

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Wednesday 19 June 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

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BICENTENARY CONCERT SERIES

The PRESIDENT (10:01): I inform members that today, from 12.45 p.m. to 1.30 p.m., a talented saxophone quartet from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music will be performing in the Fountain Court as part of our special Bicentenary Concert Series. The series invites everybody in New South Wales Parliament to reflect on our past, celebrate our progress and imagine our future. Today we will hear a selection of pieces from talented musicians as we are encouraged to reflect on the theme of working together in the spirit of democracy. A light luncheon will be provided.

Motions

LION DANCE KIDS

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (10:02): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) on 26 November 2023 Lion Dance Kids held its first ever competition in Hurstville and the Hon. Mark Buttigieg, MLC, was honoured to attend and speak, representing the Hon. Stephen Kamper, MP, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, as well as present two awards;
 - (b) Lion Dance Kids is an initiative of the Australian Yau Kung Mun Chinese Martial Arts Association, which was founded over 40 years ago;
 - (c) competitors were between six and 10 years old and performed lion dancing, dragon dancing and the Yau Kung Mun martial art;
 - (d) many community leaders attended the competition to show their support for the participants, including the following:
 - (i) the Hon. Mark Speakman, SC, MP;
 - (ii) Mr Mark Coure, MP;
 - (iii) the Hon. David Coleman, MP; and
 - (iv) Ms Shuyu Wang, Consul (Cultural Affairs) in the Consulate-General of the People's Republic of China in New South Wales.
 - (e) the competition was made possible with a grant from Multicultural NSW.
- (2) That this House congratulates Lion Dance Kids and the Australian Yau Kung Mun Chinese Martial Arts Association for holding the competition and in particular thanks the following individuals for their ongoing work to educate and train individuals in this important art form:
 - (a) Mr Kwan Leung, the President of the Australian Yau Kung Mun Chinese Martial Arts Association;
 - (b) Mr James Leung, the immediate past President of the Australian Yau Kung Mun Chinese Martial Arts Association; and
 - (c) Mr Johnny Leung, the Vice-President and Operations Manager of the Australian Yau Kung Mun Chinese Martial Arts Association.

Motion agreed to.

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY

Dr AMANDA COHN (10:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) World Blood Donor Day was Friday 14 June 2024;

- (b) Australia needs 1.7 million blood donations every year to meet demand;
 - (c) a blood donation is needed every 18 seconds in Australia for cancer patients, people living with blood disorders, for surgery and birth;
 - (d) currently, only 3 per cent of the Australian population donates blood even though 58 per cent of the population is eligible;
 - (e) blood has a 42-day shelf life, meaning consistent donations are required to maintain blood supply levels;
 - (f) increased respiratory infections during the winter months leads to reduced donations;
 - (g) from May to September, blood supply levels are most likely to drop to "very low";
 - (h) the Lifeblood Blood Supply Update was launched on 12 June 2024, allowing blood levels to be viewed online in real time; and
 - (i) on 18 June 2024, New South Wales blood supply levels showed a critical need for donations of A-positive, B-negative and O-positive blood types within the next five days.
- (2) That this House notes that:
- (a) blood donation rules have been changed to allow those who have received a tattoo to donate blood just seven days after a new tattoo or to donate plasma straightaway, instead of the previous four-month waiting period; and
 - (b) the Therapeutic Goods Administration has approved a new plasma pathway for people of any sexual orientation and people taking HIV pre-exposure prophylactic medication to be eligible to donate plasma without any waiting periods.
- (3) That this House encourages all eligible residents of New South Wales to donate blood in winter 2024.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

SYDNEY FISH MARKET AND INFRASTRUCTURE NSW

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (10:03): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 1125 by omitting from the second line the words "the Premier, the Treasurer,".

Leave granted.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Accordingly, I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 26 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 1 January 2020 in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, or Infrastructure NSW, relating to the Sydney Fish Market redevelopment and Infrastructure NSW governance:

- (a) all documents relating to the Main Works contract between Infrastructure NSW and Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd, dated 22 October 2020;
- (b) all monthly progress reports on the work in connection with the contract provided by Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd to Infrastructure NSW under clause 6.1.2 of the contract within the last 12 months;
- (c) all documents relating to the Blackwattle Bay interagency delivery process;
- (d) all minutes of the project control group meetings;
- (e) all documents regarding complaints or notifications notified by Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd to Infrastructure NSW under clause 25A.2 of the contract;
- (f) all notices of non-compliance provided to Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd by Infrastructure NSW's nominated "Principal's Authorised Person" under clause 39.14 of the contract;
- (g) all "Variation Orders" issued by Infrastructure NSW to Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd under clause 48.1 of the contract within the last 12 months;
- (h) all "Liability Direction" notified by Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd to Infrastructure NSW under clause 48.9A of the contract within the last 12 months;
- (i) all documents regarding claims by Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd for an extension of time, reductions in time or adjustment to contractual completion dates under clause 50 of the contract;
- (j) all documents regarding claims by Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd for delay costs, liquidated damages or acceleration under either clause 51 or clause 52 of the contract;
- (k) all documents regarding claims by Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd under clause 68 of the contract;
- (l) all "notification of issue" by Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd under clause 69 of the contract;

- (m) any document which lists the contracts or other arrangements with consultants to Infrastructure NSW, including Infrastructure NSW's board, having a value or cost of more than \$50,000 in relation to:
 - (i) the new Sydney Fish Market project; and
 - (ii) Infrastructure NSW's internal governance.
- (n) all briefings from Infrastructure NSW regarding the Sydney Fish Market project;
- (o) all reports provided by consultants to Infrastructure NSW, including Infrastructure NSW's board, having a value or cost of more than \$50,000 in relation to:
 - (i) the new Sydney Fish Market project; and
 - (ii) Infrastructure NSW's internal governance.
- (p) 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.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

LAWRENCE DIMECH, OAM, MOM

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House congratulates Lawrence Dimech, OAM, MOM, on his retirement from community activities following many decades of service to the Australian Maltese community.
- (2) That this House notes that:
 - (a) Lawrence Dimech migrated to Australia from Malta in 1954;
 - (b) a leading Australian Maltese journalist, Lawrence founded *The Maltese Herald*, where he was the editor until 1971, and *The Voice of the Maltese*, as well as writing for a number of Maltese publications and authoring two books;
 - (c) Lawrence has held several significant diplomatic and community roles in New South Wales, including:
 - (i) serving as the representative for Malta in New South Wales, as the Migration Attaché between 1971 and 1977 and Consul General between 1997 and 2000;
 - (ii) working as the Director-Coordinator of the Parramatta Migrant Resource Centre between 1977 and 1985;
 - (iii) Executive Officer for the Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs between 1985 and 1992;
 - (iv) founding member of the Melita Eagles Paramatta Soccer Club, where Lawrence served as secretary and president;
 - (v) serving the Maltese community in 2012 and 2013 as one of only 40 People of Australia ambassadors; and
 - (vi) leading the Maltese Community Council of NSW and Maltese Welfare (NSW) Inc. as president and in other leadership roles for many years.
 - (d) in 2003, Lawrence very deservedly received the Order of Australia for his outstanding contributions to the Maltese community;
 - (e) in 2014, Lawrence received Malta's highest honour, the National Order of Merit, for his service to Maltese migrants in Australia, which is particularly of note considering it is not usually awarded to people living outside of Malta; and
 - (f) Lawrence also won the Manoel Vilhena Award in 1996, the Premju Kulturali from the Maltese Cultural Association of New South Wales in 1997, and a Special Merit Award from the NSW Football Federation in 1998.
- (3) That this House thanks Lawrence Dimech for his enormous service to the Australian Maltese community for 70 years.

Motion agreed to.

ANIMAL SHOCK COLLARS

The Hon. EMMA HURST (10:04): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the use of shock collars that send an electric shock through an animal's neck is a criminal offence under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979, and has been since that Act was first introduced by the then Wran Labor Government;
 - (b) this offence is a vitally important protection for animals, noting that shock collars can cause serious physical and psychological injuries to animals, including pain, anxiety, trauma and even thermal burns;
 - (c) the maximum penalty for using, selling or possessing a shock collar or similar electrical device today is a \$27,500 fine for a corporation and a \$5,500 fine or six months imprisonment, or both, for an individual; and

- (d) animal welfare groups and the majority of vets oppose the use of shock collars on animals because of cruelty concerns.
- (2) That this House reaffirms the importance of the prohibitions within the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 concerning the use of shock collars and congratulates the Wran Labor Government on ensuring these cruel devices are banned in New South Wales.

Motion agreed to.

Documents

GREYHOUND WELFARE

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. EMMA HURST (10:05): 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 the following documents created since 1 April 2024 in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty, Minister for Gaming and Racing, Minister for Veterans, Minister for Medical Research and Minister for the Central Coast, the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission or Greyhound Racing NSW relating to greyhound welfare:

- (a) all documents recording any handover from current or former staff, board members or Animal Welfare Committee members of the Greyhound Welfare and Integrity Commission or Greyhound Racing NSW; and
- (b) 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.

Motion agreed to.

Motions

REPUBLIC OF CHINA (TAIWAN) ELECTION 2024

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (10:05): I move:

- (1) That this House recognises that on 13 January 2024 the Republic of China (Taiwan) held free and democratic elections which resulted in the election of Mr Lai Ching-te as President and Ms Hsiao Bi-khim as Vice President.
- (2) That this House congratulates the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Sydney for hosting a bipartisan event on 20 May 2024 to celebrate the inauguration of the sixteenth-term President and Vice President of the Republic of China (Taiwan).
- (3) That this House acknowledges the following members who attended:
 - (a) the Hon. Paul Fletcher, MP;
 - (b) the Hon. Damien Tudehope, MLC;
 - (c) Dr Hugh McDermott, MP;
 - (d) the Hon. Rod Roberts, MLC;
 - (e) the Hon. Chris Rath, MLC;
 - (f) the Hon. Rachel Merton, MLC;
 - (g) the Hon. Jacqui Munro, MLC;
 - (h) Mr Mark Coure, MP;
 - (i) Mr Tim James, MP;
 - (j) Mr Ray Williams, MP; and
 - (k) Mr Jordan Lane, MP.
- (4) That this House further acknowledges the leadership and commitment of Mr David Cheng-Wei Wu, Head of Mission for the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office Sydney.

Motion agreed to.

BOOKS AND PRINT-BASED LEARNING RESOURCES

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (10:06): I move:

- (1) That this House acknowledges:
 - (a) concerns held by parents in relation to the replacement of physical books and other print-based learning resources with e-learning; and
 - (b) that physical books and print-based learning resources continue to be available to New South Wales schools, along with e-books and other digital learning resources.

Moton agreed to.

*Committees***REGULATION COMMITTEE****Reports**

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I table a report of the Regulation Committee entitled *Delegated Legislation Monitor No. 6 of 2024*, dated 19 June 2024.

*Bills***ROAD RULES AMENDMENT (MOBILE PHONES AS NAVIGATION AIDS FOR PROVISIONAL LICENCE HOLDERS) BILL 2024****First Reading**

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

Second Reading Speech

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK (10:22): I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Road Rules Amendment (Mobile Phones as Navigational Aids for Provisional Licence Holders) Bill 2024 will grant provisional drivers over the age of 25 the right to use their mobile as a navigational aid while driving. Under this bill, drivers may not touch their phone while driving but can preset it while the car is parked. I will give this Chamber some context as to what inspired this bill. On 15 December 2023 the Supreme Court of New South Wales ruled that Chiqui Esequé, a provisional driver, had violated the law by using a mobile phone device as a GPS while driving.

Ms Esequé, aware of the legal restrictions, had removed the SIM card from her phone to prevent it from making calls or sending SMS. Instead, she tethered the phone to a mobile broadband device for internet connectivity. The Supreme Court determined that the absence of a SIM card and cellular network connection was irrelevant, as calls and messages could still be accessed via voice over internet protocol [VOIP]. Justice Monica Schmidt ruled in favour of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, which had appealed a New South Wales Local Court magistrate's decision to acquit Ms Esequé on the grounds that her device was not functioning as a phone.

Ms Esequé was pulled over at 1.12 a.m. on 20 May 2022 when a police officer noticed she was driving without headlights. Court documents indicated that the officer saw a mobile phone mounted on a hands-free holder, with the screen illuminated and displaying a GPS application. Evidence presented included a photo of the mounted phone and part of the conversation between Ms Esequé and Senior Constable Frencham. The officer said:

... you have a mobile phone displaying a map which you are not allowed to have displayed. As a P plater you are not allowed to use a phone for any reason. Just wait here a minute I'll be back.

Ms Esequé told Senior Constable Frencham that she "didn't understand", but she was issued a ticket for the headlights and charged with using a mobile phone while driving. According to New South Wales law, drivers with a learner, P1 or P2 licence are prohibited from using a mobile phone for any purpose while driving. The key issue was whether Ms Esequé was using the device as a mobile phone. During the Local Court hearing, Magistrate Hugh Donnelly found Ms Esequé not guilty, stating that the device was being used solely as a GPS and was not capable of making calls, thus not meeting the definition of a "mobile phone" according to law. He stated:

I find in this case that I am to accept that the definition of a mobile phone just cannot be anything, there has to be some limitation to what the expression means. This is a case where the phone itself, there was evidence of having no SIM card.

...

I may be wrong about this, but I am prepared to make a finding in this case I am not able to accept beyond reasonable doubt that what was in the cradle of the car was a mobile phone.

However, the matter was then brought before the Supreme Court after a DPP appeal. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled that the device was still a mobile phone and the DPP's appeal was upheld. Justice Schmidt stated that phones can make calls without SIM cards. She stated:

I am satisfied that the approach urged for Ms Esequé cannot be accepted and that his Honour did fall into legal error in reaching his conclusions about the proper construction of the rules.

She added:

... it cannot sensibly be concluded that a mobile phone only becomes one, when a SIM card is placed into it and ceases being one, whenever such a card is removed.

...

It thus cannot be sensibly accepted, as was urged "that a device that does not have a SIM regardless of cellular service range, is presumed to always be incapable of receiving or sending telecommunications".

The decision was set aside and remitted to the Local Court. Ms Esequé was ordered to pay the DPP's costs, despite the device not being used for anything other than the purpose of navigation on Sydney's complex road system. Who is this bill for, and why? Today there are approximately 112,000 provisional drivers over the age of 25 in New South Wales. Young people aged 17 to 25 are vulnerable as road users due to their increasing independence and mobility while lacking full brain maturity and cognitive development.

Research shows that brain development is not complete until the mid-twenties, leading to greater risk-taking in young drivers. Younger novice drivers, young passengers and pedestrians can lack the exposure to hazardous, new or unexpected situations and have inexperience of judgement in assessing risk and in dealing with a variety of driving situations. However, many new provisional drivers have experienced undue difficulty and stress navigating roads across New South Wales, especially in Sydney. This may have contributed to the higher road fatality toll and incident rate.

How does this bill work? Our option is to legislate a 12-month trial that would recognise provisional drivers over the age of 25 are likely to have better-developed skills to manage controlled distractions. Analysis shows that the crash risk of novice drivers aged over 25 years is lower when compared with provisional drivers of all ages, particularly those in the P1 period. Similar age-based provisions restricting the use of mobile phones apply in Queensland for learner and P1 licence holders under the age of 25, while older novice drivers are permitted to use their phones for some functions. The results of this trial would be reviewed, and further legislative changes made if road safety is improved or if there is no effect.

What does this bill do? Firstly, it allows provisional drivers over the age of 25 to use their phones as a navigational aid while the car is parked or not moving. Secondly, the legislation will last for a 12-month trial period, after which additional legislation may be required to extend or make permanent these new privileges. What does the bill not do? Firstly, it does not allow provisional drivers to touch their phones while their car is stationary. Secondly, it does not allow provisional drivers to touch their phones while their car is in motion. Thirdly, it does not permanently grant additional road privileges for provisional drivers. However, the option for the trial to become permanent is a matter I would welcome, provided that the trial is successful. The road toll is up, but denying provisional drivers the ability to use their phones as navigational aids may well be making the problem worse. Sydney can be a dangerous city to drive in and provisional drivers should be provided with all the tools they need to navigate it safely. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned.

Motions

ACTIVE SUPER FUND

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (10:31): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) the practice known as "greenwashing" involves the making of misleading and deceptive statements about an organisation's environmental or ethical credentials in order to promote or expand its business;
 - (b) on 5 June 2024 the Federal Court of Australia made findings that Active Super had, between 1 February 2021 and 30 June 2023 - "the relevant period" - made a series of misleading and deceptive representations to its members and prospective members about its investments in coalmining, oil tar sands, gambling and Russian stocks;
 - (c) Ms Karen McKeown, the member for Penrith, was a member of the board during the whole of the relevant period and deputy chair of the board from 26 March 2021;
 - (d) Mr Nathan Hagarty, the member for Leppington, was a member of the board of Active Super from 5 December 2021; and
 - (e) in the financial year 2022-2023, the member for Penrith and the member for Leppington received a combined total of \$218,114 for their role on the board of Active Super.
- (2) That this House condemns greenwashing by superannuation funds, including those established under the Superannuation Administration Act 1996.
- (3) That this House calls on the member for Penrith and the member for Leppington:
 - (a) to return to the Active Super fund any fees received in relation to their membership of the board during the relevant period; and

- (b) to pay a material share of a penalty, if a financial penalty is imposed on Active Super for making misleading and deceptive statements.

