment of a committee, I would ask the Leader of the Government if she would establish a committee to investigate Rosehill. I said no such thing. There has never been a precedent when members cannot ask about something because it is subject to a committee inquiry.

The PRESIDENT: This is quite an interesting one. To take everyone out of their suspense, I do not uphold the point of order. Predominantly, what the Hon. Mark Latham says is correct. The motion of the Hon. Scott Farlow goes to the process of establishing a committee rather than discussing the substantive issue itself. It does not come to conclusions about the issue. Therefore, I rule that the question is in order. I instruct the Minister to answer.

The Hon. Wes Fang: I will get you some standing orders, Bob. You will be all right.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:36): Don't set yourself up as a tutor on those matters. Thank you, Mr President. I have a couple of things to say in relation to this. I would say that the question contained some imputations, but I am not taking the question on notice or taking a point of order. The issue is very straightforward. There is a unique opportunity at Rosehill to transform Sydney with a large new community of housing on a site that potentially could become available. If we want to talk about unsolicited proposals and about the need for them to be one-off and to have no competing other options, it does not get more unique than this one.

The Government has made it very clear that it hopes that this proposal is able to proceed, but we are a long way from it being approved and from working through the process. The New South Wales Government has put this through the unsolicited proposal process, which is the right way to do it and which provides the transparency that the member wants. I can update the House that the proposal at this point contains six parts: a centre of excellence for horse training at Horsley Park; the redevelopment of Warwick Farm into a state-of-the-art racing and training facility; other sites that are earmarked for racecourse tracks; the development of the Rosehill Gardens site for housing, entertainment, green space and a new school; and the potential for a metro station. Very few places in landlocked Sydney can deal with a proposal like this. That is why the Government has been optimistic and hopeful about what can happen with it.

The Government announced the unsolicited proposal on 7 December. The Australian Turf Club has now submitted its proposal to the New South Wales Government and is at stage one of the unsolicited proposal process. The proposal centres on building more than 25,000 new homes on the Rosehill racecourse site. Many members in this Chamber, including the member who asked the question, have talked much about the need for extra housing. That is what we are doing. The proposal is allowing New South Wales to explore the feasibility of the new Metro West station at Rosehill. It also includes other elements. We are at stage one now. The Government will continue to provide information during the unsolicited proposals process, as is appropriate.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (11:39): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elaborate on her mention of the so-called unsolicited proposal being lodged for a new training facility at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre at Horsley Park? Because it shows that the site is too small and that land needs to be taken from the adjoining Western Sydney Parklands. Will the Minister assure the House that the valuable parkland in Western Sydney will not be lost as part of the proposed sale of Rosehill?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:40): Looking at this advice, the first thing I would say is that the original proposal has six parts. Where the training facility would be is obviously subject to questions as the proposal is worked up. At the moment there is still a lot of work that needs to be done.

The Hon. Mark Latham: You said it was Horsley Park.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, I did say Horsley Park. The Australian Turf Club's original proposal has six parts. That was what I was taking members through. I am not the Minister responsible and I have not seen it. Just to be clear, I am working off the advice that I have been provided. It covers those things that I have just taken members through. In relation to the matters that the member has asked about around the impact on the Western Sydney Parklands, we are not in a position to talk about that. Obviously, we are concerned and want to

support open space. The proposal includes a new park in the middle of where Rosehill racecourse currently is. There is a long way to go and a lot of discussion to be had.

We will look at all of those issues and they will be assessed in the normal way through the planning process if we get to the final part of the unsolicited proposal and it is given the green light. There is no green light at this point. There is an optimistic proposal that can deliver 25,000 homes in the middle of Sydney near the river and close to public transport, with a new park, a new school and a new metro station, and we're pretty interested in that. The proponents need to work through the proposal and it will need to be weighed properly as all unsolicited proposals are.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (11:42): I ask a second supplementary question. Given the Minister outlined in her answer that this was an unsolicited proposal, will she tell the House when an unsolicited proposal is given a project name, considering that the project was given the name Project Wattle on 6 November before the unsolicited proposal was actually received?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:42): I am happy to answer. There is some sort of conspiracy being suggested by the member opposite. I have no idea when it was named. I do not know when proposals are given names. But I am happy to take it on notice and find out. There is no conspiracy. There is a massive opportunity in Sydney and in New South Wales to deliver 25,000 homes. We could talk about the projects that some of the previous Ministers in the previous Government named so that they would not get picked up in Standing Order 52 searches. We can get into Project Phoenix. There is no conspiracy. I am happy to get the information.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The clear question is will the Opposition support a proposal like this and the opportunities that it provides Sydney or will it continue to say, "We need housing but you cannot build it anywhere"?

SOUTH COAST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACILITIES

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (11:43): My question is directed to the Minister for Homelessness. With hundreds of homeless individuals on the South Coast, including women and children fleeing domestic violence, relying on Safe Shelter Shoalhaven and Safe Waters Community Care in Ulladulla for safe refuge, will the Minister guarantee ongoing funding for those vital services beyond 30 June this year?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:44): I thank the member for the question. I am familiar with those two facilities. I have met with Peter Dover and Sarah Date, who run the Salt Care shelter and Safe Waters Community Care in Ulladulla respectively. They do really good work in those communities. To be clear, those are not specialist domestic violence refuges; they are generalist facilities. They are not the types of places that, in the current conversation we are having about support for women and children leaving domestic violence, we would prioritise. However, that is not to say that they do not do good work or that other people experiencing homelessness have not benefitted from them.

Conversations with them are ongoing. The background to those is clear. Those facilities have not historically been government funded. They do not have ongoing Specialist Homelessness Services contracts. Due to absolute increased demand along the South Coast, they have been seeing more people. Those facilities came very close to closing their doors in 2022—when the member was Minister and did absolutely nothing to save them. We made a commitment to provide them with one-off funding of \$250,000 each when we were elected to government, and we delivered on that commitment. We recognised that they were in need. It was clear at the time that it was one-off funding. The reason for that, as I am sure the member knows, is we do not generally fund shelters and homeless support services in an ad hoc way.

It is important for the people who rely on those facilities and the staff who work there that they have consistent funding through contracts. The contracts were for three years. We are extending them to five years in recognition of the importance of ongoing funding. We provided what was clearly one-off funding to those important shelters, which are doing good work, to try to support them to move into recommissioning. That recommissioning of those stable five-year contracts is the path forward for all such services. I am in dialogue with those facilities. As I have said, I have met with Peter and Sarah on a number of occasions to try to move their services into a system of clear, consistent five-year contracts so that their work is well supported. We provided one-off emergency funding because the former Minister had brought them to the brink of closure. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (11:47): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister clarify whether she is prepared to leave Safe Shelter and Safe Waters Community Care with that uncertainty? Or is she indicating today that they will not receive any funding from 1 July and close their doors?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister will resume her seat while members come to order. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:47): The commitment that I am giving is that I am in dialogue with those facilities. As I said, I have outlined the reasons for that, which is that the member opposite, when she was the Minister, and in the 12 years that those opposite were in government—

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones: Point of order: The question is specific. It is asking whether or not the Minister is going to fund those organisations from 1 July. Will they be closing their doors and will their staff lose their jobs?

The PRESIDENT: The Minister is being directly relevant. The fact that she is not answering the question in the way that the member would like is not, unfortunately, important to the issue. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: As I was explaining, I am not in a position to offer the kind of long-term funding contracts that those organisations are looking for at this time. The reason for that is that we are not commencing recommissioning right now. We are transitioning from the previous contracts—the competitive tendered contracts that were rife with a culture of services competing with each other and cannibalising each other, and with the closure of specialist services and specialist women's refuges.

Let us remember the legacy of Going Home Staying Home and what the former Government did for the specialist women's legacy. That is the history. I am trying to chart a path forward. It is difficult to unscramble that egg. Outside that recommissioning process, I am not in a position to offer long-term, stable contracts to organisations. We have offered one-off emergency funding to try to ensure that services are brought along with that, and I am in dialogue with those services. But, again, I emphasise that we have a situation where the contracts across the sector need to be looked at to ensure that they are fair, that they are equitable, that they speak to specialisation, that they deliver five-year funding contracts and not three-year funding contracts, and that they offer more stability and more service provision. It is challenging work. We are always looking for opportunities for dialogue to bridge those gaps.

STATE CREDIT RATING

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (11:50): My question without notice is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer outline some of the key pressures endangering the State's triple-A credit rating? Is he aware of any community concerns about sensible fiscal management?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (11:50): I thank the member for his question. At the outset I offer a special Treasurer's welcome to the tax collectors from Revenue NSW. I am praying for their success. Recently it was my sad duty to inform the people of New South Wales that the Commonwealth Grants Commission's decision to remove \$12 billion of funding would almost certainly lead to the State's triple-A credit rating downgrade. I did that in order to solicit community debate and to allow people who are concerned to come forward with their concerns.

I am pleased that at least one person has done so: My predecessor as Treasurer has come forward and expressed his concern about the implications of a triple-A rating loss. Of course, I welcome contributions from former Treasurers, including the one that I directly replaced. I was quite surprised to hear my predecessor write that he took great pride in maintaining the triple-A and that "good Treasurers guard it zealously". That was a stunning statement for him to make on 22 April because just six weeks earlier he said, "I will stand against foreign ratings agencies every day. If I had my time, I would do it all again."

Now, I give credit to Matt Kean. For him to hold a position for six weeks is a record. I praise his consistency in Opposition. I wanted to test the zealous guardian of public finance, so I tested his record. I grabbed his last budget and went back to the Measures Statement. I had a good look at it and saw once more that this zealous guardian of public finance committed \$27 billion of new spending after the pandemic. It occurred to me that if that is what he was doing while he was zealously guarding public financing, imagine what would have happened if he had not been!

Nevertheless, he was the biggest-spending Treasurer of any jurisdiction since the 1970s—that is what he claimed. I am pretty forensic. I have that reputation and I accept it. I checked what he was prepared to gamble the triple-A credit rating on. I grabbed the Auditor-General's recent report into WestInvest. It said that the program

he designed "did not have sufficient regard to the implications of risking a commitment of \$5 billion to the State's credit rating". Once more, I say this: My predecessor has done enough. He should take comfort in me relieving him of his duties. [*Time expired.*]

The PRESIDENT: The Treasurer and the Deputy Leader of The Nationals will come to order.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (11:54): My question is directed to the Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage. In May 2023 the Minister praised the previous Government's energy road map, saying she wanted to "accelerate it". Now in May 2024 she is about to announce the extension of the operational life of Eraring. Is that not an admission that the State's grand energy road map and net zero targets are a total failure and our State needs to slow and stop its obsession with unaffordable renewables?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:54): I thank the honourable member for her question. The short answer is no. The longer answer is this: Australia, and the world, is tackling one of the largest existential crises that it has faced, which is dealing with climate change and global warming that will literally change every aspect of our lives, and not in a good way. We must take urgent action on that. Australia and a variety of jurisdictions have signed up to the project of trying to reduce global warming. There are a number of different ways in which we are doing that. In New South Wales, the Government and the Parliament very proudly—with the support of most parties—supported legislating targets to meet our climate change goals and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We also joined across the Parliament to support the delivery of the decarbonisation of our energy grid through the New South Wales energy road map. No-one has suggested that that will be easy. No-one has suggested that it will be straightforward.

I have said many times that we are literally delivering the industrial revolution within 15 years. This is not a choice; this is a necessity. I am pleased that we retain the bipartisanship and multipartisanship in this Parliament to take on that task not only now but also in five years, 10 years, 20 years. That is what we will have to do. We are in discussions with Eraring. Before everyone gets excited and I get another front-page article by saying it, the Government has made no decisions. We have made it really clear: not open a minute longer and not a dollar more in relation to what may happen with that. Announcements will be coming imminently.

The Hon. Mark Latham: On budget day.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, they are coming at some point. I will advise members when those announcements have been made, because the decisions have not been made and we are dealing with a very serious process. I acknowledge also that recently we released the climate change emissions data, which we have been very transparent about. That is the point: It tells us that the task is harder. We are not at a 56 per cent reduction in emissions, which we were on track for by 2030. We are between 44 per cent and 50 per cent. That means we need to double our efforts, not walk away, because if we walk away the emissions go up, the planet gets hotter and every aspect of our lives—whether it is food production, energy costs or the way our economy works—will be undermined, let alone losing the beautiful ecosystems that we rely on to survive.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (11:58): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate how the net zero targets for 2030 and 2035 will be reached with Eraring operating?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:58): I cannot explain the way in which emissions modelling works in two minutes. I suggest that if the member is really interested—and I am very genuine about this—I am very happy to take her through the way in which the emissions are calculated. They are complicated. They take into effect things that are happening like what is in the planning system, and they also take on what we have observed in a range of different models that come from both Commonwealth and State data. It is not straightforward. The ability to meet our emissions reduction target does not change, no matter what decision we make about Eraring.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (11:59): I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elaborate on her mention of an announcement about Eraring? Isn't the Government planning to do it on budget day, to smother the publicity? If the Government is so committed to transparency, why does it not do it out in the open and let people know how much it will cost?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:59): There are a lot of hypotheticals in the question. It is a serious issue. I have been extremely clear since taking on this role that we will be transparent, and we will provide the

information that we need to when we make a decision on the issue. I am not able to confirm any of those things regarding the date because the decision has not yet been made. But I would say that it is highly unlikely that it is going to be on budget day.

The PRESIDENT: I call the Hon. Susan Carter.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I am sorry, I thought it was the end of question time.

The PRESIDENT: Unfortunately, the Leader of the Government finished her answer too early. If she had gone for another 30 seconds, it could have been.

SPECIALIST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKERS

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (12:00): My question is directed to the Minister for Homelessness, representing the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Why has the Great Lakes Womens Shelter, which provides domestic violence service to clients, over 50 per cent of whom are Aboriginal women and children, been excluded from tendering under the contracts for additional Commonwealth-funded domestic violence workers?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (12:00): I thank the honourable member for the question—I do not thank the Leader of the Government for not being particularly attentive about the clock. I am not familiar with the particular facility referred to in the question. There are a number of facilities across New South Wales. I am happy to take on notice the specific question about the shelter in Great Lakes and get the member some specific information.

My understanding, from the information I have, is that some facilities have been told that they are not eligible for the funding because they are not Aboriginal community controlled organisations. I do not know if this shelter is in that category, and that is why I have indicated that I will get specific information. I say this clearly and deliberately: We all signed up to priority one under Closing the Gap. Former Premier Perrottet, to his credit, signed up. I hope that the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs at the time, who is sitting in the Chair now, and the former Minister Sarah Mitchell understand that we all signed up to Closing the Gap.

Priority one was transferring funding to Aboriginal community controlled organisations. It was always going to be difficult. Either those opposite did not understand what priority one was or are now opportunistically trying to ask questions about efforts to ensure that Aboriginal community controlled organisations do have priority. It is called "priority" for a reason: They get prioritised. This is a critically important question, and I am unapologetic about being part of a government that recognises what we all signed up to. We all signed up to say we need to ensure—

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: We did, but not to exclude others.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: If you are not an Aboriginal community controlled organisation, you are excluded from priority funding. That is how it has to work. Closing the Gap is going to be difficult, and it was always going to be difficult. But I am unapologetic about ensuring that, when we have communities that are majority First Nations, Aboriginal community controlled organisations are supported and prioritised. They are put at the top of the list. That is how it has to work. Otherwise, they will never build capacity. They will never have the resources. They will never catch up and we will never close the gap. As I have said, I have taken on notice the specifics— [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (12:04): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate whether, in those areas where existing facilities provide services to Aboriginal communities and families, there are Aboriginal community controlled organisations [ACCOs] that are up and running and can hit the ground from day one? What will be the impact on domestic violence workers who are employed in services that have been told that they are ineligible to apply for funding?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (12:04): Yes, I can. The question related to new funding, not to existing contracts. It is new funding, new money and new workers. This is a really important point: We will never make the change if we do not prioritise Aboriginal community controlled organisations when new funding becomes available.

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones: What are you doing to support those ACCOs to get up and running?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We are giving them funding. We are prioritising them for funding. That is what we are doing. Of course, existing contracts—and the honourable member's supplementary question went to existing contracts—have to go through a proper recommissioning process and transitions need to be managed

sensibly. The question about capacity is very important. I can indicate to the honourable member that, when there is not an Aboriginal community controlled organisation that has that capacity and capability, we will ensure that service gaps do not exist and that other organisations will be able to pick up the new funding.

The Hon. Aileen MacDonald: They have been told they can't.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: What they have been told is that, unless you are an Aboriginal community controlled organisation, you are not prioritised for the funding. As I said, I am unapologetic about that. We all signed up to Closing the Gap. Premier Perrottet sat next to Pat Anderson, the head of the Federal Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations, and said, "We sign up to priority one." It was clear what that meant: funding over time, in an orderly way and reflecting capability and capacity. This is the moment. When new money comes online, it is the moment to lean into that and not attack Aboriginal community controlled organisations for wanting to be at the top of the list. We are unapologetic in prioritising them. I call on those opposite to recommit to Closing the Gap.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Now it is the end of question time.

The Hon. Wes Fang: I bet you wish you'd jumped.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: No, because the Hon. Rose Jackson is very capable of answering questions and actually raised the nub of what is going on here. Mr President, I apologise for responding to interjections. I am always trying to be better. If members have further questions I suggest that they place them on notice.

Supplementary Questions for Written Answers

SPECIALIST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKERS

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (12:07): My supplementary question for written answer is directed to the Minister for Homelessness, representing the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, regarding her answer earlier today. Will the Minister provide a copy of the national partnership agreement on domestic violence between New South Wales and the Commonwealth, including any variations insofar as they relate to the funding and timing for the recruitment and deployment of the 118 additional domestic violence workers?

ROSEHILL RACECOURSE

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (12:08): My supplementary question for written answer is directed to the Leader of the Government. What is unique about converting Rosehill racecourse to housing, given that Sydney racetracks have often been converted to housing, most notably at Mascot, Kensington, Rosebery, Victoria Park and Harold Park?

Questions Without Notice: Take Note

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: I move:

That the House take note of answers to questions.

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE SERVICES

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (12:08): I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Mental Health, representing the Minister for Women, to a question about the operation of the Staying Home Leaving Violence program operated through the auspices of the Far West Community Legal Centre in Broken Hill. The Minister seemed to indicate that this was simply a question of Commonwealth funding and that it was just a matter of dialogue with the Commonwealth to ensure that those very important domestic violence services would be maintained for the women and children of Broken Hill. We first started asking questions about this service at estimates in February this year and we have been asking questions about the maintenance and continuity of these important services ever since. At estimates we got a very different answer from the one the Minister provided today. At that time, Mr Michael Tidball said:

If I may supplement my inadequate response to Ms Carter's question about the Far West Community Legal Centre—

and he talked about an immediate issue to do with its advisory board. He noted that notice was given of the board's intention to cease operation of their legal and domestic family violence related services in the Far West on 31 July of this year. It has been known since February. He continued:

There are four services that operate under the auspice of Far West: Staying Home Leaving Violence, which clearly is funded by DCJ—

that is, funded by the State—

Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, funded by Legal Aid—
again, a State responsibility—
the Far West community legal service, which is funded by Legal Aid—
that is, a State responsibility—
and the Warra Warra Legal Service, which is an ALS service funded under the NIAA.

The latter is Federal. Some three-quarters of those bodies are State responsibilities and State funded. Yet when we asked what was happening to make sure that the women and children of Broken Hill and the Far West would have continued access to domestic violence services, we were told, "Well, we just have to have a dialogue with the Commonwealth Government and it has to come to the party." Yes, of course the Commonwealth should come to the party, but the direct responsibility rests with the Department of Communities and Justice. The direct responsibility rests with the State. It is a direct responsibility that needs to be discharged—and it should not wait until 30 July. Does a woman in a violent situation, a woman in a refuge or a woman being supported by Staying Home Leaving Violence want that uncertainty? Do those women want to think, "Maybe I'll be funded, or maybe I'll have to go back to a violent situation"? [*Time expired.*]

SCRAP METAL INDUSTRY

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (12:11): I take note of the answer provided to question on notice No. 1883, which I directed to the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism. The question regarded the Scrap Metal Industry Act 2016, for which the NSW Police Force has responsibility. The Scrap Metal Industry Act was passed by the New South Wales Parliament and assented to on 21 September 2016 in response to concerns surrounding unlawful activity within the scrap metal industry. Up until the introduction of the Act, the industry was largely unregulated and undocumented, making it extremely attractive to criminals as a way to make some quick cash. When assented to, the Act in part prohibited scrap metal dealers from paying cash for scrap metal. Businesses have to pay via EFTPOS or cheque, thus ensuring records are maintained of transactions and removing any incentive to receive anonymous cash payments for metal acquired by theft. In his second reading speech when introducing the bill, then police Minister Troy Grant thanked police from the Property Crime Squad for developing the proposal.

What has happened since the introduction of the Act? The answer to the question on notice is quite telling. Since the Act has come into being, there have been only three prosecutions for breaches under the Act, the last being in 2019. This is despite AUSTRAC and the Australian Border Force, in a financial crime paper in October 2022, identifying the scrap metal industry as a high-risk industry for trade-based money laundering. I have spoken with a number of legitimate stakeholders in the industry who have expressed their concerns to me of illegal activities taking place. This is to the detriment of legitimate businesses that follow the law, pay tax, conform to legislation and do not pay cash for scrap, only to see potential sellers drive down the road to shonky dealers.

Are the concerns of these stakeholders legitimate? The answer is yes. I have in my hand pages and pages of google searches indicating a plethora of businesses offering cash for scrap, in direct violation of the Act. This is brazen. What are the police doing about it? Apparently, from the answer to question on notice No. 1883, they are doing absolutely nothing. There have been no prosecutions since 2019 despite an easy google search showing those businesses thumbing their noses at the law. It is all there and easy to see. I call upon police Minister Yasmin Catley to inform Commissioner Karen Webb of the flagrant and disturbing breaches taking place within the industry, right under their noses, and have this industry finally cleaned up once and for all.

CRITICAL MINERALS MINING

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (12:14): I take note of answers given today by the Minister for Natural Resources, the Hon. Courtney Houssos. In her answer she spoke about the Critical Minerals Strategy and the exciting work being done to explore the deposits of critical minerals we have here in New South Wales. The announcement was particularly exciting, acknowledging the extent of the work that has been undertaken in terms of the geospatial survey. One-sixth of the State was surveyed. It is important for members to understand that here in New South Wales we have 21 of the 31 nationally identified critical minerals.

It is a huge opportunity for jobs, particularly in regional New South Wales. Members know how important jobs are in our regional areas. We also know that there are currently more than 2,600 people directly employed in critical minerals and high-tech metal mines in the Central West of New South Wales alone, with another 1,260 in the Far West. They are the direct employees but, obviously, there are thousands more indirect employment opportunities with these mines in regional New South Wales, such as the engineering companies and all of the other businesses related directly to these mining jobs.

In terms of the surveying completed, I note that there are a further 1,600 people projected to be employed if currently proposed projects begin moving—some 1,600 direct jobs in these mines. Again, this underscores that

there are thousands of indirect employment opportunities, which are so important in our regional areas for our small businesses. I note the Hon. Sam Faraway has spoken about the small businesses in the Bathurst area in this place as well. These jobs will be so crucial to our regional areas.

The release of this data by the Government will help to stimulate the investment in regional New South Wales. Here in New South Wales we are leading the country in the exploration and development of critical minerals. We want to take advantage of the opportunities presented by these amazing deposits of natural resources, particularly in our regional areas. I again thank and congratulate the Minister, Geoscience Australia, and the Mining, Exploration and Geoscience group for the work they are doing in this space.

SPECIALIST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKERS

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (12:17): I add to the debate taking note of answers given today. It gives me no joy to do so. Opposition members asked specific questions about specific services in specific areas and the huge challenges they face with no more funding. It is clear to us that there were no answers today. Regrettably, there was quite a deliberate strategy of "look over here". No-one disagrees that Aboriginal controlled organisations should be at the forefront, which is why, when in government, we allocated to 20 of them specifically and funded the upskilling of workers for those organisations in our Core and Cluster program. No-one is debating that. What we are debating is that specific services have asked for questions to be asked of this Government about what is happening to their funding. It was disappointing to see no answer there.

In relation to Staying Home Leaving Violence, it is clear that is just some talk about a program that is critical to keeping women safe. Some \$34 million was invested by the former Coalition Government to expand this program across the State. I am pleased the Government is addressing it, but it ought to get on with the job. It gives me no joy to see. We want to see the Government succeed. We want to see women being kept safe. But when we asked about this funding for specific domestic violence workers—118 of them were funded. The money is there; it is in the tin. One would think those opposite would be doing everything in their power to recruit and get out there and make sure that those workers are in place.

When talking about domestic violence, we all say we do not want to wait until the next death and do not want further delay but, sadly, we have seen exactly that here. This funding was provided by the Commonwealth Government in June 2023. We are now approaching June 2024. Nothing has happened in this space for 11 months. Thankfully, five workers are in place, and I wish them the best of luck. But knowing there are still 113 to go, it is quite right that we ask these questions. Where are they? How is it happening? If I was the Minister, I would be yelling, stamping and saying, "Where are we getting these workers from?" We are a year late into this. We have been asking what has been done and where will we see these workers? How will they be recruited?

It is so disappointing that the talk is all about contracts and recruiters and not about people on the ground who will be providing services ultimately to the most important people, the people at the centre of this issue, who we should all be focusing on—the women and their children, and the victim-survivors who need help. While there is a whole lot of cheap talk in this place about timelines and pious, gratuitous nodding to various amounts of funding, the women experiencing or at risk of domestic violence need the workers in place right now. There should not be any further delay. Where are the programs? What steps is the Government taking? What is it doing? It has had a year. Put those workers in place now, particularly in specific areas like Cobar and Condobolin that have said to us that they need help.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (12:20): I take note of the answer to the question that I put to the Minister for Energy, and Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, regarding the admission that the operation of Eraring will be extended. The Minister did not admit that but, in reality, the Government will shortly announce the extension of Eraring. We all know that, although the Minister today indicated that no decision had been yet made by the Government. It is hard to believe that is the case. It may not have gone through the final stages of Cabinet, but there is no doubt that this Government will shortly announce that it will extend the life of Eraring, probably for four years, and it will be doing so at great expense to taxpayers. We are talking about figures in the order of \$150 million per year to subsidise Eraring and essentially pay Eraring to keep the coal-fired power station going.

I put to the Minister that in May 2023 she sang the praises of the previous Government's energy road map and said she would accelerate it. Twelve months down the track, the Government is now going to extend the life of Eraring, knowing all too well that coal-fired power stations are the backbone of our energy supply in New South Wales. There is no point denying that. The extension of Eraring essentially reminds everybody in New South Wales that the rush that we have had to fast-track renewables will eventually be a failure and the net zero targets for 2030 and for 2035 will not be met. Despite the fact that the Minister did not want to answer my question

entirely—she avoided the answer—the reality is, with Eraring being open for the next four years, the 2030 target will be impacted. Renewables cannot be fast-tracked to meet the target wanted for 2030 or 2035. I think the Government would be better off admitting that the energy road map is a failure. It is not Labor's road map anyway; it is Matt Kean's road map.

I acknowledge Matt Kean because he stepped out of his role as shadow Minister for Health this past week and decided to make a contribution as the former energy Minister to *The Australian Business Review*. I can only imagine it was an exercise in saving his own legacy. He reminded everyone that he is the architect of the failed energy road map in New South Wales and that the Coalition Government lost the election last year, in many respects, because of the work of Matt Kean. If people have a spare couple of minutes that they will never in their life get back, they should have a read of that article. [*Time expired.*]

CRITICAL MINERALS MINING

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (12:23): I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Natural Resources, the Hon. Courtney Houssos, to a question I asked about critical minerals. I thought it was fascinating to hear that we have surveyed one-sixth of the State so far and that we have already identified 21 of the 31 critical minerals. That is the future of mining in this State. Finding out what critical minerals the State has is an important body of work done by Geoscience Australia, and the critical minerals that are being used in all of the wonderfully advanced new technology will lead us to a carbon-free future. They are used in batteries and high technology. That will be, in a sense, a replacement as we transition out of the mining of yesteryear, the mining of coal, and we create new industries with high-tech mining jobs extracting extremely valuable critical minerals that feed into high technology and well-paid jobs with a secure future for people involved in those industries.

Importantly, identifying that we have those critical minerals in this State will not mean only mining jobs are attracted; it will attract other high-tech industries that decide to value-add. They will base themselves in New South Wales because they know that, off the back of those critical minerals, they can source the inputs they need in order to do important research and development and manufacturing work. We will end up with industries like those that are developing in Australia at the moment around drone technology, satellite technology and supplying defence and other industries that rely very heavily on high tech—a fantastic development. I cannot wait until the rest of the State has been surveyed. Who knows, maybe we will find more than the 21 out of the 31 critical minerals. Maybe the next time we get an update from the Minister, it will be 23 or 25. We will know where they are and we will have a secure future of high-tech mining jobs that will lead to other important high-tech industries in this State.

SPECIALIST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORKERS

SOUTH COAST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FACILITIES

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (12:26): I take note of a number of answers given by Ministers today. I start with the specialist domestic violence workers. The Coalition asked questions yesterday about them. One would have expected the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault to have provided the Ministers in this Chamber, particularly those who represent her, with some more detail, particularly around exactly how many specialist domestic violence workers will be employed by the end of this financial year and how many will be available all year. I note the comments made by the Minister representing the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault that the Government intends to have all of the specialist domestic violence workers employed by September this year.

The Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault has a track record of mismanagement with regard to contracts. She was asked about the 25 domestic violence counsellors employed at the Sexual Violence Helpline, which were announced by the Labor Government in July last year. She was asked in March this year at a budget estimates hearing how many of those 25 were currently working on the helpline. Her answer was not to advise one, two, three or 20 but that there have been none. Her answer was, "We're in the process of finalising contracts in relation to that." Eight months on and not one person has been employed in that helpline.

On specialist homelessness services contracts, I find it appalling that this Government has not commenced the recommissioning of those contracts and will not do that until next year. Some specialist homelessness services have had their contracts extended for two years, and longer term contracts are good but that must be done alongside funding. I have raised that issue on a number of occasions in this Chamber. I refer to Salt Care and Safe Waters in particular—two organisations operating in the Illawarra-Shoalhaven area. I would love to be able to refer to the street count figures for this year, but the Minister has failed to release that report.

I can see why the Minister is delaying this year's figures, because in 2022 the street count figure was 126 and last year the count went up to 173. The largest increase was in the Eurobodalla area, which I understand

is where Safe Waters does some of its outreach. Two organisations are about to close their doors come 1 July this year and staff will be dismissed. They have been providing support to thousands of families by providing crisis beds. This Government is failing to fund homelessness services and does not have a strategy to ensure that there are beds and wraparound support available. These two organisations are crying out for funding, but the Minister cannot give them any guarantee of what will happen from 1 July. That is absolutely outrageous but, to be frank, it is not a surprise. Minister after Minister has not only misled women and families, children— [Time expired.]

VEHICLE NOISE

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (12:29): I contribute to the take-note debate to speak about the answer given by the Leader of the Government and the Minister for the Environment, the Hon. Penny Sharpe, regarding the noise cameras in the Rockdale and Wollongong local government areas [LGAs]. They say all politics is local, and there is no more burning local issue, to my knowledge, than vehicle noise in the Brighton-Le-Sands area. I acknowledge Minister Jackson's expression when she looked over to me, because she lives in that area and experiences this issue directly. Walking around Brighton-Le-Sands you usually see young males manifesting their youthful exuberance in cars that are almost impossible for the police to monitor and impound because they are not on the spot all the time.

The local members in those LGAs, the Hon. Stephen Kamper and the Hon. Paul Scully, have been lobbying on the issue of vehicle noise for a long time. I congratulate them on their campaign. I know Bayside Council Mayor Bill Saravinovski has been hot on this issue, and no doubt Wollongong City Council has been as well. Addressing vehicle noise is important because this is a lovely area for people to enjoy, but it is blighted by a cacophony of noise when they walk down the street—the noise is usually from young males in hotted-up cars trying to get a thrill out of making everyone's life a misery, frankly.

Vehicle noise cameras are cutting edge. I understand the Environment Protection Authority procured them. They are also currently being used in London and New York. The trial will determine the efficacy of the cameras and the volume of noise required to pick up and take the footage to attribute it to a particular car. Hopefully the trial comes through all the teething problems and we get a system that can pick these cars up, which the residents of Bayside and Wollongong will be eternally grateful for. I thank the Minister for listening to the local members and the councils for acting on this, because this is a very important issue for them. I congratulate the local members and Minister, and I hope the community gets some relief from the noise.

WESTERN SYDNEY INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (12:32): I take note of the answer given by the Deputy Leader of the Government, which was effectively part two, with the instalment of part one outlined yesterday by the Treasurer, with respect to the Federal Government giving back what it took away in its infrastructure cuts. We heard from the Treasurer yesterday that the Government's approach has been characterised by steadfast advocacy, quiet diplomacy and technical mastery, as he complimented a range of members on their advocacy for these projects. Today we heard from the Deputy Leader of the Government about the Government's capital D disappointment with the Federal Government, but what about the rest of the projects that the Federal Government has taken away? What about those members, particularly members on the Central Coast, who did not fight for \$1 billion to be reinstated for the upgrade for faster rail between Tuggerah and Wyong? What about the commuter car park program in Woy Woy in the electorate of Gosford being shelved?