On 5 June this year the Federal Court found against a superannuation fund known as Active Super for engaging in misleading and deceptive conduct over a 2½-year period. The fund was engaged in a process called greenwashing, which has the effect of an organisation pretending to be something it is not. The fund told members of its high moral standards and environmental credentials and how it would never invest in anything that breaches those standards. Unfortunately for Active Super, but fortunately for us, it was caught out. The fund had invested in coalmining, oil tar sands, gambling and Russian stocks, all the while preaching about the high moral grounds it occupied. Active Super deceived its members, full stop.

This is important because the minority Minns Labor Government is propped up in the lower House by two directors who remain on the board of Active Super: the member for Penrith, Ms Karen McKeown, and the member for Leppington and Chief Government Whip, Mr Nathan Hagarty, who took home a combined \$200,000 in directors' fees last year alone. These Labor MPs have responsibilities as directors and they oversaw as Active Super engaged in misleading and deceptive conduct.

Of course, once the scandal broke there were the usual resignations from the board, but not quite straightaway. These Labor MPs did not want to miss out on the next pay cheque. It is interesting that when appointed as the Government Whip, the member for Leppington said, "Due to these additional commitments and responsibilities, I have made the tough decision to resign as a councillor" from Liverpool City Council, yet it took a finding of the Federal Court and seven more months as a director for him to be too busy to be on the board of Active Super. I guess Active Super pays better than serving his local community. These MPs should commit to giving back their directors' fees after they totally failed in their job as directors by being on the board of a company that misled the members who invested in its superannuation fund.

This begs the question: To the extent that penalties are imposed on Active Super as a result of its conduct, why should those penalties be sheeted home to the honest workers who invest in a superannuation fund based on the behaviour and commitments of its board of directors? "Misleading and deceptive" has become a great descriptor of this Government. Not only have we seen the member for Leppington and the member for Penrith overseeing unlawful greenwashing by Active Super and the member for Newcastle being found to have breached the public trust; we have also seen the police Minister's embarrassing media debacles and the Treasurer's dodgy budget figures, which were blown out of the water once he had to show us his homework, all while the Premier has been missing in action.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: The Clerk will stop the clock.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: I have been listening carefully. If the Leader of the Opposition is going to traduce members of the other place, he needs to do so by way of substantive motion. The member is straying from the motion and passing comment on members of the other place, which I believe is out of order.

The Hon. Natalie Ward: To the point of order: The Leader of the Opposition was reporting factual matters. He may have added some adjectives to describe those matters, but these are factual matters that are on the public record. The member was not seeking to add to those in any way, rather to include them in a factual narrative about matters that have occurred.

The PRESIDENT: I admire the work of the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party. However, on this occasion I agree with the Leader of the Government. Members will confine their remarks to the motion.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: The motion calls for the member for Penrith and the member for Leppington to return any fees received from Active Super in relation to their membership of the board in the relevant period and for Active Super to pay the material share of a financial penalty, if one is imposed, for making misleading and deceptive statements. The Government should support the motion. If the Government has any integrity whatsoever, it should look after the interests of workers who support this fund.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (10:37): I move:

That the question be amended by omitting paragraph (3).

All members think greenwashing is bad, and it should not be surprising that the Government is opposed to it. I certainly am. Those who do the wrong thing need to be dealt with, which is what has happened. Greenwashing involves the making of misleading and deceptive statements about an organisation's environmental or ethical credentials in order to promote or expand its business. In the Federal Court case involving Active Super—

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Point of order: I am unclear about what the amendment seeks to do.

The PRESIDENT: It seeks to omit paragraph (3) of the motion.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Now the Leader of the Opposition is interrupting.

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Government has the call.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The court noted:

In the realm of financial product investments, "greenwashing" is a term that:

... pertains to the misleading and deceptive disclosures employed by financial institutions to entice environmentally conscious investors into purchasing their financial products that, in reality, fall short of meeting the expected Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) or green credentials. These ESG credentials encompass environmental compliance and measures to protect the environment, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and manage natural resources; social compliance, which evaluates how a company treats its stakeholders; and governance compliance, focusing on appropriate governance practices such as executive transparency and accountability.

Paragraph (3) of the motion, which the Government is seeking to omit, makes two Active Super directors personally liable for the actions of the fund. That is not the way super fund boards work. I would have thought the Leader of the Opposition, as a former Minister for Finance, would understand a bit about governance and know that this is the case. The name of the fund was LGSS Proprietary Limited, where "limited" means limited liability—directors are not held personally liable.

The Hon. Wes Fang: They should be.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If members opposite wish for that, then they should perhaps change the law. I remind them also that it is Federal law, not State law; but we quibble. The point is that greenwashing is wrong. Those who do the wrong thing should be held to account, and that has happened. I make the point that, coming from members opposite—and particularly from the Leader of the Opposition in relation to declarations and transparency in the way he operated over his entire time as Minister—this is a bit rich.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (10:39): The Greens will be supporting the amendment from the Government. On that basis, we can then support the motion for similar reasons. Obviously, greenwashing is bad. This was deceptive conduct. That is why the Australian Securities and Investments Commission took this company to court and that is why the Federal Court found it to have breached the law. Our law has worked as it should. The Federal Court has set down a further date for delivering the penalty for that conduct.

Under the current corporate law, the way it works—as I am sure the Leader of the Opposition knows well—is that there is not an ability to automatically apply that fine to directors. The reason why we do not necessarily want that to be the case, although I would like to see more fines being handed out directly to directors, is because the matter has not been investigated. We do not actually know who was to blame for this. Was misleading information given to the directors? Were they negligent in their duty? I do not know. That has not been prosecuted in court. I would hate to think that this Parliament, somehow, just because these members happen to be now in—

The Hon. Susan Carter: That's the director's responsibility. That's what a director is. That's why directors get paid. That's the director's duty.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I acknowledge the interjection. That is right. We have directors' duties. People are taken to court for breaching those duties. That has not been found in this case yet. By all means, that would be great, but it has not happened. The Opposition is asking for us in this Chamber to be judge and jury and decide that these particular members have done something wrong because they happen to be in the Labor Government.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: No, we're asking you to have integrity, not to do two jobs at once. The party of integrity—nil.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I acknowledge the offensive interjections from the Leader of the Opposition. It is not my fault that he does not understand corporate law and the way the legal system works in this country.

The PRESIDENT: The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I question why either of these parties allow their MPs to have multiple jobs. I do not understand why Labor allows people to sit on boards and have hundreds of thousands of dollars in addition to being an MP. I do not understand why members across all parties in this place have secondary jobs. I do not understand how somebody can be a company director of multiple companies and still think that they can comply with their directors' duties. These are valid questions. In this particular case, we do not have the Hon. Damien Tudehope coming to us with all of the directors from all of the companies that have been found to have done something wrong; he is only interested in these particular directors because he made the decision to be.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: They are members of Parliament.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: If he thinks that the problem is because they are members of Parliament, he should introduce a bill today that stops secondary employment of MPs.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (10:42): What has emerged over the past week concerning the member for Penrith and the member for Leppington has been nothing short of extraordinary. Labor members in the other place have flouted their responsibilities to their electorates by leading some of Australia's most egregious examples of greenwashing, all orchestrated by Active Super. Ms Karen McKeown and Mr Nathan Hagarty collected a combined \$218,000 last year and have been earning money from their Active Super directorships by defrauding their members, many of whom choose to sign up to their fund due to their commitment to divestment from certain companies. This is just another saga of political manipulation from this country's parasitic superannuation funds. I use the word "parasitic" because, according to the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority's review conducted in October 2021, many of these bloodsucking entities do not spend in the best interests of their members, having channelled \$40 million last year directly to unions or to Industry Super Australia.

For two Labor members of Parliament to be earning thousands of dollars a year in a second job, distracting them from their representative duties, only to be engaging in illegal conduct, is a complete abrogation of their duties. The extent of misconduct is likely understated. As a Penrith councillor—a position she still holds—Ms Karen McKeown voted in favour of a proposal that benefited property developer Mirvac, a firm in Active Super's investment portfolio. We now know that she did not disclose any conflict of interest when declarations were sought, and none were noted in the council minutes. That is why I move:

That the question be amended by inserting after paragraph (3):

- (4) That this House requests that the Minister for Local Government act to eventuate a referral of the member for Penrith to the Office of Local Government for her potential misconduct as defined by section 440F of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) with respect to votes cast in Penrith City Council concerning a Mirvac development.

In light of these breaches of fiduciary duty, it is only natural that Ms Karen McKeown and Mr Nathan Hagarty should resign from their positions on the board of directors, which they have done. But they should do it immediately—not after their next pay cheque and not after 30 June, but immediately. The public must have faith in the trustworthiness of politicians. This saga is an unfortunate stain on our State's major superannuation funds and on a few politicians.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (10:45): I support the Hon. Damien Tudehope's motion and thank him for bringing this matter before the House. He believes in transparency and accountability, not just talking about it. I also support the Hon. Chris Rath's amendment. We note that this is a Federal Court finding—an Australian and Securities and Investments Commission [ASIC] finding. As a former employee of ASIC, I conducted this type of investigation and I know how serious these matters are. When the Federal Court has made these findings, they are very serious matters. Government members seem to want to brush them away and ignore them and hope that they go away. They are quite arrogant, if I may say, in their approach to the Opposition even raising this matter in the House.

These are directors' duties. We teach our students in law school about directors' duties and obligations. They are not just theory in the Corporations Act. They are obligations owed to the shareholders of companies. The member for Leppington, Mr Nathan Hagarty, and the member for Penrith, Ms Karen McKeown, are happy to take the pay cheque on the way through and to resign at some point in the future, now that there has been a finding and now that it is public, not when the inquiries were first made and not when they had declarations they were supposed to make.

It is interesting to note that Ms Karen McKeown did not disclose that she received income from this directorship. She only disclosed that she was on the board. That in itself raises questions. This Parliament has standards and we should set those standards for the rest of the community. The fact that it takes a motion, a Federal Court finding and publicity for the members to step up to their obligations as members of Parliament should be the entire reason for members to support the motion.

This is clearly the same old Labor. They are all talk about integrity and transparency and they are all happy to heap on when it suits them in theory, but it is literally theory. Once elected, we have seen them walk away from and dismiss and bury their promises when they do not produce documents. This is not going away. Our job is to hold the Government to account. If I were the Government, I would be calling those members and saying, "You need to resign immediately. You are not getting the next pay cheque. You are not going to sit in our party room."

Frankly, we should be finding new members to represent those electorates. Those electorates deserve better. Each and every member is here to serve those electorates, not to quadruple dip. This is not double or triple dipping; this is quadruple dipping by those members, who are clearly interested in the dough. They misled as

directors when they had obligations to fulfil. Those obligations are why they get paid, as the Hon. Susan Carter pointed out. I note that the amendment moved by the Government seeks to remove any obligation for financial penalty. That is the very point. The Government is happy to say, "It's terrible. We shouldn't do it," but there is no consequence to their hip pocket. We should be yelling and screaming that from the rafters. This is Eddie Obeid all over again.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (10:49): By leave: I make a couple of points relating to the amendment moved by the Hon. Chris Rath. The Government does not support the amendment. If members opposite were actually serious about this, they would deal with the issue in the Legislative Assembly. They would deal with it as a privileges matter if they believe that it is so egregious. Those opposite are raising the issue in this place to distract from their problems in responding to the budget. There is a lot of outrage from members on that side of the House about people double dipping.

Let us remember that the shadow Minister for Environment has called on all MPs who are councillors to resign from council—to not double dip and be part-time MPs. She might want to know that the member for Drummoyne, the member for Castle Hill and the member for Ryde all remain on council. Importantly, with all of the outrage from that side of the Chamber, the shadow Minister might also want to ask questions of the member for Lane Cove, who I understand is now taking consultants funding while being an MP.

The Hon. Wes Fang: Point of order: The motion references the member for Leppington and the member for Penrith. If the member wishes to talk about the member for Lane Cove, she should do so by way of substantive motion.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order, as I did for a similar one taken earlier.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you, Mr President, for that wise ruling. I make the point that those opposite should perhaps look in their own backyard before they start throwing allegations and jumping for joy on these matters. This serious motion states that greenwashing is wrong. The Australian Securities and Investments Commission did the right thing and dealt with the matter in court. I again raise the point of Ms Abigail Boyd that this is not the way to get an outcome in relation to those serious concerns.

The Hon. Natalie Ward: You don't want an outcome.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Just deal with the budget, clean up your backyard and stop your shadow Ministers going on radio and making allegations when they clearly do not even understand what is going on.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It is clear that greenwashing is bad. The New South Wales Government does not support it, nor does anyone else. The Government has moved a sensible amendment. The amendment of the Hon. Chris Rath is outrageous. If those opposite are serious about this, they should act seriously. They should deal with the matter in the House where they are supposed to deal with it. They should not waste our time on private members' business day.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (10:51): By leave: The amendment moved by the Hon. Chris Rath is very straightforward. It has been disclosed that this super fund was a shareholder in Mirvac, which sought a development approval of certain land over which Penrith council had some decision-making powers. That should be a straightforward situation for the purposes of obtaining advice or referring the matter to the Office of Local Government [OLG] to form a view and potentially give guidance to others about how these matters should be dealt with in circumstances where someone is a director of a super fund that is an investor with an application before the council. The referral of that matter should be supported by the Government because it necessarily attributes blame to the particular members, who potentially have some material answers. There are also benefits to councillors, generally, in ensuring that they act properly with respect to their decision-making relating to those bodies with whom they hold directorships.

It is absolutely befuddling that the Government would not support the amendment, because the clarity that it provides to others is an important position. It is also an important position in ensuring that those councillors have acted properly in their conduct and obligations to the council. I clearly support the amendment moved by my colleague the Hon. Chris Rath. It is an important amendment, which raises additional issues. I understand that a letter has been forwarded to the Minister. In those circumstances, it is a question of this House supporting the referral to the OLG to ensure that we have proper rules in place for people with applications before council.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (10:54): I make the point that members opposite have always despised and continue to despise industry funds. The reality is that industry funds, which represent workers' entitlements to get a share of national income and capital, instituted—

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Point of order: This is off topic in respect of what this motion goes to. There is no question about our support for super funds. There is absolute support for superannuation funds and people contributing to their retirement.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: That is not a point of order.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: This is a point of order about relevance.

The PRESIDENT: I do not uphold the point of order at this stage. The member has the call.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Thank you, Mr President. The relevance is very simple. We have people representing workers on boards of superannuation funds, and those opposite are trying to attribute blame to them for decisions which have been ruled in the court, appropriately. Appropriate measures have been taken in terms of fines and financial penalties, and then those penalties are being slated home to those directors. The conflict has been resolved; the directors have resigned from the board.

The Hon. Susan Carter: They have not!

The Hon. Natalie Ward: They have not!

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: They have not!

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Members opposite know very well that this will take effect in a matter of a fortnight. The ridiculous debating point that it has to be tomorrow instead of in two weeks does not wash. This is a typical base attempt by those opposite, who have no policy depth whatsoever and come to this place—

The Hon. Natalie Ward: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: The Clerk will stop the clock. The Hon. Natalie Ward rises on a point of order.

The Hon. Natalie Ward: I ask that the member be drawn back to the substantive motion. Our motivations or otherwise are not part of the motion. If the member has an issue with our approach, he should address it by way of substantive motion. We are dealing with a serious motion. I ask that the member be drawn back to the content of the motion.

The PRESIDENT: I understand. As the member knows, wide latitude is given in these debates. I do not uphold the point of order at this stage. The Hon. Mark Buttigieg has the call.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: I will address my issue with the Opposition's approach. The substantive motion is clear: to attack two Labor members of Parliament who were attempting to discharge their responsibilities on the board of an industry fund representing workers. The biggest single reform of Labor governments over the past 20 to 30 years is the institution of industry funds. The fact that we have union members on those funds and Labor members representing workers is something that we are proud of. The fact that there has been an issue with greenwashing is not acceptable. We cannot have a situation where funds are advertising to their members that they are investing in ethical investments when that is not the case. But to then slate home direct financial penalty to people trying to represent workers is simply a base attack on Labor members of Parliament. Members opposite know it. That is their motive. It is a joke. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (10:57): In reply: I thank members for their contributions. It is an important motion. The Government and The Greens seek to rely on a legal technicality, saying, "If you do not have a conviction against these two directors on the basis that they engaged in a breach of their responsibilities as directors by engaging in deceptive and misleading conduct, then we will not support the fact that they should return the directors' fees which they have been paid." Let me remind the Government and The Greens that these two people are members of the Government. They sit on the Government benches. This motion states that when members of Parliament are directors of a super fund, we expect certain standards of them. As directors, they have obligations relating to receiving contributions from their members, who rely on those representations for the purposes of investing in that fund. Those directors have an obligation to be transparent when they are elected to Parliament.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Members will cease interjecting.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Those members of Parliament have an obligation not to hide behind the legal fiction that they have not been convicted, but to say that it is in the interests of the members of the fund that they return the money as an act of good faith and transparency. They should not be waiting for a conviction but should be saying, "Because I am a member of Parliament and the fund of which I am a director has been convicted of misleading and deceptive conduct, I will not wait for a conviction. I will return it." That would send

a message to everyone that they have acted honourably. To hide behind the legal fiction that there is no conviction and that it is a Federal trustee—

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

Visitors

VISITORS

The PRESIDENT: I welcome to the gallery student leaders from high schools in New South Wales who are attending programs conducted by the Parliamentary Education and Engagement unit. You are all very welcome today to this particularly robust Chamber.