This Government does not even praise *The Daily Telegraph*, which started the Let's Get Moving campaign. Ben English from *The Daily Telegraph* had to fight for this funding to come back because this Government, for all its technical mastery, quiet diplomacy and soft advocacy, was not beating its chest about getting more infrastructure funding. It took *The Daily Telegraph* to bring the Federal Government in, kicking and screaming. There are still projects that are holding New South Wales back. The Federal Government will not fund them and the State Government refuses to stand up to Anthony Albanese. The Government has patted its Federal colleagues on the back in the hope of more in the next budget.

I pick up on the work of the member for Lindsay, Melissa McIntosh, in her advocacy on this issue. She has outlined that, as a result of this announcement, half the money for projects like Mamre Road has been cut. Where will the rest of the funding come from? Will the State Government pluck up and put in the additional funding? Will the Albanese Government come good on its commitment to delivering the projects that Sydney needs? The aerotropolis must not be a white elephant but an international destination that we can be proud of that can fulfil the promise that it has always had. When it comes to the Hunter and the Central Coast, the members representing the electorates of Wyong, The Entrance and Gosford need to stand up for their communities and ask for a faster rail project, the delivery of better services and, of course, a much-needed commuter car park in Woy Woy.

BLACKTOWN HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (12:35): I take note of question on notice No. 1034 to the Minister for Finance, representing the Minister for Health, concerning the Blacktown Hospital emergency department and the unacceptable wait times experienced by patients. I wrote to the Minister concerning the extended wait times at Blacktown Hospital. The Minister responded with several headline issues relating to the recruitment of additional staff, the implementation of a navigator role and the expansion of the Hospital in the Home program. There were no details, no time frames, no targets and no measurements relating to these initiatives, only headlines. Meanwhile, patients continue to wait for extended periods at Blacktown Hospital emergency department. Are these initiatives being effectively implemented? Are they sufficient to address the scale of the problem?

Earlier this year Councillor Alan Green from Blacktown City Council reached out to me, desperate for help. He reported that the problem is getting worse. The crucial fact is that patients are still experiencing lengthy delays. There is no shortage of reports and stories of patients' experiences. One patient spent 13 hours in Blacktown Hospital emergency department with a hole in his heart before seeing a doctor. On the next occasion when he required emergency treatment, he reported that he went to Westmead emergency department via Uber and said, "I'll never go there again to Blacktown. I'd rather die in someone's Uber."

The wait time at Blacktown Hospital emergency department of 10 hours longer than the State average is just the starting point. The New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association has confirmed reports of nurses being stabbed in the face onsite at the hospital. The impact of the environment on staff and patients is unacceptable. The union reports to be extremely concerned and says that its members have a right to feel safe in their workplace. It is crucial that our public health system functions effectively, especially when citizens are at their most vulnerable. The Government has a duty of care to NSW Health workers. They work long hours and I commend their resilience, dedication and expertise. It is time that the Government stepped up and provided the necessary resources, infrastructure and facilities to patients and health workers across the State because New South Wales deserves so much better.

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (12:38): I close the take-note debate on question time. I am delighted to inform the House that there are 41 sleeps until the budget. I am not sure how long some of the sleeps will be, but there is no doubt that there are 41. The Government, led by the Treasurer, is focused on delivering a prudent, fiscally disciplined budget in the face of enormous challenges. The Treasurer outlined some of those today in question time, including the extraordinary pressure put on our State's credit rating by the previous Government spending \$27 billion in its final nine months. There have been some amazing efforts by those opposite to try to rewrite history after they lost the election.

Our Government remains focused on a range of really important issues. We outlined those today in question time—whether it be infrastructure in Western Sydney and making sure we get our fair share from the Federal Government, or critical minerals and their importance in the clean energy future, in my portfolio. I give a shout-out to the environment Minister and the importance of reducing car hoonos and introducing noise cameras. This is a huge issue. I appeal to her to consider expanding that trial from Bayside Council just over Wolli Creek into Canterbury Bankstown. I will declare an interest in that, Mr Assistant President, but it is certainly an issue that communities across the State are talking about.

Specifically, I call out the eloquent and informed responses from the Minister for Housing, representing the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. It is worth noting it was in her capacity as representing another Minister. They were excellent responses across a range of issues and it shows just how committed this Government is. This is not simply a single portfolio approach. Our entire Government is committed to addressing the challenges relating to family and domestic violence.

There have been recent high-profile and tragic cases, but even in our previous budget we provided \$100 million in additional funding, delivering on our election commitment to increase funding to this important area. The Premier, along with the Minister for Housing and the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, announced a further \$230 million. But \$50,000 of that funding was to fund programs that the members who asked questions today did not fund themselves. They should reflect on their lack of self-awareness when they ask questions about decisions they failed to take when they were in a position to make a difference. This is an important issue and one that we are firmly committed to addressing.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

*Written Answers to Supplementary Questions***DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

In reply to **the Hon. MARK LATHAM** (7 May 2024).

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer)—The Minister provided the following response:

Prevention of domestic, family and sexual violence [DFSV] is a complex issue that requires a balanced, evidence-based approach. The New South Wales Government's work is informed by the lived experience of victim-survivors and expert advice to government, including from leaders in the domestic family and sexual violence sector who engaged directly with the New South Wales Cabinet last week.

The New South Wales Government is providing a \$230 million funding package that offers a coordinated, multi-pronged response that seeks to disrupt the cycle of DFSV early and permanently. This package will enhance support for DFSV victim-survivors and expand programs that reduce the rate of violence against women and children. It supports efforts that will have an impact over the short, medium and long term by:

- strengthening existing supports for victim-survivors of DFSV, with a focus on risk and need;
- investing in prevention and early intervention initiatives that disrupt DFSV before it escalates to crisis; and
- optimising the service system through better research and workforce development.

The package announced on Monday 6 May 2024 includes:

- \$48 million to roll out the Staying Home Leaving Violence program statewide and to expand the Integrated Domestic and Family Violence Service;
- \$45 million to improve bail laws and justice system responses to domestic violence, with measures to be announced in coming weeks;
- nearly \$24 million for specialist DV support workers within the justice system;
- \$2 million over four years to support the Domestic Violence Death Review Team and its work to deliver robust research around risks factors, trends and impact of service delivery;
- \$2.1 million over two years to improve and continue the Corrective Services program EQUIPS Domestic and Family Violence, delivered to offenders in custody and under supervision in the community to prevent reoffending;
- \$48 million to secure and increase funding for workers who support children accompanying their mothers to refuges. These specialist workers support them, including with education and mental health measures;
- support of \$700,000 for the NSW Domestic Violence Line;
- \$38 million for the implementation of New South Wales's first dedicated Primary Prevention Strategy;
- \$8.1 million over four years for the "All In" early childhood pilot, to prevent domestic violence by teaching young children about healthy relationships;
- \$5 million for workforce training on the implementation of a newly developed risk assessment framework, and quality standards;
- \$3.6 million to expand Domestic Violence NSW, which is the peak body for specialist services in New South Wales; and
- \$5 million in funding for research into perpetrators and effective interventions.

Holding perpetrators accountable for their abusive behaviour is a key priority of the Government, and the Bail Act Monitoring Group is reviewing bail laws with respect to DFSV offenders.

If further changes to our laws and policies are required, we will implement them.

STATE BUDGET AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

In reply to **the Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE** (7 May 2024).

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage)—The Minister provided the following response:

The New South Wales Government is committed to carefully evaluating all programs contained in the \$230 million package to enhance support for domestic, family and sexual violence victim-survivors and expand programs that reduce the rate of violence against women and children.

Existing programs being expanded already have program-specific objectives, tracked metrics, and monitoring and evaluation processes included within their program logic.

For new programs, including New South Wales's first dedicated Primary Prevention Strategy, outcomes will be monitored in accordance with the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence [DFSV] Outcomes, Monitoring and Reporting Framework, which is under development.

The DFSV Outcomes, Monitoring and Reporting Framework is a key action under the NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022-2027 and the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027. It will identify and define outcomes, indicators, data sources and reporting mechanisms.

Monitoring the collective success of this package will include examining the movement in key prevention and domestic and family violence prevalence measures over time.

Documents

NSW OMBUDSMAN

Reports

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): According to the Ombudsman Act 1974, I table an erratum to a special report of the Ombudsman entitled *Revenue NSW - The lawfulness of its garnishee order process*, dated 8 May 2024.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 2.00 p.m.

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome and acknowledge the guests of the Hon. Chris Rath from Christ Church St Laurence Anglican parish who are present in the gallery today, Reverend Dr Daniel Dries, the rector, and Reverend Ryan Austin-Eames, the senior assistant priest. They are both very welcome.

Private Members' Statements

STUDENT PAID PLACEMENTS

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (14:03): The Federal Labor Government recently announced that students in social work, teaching, nursing, midwifery and early childhood education courses undertaking their practical work will be eligible for paid placements from 2025. I acknowledge the work of the unions, especially my union, the mighty Australian Services Union [ASU], students, student organisations and academics who have tirelessly worked to make this a reality. My previous occupation was as a social worker, so I will let other members in this place speak about the positive impacts that this will have on teaching, nursing, midwifery and early childhood education.

The cohort of students studying social work are required to undertake around 1,000 hours of unpaid placement in order to graduate. That is almost half a year of full-time, unpaid work. Many students—70 per cent of whom are women—feel obliged to quit their current jobs, pay for additional child care and be out of pocket for transport and accommodation if the placement is away from their local area. Others are left in a bind where they have to choose between mandatory unpaid placements or being able to pay their bills. Around three in four social work students drop out from their degree, primarily as a consequence of the economic hardships of foregoing an income.

Deanna Grant-Smith is an academic from the University of the Sunshine Coast who has spent years researching the impact of poverty on students undertaking their mandatory placements. She acknowledges that this announcement is a great first step and that starting with feminised professions is the right decision. As a cost-of-living measure to support students who are passionate about their communities and are making their way through these courses, this initiative will really help. I particularly acknowledge the secretary of the Australian Services Union, Mr Angus McFarland, who said:

The ASU will work with our members through the detail of today's announcement and continue to campaign for students studying community services degrees to have rights and entitlements of workers through their placements.

This victory shows the power of our collective action. When we join together as union members, we win!

This is a great initiative that will ensure that current and future social work, teaching, midwifery, early childhood and nursing students will no longer have to face placement poverty as they work towards gaining an education.

CHRIST CHURCH ST LAURENCE

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (14:06): I am sure everyone thinks that their own church is the best one, but that is clearly only because they have not yet been to Christ Church St Laurence in Sydney, where I am a parishioner. Christ Church St Laurence is a diverse and inclusive inner-city Anglican parish committed to sharing the Gospel. It is a truly welcoming church where I, and people from all different backgrounds, feel at home, just as Christ taught us. Dating back to 1845, Christ Church St Laurence is one of Sydney's oldest churches. That is immediately noticeable with its impressive heritage-listed sandstone architecture and stunning stained-glass windows. We owe much of this beauty to the church's esteemed architect, Edmund Blacket, who also designed Australia's oldest university.

The recent restoration of the church, together with the magnificently talented choir and organist led by director of music, Sam Allchurch, make worshipping at Christ Church St Laurence a truly aesthetically fulfilling experience. I encourage all members to visit, regardless of whether or not they are a Christian. Christ Church St Laurence is also a church committed to social justice and community, from providing education to the impoverished in the nineteenth century and operating soup kitchens during the Great Depression to supporting HIV patients in the '80s and '90s and assisting youth in danger of homelessness today. Christ Church St Laurence is inclusive and compassionate, not just in word but also in deed. It is also uniquely a sanctuary of Anglo-Catholic and High Anglican worship in an otherwise very low church diocese.

It is why I often say, somewhat tongue in cheek, that I am an Anglican in Sydney and not a Sydney Anglican. Every Sunday, solemn high mass and Evensong are rich in history, tradition, beauty and meaning. For me, as for other parishioners, those services are a portal to the transcendental and a glimpse of the divine. I pay tribute to the leadership of the rector, Father Daniel, and the senior assistant priest, Father Ryan, who are in the gallery today. Worshipping at Christ Church St Laurence, especially with their insightful sermons, definitely makes me a better person and a better legislator. I am sure there is no such concept as a born-again Anglo-Catholic; it is basically an oxymoron. But, if there was, I can honestly say that I have found my faith at Christ Church St Laurence. Only now do I resonate with the great C. S. Lewis, who said:

Human history is the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.

MOO TO EWE FARMED ANIMAL SANCTUARY

The Hon. EMMA HURST (14:09): In December last year I had the privilege of visiting Moo to Ewe, a sanctuary on the Central Coast for animals rescued from farming industries. Operating since 2018, more than 50 individual animals are lucky enough to call Moo to Ewe their home. The sanctuary's mission is to change the perception of farmed animals by sharing their stories and creating space for people to connect with the individual residents—residents like Rose. Rose is a talkative mother sheep, who was rescued from a life of being farmed, where she was forcibly impregnated from the age of one and had her lambs taken away from her, year after year, for five years. She now lives at Moo to Ewe, where she finally has autonomy and respect, and has her twin boys, Bud and Bloom, by her side.

Rose is lucky. Most mothers in the animal agribusiness industry will have their babies taken from them shortly after birth and will never get to see their little ones grow up or spend time with them. Other residents at Moo to Ewe include Nalu, who was just three months old when he was caught in a flood. His mother and the rest of his herd are believed to have drowned. Nalu was the only survivor, rescued by good Samaritans, who saw his little white face bobbing in the water and managed to bring him to safety at Moo to Ewe. Nalu is shy and gentle, and he now lives his days alongside his friends Howie and Jolene.

The sanctuary is also home to many other residents, including pigs, cows, goats, sheep, alpacas, roosters, hens and ducks. As a non-profit, Moo to Ewe relies on fundraising and donations to care for the animals. It is a huge task to care for so many individuals, and the dedication of the people behind these sanctuaries is remarkable. Farmed animal sanctuaries often receive no government funding, even in times of fire or flood. Farm sanctuaries provide an essential safe place for rescued animals and play a crucial role in awareness and education. I encourage all members to visit and get to know some farmed animals who are living peaceful lives in one of the very few places where they have the opportunity not only to be themselves but also to grow old. I leave members with Moo to Ewe's motto: Animals are "here with us, not for us".

INTIMATE PARTNER HOMICIDE

The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (14:11): The scourge of intimate partner homicide, the most common type of homicide in Australia, is of huge concern in the community. The Federal Government has published research into this scourge that addresses important questions. Firstly, who commits these offences and why? Some of the proven risk factors identified for intimate partner homicide are a history of sexual violence by the offender; a history of non-fatal strangulation by the offender; the offender's mental and physical health problems, particularly depression and suicidal ideation; the offender's experience of traumatic life events, including war, homelessness, incarceration, abuse and neglect as a child, and the death of significant family members; the end of a relationship between victim and offender, whether announced or completed; and the offender's jealousy and perception of violations of gendered norms.

Secondly, what actually reduces the incidence of these crimes? The research identifies a number of strategies that may reduce male-perpetrated female intimate partner homicide, including evidence-based intervention programs in and out of criminal justice settings; integration of intimate partner violence intervention programs with alcohol and other drug programs and mental health services; investment in frontline staff education and identification of coercive control, with an emphasis on treating identified cases seriously; improved

identification of high-risk victims and targeted and timely responses to protect them; and investment in new techniques to detect and surveil potential offenders.

Thirdly, what is the rate of such homicides over a relevant statistical period? The research shows that the intimate partner homicide rate has dropped by more than half since 1989. In raw terms, that translates to 82 occurring in 1989-90, compared to 38 in 2022-23. When separated for gender, the figures show a similarly consistent and extremely significant drop. The rate of women killed by partners has dropped by 66 per cent over the past 34 years. The improvement in these figures is cold comfort to anyone impacted by such a crime, but reform needs to build on what works, as much as on what is proved not to work.

Unfortunately, there is not a large amount of readily available research analysing the drop. Some research attributes it in part to a contraction in three factors: the size of the young male population, the number of people living in rural areas and the unemployment rate—a reminder, perhaps, that fluctuations in crime can be driven by broad factors actually unrelated to particular interventions. It is welcome indeed that the package recently announced by the Government includes \$5 million for research into this violence and how it is best addressed, including by intervention programs. Rates of homicide and other serious offences, such as infliction of grievous harm, are important indicators because such offences are more generally detected and therefore the truer rate can generally be established. That is in contrast to less serious offences, where the evidence suggests that the reporting rates are less than half, making it harder to establish whether statistical changes are a welcome increase in reporting or an unwelcome increase in offending.

TAIWAN ELECTIONS

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (14:14): With just 12 days to the inauguration of the new Taiwanese President, Lai Ching-te, I pay tribute to the strength and robustness of the Taiwanese people and their political system—in particular, the successful democratic election held in January that has resulted in this inauguration. They conclusively prove that there is no inconsistency between democracy and democratic values, Chinese culture and the Confucianism that drives many Chinese cultural habits, and the Taiwanese Government should be congratulated. The election was peaceful and successful. It has resulted in a new president, a peaceful transition of power and also, for the first time in 20 years, a hung parliament where the Kuomintang has a small majority over the Democratic Progress Party.

In a hung parliament, the rising third-way party, the Taiwan People's Party, holds the balance of power—a challenge that I am sure will be met by that parliament. I thank the Taiwanese Government for the privilege of visiting there in December during the election campaign, with several colleagues from this Parliament. It was an edifying trip in so many respects. It opened my eyes to the strength of the Japanese influence that had been exercised in the then island of Formosa in the 50 years from 1895 to the end of World War II. In fact, the Taiwanese Parliament is housed in the buildings of an old Japanese girls high school, which is an unusual setting.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Adaptive re-use.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: The Minister approves of the recycling of the buildings, of course. It is an unusual setting, in recognition and in memory of their one-time colonial masters. There were also visits that highlighted the significance of the Taiwanese indigenous population, which we were not necessarily aware of, who are much closer to Polynesian origins, ethnically. We also conducted some good meetings about the role of economic policy in national security strategy. That is the key point to recognise in the brilliance and the genius of the Taiwanese economic miracle and its strategic position.

When Nixon recognised mainland China in 1972, Taiwan's big challenge was how it would make itself essential globally. Taiwan made itself essential to the global supply chains by producing 90 per cent of advanced microchip supply around the world. As we were told, it raised a question: Does the United States President or any other global leader ever want to have to ring Xi Jinping to ask, "Can I have my microchips?" It is clever economic policy in terms of Taiwan's challenging national security position. The bottom line is that a strong, independent and prosperous Taiwan is very much in Australia's national interest. It is the best way of preventing mainland China from doing something stupid. These visits are beneficial in educating MPs. We should be supporting Taiwan, its democracy, its independence and its ongoing economic and strategic role.

NATIONAL AUSTRALIA BANK BRANCH CLOSURES

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (14:17): Today I bring to the attention of the House the recent closure of the National Australia Bank [NAB] branch in Lithgow, a decision that is representative of a broader malign trend of branch closures that deeply concerns us all. Our towns, including the proud town of Lithgow, stand as the backbone of this State. Yet they face neglect that undermines their economic stability and social fabric. With 20,000 residents, Lithgow is the gateway to the Central West. It has recently experienced what can only be described as corporate abandonment. Following closely on the heels of ANZ, NAB closed its doors, not only

ceasing operations but also ripping out its ATM, which is a critical lifeline for daily transactions. Customers wanting face-to-face branch services are instructed to travel a 90-minute round trip to Katoomba or Bathurst—an impossibility for many, particularly the elderly and the disabled.

This closure is not an isolated incident. Just a day prior, fellow Central West town of Oberon suffered the same fate: It lost its NAB branch. Meanwhile, the NAB chairman was on social media, touring branches in Dubbo and Orange, praising the bank's alleged commitment to the Central West. The broader data from the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority is equally alarming. In the six years to June 2023, New South Wales saw a 36 per cent reduction in the number of bank branches. ATMs have fared even worse, plummeting by 58 per cent from 4,433 to 1,851.

However, not all news has been disheartening. Westpac's recent decision to extend its 2023 moratorium on regional branch closures until at least 2027 provides a glimmer of hope and a model of responsible corporate citizenship. It acknowledges that brick-and-mortar branches still play a crucial role in the community, essential for small businesses, the elderly and those who prefer or need to transact in person. We will be watching closely to ensure that commitment is upheld. The imperative for action is clear. The ball is now in the court of the rest of the big four to demonstrate a similar commitment.

NAB, for instance, is scheduled to close branches in Yass, Mullumbimby, Moruya and Cessnock next month. I call upon NAB to show the same commitment, halt the closures, keep and reinstate the ATMs, and reopen the Lithgow and Oberon branches. Community obligation standards and innovation in the delivery of face-to-face services need to be considered. The people of New South Wales are frustrated. The money men have not been listening to them. I call upon this place to consider those matters with the urgency and gravity they deserve. Let us champion the cause for our constituents to ensure that the financial infrastructure of New South Wales remains robust, accessible and equitable.

THE SOCIAL OUTFIT

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (14:20): On 4 April the National Banksia Sustainability Awards presentation was held in Melbourne. The Banksia awards are the longest running and most prestigious sustainability awards in Australia. The thirty-fifth Banksia awards celebrated excellence in 14 categories, highlighting the diversity of sustainability practices across the country. I congratulate the Social Outfit on being honoured as the thirty-fifth National Banksia Gold Award Winner and on receiving the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Award. If members have not been to its shop on King Street, Newtown, I very much recommend that they go and see its excellent clothes.

Those remarkable achievements are a testament to the impactful work it does to both empower women from diverse migrant, refugee and cultural backgrounds and divert fabric from landfill. The award citation highlights the extraordinary efforts of the Social Outfit in training over 850 women and providing employment to 97 of them. Some 81 per cent of those women had their first Australian job experience with the Social Outfit, and an impressive 86 per cent of them transitioned to further employment. It is worth highlighting the Social Outfit's commitment to paying above award wages and the ambitious target to provide 100 employment outcomes by 2024.

Nadjia and Marzia were picked to represent at the awards ceremony the 104 migrant and refugee women from many countries—including Iraq, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Iran, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, Sierra Leone, Thailand, China and Myanmar—who have been provided employment by the Social Outfit over 10 years. Nadjia and Marzia are from Afghanistan and each arrived in Australia a few years ago. Both have experiences of hardship and incredible courage. Marzia is very representative of the many women supported who already had great skills. In her case it was within textile manufacturing, but she needed the opportunity to professionalise her textile and sewing techniques. Nadjia arrived with minimal English skills and has slowly built confidence, language and community by advancing through the multiple sewing training programs and subsequently being hired as a textile sewing technician for the Social Outfit.

On the environmental side, the Social Outfit's sustainable approach to manufacturing has already resulted in saving over 14 tonnes of textile waste from landfill, with 85 per cent of garments made from donated or deadstock fabric—of which I have bought more than a few pieces, I must confess. The Social Outfit's mission, values and the tangible difference it makes in the lives of many women and in the broader community is inspiring. Its innovative and inclusive approach to fashion and employment is deserving of the prestigious recognition it has received with the awards. I wish it luck and further success in the future. I look forward to many more years of wearing more of its wonderful clothes.

KEEPING THE LIGHTS ON REPORT

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (14:24): Time and again, the New South Wales Government has demonstrated it has no regard for the consequences of its woke mistakes. Inflation continues to haunt Australians and has risen 3.6 per cent in the past 12 months. Tertiary education costs have risen 6.5 per cent and secondary education costs have risen 6.1 per cent this quarter alone. House prices have also increased and are now almost 7 per cent higher than in March 2023. All of that is according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. It seems the New South Wales Labor Government has no intention of keeping its promise to reduce power bills or address the cost of living. Unless substantial change is imminent, blackouts are inevitable and we will see more Labor excuses, finger-pointing and cover-ups. The virtue-signalling, woke-pandering disaster of a renewables transition will cause an exorbitant amount of financial grief to regular, working Aussie families.

If Australia dropped off the face of the Earth tomorrow and all our emissions with it, it would have next to zero effect on the climate. So why does the Government continue to sacrifice the economy for the sake of climate change alarmists? The recent Grattan Institute report *Keeping the lights on* warns the New South Wales Government that its poor handling of the energy industry could result in dystopian blackouts if it continues pandering to left-wing influences and their dangerous, ideological tunnel vision. The report calls for Government action and has made a strong recommendation to delay the closure of coal-fired power stations. We now know that the Government is in deep discussions with Eraring to ensure that it continues to operate for the next four years.

The report has also outlined the slow pace of the implementation of the infrastructure needed for the transition to renewable energy. Of course, the Minister has indicated on a number of occasions that she wishes to fast-track renewable projects across the State. Will the foundations for renewables be in place by the time our coal-fired stations—the collective lifeline of our society's high standards of living—are shut off? The reality is no, that will not be the case. It seems the New South Wales Labor Government has no intention of keeping its promises to reduce power bills and address the cost of living.

The Government must return to reality and place the wellbeing of Australians ahead of the renewable-cult influences driving the accelerated transition. Those influences include major political parties, which are sowing chaos and division. The net-zero-fever-afflicted NSW Nationals' civil war with its Federal counterparts over its more reasonable conservative approach to energy is an excellent example. Thanks to the Grattan Institute report, it seems our political leaders may have to finally realise renewable energy alone simply does not produce enough consistent power to keep the lights on. Australia is hurtling towards an energy catastrophe because major party politicians refuse to respond to the warning that we simply do not have the infrastructure to facilitate the energy transition.

KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT

The Hon. WES FANG (14:27): Last night I told the House about the issues around the Kosciuszko brumbies. I am glad that the Minister is in the Chamber to hear an extension of that contribution. I put on record that the Minister has shut down the only humane way of managing brumbies, which is rehoming. I believe that the Minister should cease the aerial culling immediately. It is inequitable to continue to cull brumbies by aerial culling and ground shooting and all the other means that the Minister is doing so, thus wiping out and exterminating the first truly Australian animal—the brumby.

The only management plan that the Minister has in place now is the culling. She has ceased the rehoming despite many community organisations led by good people seeking to rehome, provide shelter and continue the DNA of the brumbies, which have been so integral to the Australian culture. Many people who are willing to do that have been stopped from doing it because of one bad egg. Yet the Government continues to shoot them and cull them and reduce the numbers to the point where it may well wipe them out, given the recent numbers that we have seen from the photographic evidence.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: You told me there was not enough.

The Hon. WES FANG: Perhaps there is not, but the Minister is relying on figures which she herself said were incorrect in that the methodology was wrong, that Stuart Cairns was not using the appropriate modelling, yet now she relies on that exact modelling to count the brumbies.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: The numbers that have been killed tell the story.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Leader of the Government will cease interjecting.

The Hon. WES FANG: I am happy for the Minister to continue interjecting.

The PRESIDENT: She is not going to.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: No, I am not going to.

The Hon. WES FANG: This is the most that we have heard from the Minister about what is happening to the brumbies. We have heard no answers from her about what happened in Wagga Wagga or around the faulty and false methodology that was used for the count. We have no clear understanding of what is happening with the rehoming of the iconic Australian brumbies, yet the Minister continues to cull them. That is a terrible shame. The House should be ashamed of that.

YOUTH OFF THE STREETS

The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD (14:30): I pay tribute to the work of Youth Off The Streets. Recently I had the pleasure of meeting up with the legendary Father Chris Riley, OAM. Father Chris epitomises what it means to be an inspirational individual. Firmly of the belief that there is no such thing as a child born bad, he single-handedly targeted the circle of bad environments, circumstances and family situations. In 1991 he started the organisation with a single food van. Now it has more than 200 staff and more than 330 volunteers. Father Chris stepped down as CEO in 2020 due to health issues, but the organisation is just as important and relevant as it ever has been. Youth Off The Streets provides various homelessness and housing support services for young people including prevention and early intervention support, crisis accommodation, transitional housing, one-on-one case work support and referrals to other services.

In the Youth Justice space, it provides one-on-one support and services to young people who are involved with or who are at risk of being involved with the justice system. Those services include specialist case work, diversion programs, therapeutic pathways and a court support program. To provide an idea of the scale of the problem, the year before last almost 40,000 young people presented for homelessness support. Some 95 per cent of young people accessing the Youth Off The Streets Inner West Youth Homelessness Service had experienced domestic and family violence. I update the House on the latest youth crime statistics: As of last February, 228 young people were in custody; of those, 135, or 59 per cent, identified as First Nations people; and, more concerningly, 60 per cent of the 228 young people in New South Wales in custody are on remand and have not even had their case heard yet.

This is where the work of Youth Off The Streets becomes critical. Youth Off The Streets believes all children and young people should have the support and opportunities they need to be defined by their potential, not their circumstances. Little did Father Chris know back in the early 1990s that his work would lead to such a critical service to society decades later. I have been a community corrections officer. I know how tough it is out there for many of our young people. I know also that the only way to assure them of a better future is to strengthen our early intervention and diversionary programs. I do not like seeing the numbers of our kids who are homeless; I like even less the numbers of our kids who are in custody. I firmly believe that the more our kids are off the streets, the less likely they are to end up in detention centres.

Motions

DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (14:34): I speak in support of the motion, and I thank the Hon. Emily Suvaal for bringing it to the House. Domestic violence does require a whole-of-government and a whole-of-community response, and we should be prepared to look at all the drivers of violence against women and act to eliminate them. We know that domestic violence is an issue that cannot be solved with one simple announcement or one simple package. I recognise the work of the former Coalition Government and the efforts of the present Government. There are many root causes of domestic violence, and we must address each of these to protect women and children and to ensure family safety. Nothing should be off the table, including the impact of pornography on informing attitudes about women and, indeed, attitudes of women.

Every partner I've had has watched some form of porn it makes me feel uncomfortable. From domination porn to porn that I have compared to consensual gang rape. I have walked in on them watching it or have found it in their search history. I to a degree understand sexual fantasies but some of these things made me feel very uncomfortable and made me question a lot of things.

Those are not my words but the words of a 20-year-old Australian woman quoted in an Our Watch background paper on pornography and its contribution to domestic violence. Her voice is typical; it is not unusual. Researchers all agree about the link between pornography and domestic violence. The *National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children 2022-2032* identifies violent pornography as one of the drivers of domestic and family violence. But, so far, this issue has been put at the end of the to-do list, perhaps because we are not aware of the reach, nature and availability of porn in the twenty-first century. Our young people are not being exposed to Playboy bunnies or Penthouse pets. They are being exposed to violent and misogynistic pornography in graphic

images on the computers in their bedrooms and on the phones in their hands. That exposure, according to research in Australia, is generally occurring two years before their first real-life sexual experience.

Young people's ideas about intimacy and relationships between men and women are being formed by the violent fantasies of the pornography-makers, rather than their experiences of one another. Our children look to the world around them to learn how to behave, and they are learning that aggressive and violent sexual acts towards women are not just acceptable, but they are the norm. We know that young men who consume pornography are almost 50 per cent more likely to engage in sexual activity that their sexual partner does not want. We know that frequent consumption of pornography is correlated with higher levels of verbal and physical aggression. We know that to change attitudes, this must stop.

The motion points to the need to listen to the lived experience of those who have suffered domestic violence. A survey conducted in 2004 in Washington State of nearly 300 survivors of domestic abuse found that nearly 40 per cent of their abusers were frequent consumers of pornography. Women are telling us what some of the issues are. We are putting these issues on the list, but we are leaving them at the bottom. At the very least, we should clamour for age verification so that the ideas of our young men and, importantly, our young women are not being formed by violent pornography. I do not want my daughters or any young women to grow up to believe that they should accept violence from a man or that this is normative in a relationship, because it is not. We do not want their attitudes being formed by those ideas. Researcher Maree Crabbe notes:

Porn makes an emphatic and substantial contribution to an insidious kind of 'cultural wallpaper' that normalises and, indeed, eroticises, violence against women.

It is time to redecorate. The wallpaper of disrespect and violence has to go.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (14:38): I speak to the part of the motion about the need to do more and the need to listen to the voices of victim-survivors. It is a fact that Molly Ticehurst's voice has now gone. On 6 April in Dubbo Local Court, police prosecutor Sergeant Edward Knight was asked by the court, "What does the prosecution say about bail?" Why did he not say, "The prosecution opposes bail"? Nowhere in his reply did he oppose bail for the accused three-time rapist and animal abuser who is now a murderer. I read the transcript, and I did not read those words. The police failed Molly Ticehurst, and we need to forensically examine what happened. Sergeant Edward Knight said:

These are always difficult ones, Registrar, because the defendant's got no criminal history. But the allegations are quite serious. The evidence in the facts seems fairly detailed and gives examples of quite concerning behaviour that are indicative of features in domestic violence offenders that we see often comes to light after the most disturbing conclusions to their conduct. That is, an inability to let go of the relationship. A feeling of possessiveness and jealousy over the woman. Repeated threats in relation to, you know, her not being with someone else. Repeated threats to family members in Bourke.

All of those things are of particular concern. Specific threats in relation to coming back, knowing where she lives, coming in the window et cetera.

Nowhere did Sergeant Edward Knight say he opposed bail. Clearly, the police had refused bail when they charged him, and that is why the application was being made by the lawyer of the accused rapist, animal abuser and now murderer in court. When an application for bail is made, the responsibility to oppose or not oppose bail is on the prosecution because they are closest to the detailed facts of the case, the accused and the victim. Discussing the risks around bail in open court, as Sergeant Edward Knight did, is a direct submission to the conditions of bail but not to the opposing of bail. It is rare for a court registrar not to follow the prosecution's position on bail.