Questions Without Notice

ERARING POWER STATION

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (11:00): My question is directed to the Minister for Energy. Noting that the 2024-25 budget reports a contingent liability capped at \$225 million per year for any year in which Origin Energy chooses to be covered for 80 per cent of its losses on Eraring Power Station, why is there no contingent liability reported in the budget for the additional \$100 million relevant cost-change cap for each of those years and the cost of any repairs that may fall to the State as a result of unplanned unit failure?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:01): I am very pleased to have received this question because it shows that the Opposition has read the agreement that was made between the Government and Origin Energy. It shows that this information is all available as a result of the transparency of the Government. The costings are within the cap. There is decision-making in relation to maintenance plans and schedules, and the need for workers to remain employed to make sure that the six terawatt hours that we require to cover the reliability gap—

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: What about Centennial Coal?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you want to know about Centennial Coal, my understanding is that Origin Energy has indicated that it has entered into a contract with it.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Has it?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Yes, it was reported in the media. I can continue to answer these questions for you if you would ask them one at a time. The point is that the Government has very clearly and openly made an agreement with Origin Energy to cover the reliability gap as it rolls out renewables across New South Wales. There used to be bipartisan agreement around the need for renewable energy and the need for \$32 billion worth of investment to go into New South Wales.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Point of order: The Leader of the Government has acknowledged that I have read the contract; I do not need to have it repeated to me. The question is why it was not reported as a contingent liability in the budget.

The PRESIDENT: Although there was a lot of detail in the question, the Leader of the Government is now straying from the question. She will come back to the leave of the question.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Where is Fukushima Faraway? If Opposition members were listening, they would know I have already answered the part of the question to which they draw your attention.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Leader of the Government will resume her seat. We need fewer interjections so that the students can learn a thing or two.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I actually answered this question but, because there was so much yelling, no-one could hear the answer. The point is that a transparent agreement has been tabled. There is more information forthcoming on the advice that was relied upon to make these decisions. It is a much better process than the previous Minister for Energy tried with Operation Phoenix, which was a secret.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Point of order: It is the same point of order that I previously made. The question has nothing to do with the decision-making of the previous Government. It is about why this liability was not included in the budget.

The PRESIDENT: I do not uphold the point of order. I will continue to listen further to the answer of the Leader of the Government.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The costing is within the cap. There are agreements around the way in which maintenance is going to operate and be applied. This is all disclosed in the agreement. I am glad that the

Opposition has asked the question, but the answers have already been provided both in writing and in this House, so we will work through that.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: It's not in the budget.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It is all in the budget. If you want to ask the Treasurer, I am sure he would be happy to answer. You do not have to believe me.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: Don't fob it off to someone else; it's your job!

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you, Deputy Leader of the Opposition. That is extremely rude. There is a contingent liability. We have been very open and clear about the way that it operates. It is in the budget and it is within the cap. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (11:05): I ask a supplementary question. The Minister has made reference to the fact that I have read the budget. Given the extent of the contract, and given that the extent of the State's liability in an opt-in year will depend entirely on the annual Eraring Power Station reported loss, why did the Government agree to forgo any right of the State to audit this reported loss and allow Origin Energy to determine the extent of the reported loss at its absolute discretion?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:06): This is extraordinary. We have provided in public the agreement that explains how all of this works, and the Opposition is complaining about it. The Leader of the Opposition has a question, which is great and I am very pleased that he does, but I wish he could read and understand it. We are requiring Eraring Power Station to report its losses as a discrete option. A contract management team is in place in my department that is working through this entire contract on an active, permanent basis. There is funding there. The fact that members opposite privatised this power station and sold it for \$50 million—

The PRESIDENT: The Minister will resume her seat. The Clerk will stop the clock. There are too many interjections from members on all sides of the Chamber, with the exception of the crossbench. Hansard cannot hear.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: Thank you, and well done to the crossbench: a gold star for them. We are dealing with this transaction and project as a result of the privatisation of this coal-fired power station, which was flogged off for \$50 million.

The Hon. Chris Rath: Point of order: The question was very specific regarding reportable losses and the State Government's ability to audit those losses. It has nothing to do with the previous Government's approach to Eraring Power Station and everything to do with the inability of the State Government to audit the books there.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: To the point of order: The question relates to Eraring Power Station. The Minister was being directly relevant because the power station, as the Minister said, was sold off by the previous Government. Therefore, the auditing requirements are there because we no longer own it and we have to disclose it as a contingent liability as part of the budget. So it is directly relevant to the question that was asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: To the point of order: I do not understand the contribution just now.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: You don't understand contingent liabilities?

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: I do.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will resume his seat. This is getting silly. This is not a schoolroom where people can chat with each other. This is question time in the Parliament of New South Wales. Members will act accordingly. I will hear further from the Leader of the Opposition on the point of order.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: The question was this: Why did the Government forgo its right to audit the accounts of Origin Energy in relation to its reported losses?

The PRESIDENT: The Minister is being directly relevant. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: As I have said, Origin Energy is required to provide its operating loss and profit statements. There is an active team that is managing that contract. It also has to attest it to the market. This is pretty embarrassing from those opposite. We still do not really know what their position is. Do they support the need for this measure? Do they support keeping the lights on and dealing with price spikes? Do they support this agreement? Do they support us making it transparent and being able to work through that? I do not actually understand what their position is in relation to this. I do not understand what their position is in relation to the

road map or nuclear. I am very proud that the Government has provided this agreement openly and to the public. It is very good. I am very happy to take questions on it. *[Time expired.]*

The PRESIDENT: I warn all members that I will now call them to order when they make ridiculous interjections.

STATE BUDGET AND DEBT

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (11:10): My question without notice is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer respond to community concerns about debt in the New South Wales budget?

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (11:10): I thank the member for his question. I also take the opportunity to welcome our student leaders in the public gallery. I would like to say that ordinarily we are much better behaved than we are today, but that would be misleading the House, so I will not say it. But it is very apt that we do have so many student leaders present with us, because they are going to have to inherit a bit of debt. We are acutely conscious of that debt and we do want to make sure that we are managing the budget responsibly for this generation so that the next generation has more opportunities. That is in the context of the Government inheriting from—

The PRESIDENT: I call the Hon. Bronnie Taylor to order for the first time.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY: The Government inherited the largest levels of debt from one incoming government to another in the Federation's history, no matter how you measure it—gross debt, net debt or as percentage of gross State product. What we on this side have done in yesterday's budget is reduce debt by \$9 billion by June 2026, having absorbed the \$11.9 billion impact from the Commonwealth Grants Commission. That means that the interest growth expense has come down dramatically. That is crucially important, as the State has to refinance the emergency COVID debt, which the previous Government was right to borrow to support the economy and jobs. But the reality remains that that debt was borrowed at emergency support rates, with intervention from the Reserve Bank of Australia and with us paying on average about 0.3 per cent or 0.4 per cent, which needs to be refinanced into a scenario of about 0.5 per cent to 0.6 per cent.

The reason we are determined to stabilise the debt is so we are not paying more to our creditors and so we are capable of providing more investments to solve the housing crisis, to invest in bulk-billing initiatives and to pump money into schools and hospitals. That is the choice that we made in this budget. I am pleased to say that we have been able to pull that off by abandoning the previous Government's risky strategy of plunging the State into more debt in order to eventually get the State out of debt. We are no longer borrowing \$46 billion, as the shadow Treasurer signed us up to, for New South Wales' biggest ever carriage rate. We are instead getting on with the job of building the public transport, the schools and the hospitals of the future.

STATE BUDGET AND TEACHER WAGES

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (11:13): My question is directed to the Minister for Finance, representing the Minister for Education and Early Learning in the other place. Noting that the current teachers award expires in October this year, what provision, if any, is there in the education budget for any further wage rise for teachers above the Government's 10½ per cent baseline offer for the next three years?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (11:14): I thank the honourable member for an important and relevant question for our student leaders who are in the gallery today. I too take the opportunity to welcome them to the Parliament. We love having young people in the gallery for question time. We sometimes behave ourselves; we sometimes do not. But we love to see young people who are engaged in our democracy, particularly in relation to issues that are relevant to them. There was a question about the debt that is being passed on to them that was incurred under the previous Government, and now one about our teachers.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: Point of order: It is just ridiculous. The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones and the Hon. Sarah Mitchell continue to interrupt while Ministers are trying to answer the questions that they have asked.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order. Order! All members will cease interjecting, particularly when I am making a ruling. The Minister has the call and will be heard in silence.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: It is worthwhile noting that last year the Deputy Premier and education Minister took our teachers in New South Wales from being the worst paid in the country to the best paid in the country, redirecting those important dollars. Because after a decade of declining education outcomes—

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: Point of order: We are now halfway through the Minister's answer. My question was very specific. It related to further wage increases over the next three years. That is the information

that I am seeking. I do not need a history lesson from the Minister's perspective. I want to know what is coming in future budgets.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order. The scope of the question was very narrow. The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: The answer to the question in relation to what is included in the budget is: provision for the existing wages policy of the Government, which was announced after much work by the Treasurer and the Minister for Industrial Relations and after we lifted the wages cap. Let us be clear about what our policy is versus the policy of those opposite. The policy of those opposite was to impose a wages cap on our public servants and on our teachers, capping our teachers' wages at a 2.5 per cent increase. What was the result? Those students in the gallery saw more than 10,000 merged and cancelled classes every day.

The Hon. Wes Fang: Point of order: The point of order is relevance. The Minister was asked a specific question. She is now very much straying from the question. Mr President, I ask that you draw her back to the leave of the question asked by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

The PRESIDENT: I do not uphold the point of order. The Minister is referring to the part of the question that refers to what is in the education budget. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: This Government is redirecting funding to the classroom to make sure that it is solving the chronic teacher vacancies that it inherited from those opposite and, indeed, from the member who asked me the question. What is the legacy of 12 years of those opposite in government? The legacy is chronic teacher vacancies. The legacy is the fastest falling education outcomes in the world.

The Hon. Wes Fang: Point of order: I contend that the Minister has now very much strayed from the substance of the question. She is now referring to the previous 12 years. The question did not refer at all to the history. The question referred to provision in the budget delivered yesterday. I ask that you draw her back to the leave of the question.

The PRESIDENT: I encourage the Minister to come back to the leave of the question for the final nine seconds of her answer.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I assure the House and student leaders that this year's budget will take our teachers from being the worst paid to the best paid and will deliver them a real wages increase for the first time in a decade. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (11:19): I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for her answer. Will the Minister please elucidate the part of her answer where she talked about the Government wages policy that she had worked on and made clear in the budget, and will she confirm that teachers will not get a cent above the Government wages policy?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (11:19): No.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: You have not budgeted for it.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Hon. Courtney Houssos has the call.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: No, that is completely inaccurate because—

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: So you are going above 10.5 per cent but you have not budgeted for it.

The PRESIDENT: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has asked a question. I would have thought that she would like to hear the answer.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I will explain this for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition: We have in place a wages policy that has been budgeted for, which allows for a 10.5 per cent increase across the board to our public servants. That is budgeted for within the budget we released yesterday. That is clear for everyone to see. At the same time, we have a new industrial relations system. I pay full credit to the Treasurer and the Minister for Industrial Relations for setting up this new system. This is the way the rest of the economy works. It is called a mutual gains bargaining framework and it allows employers—that is, the Government—and employees to sit down and find savings and more efficient ways of working. One of the key challenges facing our economy more broadly is productivity. This framework allows—as occurs across the rest of the economy, though it did not occur when those opposite were in government—

[*Opposition members interjected*]

Mr President, Opposition members asked me a question and a supplementary question but they do not want to listen to the answers. We on this side have answers to those important questions. We are dedicated to being open and transparent with the people of New South Wales. Clearly the Opposition does not want to hear the answers, so I will tell the school students in the gallery. We will deliver record levels of funding for our schools because we are absolutely committed to rebuilding them after a decade of declining education outcomes, which was a result of the former Government and, indeed, the former education Minister.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY POLICY

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (11:21): My question is directed to the Minister for Energy. Last month we saw devastating floods in Germany, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Armenia, China, Mexico, Türkiye, Brazil, Afghanistan and France. A remote Papua New Guinean village was buried in a landslide and an extreme heatwave hit India's capital, Delhi, with temperatures reaching 50 degrees Celsius. We know for a fact that climate change is directly linked to more frequent severe weather events caused by our continued reliance on fossil fuels. How can the Government continue to approve new coal and gas projects and their associated infrastructure like pipelines when even the International Energy Agency has said that to meet the Paris climate targets there can be no new coal or gas?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:22): I thank the member for her question and for continually raising in this House the importance and the impact of climate change that the globe is experiencing right now. We are seeing unprecedented weather events in relation to that. We are seeing real challenges as we try to make the transition and lower our greenhouse gas emissions, which we must do so that we do not reach many of the tipping points that are going to occur. Another point that I will make, which we have seen reflected in the budget, is that the cost of disaster mitigation and repair as a result of increasing numbers of extreme weather events is costing the New South Wales budget a lot more money—money that we would prefer to spend on communities rather than fixing things as a result of that weather.

The need to deal with the climate crisis is real, and the Government takes it very seriously. That is why we passed legislated targets in New South Wales; that is why I will be very pleased to announce the net zero commissioners very soon so that they can get on with the work of holding New South Wales to account for the targets that we have set ourselves. It was disappointing that we passed the climate change bill with support from most members of the Chamber but not the Hon. Mark Latham—that is okay; at least he is consistent. The point is that climate change is real and we all must take responsibility for the outcome. We cannot kick the issue down the road any longer. It is very disappointing to see a lack of bipartisanship, which had seemed to be there in the Federal sphere but is being lost.

We were taking action on climate change under John Howard, before Tony Abbott decided that he would break that fragile consensus. Australia is now decades behind on the action that we need to take. Every piece of action that we take is harder, must be done faster and is more expensive. What we have seen federally is very disappointing to me—it is more than disappointing; it is genuinely concerning. Do those opposite believe that climate change is real and that we need to take action? Are they prepared to take the action that is necessary to save future generations? To be more specific to the question asked by Ms Cate Faehrmann, she would be aware that I am working with Minister Scully and across government to deal with the planning system in order to take properly into account the way in which greenhouse gases are accounted for. That work continues.

URBAN ACTIVATION PRECINCTS

The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (11:25): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for the Arts, and Minister for Music and the Night-time Economy. How is the Government partnering with local councils and communities to develop more precincts and free public activities for the people of New South Wales?

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) (11:26): I thank the member for her question. The Government has made no secret of the fact that housing is the greatest priority in the budget because it is the number one contributor to the cost of living. But as we build houses, we must also ensure that we build communities. That is a chance to tackle costs for families and the public, who are really feeling the financial pressure at the moment. We can do both. Too often our urban spaces become places to go through rather than to. Our streets are a critical part of public and social infrastructure. We use them to access services and to shop, eat, socialise and connect. Around the world the Open Streets movement is transforming urban spaces by activating streets, creating community and tackling the cost of living.

The PRESIDENT: Opposition members will stop having discussions amongst themselves. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am pleased to inform the House that the Government is providing funding to 73 councils across the State, including 51 in the regions, to temporarily close streets to vehicles for community events that are free to access and safe for people to enjoy. I will give the House some examples: Bloomin' Birds SpringFest in the Warrumbungle Shire; WinterGlow in Albury, where a range of events are planned from now to summer; Kurri Kurri will host the inaugural Kurri Curry and Arts Festival, a celebration of local and regional curry making skills; Trundle, of course, will host the ABBA Festival; and Parkes, as usual, will turn Clarinda Street over to Australia's biggest Elvis festival. I encourage members to get there. It is quite spectacular.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: I want to see you do Elvis.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have done it before. Other examples include the Eco Eats and Beats Street Festival in the City of Shellharbour; and the 4Elements HipHop Festival in Blacktown, which is fantastic. I commend it to members. I was in Wagga Wagga to announce the Festival of W.

The Hon. Scott Farlow: The Festival of Wes!

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can confirm that it is not the Festival of Wes. Mr President, do not miss the Big Bogan Street Festival in Nyngan. Of course, as members know, the Dolly Parton Festival in Narromine was saved and is free as a result of this funding.

The PRESIDENT: Before I call Ms Abigail Boyd, I welcome to the Parliament student leaders from across New South Wales who are attending programs conducted by the Parliamentary Education and Engagement office. You are all very welcome.

STATE BUDGET AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (11:29): My question without notice is directed to the Minister for Agriculture. The budget specified that \$21 million would be allocated to animal welfare to be shared between an additional support for animal welfare approved charitable organisations, the review of animal welfare laws and the supposed establishment of an independent office for animal welfare. Given the dearth of information and lack of communication from the Minister's office, will the Minister please confirm the exact amount of the total funding that has been allocated to the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League in the 2024-25 budget?

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:30): I thank the member for the question. I am delighted to outline to the House today that the Government has a record spend on animal welfare for New South Wales. We are getting on with the job of delivering on our election commitments on animal welfare and providing better protections for animals and enforcement in New South Wales. The Government has made a record investment of \$21 million, which will be split in a number of ways, including, as I said, on election commitments that we took to the people of New South Wales and which we were elected on. That includes reviewing the funding for charitable organisations. That work has been completed.

An allocation of this funding will go to charitable organisations who conduct enforcement activities for the government. At the moment the organisations that conduct enforcement for the government are the RSPCA, the Animal Welfare League and the NSW Police Force. The New South Wales police has its own budget, but the Government will engage with the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League on an allocation of funding to carry out enforcement activities. Under the previous Government, the RSPCA received \$500,000 a year for those activities. That will be increased by this Government. We have proper rules in place for the allocation of funding. We have grants processes that we have put in place because the previous Government pork-barrelled funds and wasted money without accountability. The processes that we have put in place for the spending of taxpayer money will be implemented as we work with those charitable organisations to provide funding for them to carry out enforcement.

We also made a commitment that we would establish an independent office of animal welfare. We will be doing that. Work is underway by me, my department and the Government for the framework of that office. Part of the funding will be allocated to setting up that office of independent animal welfare, as we said we would do. I also have two bills before the House to deal with the Government's animal welfare commitments. The work will continue on those. We have committed to reviewing the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and some of the funding will go towards the work that needs to be done for that. In addition, we made a commitment to end puppy farming, and part of the funding will go towards delivering on that commitment.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (11:33): I ask a supplementary question. Given that last year's allocation to the RSPCA was \$20.5 million and not \$500,000, will the Minister elucidate how this year's investment, which is less than the \$43 million from last year, is a record investment, and explain how \$21 million can include additional support for animal welfare organisations when the \$21 million that was announced across all of these things is

less than what was given, we understand, to the RSPCA last year? That would result in a funding cut. Does that mean the word "additional" as used in the budget is incorrect and misleading?

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:33): I welcome the supplementary question from the member. It is wrong. I am happy to provide information to follow up on the answer I have provided. The Government has made a record investment of \$21 million to deal with animal welfare in the ways that I have outlined and in the ways we took to the election. Last year there was a one-off amount of money provided to the RSPCA without proper information from the previous Government about how it should be spent. That money was spent on a range of things within the RSPCA. Some was spent on enforcement activities but some was spent on facilities that are one-off builds for the RSPCA.

Frankly, because no information was provided when the previous Government allocated the funds, we have had to ensure that systems are in place so that taxpayer money is being spent in the way that taxpayers expect. That is the process we will be going through, as I outlined in my previous answer. The Government is committed to delivering on strong animal welfare rules in New South Wales and making sure that charitable organisations tasked by the Government to carry out enforcement operations are funded appropriately. I will continue with that work.

The Hon. EMMA HURST (11:35): I ask a second supplementary question. Any budget for the enforcement of animal cruelty laws that is lower than last year's allocation of \$21 million will mean a reduction in frontline staff enforcing the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. What processes does the Minister have in place to ensure that animal cruelty laws are still fully enforced across New South Wales if there is a reduction in that \$21 million, recognising that the Police Force also does not have the resources to pick up the reduced enforcement elsewhere?

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:36): I welcome the second supplementary question. The \$21 million in this year's budget to deal with animal welfare compliance and enforcement, as I have outlined in my previous two answers, is not a cut in funding. The Government and taxpayers do not fund charitable organisations to carry out work. The RSPCA does some terrific things in working with animals and providing services that protect animals, as does the Animal Welfare League. They receive some funds from taxpayers and the New South Wales Government. They will receive more than they did under the previous Government to fund enforcement operations. There is no cut. We will work through a proper process with those organisations that sit outside of government to ensure that taxpayer money is spent exactly where taxpayers expect it to be spent, which is specifically on enforcement activities. I look forward to delivering on that.

The PRESIDENT: Before I call the Hon. Natalie Ward, I welcome to the Parliament students from Alexandria Park Community School who are participating in the Legal Studies and the Legislature program conducted by the Parliamentary Education and Engagement team.

STATE BUDGET AND TRANSPORT

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:37): My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, representing the Minister for Transport. Noting the current log of claims by the Rail, Tram and Bus Union and combined rail unions includes an 8 per cent wage rise each year for four years as well as a six-hour reduction of ordinary working hours per fortnight with no corresponding reduction in pay, what provision is there in the Transport budget to meet this demand and what has the NSW Treasury costed the demands at?

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) (11:38): I thank the member for her question. She is entirely entitled to ask the question. She is right to draw attention to the fact that this is the initial log of claims. It is the initial ask as bargaining commences, possibly today. As a keen reader, the shadow Minister should be careful not to start reading from the back of the book. This story has a long way to go. Let us let the story play out. There is no need to jump to the conclusion right at the start of this tale, and it is the start of this tale. Let us work through it.

The Minister for Finance has already outlined the system that is in place, the new bargaining framework, which sees the prospect of gains that are in the public interest as part of the bargaining. It is an important framework. I look forward to seeing it play out. It will play out in a range of areas across government, including transport. Transport bargaining, as members opposite know, is always robust. As Ministers in the former Government found out, it is always robust. I do not doubt it will be robust on this occasion, but there is a strong framework in place and, while the member is entitled to inquire about how the movie will end, how the story will finish, there will be an appropriate time to get to the conclusion of the tale. It is not today. But I welcome the

interest. There is a strong framework in place, set in the budget, as we move towards an industrial relations framework that really works for the public and we look forward to seeing how this particular one unfolds.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:40): I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for those words, noting that he did say that they are working through it and they will see it play out. I think he did mention that it will be robust. Given that it will be robust and that it is, I think he mentioned, an industrial relations framework, could the Minister elucidate his answer in relation to that industrial relations framework, how it will play out and how it will be robust? In the absence of his agreement to meet those demands, it would seem, what guarantee can he give to the people of New South Wales that they will not face disruption from industrial action in support of union demands?

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) (11:41): Here are two firm bits of guidance, firstly. The mutual gains bargaining process will look at what the ask is of essential workers looking to improve their rates of pay at a time when pressure is on household budgets, at a time when we need to invest in our essential workers in order to keep them in the State, to keep them on the job and to keep them able to do the job at hand—that legitimate claim. We will also look for opportunities to do things better in the transport space. There are opportunities to do things better. I put that on the record as the Minister in the transport space. We will look to work together to do that. That will be worked through in an orderly manner through the clear process which has been established by the Treasurer, by the Minister for Industrial Relations and by the committee on expenditure review. What we will not do is take lessons from the former Government when it comes to transport bargaining.

The Hon. Natalie Ward: Point of order: My supplementary question was very specific, about the industrial action aspect. The Minister talked about the industrial relations framework and the robust response. I ask that he be invited to address that specific part of the question that was entirely focused on the people of New South Wales not facing industrial action from that robust response.

The PRESIDENT: The question was framed as, "What guarantee can he give", which is broad in its scope. That having been said, discussion of the former Government is perhaps too broad. The Minister will return to the question, if he has anything further to add.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Respecting the ruling, that significantly crimps what I might be able to say about the lessons learned—lessons burned into the retinas of this Government—when it comes to these matters. Respecting your ruling, I will retire.

STATE BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE AND WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

The Hon. BOB NANVA (11:43): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance. Will the Minister update the House about how the Government is creating a clear set of measures to track its progress on much-needed reforms in the budget?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (11:43): I thank the Hon. Bob Nanva for his question in relation to our new performance and wellbeing framework that was released yesterday. I certainly will not use props, but I will direct members to the document published yesterday alongside the budget papers. We are, as our budget shows, working hard to build a better New South Wales, but it will take time to address the big challenges that the State is facing and it is necessary to be informed by the right data. We know what those opposite did. We inherited 12 years of neglect from those opposite and their reporting data was more than 250 different outcomes with more than 700 different indicators.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: It is called outcomes-based budgeting. How about we do that?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: If you want to hold on to that legacy and defend it, good luck to you, my friend. What we did yesterday was release a performance and wellbeing framework for public consultation that will be undertaken by the Public Accounts Committee in the other place—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: There are eight wellbeing indicators modelled off and designed to work in concert with the Federal Government's Measuring What Matters framework. We are also informed by the work that is being done across the OECD in relation to wellbeing budgets. But we are developing our own bespoke solution for New South Wales that will drive transparency and accountability for the community. That is why we have released our framework for public—

The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine: Point of order: The level of discussion and whatever else was going on on the other side of the Chamber meant that I could not hear the Minister giving her answer on what is a really interesting and important part of this year's budget.

The PRESIDENT: I uphold the point of order. There were too many interjections. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: This is an important measure that is designed to drive accountability and transparency for the community. Our eight wellbeing themes that were released yesterday are complemented by more than 100 outcome-specific indicators that we are seeking feedback from the community on. That feedback will be provided through the Public Accounts Committee, but it will also be undertaken with direct consultation work that will be done by Treasury.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Opposition members will cease chatting. This is not chat time; it is question time. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Ultimately, the indicators will reflect our values and our priorities, but they will also help to deliver better outcomes for the people of New South Wales. It is a really exciting initiative. It is one that a lot of work has been put into, alongside the traditional economic indicators that have been published in budgets since budgets have been published. Those indicators help to show progress on the big challenges that we are undertaking. There is a lot of work to do after what we inherited from those opposite, but we are committed to doing it and showing progress against those big challenges that we seek to address, whether it is in housing, as we announced yesterday, whether it is skilled, prosperous—I should not have started the list because I have run out of time. [*Time expired.*]

NATIVE BIRDS PROTECTION

The Hon. EMMA HURST (11:47): My question is directed to the Minister for the Environment. There is currently an open consultation into the draft Dealing in Protected Birds Code of Practice 2023, which would allow people in New South Wales to trade and sell up to 30 native birds without a licence. This has raised significant concern that the number of native birds becoming pets will skyrocket. Given the high level of knowledge required to care for native birds, the limited number of vets with expertise to treat native birds, the lack of expertise in enforcement agencies to understand the welfare needs of native birds, as well as the lack of housing facilities for dumped or abandoned pet native birds, will the Minister allay public fears and confirm that our precious native birds will not become part of a large-scale pet trade industry?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:48): I thank the Hon. Emma Hurst for her question. The issues that she raised in the question are valid. That is why the consultation is being undertaken and why we are working through this very carefully. It is absolutely clear that when it comes particularly to native wildlife we have a real challenge relating to the number of vets able to deal with it. It is not something that people are taught a lot about and requires close attention. There is an issue regarding carers, and I give a shout-out to the wildlife carers who do this work with native animals all the time. The ongoing issue around trade is an important one to raise. Those issues are being dealt with in the consultation and we will be able to report back. I am always happy to work with the member regarding those concerns. The point is that we are undertaking consultation.

I have met people who keep native birds, including budgies, and they are very well-loved and well-cared for pets. We need to have a clear discussion about which pets are more straightforward to deal with as opposed to some of the rarer ones. I would not want to see regent honeyeaters being kept as pets, for example.

The Hon. Wes Fang: What about broad-toothed rats?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I love broad-toothed rats; they are fantastic. I give a shout-out to the Hon. Bob Nanva, who has become the patron saint of broad-toothed rats. We love him for that.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: That is forever on *Hansard*.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: And we love that!

The PRESIDENT: The Minister will return to the leave of the question.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: The honourable member asked a good question. This is exactly why we are doing the consultation. I am happy to keep talking to her and to keep the House updated about how we will look after native birds both in the wild and in captivity.

STATE BUDGET AND HEALTH

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (11:50): My question is directed to the Minister for Finance, representing the Minister for Health, Minister for Regional Health, and Minister for the Illawarra and the South Coast. Noting the active campaign by the Nurses and Midwives' Association for a one-year 15 per cent wage rise, what provision is there in the 2024-25 Health budget to meet the portion of this demand that exceeds the Government's current baseline offer of just 3.5 per cent in 2024-25 by 11.5 per cent?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (11:51): I thank the honourable member for her question to me in my role representing the Minister for Health, and Minister for Regional Health. He is doing an excellent job delivering \$458 million in additional funding for our emergency departments.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: It is \$451 million.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Thank you. That is a Treasurer who is well across his brief.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Wes Fang to order for the first time.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: It is an important question about a campaign by the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association. It is certainly a campaign that I am aware of. I know that it is one that the Minister for Health is deeply engaged with in his conversations with the association. We absolutely respect the association's right to advocate on behalf of its members. It is an important campaign on behalf of workers after 12 years of having their wages suppressed under the previous Government and the member who asked the question, the former Minister for Regional Health. During her time as Minister the member suppressed their wages.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: And forgot to fund them.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I thank the Treasurer.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: Point of order: I have been patiently listening to the Minister answering the question. The question specifically asked about the 2024-25 Health budget.

The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham: It is specific.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: Are you mocking me, Mr Buckingham?

The PRESIDENT: Order! I call the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham to order for the first time.

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: Let's try to lift the bar a bit. My question was very specific. What provision is there in the 2024-25 Health budget to meet the portion of this demand that exceeds the Government's current baseline offer of just 3.5 per cent? I ask the Minister to please answer the question.

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order. The Minister is being directly relevant to the question.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I welcome this opportunity to explain to members opposite how negotiations work with the workforce. What members opposite did for 12 years was simply to legislate. They just rammed bills through this place. They did not engage with workers, they would not meet with them and they would not talk to them about what their challenges were. And what did we see? We saw chronic vacancies across our workforce.

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: Point of order: My point of order goes to relevance. The Minister is talking about the previous Government. This is a very specific question about this year's budget that was announced yesterday. We would like the Minister to answer the question in terms of the offer and the demands from the Nurses and Midwives' Association. The Minister is not speaking about that at all.

The PRESIDENT: The Minister is addressing the first half of the question and the premise of the question. I cannot instruct the Minister how to answer all of the question; that is up to her. The Minister is speaking specifically about the campaign by the Nurses and Midwives' Association for the wage rise and providing context for that. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: We welcome the engagement and advocacy of the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association because there is a long way to go after the wages cap that suppressed the wages of nurses, paramedics, teachers and all of our essential public health—

The Hon. Wes Fang: Point of order: Mr President, following your guidance on the last point of order, I contend that addressing teachers and paramedics in the answer is outside the scope of the question. Therefore, I ask you to draw the Minister back to the question, which referred to nurses and midwives.

The PRESIDENT: Too many points of order have been taken during the Minister's answer. Too many points of order are beginning to creep into question time. It is disrupting the number of questions that can be asked. For example, today only 10 questions have been asked. That said, points of order are important, and a number of valid ones have been taken. On this occasion, I instruct the Minister to not refer to things that are outside the gamut of the question. She will come back to the question at hand in the way that I have ruled previously. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: I note again that this question was asked of me in my capacity representing the excellent Minister for Health, who is engaged in this campaign. The way that the new mutual interest bargaining framework that was established in contrast to the wages cap works means that we make provision for the wages policy of the Government. The association is welcome to participate in that framework. *[Time expired.]*

The Hon. BRONNIE TAYLOR (11:56): I ask a supplementary question. I ask again what is the portion of this demand that exceeds the Government's current baseline offer of just 3.5 per cent in 2024-25 by 11.5 per cent?

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Treasurer will resume his seat. Members will come to order. The Treasurer has the call.

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: The member was at least up-front about the fact that it was not a supplementary question; it was a complete restatement of the question by the member who asked it. I feel that on this point of order there is no grey. You can just rule it out of order because it is literally, by confession, a restatement of the original question.

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

STATE BUDGET AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (11:58): My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for the Environment. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Labor Government is doing to protect the environment in this budget?

The Hon. Bronnie Taylor: Can she talk about the platypus?

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:58): I can always talk about the platypus. The platypus are doing well. There are 10 of them. We have found the one that lost a bit of its tracker. We also have the baby called Gilli, which is a Dharawal word for "flame". This is about reigniting the flame of reintroduction into the Royal National Park. We love all of that. We also love how much we are investing in protecting the environment in New South Wales.

The budget contains many different activities. I will not go through all of them, but I want the House to be aware of the key parts that were contained in the budget yesterday. There is \$75.1 million to maintain our national parks, protect the environment, boost nature-based tourism and encourage more people to explore the parks. There are over 900 parks in New South Wales and over 60 million visits per year. This funding helps with walking paths, camping grounds, lookouts and picnic facilities. We want everyone to visit and enjoy their national parks, and this investment makes sure that experience will be fantastic. I give a shout-out to National Parks and Wildlife Service staff, who have done some incredible work over the past 12 months in that area.