I have acted in cases where the police prosecutor stated in no uncertain terms that they opposed bail for climate protesters who committed victimless crimes, so why did Sergeant Edward Knight not state that the prosecution opposed bail? Why are we not publicly and forensically examining what went wrong in this case? Sergeant Knight precisely articulated serious concerns and warnings, but he did not oppose bail. Questions have been raised about the registrar, the court and many other aspects of the system. But that is the one question that has kept looping around my mind on high volume since it was raised with me and since I read the transcript. Sergeant Edward Knight, like every other police prosecutor, had the power, position and responsibility to advocate in accordance with the law for a victim. That victim was Molly Ticehurst. But he did not say what police prosecutors say in so many other cases: that the prosecution opposes bail.

It is really important that we look at where things went wrong, where we are failing and where we need to do much better. This is only one component of the motion, which goes to the big conversation we are having right now. My colleague Ms Abigail Boyd led for The Greens in debate on this motion as an advocate for the sector and rightly talked about all of the things we must do and the programs we must fully fund. It is really important that we recognise that the powers we have right now to protect victims are not properly being used.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (14:44): I add my voice in support of this motion. Paragraph (4) states that this House recognises that the status quo must not continue, and more work is required to protect women and

children and ensure family safety. Today we have been talking about the emergency funding package that has been committed. There is no question that resourcing frontline services to deal with women experiencing domestic violence is a critical priority, but I also acknowledge the issues that the Hon. Susan Carter has raised. There is no silver bullet with a dollar sign on it that can solve this issue; it is much more complex than that and it is about dealing with some of the cultural issues that the Hon. Susan Carter raised.

Amidst the grief we all feel every time we hear that we have lost another woman to intimate partner violence, there is also an overwhelming feeling of confusion. Why is this happening? How is this happening? Attention often focuses on the role of social media in domestic violence not only as a tool of harassment and surveillance but also because it normalises and propagates misogynistic tropes. Research tells us that the representation of violence against women in the media increases acceptance of attitudes favouring domestic violence. The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women has noted that the representation of violence against women in the media has greatly increased in recent years and that women being commonly depicted as victims and sex objects is a big part of this.

Recently I read an incredibly disturbing article in *The New York Times* of 12 April 2024, which cited an extremely disturbing trend of sexual strangulation amongst teenagers. A researcher with expertise in the area who conducted a survey of 5,000 students at a major Midwest university found that nearly two-thirds of respondents said a partner had choked them during sex, and one-third said that it was in their most recent sexual encounter. The research also showed that representation of that type of violence in popular media, including on streaming services, had increased over the past decade. The Hon. Stephen Lawrence spoke earlier today about engaging in non-fatal strangulation being a risk factor for someone being a perpetrator of domestic violence. These issues are complex and cannot be ignored.

As a feminist, I am aware that this is difficult to talk about, and it is a contested area because these types of cultural issues do not fall into a neat jurisdiction. We cannot say that it is the Feds, us or a particular service that will fix it. It will require a long-term, research-led approach to identify which forms of media are the worst offenders and have the worst effects. I am also acutely aware that there is confusion about the role that men and boys play in remedying the situation. Many of us have sons, husbands and brothers who are caring, gentle and horrified. Yet we also understand that perpetrators are also husbands, sons and brothers. It is very concerning and confusing. It is entirely appropriate that we fund frontline services, but I also join in calls for us to consider more broadly all of the factors that contribute to the perpetration of violence against women.

The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD (14:49): I support the motion. Domestic, family and sexual violence is an emergency that requires a whole-of-government and community response. In recent times we have seen an uptick in its prevalence, and I am not convinced that we are addressing it properly and with the appropriate urgency. At the moment, on average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner. Intimate partner violence is the greatest health risk factor for women aged between 25 and 44. An estimated one in six women aged 18 years and over has experienced violence by a partner since the age of 15. It is a scourge on our society and we need to listen to the relevant stakeholders.

Domestic Violence NSW says we need 750 transitional homes so that women who find a bed in a shelter have somewhere to go next. This is not a partisan issue; it is an issue that is relevant to every member in this House. We have always maintained that the Government's response to violence against women needs to be holistic and far broader than just bail reform—but bail reform is an important start—and the time to act is now. This year there has been a surge in domestic violence-related incidents in New South Wales according to data from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research. Current data identifies a 3.6 per cent increase in domestic violence-related incidents from January 2019 to December 2023. The total number of females aged from under 18 years to 60 years of age affected by domestic violence-related offences is now 25,878.

I come from a place of personal experience, not as a victim-survivor but as someone who, in a previous life before entering Parliament, worked as a community corrections officer. I supervised two perpetrators who were subject to domestic violence electronic monitoring [DVEM] as one of the conditions of their parole. Let us call them Bill and Bob. I directed both of them to attend the EQUIPS Domestic and Family Violence program, which was a 10-week program, six hours per week. Bill attended every week, completed the program and was mostly compliant.

Bob was a different story. Bob always had excuses for why he could not attend, which put him in breach of one of the conditions of his parole. He notoriously flouted his parole officer's orders. He would not charge his device, was often uncontactable and would travel close to areas where he was not supposed to be—always testing the boundaries. He was difficult to supervise and had attitude. Typically, he refused to take personal responsibility and always blamed someone else for his behaviour. He even blamed me when he breached a condition of his parole, which forced me to submit a report to the State Parole Authority. Bill completed his order, had the DVEM device removed and continued to engage with psychological services.

The point of the story is that Bob finished his order and had the DVEM device removed, but I did not feel comfortable knowing that we could not monitor whether he stayed away from the exclusion zone, so I advised police that during supervision he had not engaged in behaviour change programs, had not complied with his order and was now not being monitored. Sure enough, he caught the next train and was on the doorstep of his ex-partner before the end of the next day. Fortunately, the police were nearby and arrested and charged Bob for breach of an apprehended domestic violence order and other charges.

The programs are designed to change men's behaviour, but the sad fact is that they do not work if those men do not comply. Domestic violence electronic monitoring does work, if and when it is complied with. Bill mostly complied and his behaviour changed. Bob's behaviour was more problematic because he did not comply. We need to expand the use of electronic monitoring devices because we know that they work and they cut the risk of domestic violence offending by 32 per cent. I want real change to happen, and that is about addressing the beliefs and attitudes of the perpetrators. I conclude by saying that the New South Wales Opposition is committed to working constructively across the Parliament to ensure meaningful action is taken to reduce and prevent domestic and family violence across our State.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (14:54): On behalf of the Legalise Cannabis Party, I support the important motion of the Hon. Emily Suvaal and highlight the role that men must play in ending domestic, family and sexual violence. It is a fact that must be faced head-on that, while the victims of domestic, family and sexual violence are most often women and children, the perpetrators are almost exclusively men. This means that, when we talk about a whole-of-community response, the voices of women must be primary and must be heard. But that alone is not enough. Men have a crucial role to play to support an ongoing change in a culture that still harbours deep, dark pockets of bullying, violence and misogyny.

This is not solely about gender—and never has been. It is about power, the abuse of power, and the use of psychological and physical coercion of human beings by those who wield that power. And those people have traditionally been men. It is very much in men's interests to see an end to violence in the family. We all benefit from a society where every member can fulfil their potential and live without fear or find the right support to do so. We are all diminished by the murder and abuse of women and their children by their violent partners. There will be no instant fix, but if we all do our part and work together we can and must make domestic, family and sexual violence a relic of the past.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (14:56): I thank the Hon. Emily Suvaal for moving the motion. Domestic, family and sexual violence is an emergency, but it has been generations in the making. This year 27 women have lost their lives—almost one every four days. We were horrified when it was one a week. It is not getting better any time soon. One in four women have experienced violence from the age of 15. We also know that 40 per cent of police time is taken up on matters reported by a neighbour who might hear some yelling going on next door.

On every street, in every neighbourhood, women are experiencing violence in a range of different ways. It can be simply being isolated from their families and not being allowed to connect with their friends. It can be verbal, everyday degradation over anything that is happening in the household. It can be financial control. It can be stalking over social media or in real life. It can be waiting for someone to get home, knowing that the evening is not going to go well. It is the terror and fear that exist in households all over our State and our country, in the very streets that we will go home to tonight. It is children who are living in fear of what is going to happen, who are witnessing violence perpetrated against their mothers and who are sometimes the victims of violence themselves as they try to protect their mothers. Their view of the world and their safety in the world is completely and utterly destroyed through the experience of that violence.

Annabel Crabb once made the point—and I think it is a very important one—that when someone gets bitten by a shark we are almost willing to drain the ocean. That is really the effort we will need if we are serious about dealing with the generations of violence that are prevalent in our communities in our most intimate relationships. The place where we should be most safe is actually where most of the violence occurs. I think that because we call it domestic and family violence, sometimes we think about it differently. We really have to change that. Over many decades many excellent men and women, particularly in the feminist movement, have made a huge effort to draw attention to this violence and the need for it not to be a private matter—for it to be as unacceptable in the kitchen as it is on the street.

Members all need to work together on this. It has been a pretty tough couple of days. In this place we trade barbs over who is doing enough and who is not doing enough, who has done what and who has cut what, but none of that actually matters. At the end of the day, we are in a moment when we have been able to get this issue onto the front pages again. As a result of the horrific deaths and horrific injuries of women, and the bravery of those women prepared to speak out and tell the truth of what is actually going on, we have found a moment in a busy

world—and a busy government, with many decisions that need to be made and priorities dealt with—where we get to say that this is important. Perhaps we are willing to drain the ocean. Perhaps we are willing to put in place the justice packages that genuinely keep people safe and keep high-risk offenders away. Perhaps we are willing to work through the complexities of the policy response—because it is complex.

Whether it is the law, the way our courts operate or the way we work with police, all of that is important and is now getting the attention that it needs. Of course, it is important to support the community sector at the front line of dealing with all these matters, such as the community workers, the call centre workers and the police as first responders. As members read in the paper this week, some lawyers wake up every day asking, "Is that my client who's been killed?" I ask members to imagine doing that every day. All of those services are underfunded and have been for a long time. It is good that the New South Wales Government is putting more money into them. We will have to put in more over a long period. The Treasurer knows that and this Government knows, as do all members. It is an emergency. Are we willing to drain the ocean?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (15:02): Just about everything that can be said on this issue has already been said. In many respects, one can never understate the importance of addressing domestic violence. It is an issue that quite rightly has been identified as a gender-based issue. It is mainly men who are engaging in acts of domestic violence of such horrific nature that the deaths of people are almost a natural consequence. As the Leader of the Government just identified in her contribution, the \$230 million addresses circumstances after the event—resourcing more opportunities for people to escape, for legal help, for counselling, and all sorts of other protection measures.

But the fundamental problem was very appropriately addressed by Waleed Aly in an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, which the Hon. Mark Latham addressed yesterday. Aly noted that socio-economic conditions, alcoholism and porn addiction have invaded the family unit and broken it down, to the extent that one of the responses that exhibits itself is violent behaviour. Members have said lots about making sure that we keep women protected and safe in circumstances where they have already reported domestic violence events occurring in their family structure. As Waleed Aly correctly identifies in his article, we need to be identifying what needs to be done in family units to address those factors, such as access to social media and to pornographic sites by young people.

Potentially all members are aware of the recent behaviour of ranking various girls at an elite grammar school. That behaviour is appalling and has lifelong consequences. Those kids have been expelled. But what made them think that was the right thing to do? What were the existing cultural circumstances in that school that made those kids think it was okay to do that sort of stuff and treat the girls in that class the way they did?

While I welcome the funding the Government is putting towards assisting people who are escaping domestic violence, similar attention has to be directed at the family structure, assisting families to have the resources in place to address those things occurring in their family circumstances. For lots of people who have young children, technology escapes them. I am the first to say that when I was bringing up my kids, they were a lot more ahead of the technology than me. They were accessing stuff that I would probably never even dream of. It is imperative for parents to have the tools to look at what their children might be doing and talk to them about the dangers. It is as important as a cultural change. I commend the mover of the motion for bringing it before the House.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (15:07): I speak in support of this motion. However, from the outset I say that it is not really good enough that members are not in the Chamber this week voting in support of ambitious reform of the type that domestic and family violence stakeholders have been calling for from governments on both sides of politics for decades. Instead of the Government putting forward something significant that would actually make a difference to women's lives, we have an hour of debate this week on a day that is reserved for private members' business to acknowledge and recognise this issue. All members are well aware of the problem of men's violence against their partners. The death of one woman every four days at the hands of a current or former partner is finally getting the media attention it deserves. Survivors and their advocates have been calling for action and investment for decades. They are sick and tired of bandaid fixes, of acknowledgements, of words, and of thoughts and prayers, all of which are coming far too late.

As many members of this Chamber have said today, this year alone at least 27 women have allegedly been murdered at the hands of men. Some 34 women were killed by an intimate partner between 2022 and 2023. That number was an increase of nearly 30 per cent compared to the previous year. Eighty-nine per cent of victims of all intimate partner homicides between 2022 and 2023 were women. There is no doubt that this is a crisis and an emergency, and it is very clear that something more than words and platitudes is desperately needed. My colleague Ms Abigail Boyd has been advocating for many years for the sector's demands. It demands a massive injection of funding into domestic and family violence prevention and support services that are proven to work. We must see significantly more from this Government in this space. The chief executive of Women's Community Shelters and chair of Domestic Violence NSW, Annabelle Daniel, told *The Sydney Morning Herald* recently:

We know calls to domestic violence hotlines spike on the nights of football grand finals. We know that alcohol is in the mix there. We know financial stress, gambling, drinking: while they don't cause domestic violence, they can certainly increase its impact.

Yet, most of those areas remain in the too-hard basket as successive governments continue to pander to vested interests from the gambling and alcohol industries. In terms of having some effect on the violence impacting women and their families, surely looking at the links between alcohol and gambling as many experts have been calling for, for many years, must be done urgently. I note Premier Chris Minns has publicly apologised for not developing an emergency package for domestic and family violence sooner, acknowledging the Government had to do more to address this crisis, but right now is the time to do that. The \$230 million emergency package, with just \$46 million in primary prevention, is not enough and does not begin to compare to investments made by other States, as my colleagues and other members of this House have noted.

I comment on the contribution of the Hon. Damien Tudehope about the Yarra Valley school where students were ranked. That has been happening in many schools for decades. Something is not suddenly happening to kids because of technology. In the '80s, at my school—a private Catholic school—in Toowoomba, Queensland, girls were ranked as they arrived. I remember first walking down the "emu steps" in year 8, so called because of the ungainly walk that we did as we walked down. Every single girl was rated by the guys. That has been happening in schools for decades and is not a new thing; it is called misogyny and we need to address it. We need to look at what more we can do to change the causal factors behind men's violence, and not just continue to be in denial about bandaid fixes for this national emergency. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (15:12): This is one of the hardest subjects to speak about and therefore one of the most important. Raising awareness about domestic violence and what is known as domestic abuse, because it is not just physical violence, can be triggering and traumatic. It requires courage, resilience and determination. I raise something that I do not think has been spoken about yet. In her book *See What You Made Me Do*, Jess Hill outlines coercive control and the very clear steps that are just like those employed in North Korean prisoner-of-war camps to control prisoners. She quotes from the book *Shame* by Salman Rushdie:

Between shame and shamelessness lies the axis upon which we turn; meteorological conditions at both these poles are of the most extreme, ferocious type. Shamelessness, shame: the roots of violence.

I wanted to raise that because it is at the core of so much violence perpetrated against women. We need to address those problems in society as quickly as possible.

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (15:14): In reply: I acknowledge Ms Abigail Boyd's contribution to debate on this motion and reiterate the Government's support for and commitment to listen to the sector, particularly to people with lived experience and victim-survivors. I acknowledge the Hon. Natalie Ward for her really respectful and thoughtful contribution talking about the important role of prevention and the work the previous Government started on that. I particularly single out a remark she made. She said, "It doesn't matter what we call it; let's get women and children into safe places." I could not agree more with her. I acknowledge Minister Rose Jackson for her perspective regarding "Enough is enough". It was a really thought-provoking and insightful perspective.

There is no acceptable level of male violence against women in our community and we need to deliver a step change that is lasting. We are at a really key and pivotal moment. The quite frightening reality that rape in marriage was only criminalised in New South Wales in 1980 and we were the first to do it was quite shocking to me. I did not know that. I acknowledge the Hon. Susan Carter for her contribution regarding violent pornography and age verification. That is a really important topic and I commend the honourable member. I know she has a keen interest in that space. As the Hon. Jacqui Munro said, some of the hardest topics to talk about are the most important to discuss. I commend the Hon. Susan Carter for bringing that discussion to this place.

I acknowledge Ms Sue Higginson's contribution. I note the matter she discussed is currently before the courts so I will reserve my remarks on that. I acknowledge the contribution of the Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine. There is a collective grief and confusion that we are all experiencing as a community at the moment. She also brought the topic of sexual strangulation into the House, which is again another issue that is hard to talk about but which needs to be talked about in Parliament. More research is needed in that space. I acknowledge the Hon. Aileen MacDonald for her contribution and insights as someone who worked in the system as a corrections officer.

I acknowledge the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham and commend him as a male for the respectful and honest way he delivered his contribution. I acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition for discussing what more can be done culturally and at home. I acknowledge Ms Cate Faehrmann. Yes, this is an hour in which we can acknowledge victims and survivors of domestic and family violence. It is an hour we would all agree is well spent on a very measured and respectful discussion. There is plenty more that we could say.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

*Bills***RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (ANIMALS IN RESIDENTIAL PREMISES) BILL 2024****First Reading**

Bill introduced, read a first time and ordered to be published on motion by the Hon. Emma Hurst.

Second Reading Speech

The Hon. EMMA HURST (15:18): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Imagine having to choose between your animal or having a place to live. It might seem unthinkable, but this is the shocking reality for many people and families across New South Wales right now due to the failures of this Government to introduce rental reforms that were part of its election promise. We all know that New South Wales is in the midst of a rental crisis. Finding a place to rent has never been more difficult or unaffordable. But if someone happens to have a companion animal, finding somewhere to rent becomes virtually impossible. Only a tiny fraction of rental properties in New South Wales allows animals. This is because the Residential Tenancies Act gives landlords complete power to refuse to allow tenants to have animals at their property. This is outdated legislation that does not reflect modern values and is not supported by the community. Almost 70 per cent of Australian households share their home with an animal, and they are cherished members of the family.

During the March 2023 election, the Labor Government made a promise to the people of New South Wales that it would overhaul these outdated rental laws. But, more than a year later, the Labor Government has not taken any action to secure the rights of tenants to live with animals in their rental property. The delay by the Government to act on this issue is causing serious harm to vulnerable people and animals around our State. We need to ensure people are able to secure rental accommodation with their animals now to reduce houselessness and senseless animal killing. Animal rescue groups are reporting a significant increase in surrenders because people cannot find accommodation on the rental market that allows their animals. Most pounds and shelters are over capacity, with lists to surrender animals more than a year long. The rehoming sector is at breaking point, putting an enormous mental and financial strain on volunteer carers. But it is the animals who will suffer the most during this, being abandoned by their families, ending up on kill lists in overcrowded pounds and even being dumped on the streets.

This is a time when we need more people adopting animals and giving them loving forever homes, yet our outdated rental laws are actively working against this, and it is causing animal suffering and deaths throughout our State. It gets worse. We have a vet crisis caused by a shortage of vets, as vets are rapidly leaving the industry. Vets have one of the highest suicide rates of any profession. One of the key mental health stressors that vets and vet industry groups highlight is the requirement placed on vets to kill healthy, rehoming animals in pounds because there is nowhere for them to go. We have dumped this problem on vets and community rescue groups to deal with as people would offer loving homes if rentals were animal friendly, or they would never have dumped their animals to begin with if they could find accommodation that was animal friendly. Each day we wait for the Government to introduce this legislation more animals lose their lives.

Again, it gets worse. Many families are facing houselessness because they cannot bear their animal ending up at a pound. They know that is likely a death sentence for their companion animal in these current times. Instead, they spend nights couch surfing, sleeping in their car or even on the streets, unable to find a bed in the limited amount of emergency accommodation that is animal friendly. Again, it gets even worse. Accommodation is a critical issue when it comes to people leaving domestic violence. According to a 2020 report published by Domestic Violence NSW, 93 per cent of their frontline workers said the biggest barrier for their clients with animals was a lack of animal-friendly rental accommodation. Research suggests that up to 70 per cent of people in violent situations delay leaving violence because they have no place to go with their animals. Knowing that animals are often victims of coercive control and that they could be harmed or killed, victim-survivors often stay in dangerous situations to protect the animal. Other survivors are becoming houseless as they leave violence, because they cannot find a home with their animals. If animal-friendly rental properties were available to them, it would make it easier for them to leave, and they would stand a stronger chance of survival.

Animal companionship also provides enormous mental and physical health benefits, especially for older people or those who are socially isolated. Yet right now, many people are simply not able to find, or afford, rental accommodation that allows them to have this companionship. It does not have to be this way. Other more progressive jurisdictions such as Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory have long since amended their rental laws to ensure that a landlord is not allowed to unreasonably refuse a tenant's request to have an animal. Peak bodies, including the Tenants' Union of NSW and Lucy's Project, have been calling for New South Wales to follow the lead of these other States for years. We already know that this is something the community strongly supports. A consultation conducted with 23,000 people by the previous Government showed that 83 per cent

wanted to see legislative change to allow animals in rentals, in the form outlined in the bill. This is not just coming from tenants or even the general public; the majority of landlords also supported reform.

Despite this, and despite the Government's election commitment, the Minister has consistently delayed and made excuses as to why these reforms cannot be introduced. He claimed further consultation was needed and put taxpayers to the expense of another consultation process, which confirmed, again, how much the people of New South Wales want this reform. He has tried to blame the appointment of the new Rental Commissioner for the delay. He has tried to say New South Wales is somehow unique from all other jurisdictions in Australia and, therefore, cannot simply adopt the effective reforms introduced in other States and Territories. This is not good enough. Despite what the Minister may claim, there is truly no reason for the Government's delay on these reforms. Is the Government really that desperate to appease real estate agents and property developers that it will turn a blind eye to people becoming houseless, making it harder for domestic violence victims to leave violence, putting vets and rescue groups under extreme pressure and creating a situation where there are mass killings of healthy animals? Because that is the overall effect of these delays, and the Premier and the Minister cannot allow delays to continue.

As these delays have such a significant impact, I have introduced the bill because the community cannot wait any longer. The issue of animals in rentals is also part of a broader concern around the lack of rights and protections afforded to tenants in New South Wales. I also want to make it very clear that in order to be truly effective any reforms around animals in rentals must also be accompanied by an end to no-grounds evictions for all types of tenancies, including the end of fixed-term leases and throughout periodic leases. The aim of my reform is to ensure tenants cannot be kicked out of their rental home simply because they have an animal. But as long as landlords have the power to evict tenants whenever they like, for any reason, the position of tenants with animals will always be unstable. There will also be an easy loophole for landlords who do not want to allow animals: They can simply evict those individuals or families with animals and find new tenants. This will also be a risk if the New South Wales Government does not ensure renters are protected against no-grounds evictions at the end of a fixed-term lease, as landlords who want to evict a tenant because they have an animal will easily be able to do so under the false guise of simply terminating the lease at the end of a fixed-term period.

No-grounds evictions have been the status quo for far too long, and this must change. Renters deserve the right to safe, secure and stable accommodation, not to live under the fear that they may be kicked out of their home or forced to move for any reason, at any time. The Labor Government made a promise to the people of New South Wales to end both no-grounds evictions and allow animals in rentals. Yet here we are, 12 months post-election, and no action has been taken. The Labor Government must take action to end no-grounds evictions for good, for all types of tenancies, including at the end of fixed-term leases. The Government also needs to ensure that any new "reasonable" grounds for ending a tenancy are carefully and narrowly tailored so that they do not create any loopholes that inadvertently provide landlords with a way to get around the new laws allowing animals.

I now turn to the provisions of the bill, which creates a new regime within the New South Wales Residential Tenancies Act to allow animals in rentals as the default position in our State. These provisions are modelled closely on the animal rental reforms introduced by the Victorian Labor Government, which came into effect in early 2020. The consultation conducted by the Liberal-Nationals Government in New South Wales in 2022 showed that 82 per cent of people who supported legislative reform wanted it to be modelled off the Victorian legislation.

The bill creates a simple regime where a tenant can make a request to their landlord, in an approved form, to keep an animal at their rental property. The landlord must not unreasonably refuse this request. If they do not respond within 14 days, they are taken to have consented to the request to have the animal or animals. If the landlord feels it would be reasonable to refuse the request, they can choose to apply to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal and seek an order to that effect. This is the critical part of the Victorian reform that my bill seeks to replicate in New South Wales. The onus is placed on the landlord, the person with the power and resources, to apply to the tribunal if they do not want to allow an animal—not the tenant, who is in a much more vulnerable position and much less likely to be able or willing to challenge a landlord's decision.

That is a critical part of the reform—the onus must be on the landlord to either allow the animal or choose to apply to the tribunal. The bill also provides that, once an application is made, the tribunal can consider whether it is reasonable to refuse to allow an animal in the particular circumstances. The factors the tribunal can consider include the type of animal the tenant wants to have at the rental property, the nature of the property and any other matter it considers relevant. This is a simple, straightforward reform. It is a disappointment that I have to bring the bill before the House today, and that these reforms, given their urgency, have not been brought in already by Minister Chanthivong. Animals are being killed en masse; vets, rescue groups, shelters and pounds are at crisis point; people are becoming houseless; and victims of domestic violence remain in violent and dangerous situations. One simple reform will change that: making rental properties animal friendly.

Do not underestimate the need for this legislation. It will save both human and animal lives. It will allow people to leave violent situations with their animals so that animals are not weaponised in coercive control; it will reduce houselessness in situations where people will not abandon their companion simply because there are no rentals that will allow animals because they know it is a death sentence for most animals to end up in pounds; and, of course, it will reduce the number of animals dumped and killed in pounds in the first place and allow families who rent to adopt and save a life. We have legislation that is supported by the community and proven to work in other States. No further work is needed. There is no excuse for delay. We must pass these laws urgently. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Documents

NSW POLICE FORCE MEDIA ADVISERS

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (15:31): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 897 for today of which I have given notice by:

- (1) Omitting "7 days" and inserting instead "21 days".
- (2) Inserting "(the commissioner's executive team, office of the commissioner, senior executive services, or the media and public affairs branch)" before "the Premier's Department".
- (3) Inserting "of senior executives" after "recruitment and terminations".

Leave granted.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Accordingly, I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution all documents created since 1 December 2023, including text messages, instant messaging service messages and phone records, in the possession, custody or control of the Premier, the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism and Minister for the Hunter, the NSW Police Force (the commissioner's executive team, the office of the commissioner, senior executive services, or the media and public affairs branch), the Premier's Department or the Cabinet Office relating to the recruitment and terminations of senior executives in the public affairs branch of the NSW Police Force, and any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

I acknowledge the discussions we have had with the Government about amending the motion to give extra time and to define those who will be captured by this call for papers in order to have support. I understand that the amendment means that the motion will be passed through the House. It is important to place on the record the rationale behind this decision. I acknowledge that other members have spoken about this, including my colleague in the other place Paul Toole, the shadow Minister for Police, and indeed you, Mr Deputy President. I know you have been following this issue closely.

We all know that there has been quite the turnover of staff within the police commissioner's office, with a lot of media attention on media roles. Over the past few years, a number of people have been in those positions. We understand that Ms Liz Deegan, who left the position in March, was the commissioner's third adviser in two years. We know that Ms Deegan received a pay out of more than \$200,000. We know that before her Mr Grant Williams was made redundant when Commissioner Webb took the job. And then, of course, there is the Steve Jackson saga, which is how I will refer to it because I do not know if there is a better word for it. That hiring process brought on more controversy. We know that Mr Jackson did not work a day in the role but did receive a \$20,000 payout.

As a former Minister I know that we have to have the right process in place for corporate staff within departments and agencies. But what is equally important is that there is transparency and accountability in the relationships that exist between staff in the police Minister's office and Mr Jackson. We are keen to find out exactly what has gone on here in the hiring and firing, who was speaking and to whom about those recruitments, who was recommending and nominating people that they knew, and if there was the separation of power that we expect between governments, Ministers and their offices, and public servants.

We are not the first to seek this information. I know that you, Mr Deputy President, put several questions on notice about this matter. You asked about it during budget estimates and you have been able to garner some information about these issues. But we all agree that the Government has not been fully transparent. I know also through reporting just this week in *The Daily Telegraph* that a Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] request was submitted by a journalist at that paper and that it was delayed for weeks. Subsequently, a 75-page document was returned with 70 blank pages, and the other five pages related to news articles from *The Daily Telegraph*. Again, questions of accountability and of transparency have been raised. Using other processes available to members in this House and members of the public has not given us the information that we need.

I do not move Standing Order 52 motions very often—I have moved a few since being in Opposition—but this motion is an example of the importance of transparency and accountability. Members of the public, journalists and indeed members of the House have tried to use other mechanisms, whether through questions or GIPAA's, and they have not led to that information becoming publicly available. That is why I have moved this motion. My understanding is that, with the amendment, the Government will support the motion. That is important. It is important to understand what has gone on here, who has recommended people and for what jobs, what payouts were paid and whether any deals were made. The motion, which goes to a broader issue of transparency and accountability, is one that we, as a House of review, should uphold in this place to ensure proper parliamentary process and access to important information.

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (15:36): I contribute to debate on the motion and state at the outset that the Government will not be opposing it. The Government has no objection to producing materials in relation to this matter. As has been stated before in this place and in the other place, the Commissioner of Police chooses her own executive. I am advised that all senior executive appointments are made through a suitability assessment process in accordance with the rules of the Government Sector Employment (NSW Police Force) Rules 2017. Under the Government Sector Employment Act, consultation regarding senior executive appointments is permitted but all appointments are the decision of the heads of agencies. Of course, termination payments are set out in the legislation, so there is a clear legislative basis to calculate those payments.

We will support the three minor amendments to this order for papers. We thank the Opposition for its assistance in that matter. Firstly, 21 days becomes seven days for papers to be laid upon the table of the House. That ensures that the NSW Police Force will have ample time to respond. I remind the House that there have been quite a number of significant incidents in the past month, including the Wakeley church incident, the Bondi Junction mass stabbing, the Molly Ticehurst alleged murder and more. It would be prudent for the House to consider whether it is appropriate to divert resources in such a manner at this time. We believe 21 days is a reasonable time frame. Secondly, the amendment seeks to limit the scope of the request to the commissioner and her executive team, senior executive services, and the police media and public affairs branch so as not to impact the entire 22,000-strong workforce. Additionally, adding the words "of senior executives" will ensure that this Standing Order 52 request does not capture clerk grade staff in the NSW Police Force media and public affairs branch. We do not oppose this order for papers.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (15:39): On behalf of The Greens, I indicate our support for this call for papers. We appreciate the amendments, which better specify the source of any document and also increase the time for the documents to be produced. We are absolutely cognisant of the current pressures and constraints on the police. It is a matter of public interest that the police commissioner has ended the employment of four media advisers over the past two years, with entitlements for those former employees equalling more than \$700,000. The reasons for terminating employees are many and varied, but when such a significant cost is borne by the public, then there is good cause to examine what reasons have been used in this circumstance.

The Greens stand with workers and believe that just compensation for work and reasonable working conditions are critical, just as we believe in contractual obligations to make fair payments under conditions where employment has been terminated. Such a high turnover rate could be indicative that there is more to the situation than is immediately apparent, and it is pertinent to know what processes and internal mechanisms are or have been at play. If a system has failed and a public institution is not reviewing the system for the issue, then it is the role of this House to act in the public interest and review that system, and if there is account to be held, to commence that process.

There are members of this Parliament and beyond who would like this situation to be used as an attack on the Government or against the commissioner, but that is clearly not our motivation. There have been public missteps, poor advice given and received, and a succession of employees terminated, and it has all been at great public cost. As part of our work—and my work—to hold the New South Wales police to account, the production of these documents should reveal what has occurred at the highest level. It is an important function of ours in this Parliament to understand and to review. At the end of the day, with many of these things, my understanding is that it is not necessarily the Executive that seeks to not disclose what is happening. However, this is one of those circumstances where transparency is required and warranted. It seems good that the Government is now on board and that we can get the ball rolling and get the work done.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (15:41): In reply: I will be brief, given that we have the support for this motion. I will pick up on one thing that the Minister said about the recent horrific incidents in this State. No-one is suggesting in any way, shape or form that it has not been a harrowing time for the people of this State and indeed the frontline police, who have been serving our community through one of the worst periods that we have seen in some time. It must be made clear that this is not about going on a witch-hunt or diverting police away

from important work and from helping communities, particularly those who have been through shocking and horrific events in the past few weeks. It is about transparency and accountability. We were happy to amend the motion to allow 21 days for the documents, which we think is reasonable. This is about making sure that this is a government that does what it said it would do before the election: be open and transparent and accountable. We have a right to know what has gone on, and hopefully these papers will shed some light onto these issues.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): The question is that the motion be agreed to.

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: On behalf of the Hon. Scott Farlow: I postpone private members' business item No. 921 until the next sitting day.