We are also giving \$43 million to the Environment Protection Authority to boost the transformation of the waste and recycling industry in New South Wales. We do not have time to waste, because we are running out of landfill space. We need to get recycling rates up and make sure that every single resource we have got is re-used or recycled and part of a circular economy for the future. We have also allocated funding for the Environmental Trust to provide grants to industry, State and local governments, community groups, and Aboriginal and research organisations undertaking projects focusing on restoration and rehabilitation, education, research and waste activities. This will have cultural, conservation and tourism benefits. We are investing in the continuation of the Blue Plaques program, which not only recognises the people, places and events in New South Wales that are part of the tourist trail but also helps us reflect on our important stories.

I give a shout-out to a couple of other projects in the budget, such as the protection of the Butterfly Cave Aboriginal Place. Some members in this place have been part of this campaign for over 10 years. We have also provided support to people at Collarenebri to look after the carved trees, which are sacred to the Wollaroi and the broader Kamilaroi language nation and its neighbours. A lot of work in this budget aims to protect what is

left, restore what has been harmed and work across tenures to support the care for the ecosystems we all rely on to thrive.

The time for questions has expired. If members have further questions I suggest they place them on notice.

Questions Without Notice: Take Note

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I move:

That the House take note of answers to questions.

STATE BUDGET AND DEBT

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (12:02): Today members have heard a complete admission that the Treasurer's budget strategy is in tatters. A variety of questions were directed to Ministers relating to their wages policy and the impact on the budget if the various demands of public sector workers are met as part of this negotiation. Members got two answers. The first answer was that there is nothing in the budget for any increases over and above 10½ per cent. The second answer was, "Well, we recognise that there may be some impact on the budget because we will want to negotiate with the workers in accordance with the new industrial relations strategy." The Government's own *Budget Paper No. 01* at page B-4, under the heading "General expense risks", states:

The Budget contains the impact of the NSW Government's updated wages offer—
that is the 10½ per cent—
to employees. As the Government shifts to a more consultative mutual-based bargaining approach—
which is the approach of those opposite—
it ... may vary.

It goes on to state:

There could be additional costs.

What are those additional costs? Potentially they are higher than \$6 billion in the current round of wage negotiations to deliver the outcomes the unions and their bosses are demanding. The union bosses are saying, "We've got the new strategy for wages. We've got the 10.5 per cent cap, which the Government has imposed." They have got their cap, and now they are going to negotiate for more payments to the union bosses. The budget will be in tatters when the current deficit rises from over \$3 billion to potentially \$9 billion to take into account these wage demands. This should have been revealed to the people of New South Wales in clear and explicit terms. Few journalists understand that, but John Kehoe in *The Australian Financial Review* absolutely gets it. His analysis today is that Mookhey will need a miracle.

STATE BUDGET AND ANIMAL WELFARE

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (12:05): I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Agriculture in relation to my question about RSPCA and Animal Welfare League [AWL] funding. This is very perplexing. Page A5-10 of *Budget Paper No. 01*—and elsewhere in the budget paper—states that \$21 million will provided for:

- Funding to establish a modern animal welfare framework, including additional support for Approved Charitable Organisations.

Anyone in their right mind would think that "additional support" would mean support over and above what had been provided previously. When I asked the Minister about this, she answered with a comment about having delivered a record investment in animal welfare. That is quite curious when members consider the media release from the Liberals on 4 February 2023 when they announced a record investment of \$40.6 million, which is almost \$20 million more than the Labor Government's announced record animal welfare funding. An ordinary person on the street might think a record investment that is \$20 million less than the previous record investment is just wrong.

The funding announced by the Liberals included \$20.5 million for RSPCA NSW. In fact, in Labor's budget last year it gave \$20.5 million to RSPCA NSW. Additional funding would mean it is giving the RSPCA more than \$20.5 million this year. Instead, we have heard from the Minister that she cannot tell us how much is going to be given to the RSPCA. Given that the RSPCA budget submission asked for \$23.4 million and they were given \$20.5 million, ideally it should be \$31.1 million. We have an unfortunate situation in New South Wales where animal cruelty crimes are not routinely enforced by the police but by the RSPCA and the AWL. We ask them to do that job under our criminal law and we have to fund them for it.

Both the Hon. Emma Hurst of the Animal Justice Party and I have done a good deal of work and spent loads of time educating both the major parties, trying to explain the links between domestic and family violence and animal cruelty and the need for RSPCA inspectors to be funded adequately. Currently the RSPCA has 59 inspectors. If it has \$20 million cut out of its budget, that is 50 fewer inspectors enforcing animal cruelty law. To call this a record investment and additional funding is just not fair or true.

STATE BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE AND WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

STATE BUDGET AND TEACHER WAGES

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (12:08): I take note of the answer given by Minister for Finance in relation to the proposed NSW Performance and Wellbeing Framework. This excellent initiative indicates a willingness on the part of the Labor Government to think through the kinds of measures appropriate to assess both the performance of the Government and the aims of Government policy toward achieving ends consistent with the aspirations of the New South Wales people.

I also highlight the fact that this initiative is being put forward as a consultation proposal, in contrast with the approach taken by the previous Government to setting performance measures. Members will recall that the previous Government had the Premier's Priorities, which were determined unilaterally by the Premier of the day to set the Government's priorities. No consultation was entered into. Contrast that with the approach taken by this Government, which is not arrogant like the previous Government but has a sense of humility and takes on feedback from the community and from stakeholders to inform its practice and priorities.

This Government's process of setting priorities is not unilateral but collective and a product of consultation with the community. It recognises that some of the measures and priorities may need to be fine-tuned, that the Government may not get it right in the first instance, that something can be learned from the community and that feedback should be incorporated. That process should be commended. It is a good indication of the direction this Government is taking.

I make one further point relating to the series of questions about the wages negotiation process that is being undertaken. The former Government did not understand the idea of wages negotiations. Its view was that a wages offer is unilaterally set. It had no concept of give and take or of sitting down in partnership with the workforce to come to a reasonable settlement around wages. Members opposite have a lot to learn. If the Opposition is ever to get back into government, it should take a leaf out of this Government's book and understand that respect for the workforce is fundamental, which means a process of negotiation that does not start from a unilateral position.

STATE BUDGET AND TEACHER WAGES

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (12:11): I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Finance, representing the Minister for Education and Early Learning, to my question about the current teachers award, which is due to expire in October. This Government has told us that negotiations have started. It is now mid-June, so the Opposition would anticipate that some conversations have already taken place regarding what is on the table. In the one-year deal that was signed last year, teachers got a wage increase of up to 12 per cent, but we now know—from the budget figures that were announced yesterday—that all the Government has on the table that has been funded is 10.5 per cent over three years. That is well off what was asked for in the previous deal and what was given in to by this Government to the union bosses. Members will remember the Honour the Deal campaign. To be fair to the Teachers Federation, it had an agreement with Labor prior to the election that it would honour the deal. It did not. That is why there has been more industrial action under this Labor Government, because teachers are not happy with what they had been promised versus what has been delivered.

This sets a very interesting framework going forward regarding the impact on school communities. In her answer today, the Minister said that the 10.5 per cent is the baseline as part of the Government's wages policy, and of course it can look at other things like productivity measures. Well, productivity measures were included in the last deal. It is actually quite challenging to get productivity measures in a deal that the education union will agree to. In practice, this year schools had their budgets cut. Members opposite can dress it up any way that they want, but principals were told in April this year, midway through the school year, that they are losing money.

Many schools have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars and had their budgets frozen. When a government does not properly fund its wages deals, other departments and agencies miss out. Unfortunately, in the case of Education, that equates to children in the classroom missing out. I have been told about teachers not having their temporary contracts renewed or honoured and being told midway through the year that they need to finish up. I know of many student learning support officers in classrooms, who are helping kids and teachers with their workloads, being told that their position will not be available.

This is the real impact of a budget cut that needs to be made midway through the school year because the Government's union deals were not properly budgeted. When in opposition, Labor members failed to properly budget for these deals. They did not tell the truth when they said, "You can have it all under us. No-one will miss out." That is not what has happened. Teacher vacancy rates continue to be in the thousands. The Government has set no targets for improvement in student outcomes and has no direction for getting better academic opportunities for our kids. We are on a downhill spiral in education. Parents should be very worried.

STATE BUDGET AND ANIMAL WELFARE

The Hon. EMMA HURST (12:14): I take note of the response given by the Minister for Agriculture to the question by Ms Abigail Boyd. I particularly want to talk about the statement that she made in her answer that the Government does not fund charities to enforce the laws that are written by the Government. My question, then, is how are these laws going to be enforced? I agree that private charities being tasked with upholding criminal legislation is an odd model, but the State cannot have no-one funded to uphold the law. If charities are not going to be funded to do it then the Government must set up another system.

Simply writing laws and handing them over to charities, with very little money to enforce them, is of course not going to end well. Imagine the police holding cupcake days to raise enough money to enforce road rules or organising a fun run so they can investigate robberies. If that sounds ridiculous, that is because it is, but it is the system New South Wales currently has set up for our animal protection laws. This Labor Government has said that it will outlaw puppy farming, which is great and something that the Animal Justice Party really wants to see, but if the Government is not going to fund anyone to investigate or shut down illegal operators, and these cruelty laws are not going to be enforced properly, what is the point of writing them?

The other thing I will address is the Government's record investment of \$21 million in animal welfare. Maths is not my strong point, but I am pretty sure that \$40.5 million is more than \$21 million. As Ms Abigail Boyd mentioned, over \$40 million for animal welfare initiatives was previously given by the Government, and that was a record. That was great, but half of that in this budget is not something to be proud of. The Labor Government has cut animal protection funding in half, in breach of Labor's election commitment to the people of New South Wales.

Labor said it would review the funding of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act [POCTAA] "with a view to developing and implementing a sustainable long-term funding model". Any kind of cut to the funding of POCTAA enforcement does not achieve that. In fact, it just creates uncertainty. Failure to enforce animal protection laws in New South Wales will be a disaster. While we do not have the exact figures regarding what funding will be available and what other funding models will come into place, I encourage the Minister to make sure that animal welfare enforcement is fully funded in New South Wales.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY POLICY

ERARING POWER STATION

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (12:17): I take note of the answers given by the Leader of the Government to the questions about Origin Energy and the budget generally. People should not be fooled by the antics of the Leader of the Opposition when he feigns outrage and gives the Government a spray of invective about the Origin situation. He ought to be reminded that the Government is in the situation it is in because of the former Liberal-Nationals Government's decision to sell Eraring. This Government has had to fix the mess and put in place an agreement to keep Eraring open for two more years so that the power stays on for the people of New South Wales. That is the reality of the situation. For Opposition members to say that the Eraring losses are not really in the budget in one way or another is laughable. When they were in government, everything was Cabinet-in-confidence or commercial-in-confidence.

There was rarely anything available for public scrutiny or even parliamentary scrutiny. They tried to hide everything. The toll arrangements are an example of them hiding information from the public about the true cost effects. In contrast, the new Labor Government has provided copies of the agreement so that they can look at it and read it and subject it to public and parliamentary scrutiny. The Government is going to keep the lights on in New South Wales.

In relation to the budget, if the Leader of the Opposition says that we need a miracle, then we need a miracle, because they are the ones who left us with the largest debt ever passed from one government to another. The former Government left us with huge deficits after COVID, including a \$7 billion unfunded black hole in programs. This Labor Government set about methodically fixing that up and refocusing the budget on what matters. The wellbeing indicators are a wonderful, terrific initiative of this Government that will actually measure the budget against what people care about—wellbeing measures—rather than just numbers on a page. It is also

setting about fixing up the repayment of that enormous debt so that future generations will not be paying it back forever.

STATE BUDGET AND TRANSPORT

STATE BUDGET AND PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (12:20): I take note of answers given by Minister Houssos and Minister Graham. They were asked very specific questions about allocations for wage rises. It is clear from the budget papers that 3.5 per cent has been allocated by this Government for wage rises in the year 2024-25. But the Nurses and Midwives' Association is looking for an 11.5 per cent increase. That is its opening gambit in its bargaining. How is that going to be funded? There are no answers. The Rail, Tram and Bus Union [RTBU] is looking for an 8 per cent increase and to work six hours fewer per week. How is that going to be funded? There are absolutely no answers. The teachers award expires in October. Teachers got a 12 per cent increase as a one-off last year. What is going to be the bargaining demand this year in this mutual gain bargaining process that we have heard so much about?

There was simply no actual answer given to what, if any, budget allocations there are for these very foreseeable expenses. The Hon. John Graham, rather curiously, told us not to go to the back of the book and instead to wait in suspense to see what the outcome of this bargaining process may be. I admit to not being a fan of postmodernism. I like a really clear narrative line. I like a beginning, I like a middle and I like an end. I like a really strong plot line as the thread through my books. It seems to me that, if we are starting at 11.5 per cent for nurses and midwives, 8 per cent for the RTBU, and 12 per cent as a one-off last year for teachers, it is almost impossible that the end of the book is going to say 3.5 per cent.

What are we doing? Instead of a budget, are we actually writing a horror story? Is this a postmodern horror story where we throw out all these lines but we actually have no control over wages, which is possibly the single biggest component of the State budget? And who pays when the budget blows out? Who pays when there are unfunded wage increases? It is the everyday taxpayers of New South Wales. They pay in higher cost of living and in higher charges. Anybody who wants a boat licence is paying in higher charges. Anybody who wants a Working with Children Check is paying higher charges. This is irresponsible budgeting by a government that cannot actually foresee the negotiation results.

STATE BUDGET AND PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (12:23): I contribute to the take-note debate. Once again Opposition members are bogged down in a quagmire of reminiscence. They have learnt nothing. It has been months, has it not? The poor things cannot dig themselves out of this hole. They keep going back to the failed policies which got them on the Opposition benches. They come into the Chamber and lecture us on how to deal with the workers who were asked to service our hospitals, to clean our hospitals, to service people in ambulances and to teach our kids. They come into the Chamber and lecture us on the very thing that they were rejected on. Their fiscally responsible policy was to say, "We will not talk to you about wage negotiations. We will legislate a 2½ per cent cap. Suck it up. You're not getting any more." That was their policy. They tried to sell that on the basis of fiscal responsibility, when in other parts of the budget they were running it into the ground and importing dodgy infrastructure from overseas, with cost blowouts of billions of dollars.

The Hon. Susan Carter: Point of order: My point of order relates to relevance. This debate is to take note of answers, rather than, as the honourable member is doing, to query questions.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: To the point of order: It is directly relevant because fiscal responsibility was debated in question time. The Leader of the Opposition tried to make the point that we are fiscally irresponsible because allegedly we have not budgeted for wage increases. I will go back and be directly relevant. I remind—

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: To the point of order: The Assistant President has not made a ruling on the point of order.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): There is no point of order.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: I remind those opposite that, under their policy, they mandated a flat 2½ per cent rise. That was it. In the very first year of this Government, we on this side budgeted and delivered a 4½ per cent wage rise—the biggest in a decade. The frontline workers of this State helped out during COVID every day, day in and day out, servicing the State—and members opposite said they could not have a wage rise. We gave them the biggest wage rise in a decade and now we have budgeted for 10½ per cent over three years, with a contingency to say that we will sit down with workers and talk to them about productivity offsets in the mutual gains process. That is how the Labor Government does it. We on this side talk to the people who have a

vested interest in making sure that their livelihoods progress. We do not say, "You will not have any more than 2½ per cent."

URBAN ACTIVATION PRECINCTS

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (12:27): I take note of answers given by the Hon. John Graham about festivals and the night-time economy. There is significant concern from the small business community in New South Wales about their experience at this year's Vivid Sydney event, a leading community festival. As highlighted in recent media reports, small businesses faced exorbitant stall rental fees and multiple operational failures, which left many with no support or resources. This year's Vivid Sydney, traditionally a jewel in the State's major events calendar, saw a dramatic drop in attendance compared to last year, by one million people. Complaints about the festival ranged from it being boring and unimpressive to the fact that displays were being cancelled. A lot of small business owners paid big money for a stall in the hope that the festival would be delivered in full.

I draw the attention of the House to a couple of examples of the impact on small business. There was a report of a small business owner being left with an unsellable surplus of fresh produce due to the lack of customer traffic. That is a situation echoed by many others. I remind the House about high rental costs. Small businesses shelled out \$25,000 to be a part of the festival. I also remind the House about other experiences relating to community festival events and the absence of them. In this situation, it was around the Parramatta light rail—the delays of the light rail around Church Street, Parramatta, and the impact on small business.

During my recent visit to ALEX&Co. at 330 Church Street, Parramatta, as I sat in the cafe, there was a line-up of young people who were applying for a job. Small businesses are critical to the New South Wales economy, as 1.7 million people are employed by them. Some 97 per cent of all New South Wales businesses are small businesses. The Minns Government is continuing to ignore small business. Are vacant shops on suburban shopping strips the new way of life for the small business community in New South Wales under the Minns Labor Government? I urge the Government to get behind small businesses and recognise the jobs that they create, the risk that they take and the contribution that they make to the New South Wales economy.

STATE BUDGET AND PUBLIC SECTOR WAGES

STATE BUDGET AND ANIMAL WELFARE

The Hon. WES FANG (12:30): I take note of a couple of answers that were given today. The Treasurer and the Minister for Finance gave answers to questions asked by the Opposition about the Government's wages policy. I note the contribution of the Parliamentary Secretary, which indicated that the 2.5 per cent was budgeted in the Coalition's budgets when it was in government. That is exactly the point. We on this side know what is in the budget, because it is published. The Government has not budgeted anywhere near enough to satisfy the claims that it has made. Those teachers, paramedics, police and frontline workers who are all seeking wage increases are looking at the budget as a sign that the promises that were made to them have been abandoned by the Labor Government. We will continue to ask questions about that. The policy that the Government seeks to implement can cause wages to go out of control, as they did when Labor came into government.

I mention the answers around the RSPCA. I note that the Minister for Agriculture is sitting across the table. For her to claim that it is a record spend, when Ms Abigail Boyd clearly indicated that it is not, draws a huge question mark over this Government's ability to handle animal welfare issues. To be frank, I would not feed the RSPCA, let alone give it \$20 million. Like the broad-toothed rat, I suggest maybe it needs a pay rise and a driver.

TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (12:32): In taking note of the take-note debate and question time today, first of all I focus on the questions that were asked relating to the budget. I again congratulate the Treasurer on his great job in delivering yesterday's budget in the tough financial circumstances that the State faces, which this Government inherited from the previous Government. The Government has managed to deliver a budget that focuses on the needs of the people of New South Wales, and the Treasurer should be congratulated on his great work.

Another line of questions focused on delivery of our energy future. A series of questions was also asked around the investment the Government is making in our essential public sector workforce, who were forgotten about for 12 years under the previous Government. Their wages were frozen, and they were not respected for the incredibly important work that they do. When we on this side took government, we made it clear that we would invest in supporting essential workers and public sector workers across the State.

The Opposition does not seem to understand that it is not that scary a process. Workers get together, they elect representation—that is, unions—and they stand together to negotiate with the Government for pay rises. We

are setting up a new industrial relations system that has mutual bargaining at its centre so that we can manage the system in the interest of the workforce that we respect. I look forward to the Government getting on with that work. On the issues relating to animal welfare that were raised today, I stand by the answers that I gave. I am proud of the \$21 million that this Government is investing in—

The Hon. Sarah Mitchell: You better be finding some for bird flu soon.

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY: Point of order: Members opposite have to stop constantly heckling across the Chamber every single time that I am on my feet. It is completely inappropriate and unprofessional, and it has to stop.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): The Minister will be heard in silence.

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY: The work that the Government is doing on animal welfare is exactly what Labor took to the election. We on this side will deliver on that for the people of New South Wales. The animal welfare commitments that we made included funding and setting up an independent office of animal welfare, which is included in this budget. We reviewed money that has been paid to charitable organisations that deal with animal welfare enforcement. As I outlined in my answer, I do not sign blank cheques for charities. I will be holding the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League to account with any taxpayer funds that they may be allocated through this process, and there will be a process undertaken. The Government has set proper processes in place for the allocation of taxpayer money. We on this side do not hand out blank cheques to anyone, including the RSPCA. I will get on with delivering our election commitments.

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

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

WITHDRAWAL OF BUSINESS

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: I withdraw private member's business item No. 1105 standing in my name on the *Notice Paper* for today relating to the Republic of China (Taiwan) election 2024.

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

Private Members' Statements

UNION AID ABROAD-APHEDA FUNDRAISER

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (14:02): On Sunday 2 June Labor Friends of Palestine and Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA co-hosted a Gaza solidarity fundraiser. The keynote speaker was former New South Wales Premier and former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bob Carr. Over \$20,000 was raised for APHEDA's charity partner in Palestine, the MA'AN Development Center. The fundraiser opened with Suzan Wahhab, president of not-for-profit organisation Palestinian Christians in Australia, giving a moving speech about her family's personal experience fleeing Palestine during the Nakba. The Hon. Bob Carr spoke about the need for the Australian Government to recognise the State of Palestine. He noted that similar-minded European countries, Ireland, Norway and Spain, have, and that Slovenia and Belgium are to follow soon.

Executive officer of Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA, Kate Lee, spoke about the work its partner organisation, the MA'AN Development Center, has been doing on the ground in Gaza. MA'AN provides access to water, food, medical supplies, shelter, psychosocial support and hygiene kits for displaced people. I acknowledge my colleagues who were present, including lower House MPs Lynda Voltz, member for Auburn; Nathan Hagarty, member for Leppington; Charishma Kaliyanda, member for Liverpool; Kylie Wilkinson, member for East Hills; and Donna Davis, member for Parramatta; and my upper House colleagues the Hon. Cameron Murphy, the Hon. Stephen Lawrence and the Hon. Mark Buttigieg. The Hon. Stephen Lawrence spoke about his time working as a human rights lawyer in the West Bank, and the Hon. Mark Buttigieg had the joy of being the auctioneer.

There were also Labor councillors from a variety of local government areas: Councillor Jess D'Arienzo from Inner West Council; Councillor Susai Benjamin from Blacktown; Councillor Rachelle Harika, the Deputy Mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown council; and Councillor Sabrin Farooqui from Cumberland council. Those people represent a large number of diverse communities from all across Sydney. It is clear that there is powerful support for Palestinian rights and international law within this Parliament and from the broader public. The Federal member for Parramatta, Andrew Charlton, was also in attendance, as well as a number of former parliamentarians: Laurie Ferguson, Paul Lynch, Lee Rhiannon, Paul Pearce, Lisa Singh and Amanda Fazio.

A few thank-yous are in order. Firstly, I thank the CFMEU Construction and General Division NSW for generously donating \$2,000. Secondly, I thank the Maritime Union of Australia for providing a wonderful venue. I thank all who donated items for the auction. That includes the Palestinian Australians Welfare Association, Abdul's Restaurant on Elizabeth Street and the Fair Trade Emporium in Marrickville. Overall, it was a great event that raised much-needed funds for civilians in Gaza. Australians will continue to demonstrate their solidarity with Palestinians and work towards peace and justice.

STATE BUDGET AND TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Hon. NATALIE WARD (14:04): I speak on the State budget handed down yesterday. Budgets are about choices, and the Government's choice is clear: less investment, less delivery funding, a lot of press releases and a cut in funding. The fact is that over the next four years the transport and infrastructure budget will see a 13 per cent decrease—a nearly \$10 billion change—since 12 months ago. That is \$10 billion less funding across New South Wales in the next four years. And it is because Government members have no vision or interest in transport infrastructure. They are happy to stand next to our projects and cut ribbons but have no interest in funding more projects. This is about generations. It is about grandchildren of grandchildren and the people we will never meet but for whom we should do better.

The former Government was focused on generational investment; this Government is focused on investment for the next election. There were 13 new transport projects announced in the budget. Fifty per cent of those were for planning—that is, for pieces of paper, layers of bureaucracy, consultants, reviews and approvals. There was zero new delivery funding for road projects without Federal funding. That means Canberra bureaucrats are now deciding what the New South Wales Government invests in. The signature investment of \$2 billion for the Parramatta Light Rail stage two is not even the full funding. Those opposite are too embarrassed to even admit it. The funding does not even deliver enough "funding" to deliver the project.

That takes me to the roads budget. Government members were so proud of the \$5.2 billion spend for Western Sydney. It was called a record—except it was not a record, because at the last budget of the previous Government the spend was \$5.8 billion. So those opposite are spending less and listening to Canberra, which is never a good mix for a State government. I note some broken promises from this Government. Before the election, it promised \$180 million to duplicate Heathcote Road. The reality is only \$65 million in the budget and a plan to spend only \$2 million this financial year. That does not build a road. Those opposite took the votes of Heathcote and now they are throwing them under the bus.

It also promised \$50 million to upgrade Fifteenth Avenue. The reality is that that is now only for planning and nothing will be delivered by Labor for that project. Those opposite took the votes of the people of Leppington and threw them under the bus. We now know what the member for Leppington likes to take: director's fees for super funds that greenwash and get found guilty by the Federal Court. That is a good deal for the Labor Party but not a good deal for commuters, residents or generations to come. That takes me to the final deal not included in the budget: the 36 per cent pay increase the unions are after, which is currently not budgeted for. That is a 36 per cent pay increase on the table for the Government's union mates, who donate to its campaigns and likely decide who sits in this Chamber, but 13 per cent less investment for the people of New South Wales. That is the priority of those opposite. Budgets are about choices, and this Government has ignored us.

ANIMAL WELFARE

The Hon. EMMA HURST (14:08): Rodeos, thoroughbred racing and greyhound racing are all industries that profit off the suffering of animals. At rodeos, animals are tormented, enraged, roughly handled and physically injured. Being lassoed is the closest thing to hanging an animal. In calf roping events, a baby cow is locked in a chute, unable to escape being hit and having their tail twisted, only to be released to run for his or her life while being chased by a person on horseback. The calf will be suddenly and painfully jerked to the ground by a lasso rope, often suffering torn ligaments and broken bones. Those fragile newborns experience extreme fear and trauma, and yet such cruelty is allowed to continue under exemptions within animal protection legislation. The *NSW Code of Practice for animals used in rodeo events* was published in 1988 and is meant to be reviewed every two years. It has never been reviewed nor updated. It is currently 34 years out of date.

In 2013, over 10 years ago, a review commenced but was never finalised. I guess no-one could find the words to excuse the legality of such cruelty. Every time I ask about calf roping, I am told the Government is considering next steps. Some 34 years of consideration is a damn long time to wonder if hurting baby animals for the sick enjoyment of a few individuals should be allowed. Animals are suffering and dying. The science and public attitudes have completely changed, yet the law is frozen in time. How many horses and greyhounds must die before the Government takes notice? So far this year 52 greyhounds have died on track and 4,233 greyhounds have been injured. We are not even six months into the year, and those are only the deaths and injuries we know about. For racehorses, the average death toll is one horse every two days.

Greyhounds and racehorses are kept in isolation, physically exerted to such extremes that they often suffer internal bleeding; horses are whipped; and greyhounds are beaten. There is footage of that happening. Then there is the wastage. Animals are bred and killed because they are not considered commercially viable. Why is the Government still supporting these industries and funnelling enormous amounts of taxpayers' money into gambling? We are talking about millions and millions of dollars that could be used in many other areas. Make no mistake: Rodeos, horseracing and greyhound racing are blood sports. They have no place as government-backed industries in New South Wales.

WOMEN'S SPORTS

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (14:10): The meaning of the term "no-brainer" is known by all. Lest there be any misunderstanding, the online *Cambridge Dictionary* defines it as "something that is very simple to do or understand". One matter that the population at large understands is a no-brainer relates to women's sports. In particular, the population at large understands instinctively and very clearly that women should not be embarrassed, nudged, pressured or forced to engage in sports—both individual and team competitions—with or against biological men. Up until yesterday such a statement would pass as utterly unexceptional, fair, reasonable and, indeed, a no-brainer.

Every weekend women in New South Wales are being injured in increasing numbers, and in some cases very seriously, because their sporting codes are acquiescing, encouraging and facilitating biological men to go head-to-head with them on the sporting field. Unsurprisingly, the most egregious examples of injuries including concussion, broken bones and muscle damage are occurring in team sports that involve direct or indirect body contact between players—for example, rugby league, rugby union, Australian rules football and soccer. To explain how we as a society now find ourselves in this unfair, unsafe and dangerous situation for women would require much more time than I have this afternoon. On a future occasion I will elaborate on the matter. It deserves much more attention and scrutiny in this Parliament and across Australia than it has received to date.

To get to the bottom of how we have ended up in the situation that we find ourselves in, I draw to the attention of the House two important publications. The first is *A Fair Playing Field: Protecting Women's Single-Sex Sport*, written by the Women's Forum Australia, dated 2022; and the second, which has just been published, is entitled *Women's Sport and Transgender Inclusion: The Counter Biological Argument*, written by Helen Parker, Beth Hands and Elizabeth Rose, and dated 2024. Both of these publications do not just shed light on how unfair, unsafe and untenable the current position is; they also outline the necessary steps required to rectify the situation. I acknowledge and thank sports journalists Ms Lucy Zelic and Ms Nerissa Scott, who is also the spokesperson for Save Women's Sports Australasia. Both of those brave women have written and spoken out about the unacceptability of the current situation and the urgent need to address it. I encourage them both to continue what they are doing.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (14:13): Tonight across the State, thousands of young people will sleep rough, couch surf or stay in unsafe places. I note that in the recent budget there was no specific announcement or funding allocated to address the rise of youth homelessness, which requires immediate attention and sustained commitment from the New South Wales Government to ensure a brighter future for our children. According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, in 2022-23 approximately 38,300 young people across Australia sought help from specialist homelessness services [SHSs]. These are young people under the age of 18, some as young as 12, presenting alone. Of those, 24,944 were female, 13,363 were male, and approximately 32 per cent identified as Indigenous. In New South Wales, 12,994 young people accessed specialist homelessness services in 2023, the highest number in any State.

Young people presenting alone, also known as unaccompanied minors, constitute the fourth largest SHS client group, making up around 14 per cent of all clients. These young people are often dealing with several complex issues, which can include not only unstable housing but also family and domestic violence, mental health issues and substance abuse. Nearly half reported current mental health concerns. The primary reason for seeking assistance included housing crises, at around 19 per cent; family and domestic violence, which was 15 per cent; and relationship breakdowns, which was around 12 per cent. Those experiencing homelessness for the first time cited housing crises and inadequate living conditions as the most common reasons for their homelessness.

Community organisations such as Youth Off The Streets and Project Youth, along with Regional Youth Support Services from the Central Coast—which I note has had its funding cut by the Federal Government—provide vital support to those young people. Youth Off The Streets was founded by Father Chris Riley. It provides crisis accommodation, alcohol and drug counselling, youth justice support, life skills and employment programs. Recently I met with the CEO to talk about the school it runs, which supports young people—these are young

people who are not part of the foster care or out-of-home care system—who have been experiencing homelessness. They have received help with their studies and opportunities for full-time employment and independent living.

I also flag Project Youth, which supports young people at risk between the ages of 12 and 24 with accommodation, education and employment. Project Youth operates particularly in the areas of the Sutherland Shire, Georges River and Bayside. These organisations and many others across the State often do not receive government funding and rely on philanthropic support. I note the former Liberal-Nationals Government invested in programs including the Universal Screening and Supports program and Rent Choice Youth. It is imperative that the New South Wales Government continues to invest in and expand these services to support these young people, some of whom are as young as 12.

FORESTRY CORPORATION

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (14:16): The forestry industry, particularly the native hardwood business, is on its knees. It is only being kept afloat by virtue of it being a State-run enterprise that can draw money from the coffers of New South Wales—as long as no government is willing to tell the truth and take it on. Yesterday's budget put that truth in stark terms. Of the estimated \$68 million in dividends that Forestry Corporation was supposed to return to the New South Wales budget between 2023 and 2027, the new estimates show that just \$10 million in dividends is expected. That is a \$58 million revision in dividends in just nine months. The utter failure of Forestry Corporation to accurately project dividends is emblematic of its entire business model: smashing the forests while saying it is protecting them, and promising the world in profits and jobs but delivering neither, and hiding the truth. It is a dishonest and destructive industry that is abusing the environment, the community and the entire machinery of government in New South Wales.

The inaccuracies in the projections provided by Forestry Corporation to Treasury can only be seen as an intentional ploy by these forest vandals to justify their business model of extinction logging at all costs. The money they promised in exchange for wrecking the forests—which will not come back to New South Wales in any meaningful way—should have funded the first two years of our plan to end native forest logging. The pitiful returns from Forestry Corporation pale in comparison to the cost that is borne by the State budget, the environment and the community. We are throwing good money after bad to keep this failed industry on life support. Economic failure aside, the impact of logging native forests extends to the community as well as the environment. Forestry Corporation, in its disregard for the logging rules, has forced community members to put their lives on hold to invest their time and money into recording breaches and pursuing court action. They are even appealing decisions by the Land and Environment Court. The Forestry Corporation then challenges communities seeking applications in the High Court, all at a huge cost to the State and the community. There is no justice in this.

This litany of failures—the costs, the extinction of native forest—could be resolved by proper investment and expansion in dedicated farm forestry outside the public native forest estate. In fact, the softwood plantation division is carrying its destructive native hardwood sibling into every State budget, while native forest logging has made tens of millions of dollars in losses. It is only because of the profitable softwood industry that the Forestry Corporation is to claim any returns at all. It is time to end this madness and political failure.

STATE BUDGET AND REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (14:19): I highlight some of the important announcements made in the recent budget that relate to regional New South Wales. The Labor Government's 2024 budget will deliver for people across New South Wales, with a particular focus on the needs of those living in our regional and rural communities. In my duty electorates of Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour, there are new and continuing investments into roads, preschools, hospitals and housing. Labor is turning things around despite the terrible position that it inherited from the Liberals and The Nationals: \$189 billion in State debt, the highest ever passed from one government to another; the huge Matt Kean COVID-19 deficits; and the unfair GST distribution that penalises our State because of the Morrison Western Australia GST floor.