Motions

DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (15:44): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) New South Wales domestic and family violence services have been funded at levels significantly below demand for decades and that measures to prevent, respond to and aid recovery from domestic and family violence have not received adequate funding from Government;
 - (b) the levels of funding provided by the Government for domestic and family violence services and programs has significantly lagged behind that spent in Victoria, including:
 - (i) in the 2020-21 budget, the Government committed \$160.5 million compared to \$435.7 million by the Victorian Government;
 - (ii) in the 2021-22 budget, the Government committed \$204.9 million compared to \$582.6 million in Victoria;
 - (iii) in the 2022-23 budget, the Government committed \$262.7 million compared to \$613 million in Victoria;
 - (iv) the Labor Government's 2023-24 budget delivered only \$39.1 million in new funding overall for domestic, family and sexual violence initiatives compared to at least \$77 million of new funding in Victoria.
 - (c) in its 2023-24 budget submission, Domestic Violence NSW [DVNSW] called for an annual funding increase of \$176.35 million, to which the Labor Government responded by providing barely 20 per cent of that recommended amount.
- (2) That this House further notes that:
 - (a) the NSW Women's Alliance, a coalition of peak organisations and statewide specialist service providers with expertise in preventing and responding to sexual, domestic and family violence and chaired by DVNSW, put forward a comprehensive plan for responding to domestic and family violence in the lead-up to both the 2019 and 2023 State elections;
 - (b) DVNSW, the peak body for specialist domestic and family violence services in New South Wales, representing over 170 member organisations, prepares a budget submission each year as part of the New South Wales budget process, setting out priorities for funding and other reform;
 - (c) together the domestic and family violence sector in New South Wales, including victim survivors, frontline workers and other experts, has been providing specialist advice to the Government for decades, setting out in detail the measures and funding required to be implemented to tackle domestic and family violence and increase the safety and wellbeing of women and children in New South Wales; and
 - (d) successive New South Wales governments have failed to heed the domestic and family violence sector's calls for greater long-term secure funding, leaving the sector in crisis with demand for services unable to be met, workers leaving the sector for less precarious and better paid roles, and victim-survivors being unable to find safe shelter or resources to rebuild their lives.
- (3) That this House notes that, ahead of the 2024-25 budget, DVNSW has called for measures including:
 - (a) a funding increase of \$145 million annually for existing domestic and family violence services to meet current demand;
 - (b) an additional \$80 million annually to expand specialist services to respond directly to women, children and young people impacted by domestic and family violence, so nobody seeking assistance ever needs to be turned away;
 - (c) \$100 million over the next four years to stop the violence before it starts by releasing, funding and implementing the NSW Strategy for the Prevention of Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence 2024-2027;
 - (d) the immediate construction of 7,500 new social and affordable homes in New South Wales each year for 20 years and an exit pathway out of crisis refuges by building additional transitional homes for women, children and young people; and

- (e) an increase to the core funding of DVNSW and additional funding to assist it in its support and advisory functions.
- (4) That this House further notes that:
 - (a) the Government's recently announced so-called "emergency package" provides funding of \$230 million over four years, which is less than a quarter of what the domestic and family violence sector has been calling for; and
 - (b) even including the recently announced funding, New South Wales will still be funding domestic and family violence responses at between half and two thirds of what is provided by the Victorian Government.
- (5) That this House calls on the Government to commit to providing funding to tackle the domestic and family violence crisis at a level at least comparable to the Victorian Government.

Recently I spoke in this House about how the movement to end violence against women takes form in waves—usually sparked by a high-profile domestic homicide or instance of assault that ignites the public's attention, fuelled on by media and political commentary, pushing us a few steps forward towards progress before the wave of attention recedes. We saw it after Rosie Batty gave her incredible speech on her doorstep over 10 years ago, leading to the royal commission and transformative reforms in Victoria. We saw it again with the shocking deaths of Olga Edwards, Preethi Reddy and Hannah Clarke between mid-2018 and early 2020, which resulted in a greater awareness of coercive control and attempts to legislate it across the country. We are seeing it again now, as the community is left reeling from the recent high-profile murders of women, including Lilie James and Molly Ticehurst, leading once again to pressure on governments to finally take the action needed to stop these preventable deaths from happening again and again, as many as one every four days.

Those of us who have been advocating in this space seized on these waves of attention to push extra hard for the reforms and funding that we know is required but which at all other times governments are simply unwilling to view as a priority. On the top of that public wave of concern, the voices of victim-survivors, frontline workers and other experts are amplified for a time. But below the surface, below the waves, nothing has changed. There has been no significant change in the rates of domestic homicide in New South Wales—just women continuing to die at the hands of their current or former partner at a depressingly relatively stable rate. From time to time, there have been spikes in rates of domestic and family violence incidents, but, again, there has been no great change in what we are seeing here—just a change in focus from the public, the media and politicians. We would be mistaken to think that some new development has been going on—something that makes a marked difference in driving men when they kill women. Rather, the same issues are driving this problem, albeit taking different forms—for example, as society embraces new technologies.

What can we do? What would actually make a difference? Again, the solutions are not new. They are the same solutions that victim-survivors, frontline workers and other experts have been diligently calling for for decades, but what needs to be new in New South Wales is the Government's willingness to fund those solutions. We need only look across the border to see what happens when we actually do fund those evidence-based programs and services. It was not the royal commission that made the difference in Victoria. It was that they implemented all 227 of the recommendations handed down by that commission, backed up by funding greater than that of all of the other States and Territories combined. They took the issue seriously, and they followed through with a transformative level of funding. It is still relatively early days, but already Victoria is showing us what impact sufficient funding has on turning this issue around.

As the Treasurer noted yesterday, Victoria's reduction in domestic and family violence incidents has been notable. Although a crude way to measure these things, certainly fewer women are being murdered in domestic homicides in Victoria now. I have been fortunate enough to spend time talking with domestic and family violence services on the border in Albury-Wodonga. As my colleague Dr Amanda Cohn mentioned yesterday, the experience of victim-survivors with a Victorian postcode is vastly different to those with a New South Wales postcode. The Orange Door support and safety hubs—the one-stop shop or "no wrong door" model—has made such a huge difference in Victoria, allowing women and children to find the safety that they need as well as the services to support them. Compared with the experience of those in New South Wales, who are forced to navigate a poorly funded, overworked and complex set of services, the difference is striking.

Victoria is not perfect, and, of course, so much more still needs to be done. But already we can clearly see what improvements can be made when a government is willing to listen to the expert recommendations and commit to properly funding them. As I commented earlier today, we are lucky to have an incredibly talented expert group of victim-survivors, frontline workers and advocates in New South Wales, who have been tirelessly advising government for decades and who know exactly what to do with the huge uplift in funding needed to turn this issue around. We just need to provide it. Monday's announcement did have a small amount of additional funding. As has been acknowledged across the political spectrum, that is a good start, but it is nowhere near enough. This motion today is setting out the type of funding that we must aspire to and get much, much closer to the levels in Victoria. If we do that, lo and behold, we are likely to also begin to see improvement in the rates of domestic and family violence in this State.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (15:49): I indicate that the Government supports the motion of Ms Abigail Boyd. However, I will move a couple of amendments. I move:

That the question be amended as follows:

- (1) Omit paragraph (1) (b) (iv) and insert instead:
 - (iv) the New South Wales Labor Government's 2023-24 budget committed \$417.2 million in funding overall for domestic, family and sexual violence initiatives compared to at least \$622 million of funding in Victoria; and
- (2) In paragraph (1) (c) omit ", to which the Labor Government responded by providing barely 20 per cent of that recommended amount"
- (3) Omit paragraph (4) (a) and insert instead:
 - (a) the Government's recently announced "emergency package" provides funding of \$230 million over four years; and
- (4) In paragraph (4) insert at the end:
 - (c) the prevalence rates of domestic and family violence against women over the age of 18 in Victoria have been significantly trending downwards since 2016.
- (5) In paragraph (5) omit all words after "That" and insert instead:

this House calls on the Government to follow the lead of the Victorian Government in uplifting funding for domestic violence system responses in order to deliver, at a minimum, the outcomes being successfully achieved in Victoria.

I appreciate that the amendments are a little bit wordy. The motion is comprehensive, as is to be expected from a member who has such a deep interest in this issue. Lots of things in the motion are important to get on record. Yesterday and today we have been debating funding for domestic violence services and programs, and I hope that will be ongoing. I support the content and spirit of the motion. The Government's amendments seek to clear up a few factual issues in the motion and specifically call out the core issue of the comparison between New South Wales and Victoria. I accept the premise of what the member has said. We are behind; we need to catch up. It is difficult to know what success looks like on this issue, and there were a few questions about that yesterday. At the very least our State should be doing what Victoria is doing, particularly when it appears as though, as a result of its investment, Victoria is seeing the prevalence of domestic violence go down whilst we are seeing it go in the opposite direction.

The Hon. EMMA HURST (15:52): I indicate that the Animal Justice Party supports Ms Abigail Boyd's motion. I thank her for bringing the motion before the House today and for her tireless advocacy in this space. The motion correctly highlights that the funding package announced by the Government does not go far enough to address the problem of violence against women in this State and does not meet the funding needs of domestic violence services. The Government says this funding is a first step. While that may well be true, the reality is that domestic violence is not an issue we can take steps on. It requires big, bold and urgent action.

One organisation that has been unable to secure government funding is Lou's Place, a daytime women's refuge that supports domestic violence survivors and women experiencing homelessness. It has asked for just \$300,000 per year to support its vital work, but so far it has not received anything. The member for Sydney, Alex Greenwich, and I visited Lou's Place in June 2023. Since then we have both been advocating for this very small amount of funding, which the organisation desperately needs to keep its doors open. I encourage the Government to revisit the small amount requested by the wonderful team and volunteers at Lou's Place.

I also highlight the desperate need for funding to ensure that victims of domestic and family violence are able to leave safely and find accommodation with their animals because the lack of animal-friendly crisis and short-term accommodation remains a major barrier to leaving a violent relationship. In 2020 the Animal Justice Party was able to secure \$500,000 from the Liberal-Nationals Government to upgrade women's shelters to be animal friendly and later secured \$750,000 for peak body Lucy's Project. However, this Labor Government has not yet made any notable investments in this space, so it remains an area of urgent need.

I understand that the New South Wales budget is tight, but this is about reprioritising spending. We must stop taxpayer concessions for the gambling, greyhound and horseracing industries and we must stop funding cruel, ineffective killing programs, sausage-making classes, shooting clubs, and a breeding facility for baboons to be rented out for medical experimentation. There is money in the budget if the Government stops its wasteful spending and puts it towards the most urgent social needs, which has to include funding critical domestic violence services properly. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (15:55): In this debate we need to ask whether domestic and family violence is an issue of New South Wales funding versus Victorian funding, a gender issue of men versus women or a class issue. We do not hear a lot of class-based analysis when it comes to domestic violence, but if one reads the reports over a long time from the Coroners Court Domestic Violence Death Review Team, the common characteristics

are horrifying. They relate mainly to the underclass, in the form of poverty, welfare dependency, public housing, mental illness, alcohol and drug dependency, infidelity and Aboriginality. These characteristics dominate domestic violence deaths, as reported by the Coroners Court team over the past 15 years. One would think that an effective increase in government expenditure in this area would be directed at solving poverty.

Yesterday I quoted an expert from the United States, James Gilligan, who was also quoted by Waleed Aly, who said, "All violence is an attempt to replace shame with self-esteem." The people in the Domestic Violence Death Review Team reports have got themselves into the most chaotic lifestyle under the most dreadful of circumstances, where the greatest shame is living with hopelessness as the underclass. Why is there not a sustained effort to say that solving poverty is one of the most effective ways of solving a range of social problems, including domestic violence? Having listened to the debates on domestic and family violence over many hours now, the themes in the Domestic Violence Death Review Team reports about underclass and the bewilderingly bad circumstances in which people find themselves, are a world apart—a total disconnect—from the language and views of the privileged middle-class women MPs in this place, who have their pet hates about pornography, media tropes, stereotypes and government underfunding, none of which are relevant to the domestic violence death reports.

There is a massive disconnect between domestic violence as a public health problem, where a government can spend its way out of any difficulty, and a law and order issue, as I have outlined previously in the House. It is said that under the previous Government when Gladys Berejiklian was the Premier, any spending proposal about domestic violence could be put on her desk and she would approve it. That willy-nilly, shotgun approach to spending has gone on and on. Spending needs to be better targeted at the evidence of the underclass being a primary driver of this and many other social problems. It would be nice to hear left-of-centre politicians once again talk about class, ending poverty and uplifting people to provide equal opportunity and a better lifestyle in our State. Governments can spend money on primary prevention programs, but the ads about little boys closing the door on little girls and growing up to be wife-bashers have been ineffective.

As Waleed Aly points out, demonising all males produces resentment, which can be counterproductive. The truth is, good men—the majority of men—will not have a meeting to say, "Let's sort out the bad men." Their attitude is, "If we're targeted in this debate, we will just continue being good men doing what we do. What responsibility do we have for the bad men we will never meet and never know?" The data in the scores of Domestic Violence Death Review Team reports is compelling. It confirms exactly what is going on: that the best predictor of a domestic violence perpetrator is someone who has done it previously. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (15:59): I appreciate the opportunity to speak in support of the motion moved by Ms Abigail Boyd. I thank her and recognise her longstanding advocacy in this place over many years in this area, particularly in relation to people with lived experience in these situations either as supporters or as victim-survivors. The Coalition disagrees with some of the implications in the motion, supports it for a few reasons and supports the amendments proposed by the Government. I will highlight why we disagree with parts of the motion. The fundamental question that the motion seeks to acknowledge is that many governments across many years did not adequately fund or respond to domestic violence in New South Wales. There are many factors as to why this may have occurred, including historically political barriers, the lack of understanding by decision-makers and under-representation of women in senior government roles. All of those issues have played a part.

With each generation of new political leaders progress has been made and I am pleased that that is so. I will be the first to acknowledge that more work needs to be done. With all sides of politics it is our job to help provide solutions. That is what we are here to do. In regard to the data provided in paragraph (1) (b) of the motion, I cannot speak to every line item in the budget, but I am advised that the Victorian Government uses different metrics to collate the total funding when compared to how New South Wales delivers the budget. I am not the first to defend the Treasurer, but I understand that we are comparing apples to oranges; we do not quibble with that. As I say, we support the motion. But I understand that the Victorian Government includes health and police in its budget, whereas New South Wales quarantines them out. Nonetheless, more is needed.

Ultimately, funding is a critical component. It is the outcomes from the funding that need to improve. I can speak to the direct investment of the Government of which I was a part that it did deliver. I thank the Hon. Emma Hurst for acknowledging some of the work that we did in relation to pets and animals as well. There is \$484.3 million over four years for housing and supports for women and children—critical care that needed to be put in place—and in particular \$426.6 million for the Core and Cluster program to deliver 75 new refuges and help 2,900 women. These are not small numbers—they are significant numbers—but much more needs to be done. I hope that the funding provides real outcomes for those people impacted by violence. I note paragraph (3) of the motion outlines the call for funding for DVNSW. I believe those frontline services are worthy funding proposals. I note that the DVNSW 2024-25 submission specifically calls out for target investment to the Core and Cluster model, which is positive to see.

I seek an extension of time.

Leave granted.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It is positive to see that this sector is seeking financial support that builds on the work of previous governments. There is more to do but I am pleased that that can occur. Looking to the future, I foresee issues of changes of government leading to significant changes in policy and funding priorities in the portfolio. While that is a natural change with governments, I believe there is an opportunity to work more collaboratively across the Parliament to have more consistent funding models over time. That is something that we are open to working with the Government on. Again, in my view it speaks to the outcomes needed and that would assist in that process.

The bulk of the funding has been delivered to the sector for this program. Now the sector requires a smaller amount of implementation funding to support and deliver that program. I also note paragraph (4) of the motion discusses the emergency package by the Government to deliver \$230 million over four years. I have some concerns about that package. I welcome it and the new funding but I hope it is not a reallocation of funding. I want to understand that more clearly. We will understand that when it hits the ground. I appreciate the indulgence of the House. I support the motion and thank the member.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (16:03): Obviously this is a difficult issue and it has many different causes. Earlier I referred to embedded shame by perpetrators—fear, control and exposure to behaviours that are not commensurate with the kinds of standards that we would expect in our civilised society. I acknowledge something that the Hon. Mark Latham said earlier about the domestic violence death review. While those reports contain very helpful information that is useful for policymaking so we can address the root causes and identify patterns of victim and perpetrator traits, unfortunately we have not yet seen the report for 2021-23. I ask the Government to explore releasing that report so we can find the information we need to identify where patterns are continuing and where policy can best be implemented.

Last year Jordan Baker wrote a piece calling out some shocking sexualised behaviour of schoolboys against fellow female students, and even teachers. According to a report by the Ombudsman, these boys were clearly not appropriately disciplined for the severity of the incident. The lack of respect, the entitlement and the chronically low self-esteem that can lead to violence must be averted wherever it appears and as soon as it appears. This also relates to that embedded sense of shame—trying to build up esteem or control over someone and a sense of power where powerlessness is felt. We want to equip everybody with the tools to spot a perpetrator, to be connected to trusted loved ones, to be able to seek advice as quickly as possible or help. The reality is that we also must change the thoughts and behaviours of potential and active perpetrators.

We need to employ modern technology as a part of this solution—things like blockchain technology and identity tokens. That needs to be addressed in those funding commitments. Nansen Digital Forensic Services is a fantastic organisation that helps to protect women, whether it is securing their personal documents so that when they eventually are able to flee domestic violence situations they have a set of identifying documents, like passports and birth certificates—items that they need to set up a new bank account, for example, if they have not been able to do that because of financial control and abuse in a relationship. Nansen is also able to undertake forensic investigation of a victim's digital devices, for example, a phone that might be tracked with secret apps, where bank accounts are being accessed and where that control is more than just physical. It also extends to the digital realm. As part of this funding I urge the Government to look at technological solutions that we can employ that will help to address this terrible scourge.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (16:06): We all know that funding matters because without funding there is no empowerment and there is also no demonstration of government and community priorities. The motion encourages us to think about the quantum of funding, the quantum of support for women fleeing violence. We need to focus not just on quantum but also on outcomes and the way in which that money is spent and directed. We also want to make sure that any money being promised is in fact new money to deal with increasing problems, rather than repurposed or repackaged money. This issue is far too important to be dealt with as window dressing. We need to have funding that is carefully targeted, sufficiently targeted and newly targeted to meet the real issues that we face.

There has been a lot of discussion in this place about the need to work together and not politicise this issue. That is fundamentally very important, but it is difficult when there is a lot of talk of crisis and then, "Oh well. But we'll get to what we are doing about the crisis soon." Crisis talk needs crisis action, rather than manana action, which is perhaps some of the duologue that we are experiencing at the moment. We also need to make sure that the funding that we are providing will go to places where women are experiencing real need and will be delivered to them by people who can adequately meet their needs. That is why some of the current approaches of the Government to filling places for new domestic violence workers is frankly perplexing.

CatholicCare Wilcannia-Forbes, which operates across 400,000 square kilometres in regional and remote western New South Wales to deliver domestic violence support to the local government areas of Forbes, Parkes, Bourke and Lachlan, has been told to apply in the Snowy Valleys, 900 kilometres away from its closest refuge. It has expertise in a particular area. It currently assists women and children in that area. Yet it is not told that its programs are a problem; it is just told, "Go somewhere else." In Condobolin, it has donated a convent and refurbished it to provide accommodation for women and children leaving violence. That facility is supported by a worker who may become unfunded because the service has been prohibited from applying for funding in the current tender round. How does that funding approach help women in the west who need our support? It is difficult to understand. And that organisation is not alone. Women's community centres have been similarly impacted. The Great Lakes Womens Shelter, which it operates— [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (16:10): I thank Ms Abigail Boyd for moving this motion. Domestic violence is a scourge on our society that I think all members would be concerned about. We need to do more when it comes to providing funding for essential services for those who, unfortunately, are the victims of domestic violence, including safe and secure accommodation so that people can get to safety and making sure that those services are available throughout the community. But, unfortunately, the biggest impact on domestic violence is men doing the wrong thing, men doing something that none of us in this Chamber would support and men who have the absolute wrong view when it comes to their actions and the wrong view when it comes to women. A lot of members have ventilated that in the Chamber as well.

Unfortunately, that also brings us to the point that we need to reform the laws. We need to make sure that those violent men are not on the streets and are not able to perpetrate those crimes. That is why—as well as providing funding for vital domestic violence services—we also need to provide the police with the powers that they require to make sure that those men are off the streets. The Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research May 2023 report showed that, after the Domestic Violence Electronic Monitoring [DVEM] program—the first electronic monitoring program in New South Wales to target domestic violence offenders and their compliance with apprehended domestic violence orders—was introduced in June 2016, baseline reoffending levels had decreased by 9.6 per cent in any reoffending, 32.9 per cent in domestic violence reoffending, 19.4 per cent in apprehended domestic violence order breach reoffending and 11.4 per cent in reoffending resulting in re-entry into custody among DVEM participants relative to the matched control group.

That is why the Coalition outlined its proposals on bail—to make sure that we take those steps and the Parliament as a whole takes those steps to say, "Enough is enough," and that we actually protect women. We can do that not only through funding but also through changes to legislation and to the Bail Act, and through expanding the use of electronic monitoring, making it more difficult for people to be able to get bail when there is a serious personal violence charge held against them. We do need two parts to the approach. We need to, of course, ensure that there is safety for those who are victims of domestic violence, but we also need to ensure that they are out of harm's way and that the perpetrators of domestic violence are off the streets and not able to continue acts that nobody in this place would condone.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (16:13): In reply: I thank all of the members who contributed to debate today. I will turn to the Government's proposed amendments. I am happy to agree to those. I welcome that we have reached the point where we are acknowledging the historical underfunding—for whatever reasons—of domestic and family violence services. We are also acknowledging that, in amongst everything else that is required, one of the critical components is an increase in that funding to an amount much closer to what Victoria spends. Yesterday during question time, I asked the Treasurer to provide a detailed line item in each budget that tells us exactly how much is going to those services and breaks that down for us. As I mentioned then, the sector has had a history of not understanding what that amount is, not being able to track it, not being able to adequately assess whether it has been used in an effective way et cetera.

We really need to see that. I acknowledge what the Hon. Natalie Ward said about comparing like with like. The figures for New South Wales and Victoria in the motion were the ones that the NSW Council of Social Service believed were like for like, which is why there was not a figure for the 2023-24 year. I am happy to accept what the Government has provided for that, but it underscores the problem. It is almost impossible to work out how much is being spent. But what we can agree on is that a lot less has been spent in New South Wales than in Victoria. I welcome that cross-party agreement. I note that the sector is exhausted, because not only has it been dealing with the crisis with significant underfunding for a very long time; it has also felt that it has not gotten anywhere with government. It has been speaking out loudly for so long and not been listened to.

As we move forward, I hope that there is a new approach of listening to the experts in the sector. I ask the Government to be gentle and to be as open and transparent as possible with the sector, particularly when it comes to funding, so that we can rebuild that bond between the Government and the sector as time goes on, because that is critical. I would just add a note of warning for the Treasurer. I know that putting the budget together is top of

mind for him. We need to apply a whole-of-government approach, and we need to cast a critical lens across all of the items of spending because cutting spending in a particular area could inadvertently lead to women being less safe, for example, if we were to cut the RSPCA inspector budgets or something like that, given the links between domestic violence and animal abuse. On that note, I thank all members again and commend the motion to the House.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): Ms Abigail Boyd has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Rose Jackson has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT

Censure

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (16:18): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 28 February 2024 the Hon. Rod Roberts, MLC, asked question on notice No. 1,788 to the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, representing the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter;
 - (b) part (2) of the question asked, "How many Traffic and Highway Patrol Command operations were conducted for each month in the period of 28 February 2021 to 29 February 2024?", and part 2 (a) of the question asked, "Can you please provide a breakdown for each operation stating the name, dates, location, duration, number of officers deployed and operational objective of each operation?"; and
 - (c) the answer provided to the question on notice No. 1788, asked on 20 March 2024, does not identify a single operation and therefore fails to answer or address part (2) or part (2) (a).
- (2) That this House further notes that:
 - (a) on 2 August 2023, this House unanimously agreed to a motion moved by the Hon. Rod Roberts, MLC, that, in part, said "this House takes the opportunity to remind all Ministers of their responsibilities, and the importance of providing factually correct answers to questions so as not to mislead the House with answers provided"; and
 - (b) on 20 September 2023, this House unanimously agreed to a further motion moved by the Hon. Rod Roberts, MLC, in relation to a factually incorrect answer provided to a question by the Minister of Police and Counter-terrorism that also stated, in part, "That this House once again takes the opportunity to remind all Ministers of their responsibilities and the importance of providing factually correct answers to questions so as to not mislead the House with answers provided".
- (3) That this House considers the failure to answer the question as contemptuous, and that it inhibits the ability of members of the Legislative Council in their role of holding the Government to account.
- (4) That this House reminds Ministers in the Legislative Council that they are responsible for the answers to questions on notice provided by the Ministers in the Legislative Assembly who they officially represent.
- (5) That this House accordingly censures the Leader of the Government, as the representative of the Government in this House, for the Government's failure to answer question on notice No. 1788.

I speak on a serious issue. It is not a small matter to censure the Leader of the Government. I do not do so lightly. But the serious nature of the topic and the need for accountability demand that I must act. As my motion outlines, part (2) of my question No. 1788 related to the number of operations performed by the Traffic and Highway Patrol over the past three years and the details of the operations. I will speak to the non-answer in a moment but I will first inform the House why I asked the question. As of midnight last night, 367 people have lost their lives on the roads in the past 12 months. That is a 26 per cent increase on the previous 12 months. That is nothing short of a tragedy. Add to that the frightening reality that one in six drivers sharing our roads are drug-driving. The revelations today in relation to the Greta bus driver further drive that home.

New South Wales police are battling a heavy workload with reduced numbers. Recruitment is not keeping pace with separations and specialist police are now required to assist with first response 000 calls. These facts are a matter of record. Current serving police and members of the public have contacted me with their concerns and the families and loved ones of the victims of road trauma deserve answers. On 28 February I asked question on notice No. 1788 in the hope that the answer might shed light on the matter. What I received from the desk of the police Minister regarding paragraph (2) and paragraph (2) (a) of my question was crickets. I received absolutely no answer at all and, further to that, no explanation about why.

A question that is asked on notice in this House is not a question to a waiter about the daily specials. It is one of the mechanisms by which this House can hold Ministers to the standards that are expected of them by the electors. The Minister's response sits in the pages of *Questions and Answers*. Her non-answer stands as a lasting testimony of the Government's inability or unwillingness to address the issues of the day. I have been accused of taking a forensic approach to my work in this Chamber. That is a badge I wear with honour. The facts are these: The Minister failed to provide an answer to paragraph (2) and paragraph (2) (a) of the question on notice. That is a breach of the *Legislative Council Standing Rules and Orders*. Standing Order 65 (5) states, "An answer must be directly relevant to a question." Standing Order 68 (1) says, "The rules for questions apply to written questions."

Out of sheer frustration, I made a request for information under the Government Information (Public Access) Act. I sought from the NSW Police Force all documents compiled and provided by them to the Minister's office relating to the question on notice. While copies were not provided, it was revealed that the NSW Police Force sent two emails, one of which had an attachment, to the Minister's office to assist in answering my question. That raises a further question as to whether the Minister had the information but failed to provide it. That, we do not know, but this House deserves better and someone must be held to account. New South Wales highway patrol operations are not heavily guarded secrets. A cursory search of the New South Wales police website provides multiple examples including dates, locations, times and resources used in an operation.

Those examples of previous operations were similar in part to the information I sought. I was not asking for a disclosure of facts regarding future operations, nor did I try to uncover any State secrets. In seeking wisdom on how to approach this matter, I could do no better than the words of the Leader of the Government herself. On 9 June 2021 she contributed to debate on my motion to censure the then Leader of the former Coalition Government. She said:

We are not going to sit by and allow noncompliance to creep in and become the way in which the Government wishes to do business.

Regarding the censure, Minister Sharpe said:

... you sit in the big chair and you are the one who is going to get censured, and that is appropriate because that is why you sit in the big chair.

On 2 August and 20 September 2023 I moved motions that in part said:

... this House once again takes the opportunity to remind all Ministers of their responsibilities and the importance of providing factually correct answers to questions so as to not mislead the House with answers provided.

Those motions were both passed unanimously by this House, so it has given the Minns Government two chances, accepting the reality that they were new to government, but their time is up. While Minister Sharpe is certainly not culpable regarding the performance of the police Minister, she is responsible in this place as Leader of the Government and must be held to account. The disregard shown towards the processes of this House falls at her feet. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (16:23): Let us be clear: The Government does not support censuring itself or me in relation to this motion. But I do understand the issues raised by members of the House. Members would be aware that, since coming to government, we have taken that very seriously. We are trying to change a range of matters relating to the way we provide information transparently. I will make a couple of points. The police Minister has answered 100 questions relating to the police portfolio in this place since April 2023 and 109 in the other place. A significant amount of data was provided in response to questions on notice and in answers to supplementary questions. I am advised that the police Minister answered 479 supplementary questions and 160 supplementary questions at the November and February estimates hearings respectively.

All members of this House will know how important that is. A lot of information is provided through that process, as is absolutely appropriate. The Minister has provided a number of answers to questions in this place on many occasions including under Standing Order 52. The Hon. Rod Roberts asked specifically about the resourcing of police operations. I can advise that while there are planned operations and activities for traffic and highway patrol, they regularly support other police responding to incidents with elevated risks to public safety. As such, there is not necessarily a specific record of where a traffic and highway patrol officer may have been redirected to prefer some of the other duties.

I know that does not go to all the points that were raised by the member—I do not suggest that—but I place that on record. There are genuine debates in this place about how an answer is responded to—what does "relevant" mean, what does "directly relevant" mean and how much information must be provided. Suffice to say, the Government does not support this censure motion. We do not believe it is necessary at this point. However, I accept that the motion will probably pass, so we will deal with it when we can. Finally, I thank traffic and highway patrol staff. They do a tough job around the clock, in rain, hail or shine, to keep us safe. We have real

challenges with road safety, and they undertake very important work, not just on holidays but 24/7, 365 days a year. Everyone in this place thanks them for their ongoing work.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (16:26): I contribute to debate on the motion. I sat in the Leader of the Government's chair. There were a few times where I was the subject of exactly this sort of censure motion and it was generally the Hon. John Graham who would move those censure motions. Every time he would say, "We have nothing against you."

The Hon. John Graham: It was true.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Thank you. This falls within exactly that category of issue, where a censure motion is brought against the Leader of the Government, as the Hon. Rod Roberts correctly identified, because she is the Leader of the Government in this place and she assumes the responsibility for the performance of the Government overall. The real problem with the manner in which questions are answered that gives rise to the concern of the crossbench and the Opposition is that information is provided to the Minister's office to properly and transparently answer the question, but then the office—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: I will get my reply on this.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: You will not. You should have waited. But then the Minister's office—and some Ministers' offices do it a lot more than other Ministers' offices—puts a political lens over a transparent answer for the purposes of ensuring that it is a political answer rather than a proper answer to the question. Sometimes that is the nature of this place—it is a political forum—and the manner in which material is provided can have political implications. However, it does border on contemptuous—that was the word used by the Hon. Rod Roberts in his motion—when it is so patently obvious that the answer does not come within a bull's roar of answering the question. I received a number of those answers when I asked questions about the reprioritisation measures that have been adopted and the \$13 billion so-called black hole. I was met with an absolute brick wall in respect of that funding figure. It was very obvious that they could have provided the details, but they did not. The Opposition supports the motion on the basis that it is a call to do better. It is not necessarily a criticism of the Leader of the Government; it is a call to do better. We expect better.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (16:29): On behalf of the Greens, I indicate our reluctant support for the motion. It is a serious action for the House to censure the Leader of the Government, but it has reached a point where The Greens think it is warranted. As the mover of this motion has identified, the censure is directed to the Leader of the Government in this place as a last resort, and of course should not be seen as a reflection on the work of the Hon. Penny Sharpe. There has been not inconsiderable frustration over the incomplete or otherwise incorrect or misleading information provided by the Government in response to questions from members of this place. I appreciate that answers to questions are prepared by the departments responsible before being received by Ministers to then be provided to us, but the standards of some answers are not consistent with our expectations, and in fact are not allowing us to do our job.

As identified in the motion, this House has previously passed a motion reminding Ministers of their responsibilities to the House and, if there must be direction from the Government to its departments about ensuring answers are complete and accurate, that should occur. I appreciate that representatives of the Government, particularly many of the very competent, hardworking ministerial staffers, have offered various explanations on occasions when answers provided have been below standard, but it cannot be allowed to continue forever without note and, for their sake and ours and in the interests of democracy, it needs to change.

With regard to the detail provided in answers to questions, we do not write and submit questions for the fun of it. We work really hard to articulate what we are asking for in the most considered way, so as not to waste time and to get a deepened understanding of the workings of our State so that we can all be accountable, and we expect specific questions to receive specific answers. If data requested in questions is not available, it should be considered by the department or agency as a matter of public interest, and it should be found and delivered whenever possible.

I have confidence that this is not an intentional act by Government Ministers to evade the will of this House, but rather a lack of determination to instruct departments and recover information when necessary. I encourage the Leader of the Government to use the motion as an instrument of instruction to her Cabinet colleagues that good governance requires active and critical management. I genuinely believe that the motion is a valuable tool for the Government, should it decide to use it.

The Hon. WES FANG (16:32): I support the motion of the Hon. Rod Roberts. I note that this is the second motion to censure the Leader of the Government, in her role as Leader of the Government, that has been brought before the House for answers that have been provided to members by the Government. The Leader of the Government in this place made a commitment that the Government and its Ministers would provide this House

with more fulsome answers. Unlike my colleague Ms Sue Higginson, I am seeking to hold the Leader of the Government to account for her answers. The example that I raise involves the Minister—an inquiry into brumbies.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: I know the Hon. Wes Fang is obsessed with this issue, but he needs to address it by way of substantive motion. What he is speaking about now is outside the leave of this motion.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order and draw the member back to the topic.

The Hon. WES FANG: To the point of order—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: The President has just ruled.

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate that, but I did not have an opportunity—

The Hon. Cameron Murphy: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Is it a new point of order?