This is a true Labor budget with a laser focus on improving the lives of frontline workers through pay increases, access to affordable housing and the provision of health care. The budget contains a \$3.4 billion upgrade to hospitals and health facilities, of which nearly \$1 billion is allocated to rural and regional capital works projects. In Port Macquarie there will be \$265 million for the upgrade of Port Macquarie Hospital to provide a greater range of services for the Mid North Coast, including emergency and maternity services. As part of the New South Wales Government's 100 new public preschools program, a new public preschool will be built at Tacking Point Public School in Port Macquarie. The New South Wales Government is continuing to invest in transport and road infrastructure across regional New South Wales, including continuing funding for the \$926 million construction of the Coffs Harbour bypass.

In addition, the budget delivers \$200 million for rural health worker accommodation over the next four years. Funding is intended to support the recruitment and retention of over 500 health workers and their families. It will deliver approximately 120 dwellings, including the building of new accommodation, refurbishment of existing buildings and purchase of suitable buildings such as motels. The budget will also work to protect bulk-billing as the Government will waive the payroll tax debt for GP clinics that bulk-bill at least 70 per cent of their patients in regional New South Wales. This is a great Labor budget. It is a great budget for my duty electorates of Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie and for the rest of regional New South Wales.

GAS INDUSTRY

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (14:23): Last month the Federal Government released its new *Future Gas Strategy*. This plan is tantamount to greenlighting Santos's Narrabri coal seam gas project. One of the guiding principles of the strategy is that "new sources of gas supply are needed to meet demand during the economy-wide transition". The New South Wales Government released a *Future of Gas Statement* in 2023. It also warned of risks associated with a supply shortage and spoke of the Narrabri coal seam gas project as being critical to support supply security. That document is part of the lasting legacy of John Barilaro. However, the rhetoric that the public continues to be fed about a gas shortage in this country is false.

In 2021 the Climate Council reported there is no shortage of gas anywhere in Australia. In fact, about 82 per cent of Australia's gas is used for export. Gas demand in New South Wales could be 70 per cent lower by 2030, and eliminated altogether by 2050, if the Government took some simple, commonsense measures to prioritise electrification and energy efficiency. We could reduce gas consumption by 70 petajoules per year, the same amount that Santos's Narrabri project would produce. But the Government will not. Instead, both State and Federal Labor governments are prioritising the interests of the powerful gas lobby instead of those of impacted landholders, First Nations communities, the environment and the climate.

The fossil fuel industry's hold over governments in this country is obscene. The Australian Government collects twice as much money from HECS repayments than from the petroleum resource rent tax. It is a fact that has been bandied about over the past few months, ever since the Australia Institute's Richard Denniss made comparisons in his National Press Club speech between resource taxation in Australia and Norway. It is hard to believe, but it has been fact-checked and Richard is right. Young people, fresh out of university and in their first jobs, are doing more for our economy than mega-rich, foreign-owned gas companies. We subsidise fossil fuel companies, allow them to take our resources virtually tax free and then buy back those same resources from them at an extortionate rate. The result? Households are lumped with paying for the most expensive gas in the world.

Let's compare this situation with Qatar. Australia and Qatar are the second and third largest exporters of liquefied natural gas, respectively. Qatari citizens do not pay income tax. They do not pay property tax. They do not pay inheritance tax. They have free health care and education, and heavily subsidised housing. How can the Qatari Government afford all of this? Qatar collects 20 times more tax from gas than we do. They collect \$76 billion per year from gas, compared with our \$2.6 billion. Until we phase out coal and gas, it is time to tax them more to pay for the transition.

THE HON. CHRIS RATH STAFF

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (14:26): I pay tribute to my wonderful staff, in particular some changes in the Opposition Whip's office in the past week. My excellent Whip's adviser, Deyi Wu, is having a baby. She is on maternity leave for the next six months, with a beautiful baby boy hopefully born in the next week. We all wait with bated breath for everything to go well. She has done a fantastic job as the Whip's adviser. The Hon. Bob Nanva would know how important a good Whip's adviser is: They keep the wheels of Government and Opposition moving. I pay tribute to Deyi for everything she has done for me, my office and the Opposition over the past 12 months.

The excellent Cooper Gannon has taken over the reins as the Opposition Whip's adviser for six months. Cooper is the Secretary of the NSW Young Liberal Movement and the only staffer who has been with and put up with me since I was elected as a member of this place in March 2022. We also have three excellent Young Liberals who are doing a day a week each: Luka Fon, Bea McDonald and Orlando Throsby. They join Bryson Constable, who is in my office two days a week. Bryson was just elected as the President of the University of Sydney Union, which is a fantastic achievement for the Liberal Party. It has been a very long time since we have had the presidency at the University of Sydney. We are very proud of him, and we expect great things from him.

Motions

ACTIVE SUPER FUND

Debate resumed from an earlier hour.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (14:29): I have 30 seconds left. I reiterate the point that the Government has sought to make an amendment to the principal motion, the effect of which removes the Government from having to call on the repayment of these moneys. There is no legal requirement to do so. The Government can say that it has not been sued, but there is a moral requirement. I end on that note.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Damien Tudehope has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Penny Sharpe has moved an amendment and to which the Hon. Chris Rath has also moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes19
Noes12
Majority.....7

AYES

Banasiak
Borsak
Boyd
Buckingham
Buttigieg
Cohn
D'Adam

Donnelly
Graham
Higginson
Houssos
Hurst
Jackson

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

NOES

Carter
Farlow (teller)
Farraway
MacDonald

Maclaren-Jones
Martin
Merton
Mitchell

Rath (teller)
Roberts
Taylor
Tudehope

PAIRS

Kaine
Lawrence
Mookhey

Fang
Ward
Munro

Amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe agreed to.

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

Leave granted.

The House divided.

Ayes12
Noes19
Majority.....7

AYES

Carter
Farlow
Farraway
MacDonald

Maclaren-Jones
Martin
Merton
Mitchell

Rath (teller)
Roberts
Taylor (teller)
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NOES

Banasiak
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Donnelly
Graham
Higginson
Houssos
Hurst
Jackson

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

NOES

D'Adam

PAIRS

Fang
Munro
Ward

Kaine
Mookhey
Lawrence

Amendment of the Hon. Chris Rath negatived.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

TRANSGRID CONNECTION ACCELERATION GRANTS

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (14:42): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) since October 2023, over 400 Electrical Trades Union [ETU] members at Transgrid have been attempting to bargain for a fair pay deal;
 - (b) for the last four months, Transgrid has been involved in an ongoing industrial dispute, with ETU members again voting to continue escalating industrial action;
 - (c) the ETU alleges Transgrid is making no attempt to engage in good faith over key issues like wages and overtime rates; and
 - (d) as a result of Transgrid's unwillingness to resolve this long-running industrial dispute, further protected industrial action risks adding to a growing connection approval backlog, putting at risk the rapid and efficient rollout of energy transmission projects that are crucial to New South Wales energy transition.
- (2) That this House further notes that:
 - (a) Transgrid is New South Wales 100 per cent privatised transmission network operator;
 - (b) on 22 May 2024, the Minister for Energy and Climate Change announced a grant of \$8.4 million in new funds to Transgrid and the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO], to hire more engineers and overcome delays to the rollout of grid connections;
 - (c) Transgrid will reportedly use its \$3.2 million portion of the grant to fund extra technical staff on grid connections to overcome connection delays, as well as establish two dedicated "squads" of engineers, technicians and customer support staff, to provide additional grid connection application review and support;
 - (d) the Minister for Energy and Climate Change signed off on this grant to a 100 per cent privatised transmission operator, in the midst of a protracted industrial dispute, without any consultation with the relevant unions; and
 - (e) the grant of millions of dollars of public money to a wholly privatised operator, in the midst of a protracted industrial dispute, does not appear to have any requirements attached regarding industrial relations or worker pay and conditions, or indeed the successful delivery of the projects.
- (3) That this House expresses its concern that this decision by the Minister amounts to either a reckless squandering of public money through a dereliction of duty to perform due diligence, and a missed opportunity to improve the pay and conditions for the workers essential to the rapid and equitable rollout of our new generation and transmission infrastructure, or the threat of publicly funded scab labour undermining the power of ETU and Professionals Australia members at the bargaining table.
- (4) That this House calls on the Minister to place a temporary pause on the release of this grant funding to Transgrid until the company is able to produce a comprehensive industrial relations plan detailing how it intends to address the current industrial disputes and bargain in good faith.
- (5) That this House further calls on the Minister to, in addition to pausing the announced grants, outline in writing and table to the House:
 - (a) what conditions, if any, were placed on the grant funding awarded to Transgrid to accelerate grid-scale battery connections;
 - (b) what consideration was given, if any, to the ongoing industrial action at Transgrid and its effect on plans to accelerate connections when awarding the grants; and
 - (c) why these grants were awarded to Transgrid without any consultation with trade unions currently engaged in protected industrial action at the company.

As The Greens energy and just transitions spokesperson, I have moved this motion to call on the New South Wales Labor Government to make sure that our energy transition is one that is done in consultation and collaboration with workers. As the motion states, since October 2023 more than 400 Electrical Trades Union [ETU] members at Transgrid have been attempting to bargain for a fair pay deal. For more than four months this has seen those

members involved in an industrial dispute with their employer. They recently voted overwhelmingly to escalate industrial action in their pursuit of a fair deal. The work conducted by those members, and of their colleagues who are members of Professionals Australia and are also party to the dispute, is critical to the rollout of our new transmission infrastructure on which our clean energy transition is so reliant.

Their log of claims includes simple issues of fairness, like a pay increase that keeps up with the cost of living, and improved overtime rates. In the midst of the most significant industrial dispute at Transgrid in three decades, the workers felt blindsided and betrayed when, on 22 May, the New South Wales Government announced that Transgrid would be receiving millions of dollars in taxpayer money to hire additional staff, seemingly with the intent of overcoming the disruptions in business activity that were coming about as a result of their industrial action.

It is no easy thing to take industrial action. It is a decision only ever taken as a last resort through a democratic decision of the workers as the only means by which they can assert their power collectively against an employer they have collectively decided is not treating them with the fairness and dignity they deserve. The ETU has long been a champion of the transitioning of our electrical network towards one that is powered by renewables, recognising the urgent environmental and climate imperative for a rapid transition. It has no desire to delay or obstruct this important transition.

In fact, over a quarter of the ETU's Transgrid membership lives in declared renewable energy zones across New South Wales. Those members have placed their faith in the New South Wales Government to deliver a just energy transition that uplifts them and their communities rather than continuing the status quo of privatisation and a race to the bottom on wages and conditions. It is for this reason that they were so dismayed by the decision of the Government, after zero consultation with the union movement, to publicly fund what appears to be scab labour and, in doing so, undermine their efforts to uplift industry conditions.

An often forgotten piece of the energy transition when we are talking about social licence and community benefit is the need for projects to provide direct economic benefit through locally sourced labour to high quality, safe, secure and well-paying jobs. I note—and The Greens welcome—the resolution that was passed just a fortnight ago at the Australian Council of Trade Unions [ACTU] Congress calling for enhanced climate targets to deliver benefits and economic opportunities for workers and their communities through safe, secure and well-paid jobs. ACTU President Michele O'Neil put it right when she said:

The future for a liveable planet is with renewables. To protect the interests of all workers, two things are non-negotiable: that transition happens at the pace required by science, and that it doesn't leave workers or communities behind. Change needs to be both fast and fair.

The fundamental issue at the heart of this motion is that, to these workers, "fast" has been preferenced over "fair". In recent months we have spoken a lot in this Chamber about the power of the Government's procurement dollars to help craft desirable social outcomes. This issue is no different. We should be designing grants and investments in consultation with the workers who will be affected and, where we do pursue partnerships with private interests, we should be imposing conditions on that money to ensure that public money is not being used to drive down wages and conditions while boosting private profits. Those ideas are not terribly complicated or radical. There is no need to be so hands-off. In fact, it is reckless and irresponsible to do so, particularly when we are talking about new economy-shaping industries like the energy transition.

We are all desperate to get on with and speed up the transition. I think The Greens, more than most, are anxious to pick up the pace. We do not want to see obstacles being thrown in the way. But consultation with workers and transparency and accountability with public money should not be seen as obstacles. Workers and the public should be partners—not barriers—to this revolution to our energy network. I hope and suspect the Labor Party would prefer that to be the case as well. There is no need for the old status quo approach to delivering the infrastructure projects. We know how successful a tripartite approach to government can be. I hope we can see our energy transition begin to more closely reflect the aspirations of a genuinely just, worker-led and worker-focused energy transition. I fear we are doomed to fail if it is any other way. 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) (14:47): The Government does not support the motion moved by Ms Abigail Boyd. It does support workers being able to organise and make their case and to work through issues relating to their pay and conditions. That is something we on this side support and take very seriously, as members of the Labor Party. I work very closely, as does the Government, with all of our union colleagues. The approach taken by this Government is very different to the approach taken by the previous Government.

I place on record a couple of things relating specifically to these matters. Firstly, the Government wants employers to do the right thing. It puts them and workers at the centre of the transition. We have done a range of

different activities. I meet with unions regularly. The Renewable Energy Sector Board is well represented and talks through the issues that we are really grappling with in the transition, such as how to get good, local, secure jobs that are well paid. That does not mean that there will not be conflict at times, which is the issue that is being dealt with here. Transgrid is currently in negotiations with employees on a new enterprise agreement for people who are employed under the current award. In late 2023, 83 per cent of Transgrid employees under the enterprise agreement voted to reject Transgrid's offer.

Members of the Electrical Trades Union [ETU] have implemented a range of protected industrial action since Transgrid's initial offer. They have the right to take protected industrial action, and that is a normal part of the industrial relations system. I will give a bit of information in relation to the grant spoken about in the motion. This is separate to the workers who need to follow the rules and are employed with Transgrid and what is covered by the ETU. This grant is to assist, to speed up and to connect four key batteries that have been identified by the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] as needed to deal with summer readiness and with the reliability gaps. As the member well knows, I am not keen on extending coal-fired power for a day longer. We need to get these batteries into the ground.

There is the AGL megawatt battery at Liddell, Akaysha's Waratah Super Battery, Ark Energy's Richmond Valley battery and Akaysha's 415-megawatt Orana Battery Energy Storage System. These projects have two gigawatts of capacity. In response to the concerns raised in the motion, it is important to note that the grant funding goes towards activities that are separate to what Transgrid is required to deal with under the National Electricity Rules. The grant is \$3.2 million to provide four full-time equivalent engineers and two full-time equivalent project managers for up to two years.

I seek an extension of time.

Leave granted.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: One of the intended outcomes for this grant is to grow the available pool of engineering resources for the energy sector. We have a massive skills shortage, and we need more engineers everywhere—literally thousands of them. The latest projections suggest that we need around 500 new electrical engineers over the next decade. Under the grant, Transgrid must endeavour to employ new staff directly over other methods of engaging new staff such as consultants and contractors. The intent of this grant is not to circumvent the undertakings and work that is already being done. The reality, which I talk about a lot in the House, is that we have a reliability gap coming. We have warnings from AEMO about summer readiness. In some ways, we have been lucky that we have had a mild summer, because we have some real challenges ahead.

These four projects are very specific. Putting the approximately six workers there is about dealing with engineering studies to make sure that we can connect those four battery projects to the grid. Estimates I have show the grant could actually improve the time taken by between five to 12 months. This will be significant in getting those projects online. I understand the concerns of the union, and the member will be pleased to know that I speak to the union regularly. We are working together. I know the union is not happy about this matter, but this is a separate issue from the industrial action that it is entitled to take. We again encourage Transgrid to come to the table with the union to sort this out.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (14:52): I make a brief contribution on behalf of the Opposition and indicate that it will not support the motion. The Minister has given an adequate explanation of the Government's position. We are sympathetic to Ms Abigail Boyd, who moved the motion, but the Opposition will not support the motion in this instance.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (14:53): In reply: I thank Government and Opposition members for their contributions. To clarify, although I do not think that it was suggested otherwise, The Greens support these grants. We are absolutely in lockstep with the Government in the need to invest heavily in renewables infrastructure and in the renewables rollout. This motion is asking that, in the context of the industrial dispute that is occurring, there ideally would have been work conditions placed in the grant, and there would have been consultation with the Electrical Trades Union beforehand so that we did not get to this point. This is something that we have, unfortunately, seen across the world. Every time we do something in a hurry, we often see workers' rights get cut.

We discover every day—and not just in other parts of the world—projects that we have invested in federally through our clean energy fund where there looks to be quite horrific abuses of worker rights. That is why we feel strongly about this important issue, and why we will continue to hound the Government about it. When things are done in a hurry, corners get cut. That is not something that we want to see. I am very happy to have heard the explanation from the Minister and to have that put on record. Hopefully, that will give some comfort to the union involved. As a general concept, we would like a bit more focus on the conditions being

placed on any public exercise of money for the renewables rollout to make sure that they bind the company in receipt of the money to abide by best practice industrial labour law.

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

Motion negatived.

REGIONAL CHILDCARE SERVICES

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (14:56): I move:

- (1) That this House recognises the importance of accessible and affordable child care for families in regional New South Wales.
- (2) That this House acknowledges the challenges faced by families in regional areas, including the impacts of childcare deserts.
- (3) That this House calls upon the Government to:
 - (a) increase the availability of and support for childcare services in regional New South Wales;
 - (b) promote the training and retention of childcare professionals in regional areas; and
 - (c) provide incentives for new childcare services in underserved regional communities.