The Hon. WES FANG: It was in relation to the point of order.

The PRESIDENT: I have made a ruling on that point of order.

The Hon. Cameron Murphy: That was my point of order, President.

The PRESIDENT: Is there a new point of order?

The Hon. WES FANG: No. I draw attention to answers given to this House by Ministers. One related to the brumby inquiry that we held. In February I asked the Minister about an answer relating to an extension of time for a submission and whether that would have been granted. In the SO 52 that was returned there were no papers for this—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: The censure relates to answers given by a Minister in the other place; it is not more broadly about general views. The member previously moved a censure motion that was much broader and that would have been in order for what he is speaking about now. If he wishes to move it again, I am sure he can do so but at the moment he is out of order.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: To the point of order: Paragraph (2) of the motion we are now debating refers to the House previously agreeing to remind all Ministers of their responsibility to provide factually correct answers. That is in paragraph (2) of the motion we are debating right now. Therefore, it is in order for the member to raise other examples of Ministers not answering correctly or appropriately.

The PRESIDENT: I am comfortable to let it proceed on that basis. I ask the Clerk to reset the clock to 50 seconds, which is how much time the Hon. Wes Fang had remaining when the Hon. Penny Sharpe took her point of order. I think on this occasion that is a reasonable amount of time.

The Hon. WES FANG: I will keep my comments brief. The answer given to me after the censure motion in this House last time, when the Leader of the Government committed to better and more responsive answers, was very disappointing. I indicated then that there would be a continuation of non-answers by the Government, which other members and I have witnessed. This motion is timely and it is warranted. I encourage the Executive Government to do better. That was its commitment last time, but that did not happen. We now have another opportunity to censure the Government and I ask that it not be wasted.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (16:36): I strongly support the motion. It has been interesting to watch the evolution of Ministers in this Government: They started as joyful puppies, bouncing around with a fresh start, "We've got transparency and integrity." They declared, "Unlike the last mob, we have nothing to hide." It is fair to say that, within a year, they are worse than the last mob. That has been the evolution. The enemy of transparency is arrogance and the belief that they can get away with just about anything if they control the numbers notionally in the Chamber.

A series of techniques have been developed to avoid answering questions on notice. We used to say that the lower House Ministers were worse than the ones in this Chamber, but they are catching up quickly. A common technique is, if a member asks a question in four parts, we do not get an answer in four parts but a general answer that avoids the toughest part of the question that was asked. That means members will have to ask four questions instead of one, which gets to the theatre of the absurd.

The Hon. Rod Roberts performed a service in bringing to the attention of the Chamber how this Government has evolved quickly into the bad habits of the last mob and in fact is looking even worse. We thought that was impossible at one time, but it has happened quickly under the Minns Government. I know there is some

good faith across the table and in the Chamber, and not everyone is comfortable with this, but I think there needs to be a general directive around the Ministry to be a bit more genuine. If a member asks a legitimate question in four parts, answer the four parts, instead of deliberate attempts. We can assume that the people asking the question are as silly as a two-bob watch, but most of us have been around long enough to know the techniques. They are very transparent. That is the transparency being practised here, rather than the one that was promised.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (16:38): I support the motion moved by the Hon. Rod Roberts. Unfortunately, I have my own examples of utter frustration when it comes to asking the Government reasonable questions on behalf of our constituents. Specifically, I have been infuriated by responses to budget estimates questioning for the Minister for Innovation, Science and Technology and Minister for Industry and Trade. It demonstrates the pattern of behaviour and attitude towards the Opposition and the constituents of New South Wales who are genuinely asking questions about how this Government is spending money, how it is making decisions, what its strategy is and what its vision is. What we get is that there is no vision and no strategy.

We get things like this maze of answers I have before me to questions on notice after budget estimates hearings. It is like the R. L. Stine book series *Goosebumps*, where you have to go to different pages to reveal the story—and I assure members it is a horror story. The answer will state, "See answer to question on page 82." What is the very insightful answer at page 82? "I am advised this is a matter for the Commonwealth Government." Why did the original answer not just say that? Even then, the answer does not really make sense anyway as it is not a matter for the Commonwealth Government; the question was asking about how the State Government would fund a particular program that has previously been funded under the State Government, being the Sydney Quantum Academy.

This happens throughout the answers to questions on notice: "See response to question on page 79." What would that be? That response states, "See my responses in the budget estimates committee." What part of the budget estimates committee should members be referring to when we are looking at answers that apparently are not forthcoming in the actual committee hearing or subsequently, when we're trying to ascertain further details? There is just so much to answer. There is so much more that could be done.

Surely the Government has this information. If it is obfuscating because it does not have a plan and does not have information, that is even more terrifying. That is what we have to conclude when we do not get the very reasonable information that individuals, businesses and researchers need to plan their activities going forward to contribute to a productive and prosperous economy. It is very disappointing. It is difficult not only to be in opposition but also to be an individual or an organisation in New South Wales seeking information and clarity from this Government, particularly in the industry of science, technology and R&D.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (16:41): I support the motion moved by the Hon. Rod Roberts. I am glad he brought this motion forward. However, I have to say it is certainly not the most egregious of examples. I can provide him with hundreds of far worse examples than the one he has put up today. This culture has developed, which is one of these funny things that people say in government, that "It's not answer time; it's question time", because members do not actually get any answers from the Government. The Leader of the Government stated that hundreds of questions on notice have been answered. I would say that the Government has lodged hundreds of responses to questions, which is very different to answering those questions. There are hundreds of examples such as those I have before me; I almost feel I should table the list. My staff members have done some excellent work here and it would be sad to let it go to waste.

Members should not have to go through the path of Standing Order 52 motions and Government Information (Public Access) Act [GIPAA] requests just to get basic information. For instance, when I have asked questions about how many people took up the First Home Buyers Choice program in the last term of government, the question was just deliberately dodged, or the response sent me to a website that does not answer the question at all. This is a common occurrence with this Government. When members asked questions about how much it was going to cost to light up the Opera House sails for the coronation, they were deliberately dodged by Ministers, which is why we had to put in a GIPAA request to get that basic information.

Members have asked questions about the \$9 billion black hole. We still do not know what constitutes the \$9 billion black hole. We have asked countless questions in budget estimates. The Government has not actually answered what constitutes that \$9 billion black hole. Members would think that this was such a large part of the Government's budget repair program in its first year of the government that it would be laying out what the \$9 billion budget black hole is and what constitutes it. We still do not know, because the Government still has not answered basic questions at budget estimates. It still has not answered basic questions on notice. It still has not answered basic supplementary questions. The whole thing is a farce. I inform the House of another example. I asked something simple: "Of the \$176,000 cost of the taskforce, how much was paid to Ms Anna Booth?" The response stated:

I am advised that the Industrial Relations Taskforce was conducted in accordance with the public sector procurement guidelines.

That is not what I asked. I asked how much of that money was spent on Ms Anna Booth. These are basic questions unanswered by this Government. *[Time expired.]*

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (16:44): I make a brief contribution supporting the motion of the Hon. Rod Roberts. I know other members wish to speak so I will not take too long. There is a sense of déjà vu because members have talked before in this Chamber about poor answers from the police Minister. I understand the role of the Leader of the Government is sometimes to take one for the team, which I think is what members are seeing today. But this goes to the deeper point of continued poor answers under this Government. Like other members, I have many examples, particularly in the Education and Early Learning space, of basic factual information not being provided. Recently I asked some questions about the numbers of before and after school care and vacation care services operating on school grounds, but also off-school sites. This is data I know the department has because it is the regulator for before and after school care services. What did I get back? The response stated:

Enrolment figures at Out Of School Hours (OOSH) care services are held by each nongovernment service provider. The Department of Education works with schools and service providers to provide access to OOSH services wherever feasible.

How can members possibly hold the Government to account and get data about important issues like this if they are not even given the basic data, which has to exist by virtue of the regulatory nature of those services? I was the Minister for six years; I know that the department has those figures. I would bet any money that it gave those figures to the Minister's office, which has chosen not to provide them. That is the issue here. The other point that I briefly make is that this is not unique to one Minister. Also, Ministers in this House sign off on those answers that come from the lower House. I advise them that if they get an answer back that they know is not good enough and would not stand the test in this House, they ought to send it back. Get those Ministers to do a better job so that we do not have to censure the Leader of the Government in this House.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (16:46): I emphatically support the motion and thank the Hon. Rod Roberts for moving it. I note that many members in this place have signed off on hundreds and hundreds of these answers, particularly the Hon. Sarah Mitchell. It is a furphy to throw that out as some problem of being in government. Those opposite set the precedent; they should be welcoming the questions from the vigorous Opposition. A particular answer I received caught my attention, as it is one I would have thought those opposite would want to answer. My question was, "How many Traffic and Highway Patrol Command operations were conducted for each month in the period?" That is a road safety issue that I thought those opposite would want to be very clear about on the record—"These are the ones that we've done, and this is how we're keeping people safe."

It is worrying to me that the most obvious of answers cannot be provided to a person who is genuinely interested in road safety. I would have thought they would want to provide that answer. For all the time and energy spent by the honourable member to bring a censure motion to this place, by the Government having to respond to it and by all the members who have spoken on it, the Government could have just provided the answer to the question. Now that those opposite are 18 months into government, it beggars belief. As other honourable members have said, the Government came in on this platform of transparency and accountability but the arrogance and hubris on the most straightforward of questions is well on display.

Given there have been previous warnings, it is disappointing that members in this place have to now censure the Leader of the Government, who has been in this place for a long time and has had a stellar career on both sides of this Chamber. I would have thought those opposite would be encouraging each other to do better. As a former Minister, I say that a Minister signs off on every single one of those answers, every time. A Minister knows what the department has provided and their office knows what it has taken out. I reiterate the comments of other members: Those opposite should be doing better. We should not have to bring one of these censure motions to the House. I commend the honourable member for moving this motion and for his diligent work asking these questions, which are very obvious road safety questions that should be answered.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Pursuant to standing orders debate is interrupted to allow the mover of the motion to speak in reply.

[Business interrupted.]

Business of the House

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I move:

That the time for debate on this motion be extended by a further 10 minutes.

Motion agreed to.

*Motions***LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT****Censure**

[*Business resumed.*]

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (16:48): I thank the House for its indulgence, from members of both the Opposition and the Government, to extend the debate. This is an important topic. I was not going to contribute to this debate, but after watching some of the contributions of members I feel it is important to do so. I was once a government Minister sitting on the opposite side of the House. I would be lectured by the then Leader of the Opposition about transparency, "the destiny of this House" and the role of members of this House to keep governments to account by ensuring that the information is out there for the public. This Minns Labor Government has form. It has shown this form over 12 months.

I remind members about the lengths I had to go to with the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads regarding responses, or lack of responses, to questions on notice. This House had to order the production of documents under Standing Order 52 to obtain the original answers from the departments because in some cases answers from the department had been changed. Now, 12 months on, we all have different jobs in this Chamber. It is important for Government members and Ministers to respect and understand the roles that we all have now, which are different. Many Opposition members are now seeking answers to questions in representing communities right across this State. I refer specifically to paragraph 2 (a) of the motion, which refers to a motion agreed to last year. It stated:

this House takes the opportunity to remind all Ministers of their responsibilities, and the importance of providing factually correct answers to questions so as not to mislead the House with answers provided.

That is a really important point. We do not need Ministers changing the answers. We do not need Ministers trying to hide from the answers, and we also acknowledge that Ministers in this House represent Ministers in the other place. The motion is an important moment to remind Government Ministers that if they are not happy with the answers being dished up by lower House Ministers, they should send them back and not put themselves in a position where they could mislead the House or not provide the House with factually correct information.

If the political game is to not give a fulfilling or reasonable answer and to play politics with an issue, the House will call them out. We will not put up with that anymore. We have seen orders for the production of documents supported by the Opposition and the crossbench to flush out those types of responses. At the end of the day, Ministers should practise what they once preached to former Government Ministers, and that is to provide proper answers and not play politics because the people of this State will not put up with it either.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (Special Minister of State, Minister for Roads, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism) (16:51): I thank the House for extending the time for this debate. I did not want to cut members off when they were putting their views on record. I make a couple of comments that I hope give some sense of where the Government is coming from. The censure motion is unusual because its focus is a particular question and answer. That is a reflection of the forensic approach of the Hon. Rod Roberts, as he detailed. The motion has fleshed out an issue that I know is important to this House, and gives us the chance to discuss it again.

I detail what occurred after the last debate we had. Each time the Hon. Rod Roberts has said that he has an issue with an answer, the Leader of the Government and I have had a discussion with the Cabinet Office, which coordinated a response inside government to examine what went on in each of those instances. We have taken that very seriously and have done the work. Those answers came back in two categories. One of those categories was answers where the views of the Executive and the Parliament have often differed—where agencies have a different view to the one traditionally taken by this House about what information they would be expected to provide. The other might be better described as some practices of the previous Government, as described by the Leader of the Opposition. Clearly some of those practices have continued where Ministers' offices are taking a close interest in the answers that come back.

The House has the right to put those views and remind us of those. I assure members that the Leader of the Government has put the views of this House directly to all her colleagues and asked them to work with their agencies to get better results for answers. That view has been communicated and has been taken seriously by my colleagues as well. I understand the frustration, though, and we hear the message today that we are clearly still not quite there yet. Members have put that in strong terms. It has been helpful to have some of the specifics. I know that in some of the answers I am signing off on as the Minister, one of my frustrations is I am signing off on answers, including one that is coming to the shadow roads Minister tomorrow, that contain much more detail

than I would ever have received from the former roads Minister. The pen sometimes quivers as I am signing off on those answers. I think, "I never would have been able to get this detail!".

I seek a one-minute extension of time.

Leave granted.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I single out the Opposition Whip, who has an eye for detail. Although he has specified one that I may have slipped up on, I am signing off on detailed answers. There is no way that answers like the ones I am signing off on would have escaped the net of the former Government.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: That is not an excuse.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It is not an excuse and that is why I sign away. That is the thought I comfort myself with as I sign them away. It is not arrogance from the Government, thinking it has the numbers in the House. This is a minority government and we take our obligations to the House very seriously. We will do what we have done with the last set of issues. The Leader of the Government and I both welcome members approaching us with individual examples, and we are happy to continue to pursue those. This will be an ongoing discussion, but it is a welcome one today.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (16:56): This is a very important discussion, and I take particular note of what the Minister has said about the tensions between the Executive arm and the legislative arm in our system of government. It is critically important for our system that the Executive arm recognises its accountability to the legislative arm and to this House. The questions that are asked are one of the key mechanisms for that accountability. At a budget estimates hearing the Treasurer was asked:

Given the Half Yearly Review warns that employee expenses may need to be revised upward from 46.1% of all expenditure in 2026-2027, what further services and supports will be cut over the next four years to pay for this?

That is a detailed, measured question seeking an answer. The Treasurer replied, "I do not accept the premise of your question." That is not the way that the two branches of government should be speaking with each other. That is why we are having this debate today. The Treasurer was asked four questions about whether taxes would be ruled out on social and affordable housing. He replied, "The question is lacking sufficient specificity to provide an answer." That is not an attempt to provide information. Those answers are contemptuous. They are attempts to say, "We are not answerable to the legislative arm." Our entire system indicates that the Executive needs to be answerable to the legislative arm otherwise we will have an entirely different system of government. This may seem like a light topic where members are lobbing examples in the debate, but it goes to the heart of the way we operate, and it is critically important that Ministers of the Crown provide the information to members in this House. I ask them to do that.

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (16:58): In reply: I clarify a couple of points. I thank all members for their contributions. To Minister Sharpe, if I could just have your attention for a moment, I think you may have fallen victim to what Minister Moriarty sometimes falls victim to because I do not think that you have been informed of the correct situation. In your contribution, you said something along the lines of—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The member will direct his remarks through the Chair.

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS: I am sorry. It was not directed personally. The Minister said something along the lines of, "It's very difficult to track what highway patrol officers do because they get moved to different jobs." I would like to table three documents from the police website. One was about Operation Nabbed, where police conducted 22,000 random breath tests between 9 February and 10 February with 87 people charged. Also on the website was a document about Operation Furious. Police conducted this operation on an 840-kilometre stretch of Hume Highway between Summer Hill and Albury. Under Operation Fume, the police conducted 776 random breath tests from 7 March to 8 March, with 21 speeding infringements issued. The information is all there.

The Minister did not dispute my assertion that the Government Information (Public Access) Act showed me that the information was sent from the agency to the Minister's office. That has never been disputed. That goes to what the Hon. John Graham said as well. The agency provided the information to the Minister. It was never passed on to this House. As I stated, it is not a small matter to censure the Leader of the Government, and I do not do so lightly. It is a serious topic and the need for accountability demands that I act. Creeping disregard from the Government and Ministers when it comes to providing timely and accurate written answers to questions on notice must be called out, and someone needs to be held to account. Only then might we see change. My motion calls for greater accountability and transparency.

Surely the police Minister, and the Government in general, should seek an answer to the question I asked. I note that the Minister for Roads is sitting opposite me. That is great because I know that he cares deeply about

the catastrophe on our roads. Surely, he wants all the evidence in front of him to reduce the current road toll. The Government cannot work on solutions unless it is willing to ask and, importantly, answer questions. This Government was elected on the promise of greater transparency. My motion seeks to hold it to that promise. I recognise that the Leader of the Government does not personally handle these matters. However, in the Legislative Council, the buck stops with the Leader of the Government, and someone must be held to account. I commend the motion to the House.

I seek leave to table three media releases from the NSW Police Force.

Leave granted.

Documents tabled.

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

Motion agreed to.

FREE SPEECH AND UNIVERSITIES

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (17:02): I move:

- (1) That this House acknowledges the unique role that universities play in fostering discourse and free speech amongst their students.
- (2) That this House condemns the antisemitic encampments present at universities in New South Wales, including the University of Sydney, for their vilification of Jewish students and staff and rejection of free speech, by:
 - (a) calling for an "intifada" and the existence of Palestine "from the river to the sea", which is inconsistent with a two-state solution and akin to the annihilation of the Jewish State;
 - (b) expressing support for a registered terrorist group in Hamas; and
 - (c) disrupting the ability for students to study by blocking passageways, traffic and buildings of importance.
- (3) That this House calls on universities in New South Wales, including the University of Sydney, to uphold academic freedom on their campuses and protect Jewish students and staff by removing antisemitic encampments.

Free speech underpins the success of liberal democracies worldwide. As a Liberal, I agree in the mutual benefits that a free and open expression of ideas can give to participants and to society. It is the cornerstone of any democracy, and we are undoubtedly greater for our ability to express our disagreements through forums rather than through fists. That is why I am particularly concerned with developments at the University of Sydney regarding the antisemitic encampment that is almost reaching a full month of existence. Masquerading as a group expressing pro-Palestinian ideas to students, the encampment in reality has become nothing more than a disruptive, antisemitic echo chamber that is the product not of curious students but of groups such as Socialist Alternative and professional organisers. Many of these organisers are not students at the University of Sydney.

Make no mistake, this is not another expression of free speech. It is not a presentation of one's views, to camp on the grounds of a public institution, quite intentionally to the exclusion of others and their views. If one refuses to believe my claim that they have no interest in free and open speech, take a spokesperson for the encampment who said to the university newspaper on 6 May that their main focus was the actual encampment and standing up against Zionists without interacting with them. Those members of encampments across New South Wales have also been recorded proudly talking of their occupation of campus until their demands are met.

Encampments occupying public institutions until their demands are met sounds much more like a coup d'état than legitimate protest. I need not emphasise that these forms of encampments, irrespective of their motivations, are antithetical to the purpose of universities. There is no free exchange of ideas occurring around these encampments, nor are there reasoned argument or investigation. This should be reason enough for the senior leadership teams of universities across New South Wales to seek removal of these encampments. By failing to do so, universities have enabled Jewish academics and students to be subject to the vile antisemitism, vilification and active calls for violence. As has been widely reported, encampment tents have been painted with slogans such as "From the river to the sea", which call for a rejection of a two-state solution, consistent with the annihilation of the Jewish State.

Recently at the University of Sydney, students and even schoolchildren on holiday were seen chanting "intifada". If one were to go onto their computer now and look for a definition of intifada, I am sure they would not object to the Cambridge Dictionary's take on the word, which is "a violent act of opposition". The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as an "armed uprising". Intifada means the bombing of innocent civilians going about their lives. It means the mass murder of students at schools and universities. It means going backwards from the peace that existed before October, which was disrupted by nothing less than the decision of Hamas to

commit the mass murder of over 1,000 Israelis. If anyone briefly reads the history of the term, they will know it means quite the opposite of ceasefire.

We must note that not once have these encampments condemned Hamas, nor have they called for the release of the innocent Israeli hostages remaining in the hands of that terrorist organisation. These encampments have evidently long gone past ceasefire now. No wonder Jewish students and staff feel as though they are not welcome on campus. I suspect that for no other people would a threat of armed violence pass on our campuses, except, of course, if it is targeted largely towards Jews. This House must call on New South Wales universities, including the University of Sydney, to uphold academic freedom on their campuses and protect Jewish students and staff by removing these encampments. If the University of Queensland can refer similar protest incidents to the police and call for the removal of flags that revere an internationally recognised terrorist organisation in the popular front for the liberation of Palestine, the University of Sydney can, too.

Dr AMANDA COHN (17:07): The Greens oppose this motion. There is no place for antisemitism or Islamophobia in New South Wales. I have spoken in this place before about my experiences of antisemitism from neo-Nazi groups organising in my community and the extreme threat that these far-right groups pose. Mischaracterising any action of solidarity with Palestine as antisemitic, regardless of whether those actions display any anti-Jewish sentiment or are even led by Jewish people or groups, obscures and minimises the gravity of genuine antisemitism, which poses a risk to Jewish people here in New South Wales and to community cohesion more broadly.

Encampments have been established at universities around Australia and overseas to protest their university's ties with weapons manufacturers to be used in a conflict described as "genocidal" by the International Court of Justice. At the coalface of the right to protest, they call on the New South Wales Government to scrap its anti-protest laws and drop charges against protestors. In the United States, these protests have been met with hostility and violence, and have resulted in hundreds of arrests. The University of Sydney's encampment, now in its third week, was the first of several encampments now established in Australia to draw attention to the more than 34,000 Palestinians who have been killed by Israel since 7 October.

The Greens express their solidarity with those at Australian universities who are peacefully protesting, calling for peace and an end to the occupation and destruction of Palestine, as well as those tireless student journalists who have centred the voices of students. I acknowledge that several of my colleagues have visited and supported the encampments. I urge the mover of this motion to consider the serious risks of ill-informed reactivity. For example, since the NSW Police Force confirmed no evidence for the allegedly dangerous, deeply traumatising and potentially criminal antisemitic chants reported at last year's protest at the Sydney Opera House—phrases that were repeated by the member in this Chamber—no correction or apology has been offered.

The issues of safety, free speech and academic freedom have been directly addressed by representatives of Australia's top universities in the context of the encampments. University of Sydney Vice Chancellor Mark Scott has said "our instinct is never to pre-emptively shut down free speech and debate and the right to protest" at the university, where reported misbehaviour includes graffiti and disruption of classes but, importantly, no breaches of university policies or codes of conduct related to antisemitism. In fact, a police investigation is underway after the pro-Palestinian encampment at Monash University has faced repeated incursions, including destruction of property, theft, threatening and harassing students, and one alleged assault. I finish by quoting Dr Elizabeth Strakosch, the executive officer of the Jewish Council Australia. She said:

We should be proud of all the students, many of whom are Jewish, who are speaking out against this unfolding genocide. The right to peaceful protest is a fundamental democratic freedom that universities should uphold and defend.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (17:10): I move:

That the question be amended by omitting paragraphs (2) and (3) and inserting instead:

(2) That this House:

- (a) condemns all forms of antisemitic hate speech;
- (b) supports the right to peaceful and lawful protest;
- (c) notes that Jewish students like all students have the right to feel safe on university campuses;
- (d) supports a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine; and
- (e) is concerned by motions that attempt to sow division rather than promote social cohesion.

In speaking in favour of my amendment, I dwell first on paragraph (e) and the concern that we have about motions that stoke division in our community. That is not an abstract concern for this Parliament or this Government for the simple reason that, in the past two weeks, we have seen the strength that comes from cohesive communities, particularly those that are across faith. In the wake of the Wakeley incident, the fact that faith leaders were able

to set aside all differences about domestic and foreign conflicts—an issue that, within half an hour, a statement calmed an otherwise tense and volatile situation—is a practical demonstration of how important it is to respect each other regardless of what happens elsewhere in the world. We prize the fact that our Jewish, Islamic, Indian, Orthodox, Christian, Catholic and secular communities can join together in moments like that to put community cohesion first.

The other point I make is that our responsibility as elected leaders is to nurture that cohesion, not to undermine it. The Government has repeatedly made the point that, as conflict of this nature comes to the fore, we respect the fact that people will disagree. We have a national Parliament in which members can agree or disagree on the validity of Australian foreign policy on this matter. We respect the right for anybody to have that debate. We have the special responsibility as a State Government to ensure that all our citizens, be they supporters of one side or the other of any foreign conflict, have their democratic rights respected as well as their rights to peacefully express those views. That is the point that divides us. This House should declare as a matter of principle that it will put the cohesion of the community first, respect the right of people to democratically protest, and respect the right of law enforcement and others to be able to engage in their day-to-day lives peacefully. That balance is hard to strike, but it is being struck at our universities. They do not need glib motions like this to undermine it.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (17:13): I commend the motion moved by the Hon. Chris Rath about protecting our students on our soil in New South Wales. At the University of Sydney at the moment we are seeing nothing short of bullying, intimidation and harassment. Students who are enrolled and are entitled to be on these campuses are scared of entering the premises because of the treatment they are receiving from people in these so-called encampments. These encampments are designed to intimidate and make people feel uncomfortable about being in a space. They are even blocking off fire exits—they are removing a safe physical exit from the institution.

Jewish university students are every day facing the risk of coming onto campus and being filmed or harassed because of their faith. I have heard about Jewish students who are going to university wearing a Star of David as a necklace and are being filmed as they walk through campus. If that is not intimidation, then I do not know what is. They are being marked out for their ethnicity, culture and religion because of a conflict that is not on our shores but has been brought to our universities, where people should feel safe and respected and at least tolerated. Instead, they are being made to feel as though they are not welcome and are being followed. The person wearing the Star of David while walking across the University of Sydney front lawn was filmed and then that video was put on social media. It received 820,000 views on TikTok and over 100,000 views on Instagram.

People are using these targeted intimidation techniques to try to bring a conflict from the other side of the world to Australia and to try to sow division and a lack of cohesion. This is about liberty and freedom of movement, not just freedom of speech. Freedom of speech is not the same as being able to camp on a public university lawn. They are different. There is a difference between expressing an opinion and actually sitting in a place and preventing another person from entering that place because they are there waiting for an extended period. Jews have been persecuted around the world for millennia. This is just another example of Jews having to face the intimidation and bullying that they should be safe from on our shores in New South Wales and Sydney.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (17:16): The mover of the motion asserts that his motive is to defend free speech, but this motion is not about free speech; this motion is about the exact opposite. This is about shutting down debate and discussion on something that is making some people uncomfortable. There is a difference between feeling unsafe and feeling uncomfortable. Those people who are supporting the genocide in Palestine should be feeling uncomfortable. Members on the opposite side of this Chamber repeatedly try to shut down discussion about what is going on in Palestine, where 40,000 people have lost their lives as a result of the excessive actions of the Israeli State.

There is a difference between being antisemitic and being opposed to Zionism; they are different things. You can be a Zionist and not be a Jew. You can be a Jew and not be a Zionist. They are different things and to conflate them is to engage in a deception. The fact of the matter is that there are Jews who are actively and passionately engaged in the struggle against what is happening in Palestine. They are trying to right a wrong. They are trying to stop a war, the destruction of the Palestinian people and the destruction of the viability of a two-state solution to the conflict that has persisted in that part of the world.

The motion seems to assert that to not support a two-state solution is somehow to be antisemitic. I reject that as well. That is a ridiculous proposition. It cannot be said to be antisemitic to argue that the Jews, Christians and Muslims who have lived historically in Palestine for generations cannot one day live in one state from the river to the sea. That is not an antisemitic proposition. It is not an antisemitic proposition to suggest that. While in an imperfect world we might be willing to settle for a two-state solution as the way to find some enduring peace, the aspiration that all people, regardless of their religion, can live together in peace and harmony is not an antisemitic proposition.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (17:19): I commend the mover of this motion. The University of Sydney was founded on 1 October 1850 with the motto "sidere mens eadem mutato"—"the same intellectual tradition under a new constellation"—the idea being that under the Southern Cross, that intellectual tradition of Oxford and Cambridge would continue. But that intellectual tradition was different in one very important respect: There was no religious bar in place. The university was open to students from all backgrounds, unlike Oxford and Cambridge, where it would be another 21 years and the passage of the Universities Tests Act in 1871 by the United Kingdom Parliament before religious tests for admission and employment at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Durham would be removed.

Those tests have never been in place at the University of Sydney. It has always been a place open for students and staff of all religions. Like all universities in this State, founded in a country with no established religion, there have been no religious bars. As John Henry Newman has described the university, it is a place where students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge. It is a place for the communication and circulation of thought. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, discoveries verified and perfected, and error exposed by the collision of mind with mind and knowledge with knowledge. In this country, we have acknowledged that different minds should be able to collide, from different backgrounds and faiths, so that true knowledge will be advanced.

Fast-forward 175 years. How open to students of all faiths is the University of Sydney today? How easy is it for Jewish students to walk past an encampment at the literal door of the university, where support is being expressed for Hamas, a registered terrorist group responsible for the abduction and continuing detention of their co-religionists? How welcome do Jewish students feel hearing chants of "From the river to the sea" while trying to study in Fisher Library? There may be no religious tests in place, but what physical barriers are there for Jewish students? Why is the University of Sydney not demanding true religious freedom and respect for all and the removal of these encampments? In its *Charter of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom*, the University of Sydney notes in paragraph (5) that:

(5) The University of Sydney greatly values courage, civility and respect and promotes a climate where people disagree well.

It is a laudable aim. We call on the University of Sydney to ensure that it is implemented for the benefit of all.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (17:22): I speak in debate to support the amendments to the motion. I support a right to protest. Students engaging in perfectly lawful, peaceful protest is something that ought to happen in this State, where they express their views about things that matter to them. I also condemn any antisemitic comments. As the amendments to this motion state, I accept that all students—whether they are Jewish, Muslim, Christian or otherwise—are entitled to feel safe.

What is so awful about the original motion is that virtually every other week the Liberal Party moves similar motions that are designed to sow division and bring about hate at the same time as this Government is working to bring communities together through initiatives like the faith council and through the good work of its Ministers. As the Treasurer explained in his comments only minutes ago, our Government is trying to hold the community together, trying to ensure that people have a right to engage in protest and free speech and that people feel safe. Yet the Liberal Party, the so-called or purported party of freedom, is out there moving motions that will do exactly the opposite.

The Hon. Mark Buttigieg: What do you expect, with a leader like Dutton?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: In my view, trying to divide the community and sow division and hate is just unhelpful. When an awful international situation is going on and students—who I should say include Jewish students—are asking for all parties in this conflict to abide by international humanitarian law, members opposite seek to, in some way, exploit things and sow division.

[*Opposition members interjected.*]

The PRESIDENT: The Clerk will stop the clock. I understand that this is a very heated debate, with strong views on all sides. Members have allowed all speakers to be heard in silence. I want the rest of the debate to continue in that way. The Hon. Cameron Murphy has the call.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Thank you, Mr President. As a parliament, we have a responsibility for community harmony. This Parliament should be speaking as a whole, upholding people's right to protest and to feel safe. We have a responsibility to lead on this. Motions like this on every other private members' business day do the opposite of that. This Parliament deserves better, and the people of New South Wales deserve better. I commend the amendments to the motion.

The Hon. WES FANG (17:26): I will move an amendment to the amendments moved by the Treasurer but before doing so I will make a few observations. The Treasurer's contribution to this debate was measured, reasoned and entirely sensible. Ultimately, all members must speak as one against any form of oppression or any perceived support for anti-speech and anti-religion. We need to speak as one. However, when the Treasurer makes a contribution that, effectively, chides the Opposition for moving motions in this House, that message is somewhat lost when immediately afterwards the Parliamentary Secretary incites commentary accusing members on this side of the House—it was indiscriminate; I note that the Hon. Cameron Murphy at least had the good sense to be more targeted in his comments—of inciting hatred and making a number of other comments. To then use the phrase "from the river to the sea" and to say that it is not antisemitic, trying to justify its use in this place, belies the message that the Treasurer was trying to convey. Treasurer, it would do you good to speak to your own side before seeking to—

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Wes Fang will direct his comments through the Chair.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you, Mr President. I move:

That the amendment of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey be amended by inserting at the end of paragraph (b) "while not blocking fire escapes or egress points".

We hope that we can take the Treasurer's contribution at face value. Free speech is free speech but, ultimately, people's safety, whether they are a university student or whether they need to use a fire escape or an egress point, and all of those things should be respected. Let us hope that these debates can be handled in a sensible way.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (17:29): I have not contributed to previous debates on this issue because I have felt that I am less qualified than others who have spent more time studying matters in the Middle East. I do not like to make assertions and statements in the House about issues that I feel I am not qualified to speak on, but I felt compelled to speak in this debate largely to support the final part of the Treasurer's amendment about trying to avoid behaviour that sows discontent. This issue has been canvassed in the House through motions moved by the Opposition and through pointed questions asked in question time that were clearly positioned to sow discontent, both on this side of the House but also outside of Parliament, so that compelled me to speak. I also wanted to speak because it should be pointed out, as my colleague the Hon. Anthony D'Adam did, that just because the Hon. Chris Rath, or any other member in this House, says that something is, it does not make it so. To label something antisemitic does not make it so. It might be an opinion. As we heard from the Treasurer, there are very fierce disagreements on this issue. None of us here is scared—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. The member will resume her seat. I made it very clear that there would be no interjections in this debate. I will name members if they continue.

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE: It is also very inappropriate for the member who moved the motion to talk about the mass bombing of innocents in the context of what has been happening in Gaza and not acknowledge that side of the situation in the motion. I have regard for the Hon. Chris Rath's intellect and the way he engages in the House, but on this occasion his actions were unbecoming. We have a long history of protest on university campuses in Australia. Looking back, those protests have been about the Vietnam War, rights for Indigenous citizens in Australia, the women's movement and the anti-apartheid movement. I know which side of history I want to stand on. I commend students for being prepared to protest and voice their concerns about injustice. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: I seek an extension of 10 minutes because other speakers wish to contribute to this debate. They should not be prohibited from making their contributions, in the same manner as the concession made to the Government on a previous motion before the House.

Leave not granted.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (17:33): In reply: I thank all those who contributed to the debate. I know this is a heated issue. In terms of paragraph (e) of the Treasurer's amendment, it is not members on this side of the House who are trying to sow division. Rather, the protesters at the University of Sydney who are calling for intifada and chanting things like "from the river to the sea" are attempting to sow division. The Treasurer's amendment is quite good, but the original motion is better. The Opposition prefers it and will be voting accordingly.

I acknowledge the amendment of the Hon. Wes Fang. The Opposition wants to include not blocking fire escapes and egress points because the protesters at the University of Sydney—and I have the photos right here—have blocked several of them. We need to call that out for the safety of students, so paragraph (b) of the Treasurer's amendment needs to be amended to include not blocking fire escapes and egress points. There are points at which the line needs to be drawn when it comes to peaceful protest, and blocking fire escapes is certainly one of them. The point at which legitimate protest oversteps the mark is when violence is incited. In my speech I outlined that

"intifada" means calling for a violent uprising. That is what these protesters are calling for. The word incites violence.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Anthony D'Adam will cease interjecting.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Members on this side of the House condemn the slogans "intifada" and "from the river to the sea". It is a shame that those opposite do not condemn them also. In fact, they showed almost tacit support for those slogans. Members on this side of the House do not want to be tolerant of the intolerant. We call out these protesters for what they are, which is antisemites who are disrupting legitimate academic freedom at the University of Sydney. Slogans like "from the river to the sea" have been called out in previous motions. The House should continue in the vein of the Prime Minister, who said that these words were not appropriate and should not be used.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Chris Rath has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Daniel Mookhey has moved an amendment, to which the Hon. Wes Fang has moved a further amendment. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Wes Fang to the amendment of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes 18
Noes 23
Majority.....5

AYES

Carter	Maclaren-Jones	Rath (teller)
Fang (teller)	Martin	Roberts
Farlow	Merton	Ruddick
Farraway	Mihailuk	Taylor
Latham	Mitchell	Tudehope
MacDonald	Munro	Ward

NOES

Banasiak	Faehrmann	Mookhey
Borsak	Graham	Moriarty
Boyd	Higginson	Murphy (teller)
Buckingham	Houssos	Nanva (teller)
Buttigieg	Hurst	Primrose
Cohn	Jackson	Sharpe
D'Adam	Kaine	Suvaal
Donnelly	Lawrence	

Amendment of the Hon. Wes Fang to the amendment of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey negated.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the amendment of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey be agreed to. Is leave granted to ring the bells for one minute?

Leave granted.

The House divided.

Ayes 23
Noes 18
Majority.....5

AYES

Banasiak	Faehrmann	Mookhey
Borsak	Graham	Moriarty
Boyd	Higginson	Murphy (teller)
Buckingham	Houssos	Nanva (teller)
Buttigieg	Hurst	Primrose
Cohn	Jackson	Sharpe
D'Adam	Kaine	Suvaal
Donnelly	Lawrence	

NOES

Carter	Maclaren-Jones	Rath (teller)
Fang (teller)	Martin	Roberts
Farlow	Merton	Ruddick
Farraway	Mihailuk	Taylor
Latham	Mitchell	Tudehope
MacDonald	Munro	Ward

Amendment of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

STATE SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING MODEL

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (17:47): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the Federal Labor Government has proposed to scrap the 80-20 funding model opting for 50-50 funding split for all new major regional infrastructure projects; and
 - (b) the proposed scraping of the 80-20 funding model will be a further hit to the New South Wales budget following the public sector wage rise blowout and reduced GST revenue share coming from the Commonwealth Government.
- (2) That this House acknowledges that under the existing 80-20 funding model for State significant infrastructure projects such as the M1 Pacific Highway upgrade, Coffs Harbour bypass and the new Dubbo Bridge were completed or funded for the betterment of all people across New South Wales.
- (3) That this House calls on the Minns Labor Government to call on the Federal Labor Government to reinstate the 80-20 funding model for all major regional infrastructure projects in the upcoming 2024-25 Federal budget.

This is an important motion for significant road infrastructure in regional New South Wales. When the Federal Labor Government came to power, Minister Catherine King was pretty quick to start the conversation with the States, including New South Wales, that the Federal Government wanted to move away from what is a very successful funding model to build road infrastructure in regional New South Wales. That is an 80-20 funding split: 80 per cent paid by the Commonwealth and 20 per cent paid by the State Government. The reality is that in regional New South Wales sometimes if a complete business cost ratio is needed or if future dividends need to be justified that is very hard to do. If that lens were put on every regional project, in particular road projects, nothing would be built.

Even the Treasurer may support me on this, because there is no way we can continue as a State, no matter who sits on the Government benches, to build the infrastructure that this State needs under a 50-50 funding split in regional areas. We need an 80-20 funding split. This comes on top of the further GST revenue hit that New South Wales has had to take. I acknowledge yesterday in question time the Treasurer updated the House about some money he has been able to get back from the Commonwealth but I note that in his contribution not one dollar he outlined was going to regional New South Wales. It was all GST collected for projects in Western Sydney instead of western New South Wales.

Former Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss cemented the 80-20 funding split when in government, which allowed for the building of some real legacy projects across this State. The Pacific Highway upgrade would not have happened without the 80-20 funding split, no matter who sat on government benches. The former Coalition Government identified both Coalition-held and Labor-held areas along the eastern seaboard as a part of the Pacific Highway upgrade. We are finishing that highway as a State. We have the Coffs Harbour bypass project, which was started under the former Coalition Government and which the Labor Government is continuing to build. We also have the M1 to Raymond Terrace extension. They are two pinch points on a national highway in this State that need to be finished.

The new Dubbo Bridge is incredibly important to the community and for the service centre of Dubbo. It will assist with the movement of vehicles, people and freight and help with flood mitigation as well. I am calling on the Minns Labor Government to do what it needs to do: pick up the phone and call Prime Minister Albanese, because Federal Minister King is nowhere on this. We need to bypass the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads because, when asked, she cannot say what has been done, if anything. This is becoming a job for the State Treasurer. I have a lot more confidence in the Treasurer than I do in the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads. We need this Labor Government to start pushing its mates in Canberra to reinstate the 80-20 funding

model. I am sure the Treasurer will outline that, no matter the politics, no State government can fill an extra 30 per cent in funding for large-scale, much-needed regional road projects.

Some \$560 million is coming from the Federal Government and \$140 million from the State Government for the Singleton bypass. The M1 to Raymond Terrace extension has \$1.68 billion coming from the Federal Government and \$420 million from the State Government. It is worth noting that under the Federal Labor Government infrastructure review, this State lost \$5.36 billion in projects, and \$3.5 billion of that is Federal funding. No matter who is in government, they are forced into a position where they cannot fill the void. You cannot fill the funding gap when you change the funding model. I call on the Treasurer to get onto Canberra and get them to reinstate the 80-20 funding model for regional New South Wales.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (17:52): I move:

That the question be amended as follows:

- (1) In paragraph (1) (a) omit "Labor".
- (2) In paragraph (1) (b) omit "the public sector wage rise blowout and".
- (3) In paragraph (3) omit all words after "That" and insert instead:

this House supports calls made by the New South Wales Government to the Federal Government asking that the 80-20 funding model for regional infrastructure projects be reinstated.

The 80-20 funding model is the reason why major investments are being made in regional New South Wales, just as they are being made in regional Queensland, Western Australia, Victoria and the rest of the Federation. The funding model is a reasonable compromise when we consider that 81 per cent of taxes in Australia are collected by the Commonwealth Government and, as the High Court has recently found, fuel excise is exclusively the preserve of the Commonwealth. It has exclusive control of the major tax and excise levers that everybody depends upon when it comes to building road and rail infrastructure. This is why the 80-20 model came about as a reasonable compromise back in the day between Conservative and Labor governments. It is a reasonable compromise, and it should stay.

The amendment I put forward is a mature and bipartisan way in which we can make it clear to Canberra that both sides of politics are united on this point. I appreciate the strong enthusiasm and the level of confidence that the former shadow Minister for Regional Transport and Roads has in my abilities to persuade Canberra. It is fair to say that I am pleased that we managed to get \$1.9 billion back, and I am looking forward to further updates from the Commonwealth in respect to some other matters. All eyes are on them in respect to their budget, but the member will be pleased to know that as recently as a few weeks ago the Board of Treasurers made it clear that this is a common position shared across all States and Territories. New South Wales played a key role in bringing a consensus inside that forum. We are taking our responsibility as the premier State very seriously in leading the other States in this respect. I look forward to further updating the House on our efforts to make sure this State gets its fair share.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (17:55): The Greens support the amendment from the Government and, with that, the motion itself. We have some sympathy with the desire to depoliticise infrastructure projects, which we assume is the rationale for a potential recalculation of their funding mix. We want projects to be promised and assessed on merit, and to be planned and staged in a bigger picture way in collaboration with the Federal Government where appropriate. Perhaps an 80-20 split has incentivised an unsustainable rush to announce projects that are now overloading our national infrastructure pipeline, and so a 50-50 split may serve to slow that down. There must be a better considered mechanism to achieve this end, if that is indeed the policy intent behind this suggestion. Madam Deputy President, can you please stop the clock?

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Emma Hurst): Order! The Clerk will stop the clock. I assume Ms Abigail Boyd is about to take a point of order. There is a lot of chatter in the Chamber. Members will keep their conversations to a minimum. If members would like to have conversations, they are more than welcome to find somewhere else in the building.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: However, if the intent of the suggestion is simply to foist more expenses onto the States, then that is something we cannot countenance. It is incumbent on the Federal Government to carry a greater load of expenditure because, as the Treasurer wisely said, that is where the money and the levers lie. The Government amendment is sensible and avoids the Opposition's hyperventilation over workers' wages. The Opposition's inclusion of a petty jab about wages warrants noticing. The Opposition seems hell-bent on pursuing a future full of bridges for public sector workers to sleep under because their wages are so unfairly capped that they have become priced out of homes in their communities. Opposition members need to be constantly challenged on their nonsensical and frankly cruel opposition to the livelihoods of working people in this State. But I digress. The Government amendment is good. It sets out a sensible position that we can all support, and we are happy to

endorse a message that tells the Federal Government to pull its socks up, pull its wallet out and stop pursuing a Federal surplus at the expense of the States and their residents.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (17:58): I support the motion moved by my colleague the Hon. Sam Farraway regarding funding for major regional infrastructure projects. We know that major infrastructure projects have a massive impact on the day-to-day lives of people not only in regional communities but right across the State. In his contribution the Hon. Sam Farraway canvassed very well the importance of making sure that the 80-20 funding split remains. He referenced Warren Truss, who I think was always referred to as a safe pair of hands. Perhaps he was not the flashiest National Party leader we ever had, but that is maybe not a bad thing. Sometimes you need someone who is a steady pair of hands and very sensible. That is exactly what Trussy was. That was good public policy in terms of making sure that the regions got their fair share.

In his contribution the Hon. Sam Farraway talked about what it means in practical terms when you get solid government investment in regional infrastructure like the upgrade to the Pacific Highway, the Coffs Harbour Bypass or the Dubbo Bridge. It serves a number of purposes. For those of us who live in the bush and who drive to Sydney, whether for work, for medical appointments or for holidays, the difference and safety improvements that that infrastructure investment has made—and I pay credit to former Minister Duncan Gay—literally saves lives. There is no question about that. We can never underinvest when it comes to regional roads because, frankly, we drive all the time on those roads. We drive on those major highways into metro areas. When you can have good quality infrastructure, it literally can be the difference between life and death.

For particular areas, good investment in a bridge or a road can also do simple things like ensure kids get to school safely. I know that sounds trite, but that is the lived reality of a lot of people in regional communities. The other point is that those regional infrastructure projects, including a number that have been cancelled and not yet had their funding brought back, make a difference in terms of freight networks and getting food and fibre to port. Maybe the Treasurer will go in to fight for the regions in Canberra on those as well. Those things matter for people, not just in regional communities but in the cities as well. When those good transport networks and the right linkages, intermodals and investments are not in place, people in the city also suffer because they cannot access the goods that they rely on.

The Hon. Sam Farraway: Paddock to plate.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Exactly. This is an important motion. It might be one that we end up all agreeing on, which is good. Now, of course, the onus will be on the Treasurer to fight not just for those projects in Western Sydney to be reinstated and to get their money back but also those in regional New South Wales, because they matter and make a difference for people across the State.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (18:01): I contribute to debate on this important motion. I commend the amendment to the motion to the House, because it will make the motion even better. It is absolutely vital that we return to a fair system in the allocation of funding to New South Wales. We have seen during developments over the past few months that the system just is not fair for New South Wales. We recognise that we are part of a Commonwealth. We are part of the Federation. That means that a State like ours has to do its fair share to support some of the smaller States like Tasmania or South Australia in order to keep the Federation and the Commonwealth together. That is fair and absolutely reasonable. There is nothing wrong with it.

What is wrong is when a State like Western Australia gets a GST split even though it has record mining royalties coming in while infrastructure funding in New South Wales is cut at the same time. New South Wales suffers because it simply does not have the ability to meet the needs of its population under those unfair arrangements. This forward-looking Government will approach the issue in an adult way by having a conversation with the Commonwealth about the issues in an effort to restore fairness. I note the ridiculousness of a suburb near where I live, Googong, being declared a regional city by the Commonwealth Grants Commission. That is a suburb of Queanbeyan. On its own it is not an area that has a hospital or the sort of infrastructure that would be found in a regional city.

That is a symptom of the problem, which is that the Commonwealth Government's methodology for the way infrastructure is funded and for its GST carve-up has been grossly unfair. New South Wales is more than prepared to pay its fair share to support the Federation and those smaller States, but we cannot be in the current position of complete unfairness to our residents. The Commonwealth has to listen and has to do more. The Treasurer is doing an excellent job and he is approaching it in a mature and reasonable manner by having a discussion. That discussion has already resulted in \$1.9 billion being given back. He is progressing it in a sensible and dignified manner that is working. I commend the amendment and the motion if amended to the House.

The Hon. WES FANG (18:04): I was reluctant to speak in this debate but felt compelled after the contribution of the Hon. Cameron Murphy. I was provoked when the Hon. Sam Farraway spoke, but I was

compelled when the Hon. Cameron Murphy made his contribution. The Hon. Sam Farraway praised the Treasurer. That provoked in me a sense that I needed to correct the record. Because the Treasurer thinks he is good, and maybe the Hon. Sam Farraway was trying to milk a bit of that and encourage him but, let us be honest, there is no way that the Federal Labor Government would have cut the funding if it was truly scared of the Treasurer. The Hon. Sam Farraway has maybe given him a little too much credit.

But I was absolutely compelled to speak when the Hon. Cameron Murphy talked about "adult conversations". "We are going to have an adult conversation with the Federal Government about this," he says. "The Minns Labor Government at State level is going to have an adult conversation." That is the reason the Federal Government took back the funding in the first place—that lacklustre, weak-kneed, absolute wet-lettuce-leaf-threat way that the Government does business. The Hon. Sam Farraway was right to move this motion because, let us be honest, members opposite could not get it done. Yes, they got a little money out of Catherine King. That is only because they needed to get some of the Sydney roads done because they knew they were losing support. The Government needs to restore what was cut from rural and regional areas. That is the bit it needs to deliver on and that it has forgotten about. It has gotten a little money for Western Sydney. That is great. Obviously it needs to keep some people happy there. But rural and regional communities are missing out.

The Hon. Sam Farraway is right to move this motion. It should not be amended. It should be passed as is. The Hon. Cameron Murphy's position that we should have some "adult conversations" about this to fix it is the very reason Albo is sitting there counting his dollars and telling Catherine King to pull the money out of New South Wales—because, at best, what will he get? A wet lettuce leaf from members opposite? They need to do better and stand up for and deliver for rural and regional New South Wales. If the best that they can do is deliver an adult conversation on the matter, well, God help us. Because, honestly, they are not up to the job. They should put us back in government. We will deliver for rural and regional New South Wales. The Federal Government did not pull this trick when we were in government; it has only done it to those opposite.

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (18:07): I add my voice to this discussion tonight. I speak in support of the amendment so ably put by our Treasurer. I acknowledge and reiterate the words of the Treasurer earlier this week that the outcome of getting funding back for Western Sydney had been the result of an approach "characterised by steadfast advocacy, quiet diplomacy and technical mastery". I encourage some members of this House to perhaps think more along the lines of those three things. There is an old saying: You get more with honey than with vinegar. I am also inclined to think that way. I also acknowledge the Treasurer's remarks on our position regarding the funding. It should be 80-20. That is unchanged.

As someone who lives in regional New South Wales, I also understand and echo some of the comments of the Hon. Sarah Mitchell about the benefits key infrastructure projects have for our regions. It is great to see the Raymond Terrace bypass, as I call it, or the M1 Pacific Highway extension underway. I use that route regularly when I travel from Cessnock to my duty seat of Myall Lakes. It is also used very frequently to commute to the airport in Newcastle and it is used by people from the Hunter Expressway into the Port of Newcastle. It is a key link to unlocking more potential in our region of the Hunter. It will be particularly beneficial, as the Hon. Sam Farraway will well know, in getting some of the oversized vehicles through that point.

The Hon. Sam Farraway: Those wretched turbine blades!

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL: They are quite challenging to get through our area. We have a commitment to reach net zero and we have designated renewable energy zones. We need the infrastructure in place to reach that commitment. The M1 Pacific Highway extension will play a really important role in improving the tourism in the area. Anyone who has tried to drive through it at any peak time, such as during school holidays, will know of the bumper-to-bumper traffic. I commend the amendments to the House and support these infrastructure projects in our regional areas.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (18:10): I support this motion. It is critically important that we understand what a lot of the infrastructure—or so-called infrastructure, we should say—in regional and rural areas is really like. Unfortunately, too many of the decision-makers, too many of those quiet diplomats with their technical mastery and their adult conversations, only travel on city roads. They fly over regional areas. I encourage the Treasurer, next time he is engaged in quiet diplomacy, to take Catherine King and Mr Albanese in an older car without great suspension—like those that many of us drive—on some of those great regional and rural roads. Perhaps he would like to go to the cherry capital of New South Wales, Young, and some of the areas around Young such as Monteagle, and talk to some of the people living on properties there. But first of all he would have to make a phone call to ask, "Which approach is flooded today? Have the potholes that are so big they swallow cars been fixed on the approach from Grenfell or do I have to come in the other way?"

These are the conversations that our taxpayers who live in regional Australia commonly have to have. That area, which has whole roads washed out by floods, produces fibre, cherries, wheat and meat and its tourism

potential is expanding enormously. But, of course, all of that is limited if the roads are not there to be able to access markets, visitors and tourists. We are selling this State short if we do not demand appropriate investment in the infrastructure we need so that our people can take their products to market and visit each other, and so that we can holiday in this great State because we can actually drive on roads that are safe and efficient and have not been damaged by heavy trucks or washed away by floods. With appropriate investment we will not have to ring people who live a slow four-hour drive from Sydney and ask, "Which approach is safe this time? Which of your many roads are washed out?" That is critically important for everyone in New South Wales.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (18:13): I compliment the Hon. Wes Fang for his character assessment of the Treasurer.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: You could not have said it better yourself.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I could not have said it better myself. The extraordinary amendment moved by the Treasurer removes the word "Labor" from the motion. Last time I looked it was a Federal Labor Government. Clearly the Treasurer wants to disassociate himself. He does not want to know them—"They have nothing to do with me! Labor has to go because we don't like them. They are people we don't want to know about." There is a serious point to this. The Federal regional transport Minister thought it was okay to cut funding because she decided that they are not in the same party any more. She does not have to deal with this bloke because he does not belong to any party that she has been part of. That is why she feels free to make that funding cut.

It is extraordinary that time after time the Treasurer has congratulated himself on getting the \$1.9 billion funding back for projects in Western Sydney. Give me a break! We already had that funding and he lost it. He lost that funding and now we have it back for the projects that are essential to the delivery of one of the most important pieces of infrastructure in New South Wales. The funding was already there and the project was earmarked to be done. The Federal Government cut the funding and that had a detrimental effect on the projects. I want the Treasurer to pay attention to one other point: For all the projects that have been cut, the Treasurer should make the pledge now that when the 80-20 funding split is restored he will commit the New South Wales Government to those projects, because at the heart of this motion is the future of New South Wales.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (18:17): I make a brief contribution to debate. I have learned—and this has been reinforced for me many times in this place over more than a decade—that critical transport infrastructure in this country and in this State should not be used as a political football, but here it is again. People in the regions lose their lives on roads that are underfunded because it has been a political football in this country since Federation. In my region, in the Bellingen region, a friend of mine died on Waterfall Way two weeks ago, in part because of the quality of the roads there. Members in this place have seen the blame game play out between the Federal Government and its State counterparts for too long. If there is one area where we should build consensus, it is on our critical transport infrastructure. Tonight's debate makes that point again.

The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (18:18): In reply: Firstly, I reiterate the points that were made by my colleague the Hon. Damien Tudehope. On reading the amendments moved by the Treasurer to my motion, I think he is trying to hide from reality: We have a Federal Labor Government, the Anthony Albanese Labor Government. Now that the Prime Minister is on the nose, the State Treasurer of New South Wales does not want anything to do with him. We have seen what is happening in the polls for the Federal Labor Government. It is clearly on the nose. In some ways I understand what the Treasurer is doing. He does not want a bar of Albo. He knows Catherine King is cut, cut, cut.

He knows his Minister for Regional Transport and Roads has not lifted a finger. She does not answer a question. The poor old Treasurer of New South Wales is stuck holding the can, having to defend the Labor movement whilst distancing himself and removing a factual point of this motion, which is the Commonwealth Government is a Federal Labor Government. That is the first point. We could debate the second point all night. I am sure the Hon. Damien Tudehope would go toe to toe with the Treasurer about trying to omit the public sector wage rise blowout. The reality is that it will cost money and it comes down to priorities. I am sure that is a debate that will rage on for quite some time.

We have been able to come to an agreement about the third part of the amendment because there is no way that the Opposition will ever commend the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads for doing nothing, trying to seek assurances from Canberra around 80-20 funding. We are not going to commend a Labor State Government for basically not doing anything. That is never going to happen. There is no way that the Opposition can support the amendments, but I do say to the Treasurer that there is still a huge job to do. He needs to take the will of this House to Canberra, get in Mr Chalmers' face and say, "Regional New South Wales wants their money back."

If I look at the list of projects I have and the huge amount of funding that was cut from the Federal Government's infrastructure review, number one on the list is the Great Western Highway. That east-west divide,

the next piece of road infrastructure that should be fixed—even the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham supports me on this. Even Jezza supports me on this! At the end of the day, we need that funding model reinstated. We need to build the legacy infrastructure that this State deserves and that it needs to advance into the future. We do not need Labor in Canberra telling Labor in Sydney what will happen, what will be cut and what will be funded.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Sam Faraway has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Daniel Mookhey has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes 24
Noes 14
Majority..... 10

AYES

Banasiak
Borsak
Boyd
Buckingham
Buttigieg
Cohn
D'Adam
Donnelly

Faehrmann
Graham
Higginson
Hurst
Jackson
Kaine
Latham
Lawrence

Mookhey
Moriarty
Murphy (teller)
Nanva (teller)
Primrose
Roberts
Sharpe
Suvaal

NOES

Carter
Fang (teller)
Farlow
Faraway
MacDonald

Maclaren-Jones
Martin
Merton
Mihailuk
Munro

Rath (teller)
Taylor
Tudehope
Ward

PAIRS

Houssos

Mitchell

Amendment agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

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

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (20:01): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that according to the Australian Government, Institute of Health and Welfare as of July 2023:
 - (a) suicide was the second leading cause of death in Australia for children aged between five and 17 years at 15.5 per cent of deaths;
 - (b) suicide was the leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 24 at 36 per cent of deaths;
 - (c) for people aged 25 to 44, the leading cause of death was suicide at 22 per cent; and
 - (d) over three-quarters, 75.6 per cent, of people who died by suicide were male.
- (2) That this House further notes that according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics:
 - (a) suicide was the cause of death that accounted for the highest number of years of potential life lost for both males and females, due to the high proportion of suicides that occur within younger age groups;
 - (b) a person who died by suicide lost on average 35.6 years of life;
 - (c) almost 85.8 per cent of people who died by suicide had risk factors identified; and
 - (d) the most recorded suicide risk factors included mood affective disorders, suicide ideation, problems with spousal relationships, and personal history of self-harm.

- (3) That this House notes that suicides are potentially avoidable deaths that may have been avoided through individualised care or hospitalisation.
- (4) That this House notes that the March 2023 report presented by the New South Wales branch of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists and an alliance of peak health and mental health groups found that:
 - (a) triage and assessment services are piecemeal, so people often miss out on getting an accurate diagnosis early and, hence, the right management plan;
 - (b) services that scored poorly on access and equity measures, particularly private psychiatry, and psychology, scored significantly higher on effectiveness;
 - (c) there are not enough hospital beds;
 - (d) it is almost impossible to access community follow up for patients who are not on community treatment orders unless they can pay for private providers; and
 - (e) people with lifetime complex cognitive and mental health impairments who demonstrate aggression, often without acute diagnoses, are channelled into the criminal justice system.
- (5) That this House further notes that *The Sydney Morning Herald* article written by Mary Ward on 11 March 2024 stated that:
 - (a) long wait times, a shortage of hospital beds and rising demand for adolescent care have left New South Wales mental health services in a "constant state of crisis";
 - (b) a 2023 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare report found mental health issues represented 15 per cent of New South Wales' total burden of disease, yet only 6.5 per cent of the State's total health budget was spent on mental health;
 - (c) Professor Samuel Harvey, Executive Director of the Black Dog Institute, and member of the NSW Mental Health Alliance said, "The fact is the New South Wales mental health system is critically underfunded and on the brink of collapse";
 - (d) it was revealed last month that a \$7.5 million plan to build a four-bed dedicated adolescent mental health unit at Northern Beaches Hospital had been abandoned, replaced with a \$500,000 Safe Haven at Brookvale Community Health Centre;
 - (e) Sydney is at risk of losing 70 private psychiatric beds as Wesley Mission intends closing hospitals in Ashfield and Kogarah; and
 - (f) in 2021 a woman waited 27 hours with her suicidal teenager at a major Sydney emergency department and they still did not see a psychiatrist, and there were no mental health beds available in the city that day.
- (6) That this House calls on the Government to consider increasing funding for mental health services and suicide prevention programs using:
 - (a) the current 15 per cent point of consumption tax on gambling and wagering and/or;
 - (b) a mental health levy, like Victoria and Queensland have implemented:
 - (i) payroll tax of 0.5 per cent of taxable wages over \$10 million; and
 - (ii) an additional 0.5 per cent of taxable wages over \$100 million.

Tragically and desperately, suicide is the leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 44 years in our country. Males account for 75 per cent of those deaths. In 2020-21 more than 63,000 people with suicidal thoughts presented to New South Wales emergency departments. It is a crisis. Factors contributing to suicidal distress include trauma in childhood, mental health issues, disconnection, discrimination, inequity, loss of family and societal value, loneliness, a crisis, and exposure to suicide. The 2023 Suicide Prevention Australia *State of the Nation* report anticipates increases in suicide rates in 2024 due in part to cost of living, debt and unaffordable housing. We need a whole-of-government approach to suicide prevention. We need a whole-of-society approach to suicide prevention. We need to discuss suicide more now than ever before.

In 2006 Japan introduced an Act for suicide prevention and since then suicide deaths have fallen by about 40 per cent. In 2021 South Australia passed the first suicide prevention legislation in Australia, with 10 government departments, including the police, being required to implement suicide prevention plans. Victoria established a suicide prevention and response office in July 2022. New South Wales should introduce a standalone suicide prevention Act enabling mental health and suicide prevention to be considered beyond the health system.

The New South Wales mental health system is underfunded. Wait times are too long, services are stretched and understaffed, and people who need help are being turned away. A person experiencing a mental health crisis sometimes will not willingly get help. They may end up being brought into an emergency department by police, which can be a distressing experience. The Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response [PACER] program was part of the New South Wales Government's COVID-19 mental health package. It involved 36 specialist mental health clinicians employed across 10 police area commands and districts in Sydney. There should be a rollout of the PACER program across all police area commands and local health districts in New South Wales.

Emergency departments are not designed for someone in acute crisis seeking help. One member of the Black Dog Institute Lived Experience Resource Centre said:

I will never go back again ... I have to sit there, manage an acute active crisis and hope that I have the strength to get out of it. It makes me feel so worthless.

Those that get admitted to mental health wards for weeks or months are provided with few activities and few psychology services. Patients are locked in, sedated and given medication often with severe side effects. The mentally ill are at the mercy of "experts" who oversee their health, but how considered and rigorous is that health care? Community-based mental health services are underfunded and undeveloped. There is very limited supported accommodation. There are not enough private GPs, psychologists and psychiatrists to meet demand. Even with private psychiatrists charging up to \$800 per hour, many psychiatrists' books are closed to new patients. Even if an appointment is available, psychiatrists pick and choose who they will take on.

New South Wales needs a statewide dedicated community mental health navigation support service to help people obtain support services such as housing and employment. Funding should go to those who are contributing on the ground face to face, taking time with people, following through on arranging jobs and accommodation, providing company, and providing face-to-face psychology or psychiatry. Mental health represents 15 per cent of the burden of disease in New South Wales but is only funded with 6.5 per cent of the overall Health budget. New South Wales spends less per capita than other States to support people with mental health conditions. We should have a dedicated revenue stream to provide ongoing funding for mental health services. One option is a point of consumption tax. This is an existing tax on all wagers placed by New South Wales residents, which raised \$161.6 million in revenue in 2020-21, of which \$52.7 million was gifted to NSW Racing.

I seek an extension of time.

Leave granted.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: In 2022-23, \$70 million from the point of consumption tax revenue was given to Racing NSW. In March 2024 the Minister for Finance, the Hon. Courtney Houssos, stated in budget estimates that revenue from the tax was forecast to be \$970 million. We have the money if we have the will to use it on suicide prevention and mental health. That tax revenue is likely to continue to grow and should be hypothecated to this area in crisis. In Victoria a mental health and wellbeing payroll tax surcharge commenced on 1 January 2022. The levy was a recommendation of the royal commission into Victoria's mental health system. The Victorian mental health payroll levy imposes a surcharge of 0.5 per cent on employers whose taxable wages are more than \$10 million and 1 per cent on those with total annual wages of more than \$100 million. The money generated from the levy is pledged to mental health programs and cannot be spent on other measures. A similar initiative was rolled out in Queensland. We need to do the same in this State now.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (20:07): On behalf of the Government I indicate that we support the motion moved by the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham, with two minor amendments. Accordingly, I move:

That the question be amended as follows:

- (1) Omit paragraph (5) (d).
- (2) Omit in paragraph (6) all words after "programs" and insert instead "potentially through mental health funding initiatives, modelled on those implemented in other jurisdictions like Victoria and Queensland."

In speaking to the motion, I thank the honourable member for bringing this issue before the House. There has been a lot of conversation over recent weeks—and rightfully so—about untreated mental illness in the community. That conversation has highlighted this issue that I know people in the sector have for some time been trying to give the priority and the platform that it deserves. It is good to see these conversations coming to the fore. Specifically on the issue of suicide, I give the honourable member and the House my commitment as the Minister for Mental Health that the New South Wales Labor Government will introduce standalone suicide prevention legislation within this term of Parliament. He rightfully calls out the success stories in Japan and South Korea, which introduced standalone suicide prevention legislation and have seen the impact of that. We have made that commitment.

I do not want to put a time frame on that legislation because it needs to be deeply informed by people with lived experience for it to be effective. What I do not want and what I know that the honourable member does not want is a piece of paper. We need the change that that piece of paper catalyses. We need the funding—including potential models like the member has described—to make that legislation real. Those things take time. I do not want this to be a slapdash tick-a-box exercise. I want a deep and whole-of-government engagement with this question, so that consultation is important. That commitment is on the record that in this term of Parliament we

will introduce and hopefully pass that legislation. I hope that that brings about the kind of whole-of-government change that the member refers to.

I will also briefly indicate one of our challenges in mental health—in particular, in men's mental health. The member rightly identifies the chronic underfunding of community services, but of those many men—in particular, those who die by suicide—50 per cent have never reached out to a service. The high demand that we have for mental health does not even reflect those people who do not yet have the courage to reach out for help. Of those who have reached out for help, half of them have disengaged with support. It is not just that the services are underfunded, which they are; it is that they are not meeting the needs of the people who are reaching out and using them. It is one of the many issues that I hope will be canvassed as part of that suicide prevention legislation. I thank the honourable member for moving this important motion.

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (20:10): On behalf of the Opposition I speak in debate and thank the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham for moving this motion. His passion and conviction on this issue is exactly what we need. I also thank Minister Jackson for her contribution. We need to look at a lot of different things. The Minister is correct when she said that 50 per cent of people who will attempt suicide have not reached out for help, which means we have to do that work so much earlier on. New South Wales rolled out the world's largest suicide prevention training program. It aimed to train 275,000 people through LivingWorks, including high school teachers, support staff, parents, police officers and community groups. Those important initiatives get to the crux of the problem before it becomes a problem. We must look at different and innovative ways of doing things. That is why the Safe Haven model—which we also copied from Victoria—has had such great success. It was used in the rollout in the floods and in bushfire-affected areas because it has been so successful.

I also want to talk about Habilis. The former Government contributed \$4.6 million to construction funding and \$1 million to the mental health budget. Victoria supported housing for people with schizophrenia who were at risk of homelessness. It has proven to be successful in other States because it enables people to live independently but with that support wrapped around them, which is essential. I visited the site at Summer Hill in December 2012, and I look forward to seeing it up and running and operational. We have to think of different things. The successful trial of placing final year psychology students in headspace to reduce the waiting list was great. Often people fight about what is Federal funding and what is State funding. I loved working with Jason Trethowan of headspace to make sure that we got that done and I hope it continues.

I finalise my contribution by saying that New South Wales saw a real decrease in youth suicide over a number of years. We really bucked the trend. No other State had seen that decrease before. We need to go back and look at that to see what we are doing right. My predecessor implemented a suicide prevention plan in New South Wales. I know that it is a difficult thing to talk about, and we must talk about it, but we must also acknowledge the things that have worked over time because we had never seen that in an Australian State before. That was not the Government or me as the Minister; it was the people who provide the services each and every day. The Opposition supports the Government's amendments.

Dr AMANDA COHN (20:13): The Greens support the motion. The motion describes exactly what we have heard in evidence given to the current inquiry into the equity and accessibility of outpatient and community mental health service in New South Wales: This is a mental health system that is in crisis. As one witness put so beautifully, when somebody has cancer, we do not wait for that cancer to get to stage four to admit them to hospital for a single course of chemotherapy and then discharge them back into the community with no support.

That is exactly what we are doing with mental health, and it would not be acceptable for any other kind of illness. There is a total funding gap for mental health services—the mover of the motion has already articulated that. We need the Government to look at innovative revenue streams to meet that gap. It will not come from the existing mental health budget or the existing health budget. My colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann will elaborate on some of the opportunities to do that, which are currently being missed.

It is not just about the quantity of funding; it is also about the way that it is so fragmented at the moment. Service organisations are getting single short-term contracts. They are constantly writing grant applications. They cannot give their staff job security or opportunities for progression. There is a total disconnection between mental health services and other health, social and community services. We keep funding episodic care. We fund care per appointment or per presentation rather than long-term, longitudinal relationships between people so that they can see and build a relationship with a clinician over the long term.

We have heard about the specific unmet needs of priority populations: young people, older people, First Nations people, LGBTQIA+ people, people in rural and remote areas, culturally and linguistically diverse people, and people with a disability. We heard that between January and October 2023, 208 young people in New South Wales were being treated in adult mental health units. I do not think members would think that that is acceptable. We heard about some of the challenges for those priority populations in finding cultural safety in mainstream

health services. In particular, trans and gender-diverse people are facing unacceptable discrimination in healthcare settings, which means that they frequently do not access health care even when it is necessary.

While suicide prevention training is being delivered in New South Wales, it is clear from responses to my questions during budget estimates that this has not successfully reached some of those priority populations, particularly rural and regional communities and LGBTQIA+ people living in the regions. There is some important work to be done in that space. We also have a workforce that is in crisis. Some of that is to do with pay and conditions being better interstate. It is also about professionals not being able to work to their full scope of practice or in teams to do the kind of work that would be meaningful for them, which provides job satisfaction and reduces burnout. That is some of that long-term relationship care, rather than transactional episodic care. Even worse, we do not have any statewide visibility, for example, on vacancies in public mental health services. There is so much more work to do. We appreciate the opportunity to debate this important issue, as well as the commitments made by the Minister.

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (20:16): I make a brief contribution in support of the motion moved by the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham. I join with other members in thanking him for moving the motion. It is an important issue to discuss, particularly at this point in time. I also thank him for his ongoing commitment to and advocacy in this sector and in this space. He joins a number of us in what has now been termed a bi-champion issue by the Hon. Susan Carter. There was discussion around innovative funding solutions. Some of the ideas that have been tossed around are welcome solutions. It is clear that there are no bad ideas at the moment, and we are looking at all options. Some of the innovative workforce solutions or solutions for people to access care are also areas that our Government is undertaking work on, that, over time, have been more and more recognised. They were certainly discussed throughout the inquiry that we have undertaken. I commend Dr Amanda Cohn for her work during that inquiry.

The role of peer support workers has shown an increasing value in the sector. It has always had value, and it has always been recognised as important. Indeed, I can recall some 15 to 20 years ago being a consumer representative on a committee somewhere, doing something and not getting paid for it at the time. It was shown to be of value then, and the importance of that role now is perhaps not fully understood. The role that peer workers play is better understood but still not appropriately recognised or maximised. We heard from a number of those workers in the inquiry—and I have also spoken to a number of them over time—that they play a role in helping with care navigation and that just being with someone at the time of crisis is so important.

I welcome the work the Government is doing to modernise the ways in which these wonderful workers are treated and recognised. The Minister has been a real champion in this space and understands the importance of the work they do. I will be very pleased—that may be the wrong word—when the suicide bill is introduced to Parliament. It will be a welcome initiative and certainly a day to celebrate. I have every confidence that our wonderful Minister will bring us a bill that is of the most robust quality.

The Hon. EMMA HURST (20:20): As a former psychologist, I support this important motion and thank the member for bringing it to the House today. I know doing so would not have been easy for him, so I thank him. I particularly highlight what the member calls for in the motion: that the money already exists and we do not need to raise taxes or take money from hospitals or schools. The industries that cause harm have a social responsibility to ensure that the money they generate is used to fix that harm. I briefly mention vets, who have one of the highest suicide rates of any profession.

The House is conducting an inquiry into the veterinary shortage and the stresses that vets face to understand why. I do not want to predict anything about the findings of that inquiry, but it has certainly heard about the stresses that vets face. Of course, a lot of funding is needed in this space as well. There is money for all of this. It is entirely unconscionable to allow harmful industries to make pots of gold when we should be targeting the most vulnerable people in our society to make sure they get the help they need. I again thank the member for the motion, which is not just sensible but also common sense.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (20:21): I support the motion of the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham and thank him for bringing it to this place. When I was 10 years old growing up in country Queensland, my brother, who was 15 at the time, pulled a knife on a kid at his local school. He was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia and was in and out of institutions and hostels and on different types of medication for the rest of his life. Eventually, he took his own life when I was 25. He was 28. That was 30 years ago, and it is heartbreaking to still hear the same stories—30 years ago I thought that surely things would get better, that more funding would be put into mental health services and people would be treated and we would see less suicide. But that is not the case and it is incredibly heartbreaking.

Funding is available. I echo the Hon. Emma Hurst's contribution that the industries that cause harm could be paying for so many more services. I put one on record in the limited time I have available: the ClubGRANTS

scheme, which gives more than \$100 million annually to communities, but more than \$8 billion was lost to poker machines in this State in 2023. Millions and millions of dollars are going to wealthy sports clubs, which has been described as an absolutely massive rort by the likes of the NSW Council of Social Service, Wesley Mission and other organisations. I understand the scheme is up for review at the moment after submissions closed in March.

I call on the Minister for Gaming and Racing, the Hon. David Harris, to really think about this. I also understand that the review into the cashless gambling card for pokies is currently looking at the ClubGRANTS scheme. What better way to get a bit more respect in the community than to put all the proceeds from poker machine losses into frontline services? That is what the scheme is supposed to be for and what it says it is about, but it is not. Potentially hundreds of millions of dollars could be funded from poker machine revenue. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (20:24): I make a brief contribution. First of all, I thank the member for bringing this motion to the House. By way of background, I worked for a time as a psychiatric nurse and also a community nurse, linking in with a psychiatric clinic nearby. One of the things I found most confronting was when a young 15-year-old boy had a psychotic episode and he had to go into the adult locked facility. I was still in my early 20s, so I could relate to what he was going through. He was in an environment with adults—men and women of all different ages—where everyone was unwell without support available.

When I worked in the community nursing sector, there were also no resources or support. One area that needs more focus, as well as adolescent mental health, is community support. Particularly regarding adolescent mental health, the Government must ensure that there are more beds and clinics. Families are at their wit's end. We heard from Ms Cate Faehrmann about what she went through, which is being seen day in, day out now, and parents are reaching out desperately. Recently a parent told me she had to take out an apprehended violence order on her teenage son because there was no-one to see to get treatment. In many ways we are not only failing the families but also failing the kids. We should be doing everything we can in this space, and that means increasing funding.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (20:26): In reply: I thank all members for their erudite and articulate contributions to debate on this motion. It augurs well that we are bringing to bear such great contributions and skills on a difficult problem. I thank Minister Jackson for her commitment to introduce a suicide prevention bill during this term of Parliament, which is very good news. I also thank the former Minister, the Hon. Bronnie Taylor, for highlighting that great people are working in great services in this space, such as the work that safe havens do to lower those rates of youth suicide. Other members shared their expertise and lived experience, which also augurs well for solving this problem and at least working to limit the impact of mental health issues on individuals, families and communities, and eliminating the scourge of suicide over time. But we need the resources to do that.

I join with the Animal Justice Party, The Greens and all other parties in recognising that dedicated revenue streams must be found. I look forward to a bill coming before the House, potentially going to inquiry, and the Government acting with the support of the House to find the money for work in this area. The Hon. Emma Hurst and Ms Cate Faehrmann are absolutely right that there are some big pots of gold that come from problematic areas in our society, none more so than gambling, which contributes to such bad mental health, domestic violence and suicide outcomes. We need to build a consensus around acting in this area and how to fund mental health services, which I think is forming in our society.

In Victoria and Queensland, when the mental health levy on payroll tax was introduced, business welcomed it because it is their people who suffer as well. There is a productivity dividend from not having the scourge of suicide and mental health diseases rampant in our society. Business is behind it and I can see from the debate tonight that all sides of politics are. I thank the House.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Rose Jackson has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): The question is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

*Bills***LOCAL GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT (DE-AMALGAMATION PLEBISCITES) BILL 2023****Second Reading Debate**

Debate resumed from 22 November 2023.

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (20:30): I lead for the Government in debate on the Local Government Amendment (De-amalgamation Plebiscites) Bill 2023. The Government opposes the bill, which lacks a clear and transparent process. Unfortunately, we have before us another rushed amending bill that has not been given sufficient attention and consideration as to how the de-amalgamation process will operate in practice, how it will safeguard the future sustainability of councils and communities and how it will fit within the broader legislative context of the Local Government Act. Just like the current de-amalgamation framework set out under section 218CC of the Local Government Act, if we pass this bill we will end up with another flawed and unworkable framework that prevents councils from being able to de-amalgamate in a way that is democratic and administratively feasible and that mitigates future risks for councils and communities.

The bill raises far too many questions—simple and reasonable questions of process and intention. First and foremost, one needs to ask where is the democracy in this process put forward by the proposer of the bill. There is no leadership or involvement from the democratically elected local council in this core local government matter. What if the proposed demerger is not supported by the council, the representative body elected by the community to make decisions on its behalf and in its interests? For that matter, what if the community as a whole does not support the proposal? What opportunity does the community have to express its views about the de-amalgamation proposal? A vote in a plebiscite does not allow for discourse and feedback, which are fundamental elements to genuine consultation.

Another problem with the bill is that there are no checks and balances. Unfortunately, the onus would be placed on the Government and not the council to prepare a case for and against de-amalgamation. It is possible that The Greens may not trust their locally elected representatives to carry out the views of the community. A further question relates to what type of information would need to be provided to the community in these de-amalgamation cases. Surely, to be sufficiently informed ahead of a plebiscite, the community would need to know about the financial and other impacts of de-amalgamation and how these will be addressed and managed. These are legitimate questions when we are dealing with a very serious issue that the National Party might not care about but regional communities do.

They will also need to know about long-term strategic plans, future sustainability and the delivery capability and capacity of de-amalgamated councils. The Government would need to set out a business case, which would not be possible without the involvement of councils. There are no checks that would provide sufficient information to the community about consequences of de-amalgamating. As we know, that is a significant decision for communities, with long-term ramifications. We have heard a lot about the creation of new councils that have not been financially sustainable because mergers were forced on those local communities. However, unfortunately the bill would repeat that sin by failing to let councillors drive the demerger process to ensure new and financially secure councils, which has to be a fundamental part of making any decision to demerge.

In the past we have relied on the Local Government Boundaries Commission, with its two Local Government NSW appointed members, to ensure genuine local involvement from independent voices and independent assessment of demerger processes. This is what is used for other boundary change processes, but it has been ignored in the bill in favour of State-appointed reports from the secretary. What checks are there to assess whether a former area proposing to de-amalgamate will have the necessary financial and service delivery capacity as a standalone council? These are very important questions that need to be asked and explained, and conversations that need to be had with local communities, when they are confronting big decisions like these ones. Checks need to be in place to ensure that local government experts have a say in advising both the Minister and local communities on the appropriateness of any demerger proposal. Unfortunately, the bill does not provide answers to those questions.

In regard to the plebiscite process, under the bill a council could be de-amalgamated simply on the basis of a majority of people who turn out to vote on the day, in only one former area, voting in support of the de-amalgamation. There is no consideration or detail of how a plebiscite vote would work from a practical perspective across different former areas. That is another important process question when considering these issues. There does not seem to be reference to consultation with the Electoral Commissioner in regard to how a plebiscite would be conducted. There does not seem to be consideration for how voters' addresses will be mapped to former areas, or of how voters will be identified for each of the different former areas. What if a former area

has been split across multiple new councils? The number and complexity of these questions unfortunately demonstrate that the proposal is flawed, which is why the Government is not in a position to support it.

The bill also lacks important independent scrutiny of the Local Government Boundaries Commission. A proposal to de-amalgamate a council is a serious matter that has potential to have long-lasting implications for the communities involved, for the future services and functions of the de-amalgamated councils, for the division of their assets and for their ability to remain financially sustainable for the long term, as well as for the interests and wellbeing of all of the communities involved. It is critical that any de-amalgamation proposal is given the required attention and scrutiny to assess its viability. Unfortunately, again the bill falls short on that front.

The Local Government Act establishes an existing independent body for the express purpose of independently and impartially examining boundary change proposals. I refer, of course, to the Local Government Boundaries Commission. The role of the boundaries commission is to examine and report on any matter referred to it by the Minister for Local Government in relation to the boundaries of local government areas in New South Wales. Crucially, while the boundaries commission reports to the Minister, it is not subject to the direction of either the Minister or the Office of Local Government.

The boundaries commission is an independent source of advice on local government issues, with two of its four members drawn directly from Local Government NSW. That independence, coupled with the commission's expertise and experience, is a critical safeguard for the transparency, integrity and fairness of the process of boundary changes. I note that the existing de-amalgamation process set out at section 218CC of the Act includes consideration of a de-amalgamation proposal by the boundaries commission. Unfortunately, the bill does not include that important step and excludes the boundaries commission from the proposed de-amalgamation process. That creates genuine risk to community, council and government of a potentially unviable de-amalgamation proposal failing in the future, which is a risk that we simply cannot take or support.

A framework that allows de-amalgamations to proceed without appropriate safeguards, such as an independent examination of proposals by the boundaries commission, does have real and worrying potential to result in unsustainable councils that are simply unable to deliver local government services for their local communities and that create ongoing liability for the State. The detrimental effects of a council's failure on local communities are well known. Therefore, it seems imprudent to proceed with a proposal that is not clear in relation to those important practical measures that give protection to local communities, local councils and, of course, to the Government. Whilst we welcome discussions—of course, I am speaking on behalf of the Minister for Local Government—and I am sure discussions are happening across the aisle on how to deal with this issue of interest to a number of communities, the Government cannot support the bill.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (20:41): On behalf of the Opposition and the shadow Minister for Local Government, I oppose the Local Government Amendment (De-amalgamation Plebiscites) Bill 2023. The bill proposes to amend the Local Government Act 1993, aiming to establish a process for conducting plebiscites to decide on the de-amalgamation of amalgamated local government areas. Dr Amanda Cohn has detailed that this legislation intends to overcome barriers faced by de-amalgamations. The first barrier identified by Dr Cohn in her second reading speech is that smaller communities lose their voices when amalgamated into larger councils. The bill would allow just 10 per cent of electors in former smaller areas to bring a petition for a plebiscite.

The second barrier raised in the member's second reading speech was the cost for councils pursuing demergers through the provisions of the Act as it stands. I note her reference to Minister Hoenig's statement that there is no cost to fund demergers. However, the Liberals and The Nationals agree with The Greens on the fact that demergers will have a significant cost—a cost that the Labor Government is not willing to pay. The third barrier raised was the legal hurdles and the continual moving of the goalposts for councils that are prepared to demerge. We agree that the Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council has done everything by the book to demerge under the Act as it stands and the Coalition left step-by-step instructions on how to help the council. Its case has been supported by the Local Government Boundaries Commission and also by the Minister.

But the Minister has kicked the issue down the road despite having detailed advice and formal legal counsel that the council will be unable to enact the de-amalgamation under section 218CC of the Act. With no statutory mechanism under the legislation to create two independent and fully functioning councils, any council would be left in the ether. Yet the Labor Government has refused to amend the Local Government Act. Over 12 months after the election, nothing has been done. Instead, the Labor Government has forced the hand of the crossbench to do something, because it has failed to do so.

There exists an established process within the Act for proclaiming new areas. The Liberals and The Nationals are strongly recommending that the Government adhere to the original road map delineated by the former Government, which proposed a legislative solution to facilitate the demerger of Cootamundra Gundagai

Regional Council. Instead, we are seeing this plebiscites bill, proposed by Dr Amanda Cohn. As presented, the bill is unworkable and is anticipated to yield unintended consequences for communities. The proposed amendments encompass various changes to the Act, primarily focused on facilitating the de-amalgamation of local government areas through plebiscites conducted by local electors. Notably, proposed schedule 10 delineates the procedures for initiating and conducting those plebiscites.

Furthermore, proposed schedule 11 delineates the process through which the Minister for Local Government would execute the de-amalgamation following a plebiscite. It mandates that, if a majority of electors support de-amalgamation, the Minister must recommend to the Governor that they issue a proclamation effectuating the de-amalgamation. Additionally, the bill introduces provisions regarding elections for de-amalgamated councils, costs of de-amalgamations and regulations necessary to give effect to de-amalgamation. However, the passage of the bill in its current form would effectively divest democratically elected councillors of their decision-making authority, transferring it to the department and thereby removing their capacity to prepare a business case. If its amendments are incorporated, irrespective of the plebiscite's actual outcomes, a demerger will proceed even if two areas within the amalgamated council oppose it while the third is in favour.

I reiterate that it is clear that Dr Amanda Cohn has presented this bill because the Labor Government was doing nothing, although I do note that a similar bill has been debated in the other House today. It is pertinent to note that, despite having previously advocated for section 218CC, and having moved the amendment to add it to the Act while in opposition, the Labor Government has now opted to go against its own policy and remove the legislated financial supports for demergers. According to advice from the Crown Solicitor to the former Minister for Local Government, the amendment by Labor lacked clarity in defining the demerger process, particularly concerning the delineation of costs. As a result, a road map was devised to advance the Minister's decision, clearly stipulating the necessity for legislation to address the issues identified in the Crown Solicitor's advice. That was identified by the former Minister and a solution was proposed to enact a de-amalgamation. However, the former Government's tenure ended before the legislation could be presented to the House.

At present, the Minister for Local Government has no machinery of government outlined in section 218CC. The solution was specified; to activate section 218CC, urgent amendments to the legislation would be required. Despite that solution, which was a key point highlighted in the demerger road map of the former Government, the current Government has continued to drag the chain. We commend Dr Amanda Cohn for presenting a solution for the Labor Party relatively quickly, on 23 August 2023. Dr Amanda Cohn has worked on a solution while the Labor Government has remained silent.

Under Dr Amanda Cohn's bill, a plebiscite can be initiated either at the Minister's discretion or upon receipt of a petition submitted to the Minister. That petition is required to be supported by just 10 per cent of electors from a former area. It must include a proposal for the reconstitution of the former area and a statement of reasons endorsing the proposal. Upon receiving the petition, the Minister will be mandated to facilitate a plebiscite within 28 days. To initiate the plebiscite, the Minister must instruct the department to determine a date within six months of receiving the petition and to formulate arguments both for and against the proposed reconstitution of the former area, consulting with electors enrolled in the new area. The Labor Government's position, as stated by the Minister for Local Government, is that Labor supports compulsory referendums with business cases detailing costs of demergers.

But I will be clear: Labor does not want to pay for the demergers. It wants to ensure that, if any demergers were to proceed, councils would be paying for them, which means ratepayers would be paying for them. We all agree that councils should be financially sustainable and the community must be well informed of any cost to ratepayers. The plebiscite legislation proposed by The Greens will have unintended consequences for communities. It will pit communities against communities and rely on a small percentage of electors from former areas to enable a plebiscite even if the majority of electors do not want that to happen. It takes away any decision-making power from democratically elected councillors. It also takes away the council's ability to prepare a business case and puts it in the hands of the department.

The Hon. EMMA HURST (20:48): I speak in support of the Local Government Amendment (De-amalgamation Plebiscites) Bill 2023 and commend Dr Amanda Cohn for her work to uphold representative local government. The proposed reforms are sensible and important and will ensure that any decision to merge or demerge a council has the support of local residents. Communities suffer when decisions are forced upon them. Since 2016, when the former Liberal-Nationals Government forcibly merged 44 councils into 20 mega-councils, local residents have consistently reported experiencing poorer council services and feeling their voices are being ignored by their local government. Those issues have been the subject of campaigns to Parliament for years, led by passionate local citizens who simply want to be heard.

The principle underlying their campaigns is indisputable: Members of the public have a legitimate say over how their local area is governed. Local councils impact our daily lives and represent our closest and most

immediate access to government. That access must be protected. Where a community has spoken, there must be a clear path forward for action. That is addressed by the bill, which seeks to remove the legislative and financial obstacles that have effectively prevented local councils from completing a demerger. Regarding finance, the bill provides that any demerger will be funded by the State Government. That reasonable measure aligns with Labor's view, which it expressed while in opposition.

From my work with local councils, I know firsthand about the struggle for funding and resources. Local councils carry responsibility for so many essential services that are taken for granted, such as the maintenance and operation of pounds, many of which are in a state of disrepair and are not delivering basic animal care and welfare. Local communities are incredibly passionate about rehoming animals and improving the state of pounds, yet too often they report to me that their voices are not being heard on those issues by councils. Local councils also play an important role in a range of other animal-related issues, including companion animals, development applications for breeding facilities and even the administration of lethal programs such as those that use 1080 poison. My office is contacted frequently by members of the public who have important things to say on these topics.

We need members of the public to be empowered and heard by their local councils. I acknowledge that the bill is informed by the views of a wide range of community stakeholders and that Dr Amanda Cohn's firsthand experience working with local government for many years has provided invaluable insights. I have met with the Demerge NSW Alliance and heard from other community members who support the bill. It is clear that local communities want these reforms. They want a path forward to finally demerge, and that is the right move in our democratic process. By introducing a mechanism of representative government and by addressing some of the shortcomings of the current legislation, the bill will empower local communities and ensure that New South Wales residents are heard.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (20:51): I support the outstanding work of my colleague Dr Amanda Cohn, who has brought the Government kicking and screaming to finally do something about the de-amalgamation of local councils by introducing the Local Government Amendment (De-amalgamation Plebiscites) Bill 2023. Of course, Labor talked a lot this about when it was in opposition, but now that it has decided it does not want to pay for those de-amalgamations to occur it has wound back its fervent support for local democracy. I am incredibly proud to share a party with Dr Amanda Cohn, who has spent a considerable amount of time working across the State and very closely with those councils that would be impacted by the bill. She has diligently reflected their wishes in the bill. Given that she has forced the Government to produce its own bill, I am incredibly disappointed that the response to her bill has been so turgid. The Minister for Local Government spent a significant proportion of his second reading speech on his bill criticising The Greens' bill.

The Hon. Wes Fang: So has this Minister.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: As has this Minister, on behalf of the Minister for Local Government. Again, I really do not see why that is necessary. But, importantly, it has confirmed that we would not have seen legislative reform on the matter had it not been for the effort of my colleague in drafting and introducing the bill before us. The Minister made some relatively trivial criticisms of the process proposed by the bill. The Greens have taken that in good faith and foreshadowed some amendments. If those amendments pass, they would completely resolve all of the issues that the Minister for Local Government has professed to be so concerned about. Firstly, the amendments would provide a role for the expertise of the Local Government Boundaries Commission in developing the cases for and against the reconstitution of a former local government area, in consultation with impacted communities.

Secondly, the amendments would harmonise the clause relating to the plebiscite with the Government's own proposed mechanism in its bill to clarify that a majority of the total number of enrolled electors in the former area is required for a successful plebiscite, which would avoid the extremely unlikely hypothetical situation described by the Minister where as few as 100 people could decide the future of a local government area if a large number of people did not vote in the plebiscite. With the resolution of those incredibly minor issues, and notwithstanding the unfounded and unprofessional approach of the Minister for Local Government towards my colleague and her bill, The Greens look forward to the support of the Government in progressing this important and overdue reform and explaining to the people of New South Wales why, after all of their years lobbying against amalgamation, it is not now going to live up to all of its promises in full.

Dr AMANDA COHN (20:55): In reply: It has taken seven years of tireless advocacy by volunteers in impacted communities to get to this point where everybody agrees that forced amalgamations have been harmful and we are debating the different mechanisms for de-amalgamation. The process suggested by The Greens puts the community first. The Local Government Amendment (De-amalgamation Plebiscites) Bill 2023 was drafted in collaboration with the Demerge NSW Alliance, and I acknowledge the members of the alliance who are in the gallery at this late hour. That remarkable alliance represents a broad and diverse range of impacted local

government areas across the State, as I outlined in my second reading speech. It is remarkable that both the Government and the Opposition have chosen not to work with this alliance of impacted communities across the State. The Government has instead progressed its own proposals.

I must respond to some of the grotesque allegations made by the Minister for Local Government in his second reading speech on his bill, particularly the remark that The Greens do not trust councillors. As a former local government councillor, I know that local government is the most important level of government because it is the closest to the communities it represents. We are talking specifically about those amalgamated councils. In some of those amalgamated councils there are clear examples of areas that have been disenfranchised through that process and where some former areas are not democratically represented in those amalgamated councils. Some of those communities include Guyra, Hilltops and Bombala, but there are more.

That is why it is critical that the pathway is led by the community and the residents, and not the amalgamated councillors, who obviously have a vested interest in the amalgamated council that they are on. In conclusion, very shortly we will debate the Government's bill on this issue. There are a number of issues with that bill—notably, it does not include the voice of the community in leading the process, where their view differs from that of the amalgamated council. The Greens have put forward that critical process so that we can put "local" back in "local government". I commend the bill to the House.

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

The House divided.

Ayes 7
Noes 28
Majority.....21

AYES

Boyd
Cohn (teller)
Faehrmann

Higginson
Hurst

Roberts (teller)
Ruddick

NOES

Buckingham
Buttigieg
Carter
D'Adam
Donnelly
Fang
Farlow
Farraway
Graham
Jackson

Kaine
Lawrence
MacDonald
Maclaren-Jones
Martin
Merton
Mookhey
Moriarty
Munro

Murphy
Nanva (teller)
Primrose
Rath (teller)
Sharpe
Suvaal
Taylor
Tudehope
Ward

Motion negatived.

Motions

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (21:07): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 964 standing in my name on today's *Notice Paper* by omitting in paragraph (1) "million" and inserting instead "billion".

Leave granted.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Accordingly, I move:

- (1) That this House recognises that according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New South Wales trade exports account for around 20 per cent, or approximately \$150 billion, of gross State product.
- (2) That this House notes that the Government announced on Friday 12 April 2024 that it was removing the title of the Department of Enterprise, Industry and Trade, replacing it with the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport.
- (3) That this House calls on the Government to reinstate the title of the Department of Trade to maintain a pathway for international trade relations.

I thank members for their indulgence. If I ever have the privilege of a full department behind me, I will engage a proofreader. I make the point that this single-letter error in a notice of motion is nothing compared to the very deliberate error made by our State's trade Minister during budget estimates, where he very incorrectly guessed the size of the New South Wales economy and could not provide an answer when asked the value of the New South Wales exports to the Gross State Product. Our trade Minister is responsible for growing the economy through trade relationships. The answer to that question is approximately \$150 billion, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, which makes up around 20 per cent of our \$777 billion economy.

I have shared with this House that the State of New South Wales is in the Bermuda Triangle of trade policy. We have now lost the mother lode. It was not enough that the Labor Government threw out the State's trade statement with nothing to replace it; now it is getting rid of the Department of Trade. On 12 April this year the Government pulled a Friday special. In a 2.00 p.m. media release, the Labor Government announced the abolition of the New South Wales Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade—another admission that growing the New South Wales economy is low on its agenda. To replace it, we have the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport.

While the trade Minister was promising new trade and industry strategies at the beginning of March, it looks like the Premier was plotting the demise of the trade Minister's very own department. How long has Labor planned this? How long have New South Wales businesses, start-ups, investors and entrepreneurs been dragged through uncertainty while the Government either sat on its hands or was actively misleading stakeholders? The Government has not only slashed funding and staff from the trade networks that increased opportunities for Australian businesses but also kept the business community and industry stakeholders in the dark. It has now relegated the Enterprise, Investment and Trade portfolio to a sub-ministry. Now there is no dedicated department of trade and no mention of trade in the title of any agency or office.

However, I note that the NSW Trade Statement developed by the Liberal-Nationals Government does remain on the Investment NSW website, with targets, strategies and actions still listed. It begs the question, is it still operational? Earlier in the year the Minister stated, "The Government will make its own trade statement", but we have not heard anything about it. I have heard the Minister say he wants to expand into South-East Asia because it will be a big market, but where is the action? The Minister had no answer for strengthening the existing relationships we have. In fact, we are cutting those relationships off at the head.

For example, India has an import market worth almost \$1½ trillion alone. The campaign advertising for the NSW Education Showcase Vietnam run by Investment NSW aims to drive attendance—but will it result in actual deals? I have heard that hundreds of staff are being retrenched from the trade section of Investment NSW, particularly those staff in overseas offices. I have heard that measures of success when it comes to trade deals are not going to include those secured in those offshore offices. I have understood that offshore wins are not recorded, perhaps because they are "too successful". I have heard that no reasons are being given for terminating senior staff who have performed their jobs and offered substantial references from foreign officials and industry leaders in their regions.

I have heard that the remaining senior trade and investment commissioners need to justify the necessity of having an offshore presence to the Minister by next Friday; otherwise, trade could be handled by Austrade. But that does not bode well for New South Wales. When I asked the Minister during budget estimates whether there would be any special deals done between Austrade and New South Wales that would mean we get some preference, I was told that there was no special deal. Recently our United Kingdom trade and investment commissioner left his post, following in the footsteps of the Senior Trade and Investment Commissioner, and with them further staff, leaving our United Kingdom representation at just two people. That includes representation for the entirety of the European Union.

Meanwhile other States, like Victoria and Queensland, are increasing their staffing levels to 10 people across Europe and utilising a contracted network of on-the-ground embedded experts. The underlying impact of all of this is that if we lose the value of exports and investment into New South Wales, what replaces it? Our exports are worth \$150 billion. More than 60 per cent of our export revenue is coal. In fact, our top trading partners all have set 2050 net zero targets, and China by 2060. If these exports are declining and we have no plan for growth, where does our economic growth and prosperity come from? We have Global Victoria and Trade and Investment Queensland, but in New South Wales we are abolishing our trade department. It is an indictment on the Government. [*Time expired.*]

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (21:12): On behalf of The Greens, I briefly contribute to debate on this motion. Climate change, biodiversity loss, the cost-of-living crisis, the domestic and family violence crisis, major wars across the world—a lot of people find themselves in a pretty bad set of circumstances. I guarantee that if members went out today and did a spot poll of maybe 100 people on the street, none of them would say their top issue is whether or not the Government has named something the "Department of Trade" or not. Earlier, members heard

the Liberals going on about the Government having a lack of an agenda. Sometimes I agree with that, sometimes I do not. But if the Liberal Party's agenda is to try to put the name back to a thing that it used to be, as though a change to the name of a department is somehow indicating to people that we are no longer having international trade, all I can say is that we oppose the motion. I thank the House.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (21:14): I thank Ms Abigail Boyd for her contribution. The plan for trade of the Liberal Party and The Nationals was to have John Barilaro sitting up there in New York. He was packing his bag and ready to go. Of all the people in New South Wales and Australia, who did we need to send to New York? It was John Barilaro. I enjoy the fact that the Hon. Jacqui Munro is interested in trade and is bringing forward motions in relation to it. One would think that perhaps the shadow trade Minister might occasionally show up and have a view about this; we are yet to hear anything from her on these matters. My big plug for tonight is that the Hon. Jacqui Munro deserves a promotion. At least she is interested in the area and actually understands it, which is great. We disagree with the basic premise of the motion.

The Government has moved Trade to where it should be, if we really want to get into where things sit in government and what the architecture looks like, which is in the Premier's Department. It actually does matter. I agree with Ms Abigail Boyd that this is probably not the hottest topic that members should be debating tonight, but here we are. Having Trade at the centre of government so we are able to use all of the central agency powers to bring together and better support trade in New South Wales—imports and exports—is the point of all this. Members need to understand where Trade sat in the previous Government. In the dying days of the previous Government it was moved around so that various Ministers could have cobbled-together clusters of portfolios in order to become senior Ministers and get the big bucks. That is what was going on. There was a whole range of bizarre decisions made through machinery of government changes.

The Hon. Jacqui Munro: So you've demoted your trade Minister?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you are the trade Minister, you are very happy to be in the Premier's Department. If you are the Aboriginal affairs Minister, you are also very happy to be in the Premier's Department. If the member wants to set herself on fire about this issue, she is just wrong. Some members on this side of the House spent a lot of time looking at what those opposite did and did not do in the Trade portfolio. Those opposite did not appoint women. They decided that John Barilaro was the best person in the world for the job. What we have done is put Trade at the centre of government. Members opposite can argue about the titles, but let us just be clear.

I again note that it is disappointing the shadow Minister is not in the Chamber to speak. It is disappointing that yet again the Hon. Jacqui Munro has had to light the torch and carry it. I am pleased she does so. She wants to hide behind the failures of the National Party in this entire area, which has shown zero interest in trade and since 2020 did not meet with one consul general or ambassador about trade. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (21:17): I speak in support of the motion put forth by my colleague the Hon. Jacqui Munro. This motion is not about a title change; it is about securing the economic future of New South Wales. It is about ensuring our State continues to thrive on the global stage. I am concerned that the Minns Government is not focused on the economy or trade. Already we have seen New South Wales stripped of its top tier credit rating. Further, New South Wales will be \$1.65 billion worse off after the latest GST deal. This is a dud deal for New South Wales. At the time, the New South Wales Treasurer said this will cost us more than COVID. That does not sound good. Now it seems Trade is on the cutting block.

Let us recognise an undeniable fact: Trade is the lifeblood of our economy. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade reports that New South Wales trade exports contribute approximately 20 per cent of our gross State product, amounting to about \$150 billion. It is not a trivial contribution. It is a substantial pillar of our economic structure. Yet on 12 April 2024 the New South Wales Government announced a decision that could jeopardise this: the renaming of the department. We are dropping "Trade" and have a new name: the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport. It is more than a simple shift in terminology. It symbolises a shift in priorities that could significantly dilute the focus on building and strengthening international relations. I implore the Government to reconsider this decision.

Dropping the title of the Department of Enterprise, Industry and Trade sends the wrong message to international trading partners. The change in title reflects a change in focus, which could mislead international partners about our commitment to trade. It risks disrupting the pathways that we must take to be a formidable player on the world stage. From wine to coal, we deliver the best in this State. We must question the prudence and rationale of rebranding a department that has successfully navigated the complexities of international trade and a globalised economy. Our priority should be clear: to facilitate business, to foster relationships and to forge new trade links that will prosper our State going forward. Let us not undermine those objectives with a title that no

longer represents the vital role of trade in our government's portfolio. My message to the Government is clear: Take charge and reinstate the title of "the Department of Trade" for the prosperity of New South Wales and for the security of our future. I strongly commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (21:20): I contribute to the debate on the Hon. Jacqui Munro's motion. I note that wide latitude is afforded to honourable members in debates on private members' business and so rather than trade blows, I think it is very important to discuss a trade opportunity that New South Wales—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Hemp?

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: No, medicinal cannabis. Just this week the Biden administration downscheduled cannabis in America in the largest shift in global drugs policy in 100 years, from a schedule 1 drug to a schedule 3 drug. The US Democrats have introduced a bill to Congress which all honourable members should pay attention to because the cannabis industry is going to be one of the biggest trade industries in the world within 10 years, and we are falling behind. Last year sales of cannabis in the US surpassed \$33 billion. Cannabis in the US is now a bigger industry than coffee and chocolate combined, and by the end of this decade it will be as big as the wine industry. Sales of cannabis will be 25 per cent of the entire alcohol industry in the United States. Germany has legalised it, and about 30 jurisdictions in the world have moved to legalise medicinal cannabis and export it.

Where are they exporting it to? New South Wales, Australia. Australia is the most profitable medicinal cannabis market in the world. We pay the most for cannabis in the world. It is also the fastest growing medicinal cannabis market in the world and the largest per capita, but we are asleep at the wheel. The Americans, the Canadians, the Mexicans, the Germans, most of Europe and even the Swiss have legalised cannabis and they are moving to trade in this bulk commodity that will be worth trillions within a decade. It will supplant alcohol. Our governments are asleep at the wheel when it comes to the opportunity.

The bill before the US Congress is about righting the wrongs of prohibition and the racist policies that have cracked down on minorities in the past, and opening up. They actually call the legislation the Administration and Legalisation of Cannabis Opportunities Act; that is, the opportunities to create a regulated, safe and global market in cannabis after 100 years of pointless and stupid prohibition. If there is an issue we should be talking about, it is the opportunity for Australian and New South Wales cultivators of medicinal cannabis to be able to trade to other jurisdictions and not be swamped by global imports as we are now because we have stupid rules set upon us by the Office of Drug Control.

The Hon. WES FANG (21:23): I contribute to debate on the motion. As is typical later in the evening, I was happy to sit back and listen to some of the contributions but I was prompted to speak because the rhetoric in the debate so far has been somewhat concerning. I note Ms Abigail Boyd said that this is not the hottest topic, but that is part of the problem. The issue of trade is not always the biggest focus. It is not always the most important issue of the day but ultimately it is an issue that delivers prosperity and wealth to this State. The downgrading of, and the treatment of, trade under this Government has been appalling. Minister Sharpe likes to criticise the shadow Minister. I happen to know for a fact that the shadow Minister is very involved in this area but has recognised that there is somebody who has also got—

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Where is she? Who is she? Who is this masked woman?

The Hon. WES FANG: Point of order: I note the Minister is a bit excited and probably cannot control herself, but I ask that Mr Assistant President ask her to hold her tongue while I make my contribution.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: It is completely out of order to be verballing members. If the Hon. Wes Fang wants to come after me, he should move a motion.

The Hon. WES FANG: I am happy to come after you.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: If the Hon. Wes Fang would like to make suggestions about me, he is entitled to move a motion so that we can discuss it properly. He is not entitled to make stuff up because he is a bit annoyed.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): I uphold the point of order of the Minister and—

The Hon. WES FANG: To the point—

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): I have not finished. I urge all members to treat this important topic with the dignity and respect that it deserves as we debate it. The Hon. Wes Fang will continue his contribution.

The Hon. WES FANG: I acknowledge the Assistant President's ruling. The fact that we have a trade problem with this Government is probably due to the fact that the way it treats trade is the same way it criticises the Opposition. The Hon. Jacqui Munro has a genuine interest and talent in this space and so Minister Sharpe decides that she is going to try to attack the shadow Minister for helping promote talent in the Opposition. The shadow Minister has acknowledged that the Hon. Jacqui Munro has an absolute talent, and she absolutely schooled your Minister in his budget estimates hearing. She encourages her and so— *[Time expired.]*

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (21:26): I contribute to debate on this really interesting motion. I have listened to the debate but there has not been one shred of evidence that a name change will somehow boost the trade between New South Wales and the rest of the world. This is the most cogent bit of the motion:

That this House recognises that according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, New South Wales trade exports account for around 20 per cent, or approximately \$150 billion

We are to believe that a name change back to the former name will somehow maintain that? Is there any evidence to suggest that this export volume has declined because we are going to change the name? Where is the evidence of a name change being in the consciousness of the international trade community such that all of a sudden the rest of the world will be up in arms because the New South Wales Government has decided to change the name of the Department of Enterprise, Industry and Trade and replace it with—heaven forbid—Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport. Is the rest of the trading community somehow going to go on strike and punish New South Wales for a name change?

This is a ludicrous motion. No evidence was presented that a name change would affect trade. It is a cheap shot at the Minister who is simply trying to rationalise the department and rename it in accordance with what it is, which is Creative Industries. What is the issue? My God, does the Opposition not have anything better to do? It is almost comical that members of the Opposition would waste the valuable time of the House to argue about a name change without presenting any argument or any evidence as to what effect it is going to have on trade. The motion is a joke and should be voted down.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (21:29): This is about the Government's priorities. When it comes to this Government's priorities, trade is just not a priority. Even though it is 20 per cent of New South Wales Gross State Product, it is \$150 billion, not million. Funnily enough, when we pick up the Austin Powers/Dr Evil references, I remember that in August last year the Government had a "laser-like" focus when it came to creating two new departments: the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and the department of environment.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Climate change, environment and heritage.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The department is responsible for climate change, environment and heritage. That is the Government's focus. Trade and investment are just not a focus of this Government. When it comes to trade, it is a dog fight between the States. It is not good enough having someone sitting at a desk at Austrade because they will be beaten every time. We saw that while we were in government, which is why we came up with Global NSW. We were engaged with trying to get more trade dollars for the State. New South Wales was at the back of the pack because the Austrade model did not work with having one person sitting at a desk at the back of Austrade, waiting for those opportunities to come through.

For too long, New South Wales has rested on its laurels because Sydney is the premier destination of this country. The other States are working hard—they have large teams working on those deals, cultivating those relationships, creating trade opportunities for their businesses and attracting investment into their States. We even saw that recently with the Federal Government quantum computing announcement of a billion dollars going to Queensland because of that aggressive approach from other States. New South Wales is completely lagging in that regard, and under this Government will go back even further. Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania will all be taking those opportunities because they are prepared to engage in the market. It is not good enough to just rest on your laurels and expect that everyone is going to come to Sydney.

The Leader of the Government stated that every Minister would be happy for their department to go into Premier's. I have a small history lesson for the Minister—and she may remember this. When Heritage went into the Premier's Department she called that "terrible" at the time. Back in 2019, when Environment fell under Planning, the current Leader of the Government said, "Under this new system, planning is king." And, "The environment needs standalone, independent and strong advice, and a Minister who will stand up for the environment." Trade needs exactly the same. Trade needs a Minister who will stand up for trade, not just be pushed around by everyone else in the Government.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (21:32): I am astonished about this motion and particularly the mover, the Hon. Jacqui Munro, talking about the Bermuda Triangle. The biggest Bermuda Triangle of all time is the Opposition members' non-existent policy in trade. Opposition members have had a year and been beaver away.

They have been contemplating what they ought to do and how they are going to win back government. "I know," says the Opposition, "we will change the name of the department back. That will fix everything." What are they going to do next? Step two is, "Let's find some recently retired former National Party Minister that we can appoint to a fat cat job and send them on a posting to a jurisdiction overseas where they go out and spruik trade over cocktails and canapes." That is how Opposition members think.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): Order! I am having trouble hearing the member because there are too many interjections. An important motion is before the House. I ask that it be treated with respect and all members be heard in silence.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: That is the best they have got. After a year of being in Opposition, instead of being constructive about this, instead of having a proper, thought-through policy, they have a Bermuda Triangle. They have nothing to offer other than going back to what they were doing previously. They want to change the name back, and what can we expect next? More of this sort of largess spending on people who they will appoint to positions who they think might make a difference to something. It does not. It is a waste of taxpayers' money. What we need is a proper trade and policy position, which is exactly what our Government is doing. That is the way forward.

The Hon. Jacqui Munro: There is literally no trade policy.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: I know the member is upset that she is not in government. I just expected that after a year of thinking this through, there would have been something more substantive than this silly motion that says the answer to everything is to change the name of the department back to what it was. If that is the best that the Opposition has in this area, then it truly is in the Bermuda Triangle. The Opposition has nothing to offer on this and the motion ought to be rejected. I call on the House to do so.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): I urge Opposition members to allow the Hon. Jacqui Munro to be heard in silence.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (21:35): In reply: I thank everybody for their contributions. I really think that the Government has misunderstood its role as a custodian of our economy. While we debate serious, interesting and important issues, as we have today, a lot of them deal with funding. When we think about the amount of funding that we spend on policy priorities, they have to come from somewhere. A growing economy and a growing tax revenue base have to be rooted in some reality when it comes to a prosperous State. If we do not have strong trade relationships internationally, we are at serious risk of reducing the size of our economy and the opportunity for economic growth. That reduces our ability to provide the social programs that we all want to see delivered, which we discussed here today.

This Government has demonstrated that it is an entirely a virtue-signalling government. It is a social media government. We have the new Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement—if that is not a virtue-signalling portfolio, I do not know what is. There is no legislation under that ministerial portfolio, yet when it comes to trade, which is worth \$150 billion in our economy, that department is now abolished. We are burying it amongst other activities. As such, it means that this Government has misunderstood fundamentally the way that business works, the way that trade relationships work, which is that you have a clear pipeline, a clear mechanism for companies and investors to make investments in New South Wales. It is also in the reverse. You need a place where businesses are able to go and export around the world. If we do not have those strong relationships, if government does not play an integral role in that, then we will be missing out on billions of dollars in growth.

This Government has no trade strategy and no trade statement. It has been abolished. The trade Minister confirmed that earlier in the year. He also confirmed that there is no trade statement or strategy to replace it. We are still waiting on that. Where is that? There is no industry policy. We do not have an innovation blueprint or a trade statement. When Government members suggest that Opposition members should be coming up with policy, they should look in the mirror for their own lack of ideas and policy. It simply does not exist. What is the point of being in government if they are not going to have some vision and direction for the State of New South Wales so that we can grow in our economic prosperity?

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): I remind members that they cannot participate in the debate if they are outside the Chamber.

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

The House divided.

Ayes 13

Noes 20

Majority.....7

AYES

Carter
Fang (teller)
Farlow
Farraway
MacDonald

Maclaren-Jones
Martin
Merton
Munro

Rath (teller)
Taylor
Tudehope
Ward

NOES

Boyd
Buckingham
Buttigieg
Cohn
D'Adam
Donnelly
Faehrmann

Graham
Higginson
Hurst
Jackson
Kaine
Lawrence
Mookhey

Moriarty
Murphy (teller)
Nanva (teller)
Primrose
Sharpe
Suvaal

PAIRS

Mitchell

Houssos

Motion negatived.*Committees***STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE DEVELOPMENT****Membership**

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that on 8 May 2024 the Clerk received advice from the Leader of the Government advising of the following change to the membership of the committee:

The Hon. Sam Farraway in place of the Hon. Taylor Martin.

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - REGIONAL NSW**Membership**

The PRESIDENT: I inform the House that on 8 May 2024 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. Taylor Martin.

*Bills***PROPERTY NSW AMENDMENT BILL 2024****First Reading**

Bill received from the Legislative Assembly, read a first time and ordered to be published on motion by the Hon. Penny Sharpe, on behalf of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: According to standing order, I table a statement of public interest.

Statement of public interest tabled.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: 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. PENNY SHARPE: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (MISCELLANEOUS) BILL 2024**Returned**

The PRESIDENT: I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly returning the bill without amendment.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

PORNOGRAPHY

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (21:48): I have raised before the link between pornography and domestic and family violence, and I am encouraged by the recognition across the Chamber that this is an important issue. I am also encouraged by the voices of advocates such as Grace Tame, who said recently that Australia "cannot hope to prevent child sex abuse and family violence" with the unfettered proliferation of pornography and inappropriate material online. She further noted that early exposure to pornography was "a clear pathway to harmful sexual behaviours among children and young people" and supported the introduction of age verification to prevent underage access to pornography. She is concerned that violent pornography has been normalised on what she calls an industrial scale. Even our Prime Minister, Mr Albanese, has been quoted as saying that violent pornography has created a "very dangerous circumstance" and was "denigrating the nature of our relationships". The evidence bears those statements out.

A 2014 study in the United Kingdom found that in an astonishing 40 per cent of cases the sexual narratives of young people normalised coercive, painful and unsafe sex. Even more troubling, many of the young male correspondents felt unsure about engaging in sexual acts which would be painful for a woman but felt pressure to do so, saying that they believed it was expected of them or, even more perversely, was expected of them as a sign of their masculinity by their sexual partners. These harmful sexual narratives were developed through exposure to pornography. In Australia today, most young people are consuming pornography two years before their first in-person sexual encounter. This is not the type of pornography which we often describe as vanilla. It is usually violent and sexually aggressive.

As children and young people, we learn by mimicry. It is through mimicking sounds and the associated pleasure we get in happy responses from our parents that we learn our first words. We start to walk because we see the adults around us walking. As we grow older, we mimic our peers in dress, behaviour and fashion in order to fit in. An Our Watch background paper highlights the fact that many young people initially view pornography as "educative". They view it first in order to mimic and learn how to be sexually intimate. Yet what this pornography is teaching our young people is that the objectification and aggressive treatment of women is not only normal but expected. It is not just our young men who are learning this; it is also our young women, whose view of what they should expect is becoming skewed by pornography.

In a study published last month, Professor Michael Salter from the University of New South Wales drew a comparison between our failure to move the dial in reducing domestic violence and Australia's great success in responding to the HIV health crisis. He noted that the success of the response to this health crisis came because it focused on identifying drivers of risk and providing support to reduce that risk. He pointed out that if our response had simply been to treat those with symptoms or to quarantine those with HIV, then we would have had no hope of success. In the same way, we should focus not just on assisting those who are the victims of domestic violence but also on reducing the key drivers of domestic and family abuse.

The obvious first step is to introduce age verification. In a liberal and plural society, we may well disagree about what adults should be able to access. But do we really accept that our children should be having their ideas of what an intimate relationship looks like and their views of themselves as sexual beings being shaped by vendors of porn? Only adults, who have started to form a strong sense of self—and not our children and adolescents, who are still exploring who they are—should be able to access violent and misogynistic pornography.

After the National Cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister announced a trial of age verification but with no time frame. Our Premier, our Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism and our Minister for Women all have important roles in ensuring that this trial proceeds, that it proceeds promptly and that age verification is then more widely adopted. It is an issue which involves us all, and the women of New South Wales will be watching to see State leadership on this issue. The last question remains: As a society, are we really prepared to accept that depictions of intimacy and violence should ever be physically associated? [*Time expired.*]

MALE VIOLENCE

The Hon. BOB NANVA (21:53): This evening I express my firm conviction that men across New South Wales can and should do more to rise to the challenge of putting an end to male violence in our community. The recent spate of murders in our State, where women have had their lives cut short at the hands of men—often men that they knew and trusted—has rightly shaken our community to the core. But the problem of male violence is not new. This is a crisis that has been coming. It is a crisis that lawmakers of all persuasions over generations have collectively failed to stop. The measures announced by the Government earlier this week will make a difference, but the reality is that we can always do more and, with the benefit of hindsight, we could have always acted sooner. I say this particularly with respect to the positive role that men can play.

I am not one who subscribes to the "not all men" perspective on male violence, because the behaviour of all men does have an impact on the people around them. All men do play a part in socialising others, modelling behaviours and setting the expectations of other men. None of us live outside of our community, and therefore all of us have a responsibility for the way that we define acceptable and unacceptable male behaviour. Those men who use physical violence, intimidation and coercion in their relationships and in the way they behave towards women and children do so because they believe that they are entitled to. They believe force or power, be it physical or psychological, is a legitimate option, even if only under certain circumstances. They hold this belief because that is the model of masculinity that they have grown up with. Sometimes it may be the dominant form of masculinity in society that they have come to know.

We have all been appalled by the deaths of women this year, but murder is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to male violence. That is why we cannot limit the ambition of our response to the scourge of violence to criminal and bail law reforms, because beneath the highly visible tip is a deeper social problem and a problem, I hope, that more men are prepared to acknowledge following the confronting tragedies of recent weeks. That is the long-term challenge that the Deputy Premier spoke of on Monday: the challenge of changing the way that we socialise our kids and refining the quintessential model of the "Aussie bloke" so that men become an even greater force for compassionate equality and safer communities.

I note that there are many wonderful people around New South Wales who are already dedicated to this challenge and who are doing amazing work to put an end to male violence. They are working in community-based organisations like the Men and Family Centre in the Northern Rivers. The organisation is funded by the Minns Government, as well as previously by the Coalition Government, to run men's behaviour change programs for men who have used violence, coercion and intimidation in their relationships and to run support groups for the women and children affected by that behaviour. This is the early intervention part of the puzzle—getting to families in need, or families in crisis, and helping them to move forward safely.

But that is not all that the Men and Family Centre does. It also works in the primary prevention space, which is all about addressing the underlying drivers of male violence. It does this by running community programs for young dads, for school parents and for a range of other groups across the Northern Rivers community. Those programs teach men and boys about respect, empathy and accountability because the key to eliminating male violence is to hold men accountable for their behaviour, not just in their own private relationships but also in the way that they behave in their communities and in the example that they set for others. People of good faith across the political spectrum in this place are up for the challenge of eliminating male violence and building a safer society, but we will not be able to do it alone. We need the support of businesses, philanthropists, sporting clubs and community leaders, but, most of all, even more everyday men.

POLITICAL LOBBYING

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (21:57): The issue of corporate lobbyists walking the hall of power in this country has once again reared its head in recent days, with the handing down of a Senate inquiry report into the rules governing disclosure of lobbying activities in Federal Parliament. Unfortunately, but unsurprisingly, the major party representatives on the inquiry failed to support major proposals that would have significantly strengthened the lobbyist disclosure regime. At a time of waning public trust in politicians and political institutions, it is crucial that those in political power behave in an ethical and trustworthy way and, even more importantly, are seen to be acting ethically and transparently. There is a pervasive sense that major political decisions are being made in the interests of big corporations without adequate scrutiny over the way that private interests are paying for access and influence in a way that directly benefits themselves.

In Canberra the number of sponsored passes to Parliament House—which includes those granted to lobbyists—reached 1,791 at the beginning of last year, with 891 issued since the previous election. People are rightfully concerned about the ways in which corporate and commercial interests can sway decision-making. With minority governments in both Houses in New South Wales, every vote counts, but only Ministers are required to disclose who they meet with. Reading the lists of ministerial diary disclosures gives a sense of the scale of the

problem. In the latest round of diary disclosures from the first quarter of this year, Premier Chris Minns and the Treasurer met with a regular rogues' gallery of corporate players and their lobbyists.

There are genuinely too many for me to list them, but I have prepared a small selection of highlights: PwC of consulting scandal shame; Tabcorp, merchant of gambling pain; the Korea Electric Power Corporation, the failed Bylong coalminer accused of international fraud and corruption allegations; Newmont, the recent purchaser of Newcrest, and with it Cadia goldmine; the Australian Hotels Association, the pokies purveyors; Crown, the owners of the only very recently approved Sydney-based Crown Resorts—wow, that is a lot of gambling—Blackstone, owners of Crown and about \$1 trillion worth of other things; and Transurban, or those guys who siphon money out of your bank account with a little bleeping machine on your windshield.

I am going to run out of time but I will go on: Macquarie, owners of power stations, resources and roads, and a million other things; BHP, the mining giant that still cannot manage to pay its employees what they are owed; Conduent, the multinational company that just won the Victorian public transport myki contract; DroneShield, the multinational defence industry corporation; Kinetic, the bus and coach company that recently won a swathe of new bus contracts from the New South Wales government; and so many meetings with Morris Iemma, the former Labor Premier turned lobbyist and good-time pal of Chris Minns, who was briefly chairperson of Venues NSW.

Think that list sounds daunting? That is just two members of the Government over three months and that is just their direct corporate interests. This is not to say that anything dodgy happened in those meetings, nor is it to say that the Premier and Treasurer should not have been meeting with companies engaged in the operation of the State. What I am saying, though, is that there is a high level of corporate motivation in influencing government outcomes and we should know when they are walking the halls of Parliament, not just find out when they have met with a Minister months after the meeting date.

In New South Wales, lobbyists, business people and representatives of unions and NGOs are issued with black security passes, the same colour that is given to everyone from special constables to former members, to heads of government departments to parliamentary interns. There is no register kept of these sponsored passes, and it is not possible for MPs, let alone the public, to ascertain who has been given a pass, what organisation or interest they represent, or who authorised them. Based on the latest figures I have from mid-2021, 1,529 black passes were on issue, with no-one having any idea how many were in the sponsored pass category.

It is difficult to understand what valid reason a person who is not employed at Parliament would have for needing to access the parliamentary precinct unaccompanied and to freely walk around MP working spaces, having casual conversations in the lifts and cafe. As the NSW ICAC pointed out in a Senate inquiry last month, is it really so inconvenient for these people to simply book a meeting if they want to speak to an MP and then be collected by a member of staff from reception? It is astounding to me that the amount of access these lobbyists and influence peddlers have is so opaque that even our own parliamentary security services are not able to tell us who is here, for what purpose and when. It is not asking much for the public to have the right to know. Secrecy and corporate influence are corrosive to our democracy. The public should have the ability to shine a light on what is happening here in the halls of democracy.

ROAD SAFETY

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (22:02): If my loved ones were on the road, I would not speed. I would not drink. I would take care. This week is Road Safety Week—a week to reflect on my own, and all of our, road safety. Sadly, under this disastrous Labor Government, it has not been good. Road Safety Week is a time to reflect on the 367 lives lost in the past 12 months on New South Wales roads—367 lives more than acceptable. More than one death per day is not acceptable. The current Labor Government's approach to road safety has been nothing short of disastrous.

The road toll was up 25 per cent in Labor's first year in office. It has provided no new funding to invest in a road safety response. The road safety budget line item showed a 30 per cent cut in Labor's first year in office. Labor's demerit point scheme has been a disaster and is not backed by road safety expertise. Safe driving practices are not being adequately promoted or enforced, leading to speeding, distracted driving and drink driving deaths. Pedestrians and cyclists are left vulnerable due to a lack of investment in safe infrastructure, resulting in preventable accidents and fatalities. The road safety summit, only held after the Opposition called for it, has proven a talkfest. There are no new solutions and no new funding. New South Wales deserves better.

This week is Road Safety Week, and unfortunately the Minister has not mentioned it in Parliament at all. Our young people are not receiving the necessary education about the dangers of the road, leading to risky behaviour and tragic consequences. This week people in this Chamber have worn the yellow ribbon of the Safer Australian Roads and Highways Group, formed by Peter Frazer after he tragically lost his beloved daughter Sarah

in a road accident. Yellow was her favourite colour, which is why these yellow ribbons are on buses and lit up on the Harbour Bridge. I thank Sarah Durham, formally of my office, who last year bought these pins for every single member of Parliament at her own expense. She paid for and distributed them quietly to try to remind people of this important issue that we must do better on.

I am not saying that the former Government was better, and I am certainly not claiming that I was in any way. There is so much to do, but we must demand that more is done. It was disappointing that in this week, when a sensible question about police road patrols and work that is being done in this space was asked by the Hon. Rod Roberts, there was not even the courtesy of a decent answer or the matter taken seriously by this Government. As we observe Road Safety Week, let us demand better from this Labor Government. Let us demand a government that is committed to saving lives, investing in infrastructure and prioritising the wellbeing of its citizens. I urge everyone on the road to check: How safe is your ride? Are you avoiding distractions? Are you focused? Are you taking care? Are you driving under the influence? Are you driving tired? If you need to think twice, think hard about if it is worth it for potential lives. Will you drive as if your loved ones are on the road ahead?

CONSERVATION HUNTING

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (22:06): New South Wales's diverse ecosystems face numerous challenges, from habitat loss to the impacts of introduced species. As we confront these challenges, it is crucial that we adopt a nuanced approach—one that recognises the complexity of our natural, social and economic environment, and seeks practical solutions that are grounded in science and community-based collaboration. The Australian conservation hunting foundation is a visionary initiative aimed at harnessing the passion and expertise of the hunting community for the betterment of our natural world. Australia's hunting community boasts a rich history and deep physical and cultural connection to the land. True hunters are dedicated stewards of the environment, committed to both the pursuit of game and the conservation of our precious wildlife and habitats. By engaging with this community, we have a unique opportunity to leverage their skills and knowledge in the service of conservation goals.

By involving hunters in management efforts we can achieve several benefits, including cost-effectiveness. Government-funded or government-required pest control programs are very expensive and intermittent, so engaging hunters, who cover their own expenses, can reduce the financial burden on government agencies, as well as our farmers and landholders, whilst keeping constant pressure on unwanted species. Hunters also possess valuable local knowledge about wildlife populations and behaviour. That knowledge can inform targeted management strategies and increase the efficiency of control efforts. Involving hunters fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility for conservation outcomes within the community.

This engagement can lead to greater support for conservation initiatives and increased compliance with management measures. Hunters are also often adaptable and responsive to changing conditions in the field. Their flexibility allows for more nimble responses to emerging conservation challenges. For many hunters, conservation is a deeply held value. By aligning conservation objectives with hunting activities, we can tap into this cultural connection and harness it for positive conservation outcomes. Cultural commitment expressed in actual hunting will always result in better long-term control outcomes. Lastly, there are the economic benefits. By attracting hunters to regional areas, conservation hunting stimulates local businesses and supports jobs in hospitality, tourism and retail sectors.

The conservation hunting foundation represents a departure from the traditional approach of viewing introduced species through a lens of xenophobia or futile attempts at eradication. Instead, it embraces a more pragmatic and inclusive strategy that acknowledges the realities of managing established populations while striving to mitigate their impacts on specific species or native ecosystems. Through the foundation, hunters will play a crucial role in population control efforts helping to manage introduced species to levels where the ecological impacts are minimised. This realistic approach recognises that complete eradication simply is not and never will be feasible for effective population management but can still yield significant conservation benefits. Furthermore, the foundation will prioritise collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders across the conservation spectrum.

By working together with scientists, policymakers and community groups, holistic management strategies can be developed that balance the needs of conservation with the realities of managing introduced species in a dynamic and ever-changing environment. In conclusion, the establishment of the Australian Conservation Hunting Foundation represents a bold step toward a change to reimagine the relationship between hunters and conservation in our country.

CHARMIAN CLIFT

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (22:10): On Saturday 13 April in Kiama I was lucky to represent the Minister for Heritage at the unveiling of the blue plaque for writer and social justice warrior Charmian Clift. The

Blue Plaques program is a statewide initiative that celebrates and shares the stories of people and events that have shaped New South Wales, with 35 being awarded since 2021, including for the likes of artists, activists and authors Brett Whiteley, May Gibbs, Patrick White and Dorothea McKellar, amongst others. Since becoming the Government spokesperson for Kiama last year, I have been enjoying getting to know more about the area, its people and history. As part of that I have come to know of Charmian Clift and her importance not just to Kiama but also to the literary and social history of Australia.

Charmian Clift is an amazing daughter of Kiama, deserving of recognition and celebration, of which the awarding of the blue plaque should only be a small part. I thank Sue Eggins and the Kiama Historical Society for submitting the nomination. From her early years in Kiama, Charmian was writing. She undertook her first "real" journalism job during World War II editing the army magazine *For Your Information*. During this time she married famed war correspondent and author George Johnston. In the last 1940s the couple relocated to London and then were reluctant to return to Australia during what they saw as the stifling conservatism of Menzies Australia, so they travelled and lived abroad for 15 years. This era provided the material for two of Charmian's best known books, *Peel Me a Lotus* and *Mermaid Singing*, that chronicled her bohemian life in Greece.

Clift and her husband collaborated as writers, and it is understood that Clift was instrumental in assisting George Johnston complete his famous novel *My Brother Jack*. Indeed, she wrote the screenplay upon their return to Australia in the mid-1960s. But in no sense was Clift a footnote in her husband's career. Very quickly upon her return to Australia she began writing a regular newspaper column that was published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, writing 240 essays and securing her position as arguably Australia's best essayist. In a sign of the times, though, these essays were presented in a column of the "women's pages" of the newspapers. However, this did not stop her tackling a wide range of social and political issues, and indeed may have allowed her to get away with what she termed as her "sneaky little revolutions".

Charmian Clift was a fierce advocate for social justice, taking up causes that today seem mainstream but were radically progressive in her time, such as support for multiculturalism, anti-conscription during the Vietnam War and challenging social norms about women and girls. I have looked at *The Sydney Morning Herald* archives to access her essays in context, and it is fascinating to see them, replete with her incisive wit and criticism, wedged between advertisements for underwear and articles about slimline jackets for the fuller figured woman. A particular example that struck me was her assessment of the character of Australia in the late '60s, a time when elsewhere in the world movements for social change were bristling and growing. She said about Australia on her return from overseas, "It is a curious sort of country, so catastrophically excessive in elemental drama, drought, flood, fire, so prodigal in opportunity and yet so unheroic, bland and even meek in the character of its people. There is little anger here. I suppose, as Bernard Shaw said, nobody will trouble themselves about anything that doesn't trouble them."

Clift, rather than being as subversive as I first thought when I started reading her, was open in her challenge of established norms. The subversion was in some ways forced upon her by virtue of the age, which sought to constrain her to the "women's pages", but in doing so ironically provided a platform that might otherwise have been denied. It is this questioning of established order, this commitment to providing voice to the voiceless and marginalised that prompted Kiama Labor to hold its inaugural social justice dinner in honour of Charmian Clift. Coinciding with the unveiling of the blue plaque, and hosted by the previous Labor candidate for Kiama, Katelin McInerney, the dinner drew together locals who are committed to the pursuit of social justice in their local community and are more than willing to trouble themselves about things that do not trouble them. I congratulate them for honouring the legacy of Charmian Clift in such a way.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): The question is that this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 22:15 until Thursday 9 May 2024 at 10:00.