This motion is on a topic that I have spoken about in this House many times before, not just when I was Minister for Education and Early Childhood for six years but also now as the shadow Minister. It is an important policy area, and we need to make sure that we get the settings right to support families to access early childhood education. In this instance, I talk about child care. There is a significant impact from the Federal Government on this area of policy, which we know by and large is the main funder to support childcare services and families through subsidies. However, this is an area where the previous Liberal-Nationals Government started to get involved in terms of the accessibility and viability of centres growing in areas where we know they are needed and also some financial support for families.

Today I talk in particular about the issues in regional and rural communities when it comes to accessing the services. As a mum who lives in a regional community and has juggled trying to get the childcare or preschool days that are needed, I know it is really hard. It is hard for everybody, but it is particularly difficult when you are in a small country town with a limited number of services. You cannot drive from suburb to suburb and find things within a radius of a few kilometres. If you only have a certain number of services in your town and they are full, then you literally have nowhere to go to get support.

We know that there are "childcare deserts", a term developed by the Mitchell Institute to define a community where there are three children to each centre-based care place. Those authors calculated that there were approximately nine million Australians, including 568,700 Australian children, living in areas that they deemed to be a childcare desert. We know gaps exist, and we know they are particularly acute in regional and rural communities. We need to make sure that we have a bipartisan approach to supporting policy reform and investment in this sector. If we can lower the cost of child care, it will relieve pressure on family budgets and incentivise women in particular to get back to work, which helps the overall economy. But it is also really good for the children. I think that third point sometimes gets lost in this debate.

While we know there are economic benefits for communities and households, a child who attends a quality early learning program before they start school literally starts school much better off and ready to learn. There is a lot of research into the fact that children who have had quality early learning experiences are less likely to end up in the juvenile justice system, less likely to need health support, less likely to end up in the welfare system and more likely to finish high school. It is one of those investments where every dollar put in before a child turns five pays dividends in the years ahead. We need to make sure there is high-quality child care and the staff to provide it.

The Coalition did a lot in this space when it was in government, such as the \$5 billion Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund. I acknowledge the member for Hornsby, Matt Kean, who said this week that he will be stepping down from Parliament. Kean as former Treasurer, Dom Perrottet as Premier and I as the Minister were in lockstep to make sure the money was available to invest in those crucial incentives over the next decade. The legislation was passed by this House, in agreement with the Labor Party when in opposition. We need to make sure that the Government continues to not only carry out the incentives that were available under that fund but also reach the objective of making sure more childcare services are available—and that has to be in regional New South Wales as well. This Government is focused on Western Sydney—and, yes, of course Western Sydney needs services—but I implore it to not forget about the bush. We are worried we are not getting the attention we need from some of the new incentives.

The Government must make sure it is promoting the training and retention of professionals in regional areas. There are scholarships available, but I would argue they are not flowing at the rate they should be to make

the most of this fund and the capital expansion we will need. We must also look at ways to provide incentives for new childcare centres in some of those underserved regional communities. They may never get the core numbers to make it a financially attractive or viable solution, but if government can come in and help underwrite it, work with local council and provide grants, that will make it an attractive business proposition for a not-for-profit or for-profit service—whoever wants to come into those communities and help families. All options have to be on the table. As I said, this policy area has had bipartisan support in the past and that should continue. But the Opposition will continue to look at this issue and will hold the Government to account to make sure regional families do not miss out.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (15:01): I indicate that the Government will not be opposing this motion. All children in New South Wales deserve the best possible start to life through access to quality teaching and essential school infrastructure. I am proud that in its budget yesterday the Government continued to deliver on Labor's election commitment to build 100 new public preschools in New South Wales, with half of those to be built across regional New South Wales.

Over two years from 2023-24, this Government is rolling out \$90 million of initiatives designed to build more early childhood education and care places in underserved regions; test and trial flexible approaches to childcare delivery; and build the business capabilities of existing early childhood education and care providers. The Government is delivering a record number of scholarships to reduce barriers to entering the sector, and supporting current early childhood education and care professionals to upskill and grow their career. The shadow Minister, and previous Minister, spoke about what her Government did. I say to members that we on this side are aware of that program. However, on top of that, we are delivering 100 public preschools. The previous Government built exactly one new public preschool. We will build 100 over the next four years.

I could outline at length the 49 regional public preschools that are available. However, I will talk specifically about the Flexible Initiatives Trial. Sixteen services across both metropolitan and regional New South Wales are receiving a total of more than \$2.8 million to test and trial new or adapted operating models that address key barriers to families accessing early childhood education and care. Ten of these services will be in regional areas, including Kyogle, Armidale, Grafton, Bega and Menindee. The number of services supported through the Flexible Initiatives Trial will increase following the close of applications for the second round of funding, which I am advised should occur in early July 2024. The Flexible Initiatives Trial will offer families increased flexibility through initiatives such as extended hours and greater choice in which days they can attend.

I also highlight the \$20 million we have allocated for capital investment programs, which will support the not-for-profit sector to build more early childhood education and care places in underserved areas. As I said, there is \$5.3 million for a business capability development program. Yesterday we announced over \$17 million in this year's budget in scholarships and professional development, with many of those places in rural and regional areas. This will more than double the previous year's record. We are doing a range of things to support early childhood education. We understand the importance of it. The Government will not be opposing this motion.

Dr AMANDA COHN (15:04): The Greens also support the motion. Early childhood education and care is an essential service that should be valued and funded by the Government. Every child deserves to have free and universal access to public early childhood education and care because of the seismic shift that early intervention and support can make in children's development. The Greens have for years advocated for the availability of government-run preschools in all new primary schools, and for increased funding to local government to expand public early childhood education and care, particularly in regional areas. Early childhood education and care has an invaluable and essential role in Closing the Gap. We must increase the number of First Nations operated and managed services—and services with strong relationships with Aboriginal communities—and support their sustainability.

The extraordinary cost of early childhood education and care is unmanageable for too many families. This systemically impacts gender equity and women's employment, and the sustainability and expansion of early childhood education and care services. All of this exacerbates lack of access to quality care in regional areas. As identified in the New South Wales *Gender Equality Budget Statement* just yesterday, increasingly high fees impede returns to work, income and participation equality, and our progress towards closing the gender pay gap in New South Wales.

Alongside the critical shortages in areas of the early childhood education and care sector and other feminised sectors, where study often requires unpaid placements, the highly gendered issue of placement poverty must be immediately addressed. We know that since the New South Wales Government announced paid study for police recruits there has been an increase in applications of over 40 per cent compared to the same period last year. The same can and should happen in the early childhood education and care sector, where staff are desperately needed. This sector is among the industries with the highest proportion of women in the workforce.

In 2022 the term "childcare deserts" was used by Charles Sturt University academic Leanne Gibbs. As we are seeing with other skilled care workforces in critical shortage, Dr Gibbs said that though attracting and training new educators was a priority, more was needed to keep them working in the sector. Just like nurses and midwives in New South Wales, pay and conditions reform must go along with these recruitment initiatives. High turnover is bad for morale, institutional knowledge and service sustainability. Consistency of care is crucial for early childhood development.

A passionate educator in the sector has already raised with me the issue that the fee relief for long day care announced in yesterday's budget is significantly less than the fee relief for preschool. This increases strain on council-run long day care services. Where preschool hours do not align with full-time work hours, this pushes families with working parents to prefer long day care where extended-hours and preschool programs are available. More funding is needed to reduce the strain on councils to keep care affordable or free. Making these services viable would have a remarkable impact on early childhood education and care in regional areas across the State. Finally, while of course this is a Federal issue, The Greens have also called for the scrapping of the activity test for the Commonwealth Child Care Subsidy.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (15:07): In reply: I thank the Minister and Dr Amanda Cohn for their contributions to this debate. I will respond largely to the Minister's contribution, which went to the number of public preschools. Members opposite love to say, "The previous Government built one in its time in government," but they do not tell the full story. There are actually 200 public preschools on school sites, with 100 of them not-for-profit and community run. About 700 schools in the State are not-for-profit and community run. That is where we invested heavily. It is the bulk of the sector. My kids went to a community-run preschool; I suspect many members opposite sent their children to a community-run preschool as well. It is misinformed to pretend that the only growth in that sector under the Coalition Government was one preschool, and that there were no other capital investments in the largest part of the sector. It is important to put that on the record.

In terms of money flowing for the flexible trial and the scholarships, this Government is basically spending the money in this space that was left to it by the previous Government. That is fine, but I am concerned that it is slow in terms of the uptake. We pumped out \$280 million worth of scholarships over four years to make sure we moved towards universal pre-kindergarten. As I said, the Childcare and Economic Opportunity Fund was spent. In the last financial year an allocation of \$100 million was put into that account through the legislation. Members know from the budget papers released yesterday that only \$40 million of that was spent.

My message to the Government is that the Opposition is watching closely. The Government is talking about in excess of \$300 million being spent in this financial year, and we on this side hope it delivers. Based on the Government's track record from last year, that fund was underspent by \$60 million, so I say to Minister Houssos and the Minister for Education and Early Learning in the other place that it is great that the Government is trialling things like flexible hours and putting money into capital, but why did it not upscale and spend the full amount that was available? Why is the Government only offering 16 services and spending \$20 million on capital when \$60 million was available that had not been allocated?

Those are the questions that early childhood providers are asking the Opposition. They know that we agreed to the childcare fund and thought it was a good idea, but they are not seeing the money flow—it is a piecemeal \$20 million over two years or this much over that period of time—and it is not adding up to the big dollar investment that the former Government committed to which, frankly, would have been delivered by the Coalition if we were in government.

People see the slowdown and it makes them nervous. Parents are waiting longer for childcare spaces and they are not getting the fee relief that they could be getting. This is money that is sitting in the Government's bank account that could be helping household budgets. These are the sorts of issues that we must keep talking about. I acknowledge that the Government will not be opposing the motion. I appreciate that. This is an important policy space that we should be having good discussions on while also making sure that the Government delivers for families.

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

Motion agreed to.

STATE BUDGET AND TAXES

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (15:10): I move:

(1) That this House notes that:

- (a) in February 2023, as shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, provided an assurance to multiple media outlets that a Minns Government would not introduce any new taxes if elected;

- (b) in February 2023, as shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, responded "No" when asked "Will you raise taxes?" on Channel 10;
 - (c) in February 2023, as shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, provided an assurance to multiple media outlets that Labor's election promises would be funded by redirecting existing resources; and
 - (d) in June 2023 *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported the Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, "has said Labor would stick to its pre-election promise of no new taxes, instead focusing on cuts to spending".
- (2) That this House calls on the Minns Government and the Treasurer, the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, to honour their pre-election promise of no new or increased State taxes in this term of Government.

Budget week has reminded me of a fable by Aeschylus that speaks about an eagle that is pierced by an arrow. Upon being struck, the eagle looks down at the fletching and notices it was made from its own plumage. It cries, "Thus, not by others, but by means of our own plumage are we slain." When we think about members in this place contributing to their own downfall, we should look no further than the Treasurer. It would be good if the Treasurer were in the Chamber for this motion.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: Point of order: It is a longstanding practice that members do not reflect on other members' attendance in this place. Members have different responsibilities, particularly on sitting days, so their absence in the Chamber does not mean that they are not paying attention to what it is going on in the House.

The Hon. Tara Moriarty: There are only three members on the Opposition benches—just pointing it out.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts): There is no need for the Hon Tara Moriarty to get involved. I uphold the point of order. The Hon. Chris Rath will not reflect on the Treasurer's absence in the Chamber.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: For months, the Treasurer has denied and denied in this place, and in the media, that he would raise taxes. In budget estimates I asked the Treasurer 11 times if he would rule out new costs and taxes on critical areas like social and affordable housing, and each time he evaded the question. Like George H.W. Bush, whom I mentioned in an adjournment speech last week, the Treasurer looked the people of New South Wales in the eye and said in a clear voice, "Read my lips: no new taxes." There are many parallels with what the former United States President did.

The Government has now broken its pact with the people of the State. It has introduced several changes to taxation that will be a burden that is carried by low- and middle-income households, like the amendment to the land tax threshold, which will cost taxpayers an additional \$1.5 billion. No doubt that will be passed on to renters and small businesses. The Government has also increased the Foreign Investor Duty Surcharge, the land tax rate for foreign importers, developer contributions, coal royalties and annual liquor licence fees. Those are just some of its negligent changes to the State's revenue. If the Government were going to increase or bring in new taxes, why in the heat of the election campaign did it make a commitment not to?

What is worse is the Government knows what it is doing and is keen to hide any trace of its dirty work. Yesterday, disguised by the budget, *The Daily Telegraph* reported that the new fibreglass power pole replacement scheme "puts hidden tax on New South Wales electricity bills". Essential Energy's revenue submission estimated that these increases will cause families to pay an average of \$39 more per year and businesses to pay an average of \$83 more per year. It sounds like a new or increased tax to me. Lo and behold, the budget papers reflect Labor's dishonesty. As per the financial statements in *Budget Paper No. 01*, government sector revenue is increasing by 6.9 per cent but taxation revenue is increasing by a whopping 8.6 per cent. This demonstrates once and for all that taxation is driving growing revenue, not some unexplained fairy dust.

The Labor Party always intended to raise taxes, most of all because of the vice grip that the unions have around its neck. Like the albatross in the *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, outrageous concessions given by the Minns Labor Government to militant, thuggish union bosses—the same bosses who shut down Sydney trains just a couple of years back—now hang around the neck of the Government, wreaking havoc on the State's finances. This means cuts to essential services and infrastructure like the 1.8 per cent real cut to police spending, the 5.5 per cent real cut to TAFE and Fire and Rescue NSW, and the 3.6 per cent real cut to education spending, not to mention the cancellation and deferrals of key projects like Sydney Metro or the Beaches Link.

As much as Chris Minns and Daniel Mookhey want to blame the GST carve-up for putting the State in a tricky position, in reality—aside from the Treasurer's incompetence in being unable to negotiate a deal with a Prime Minister from his own party—the reason that New South Wales was left shorthanded by Anthony Albanese is because of how bad the Victorian Labor Government is at putting together a budget. The Prime Minister knows how poorly State Labor governments manage their finances, and he can see that in the 2024-25 New South Wales budget papers.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (15:16): I move:

That the question be amended by inserting after paragraph (2):

- (3) That this House notes that in April 2024, as shadow Treasurer, the Hon. Damien Tudehope, MLC, called on the Minns Government to actively consider hiking the foreign investor tax surcharge since "it is seven years since the surcharge on duty was raised in 2017".

The Government has listened to the pretty lacklustre response from Opposition members to the budget. Frankly, they are annoyed that it is a good budget that deals with the issues that New South Wales has to confront after being handed the largest debt from one government to another that has ever been seen. It deals with financial cliffs and underinvestment across a range of issues. The Government has worked very hard for the past 15 months to bring about budget repair to this State and judiciously deliver on all its election commitments.

Members opposite can go on as much as they want, but the issue here is when is a tax raising a tax? They did exactly the same as what the Government is doing now but somehow there is a difference. The Government is not raising taxes but doing exactly what Mike Baird did with the payroll tax in 2013: removing indexation on a tax to make it more efficient and to provide taxpayers with the relief they are looking for. The Government is doing the same as Mike Baird but with a different tax. It cannot be any different. Members opposite are hypocrites for suggesting otherwise. As the amendment reflects, hiking the foreign investor tax surcharge has been called for by the Opposition. The shadow Treasurer has even been tub-thumping on the radio, talking about how important it is that the Government consider this issue. Well, we on this side have and we are dealing with it in the budget.

I also put on record that the Liberals introduced new taxes, increased taxes, removed concessions and adjusted thresholds 22 times in office. They implemented a total of \$35 billion of revenue measures during their time in government. We can go backwards and forwards on this matter. The New South Wales Government has put in place a judicious budget that deals with our real economic headwind, inflation and increased interest rates, and delivers real relief to households, which those opposite approached recklessly. I remind them that in their last budget they put in place \$23 billion worth of new spending that was never able to be delivered.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (15:20): Many stupid things are said during elections, but there is nothing quite as stupid as saying "no new taxes". It is so very stupid that I am genuinely surprised that it could be so easily eclipsed in its sheer idiocy by a motion calling for a party to stick to such a stupid promise more than a year down the track. Let me break it down. Very simply, the Government's budget is bounded by revenue. Some of those revenue sources are relatively stable and predictable, while others are impacted by unanticipated peaks and troughs. Some are more easily within the control of the State Government, like State taxes, whereas others are not, like Federal payments. On the other side of the equation are the expenses paid out by the Government.

Similarly, the amount of expenditure a government chooses to make changes over time depending on the circumstances, not just the changing priorities and policies of the party in government but also as a result of the general economic conditions we find ourselves in. As a general rule, a fiscally responsible government will spend more in the bad times—at a time of natural disasters or a global pandemic, for example—and save more in the good times. The height of the mining boom would have been a good time.

The idea that parties entering an election can control reality for the next four-year term is absurd. That somehow they can ensure no unexpected economic headwinds and guarantee no change to policy based on new events, learnings or change in public sentiment is absurd. The notion that a government should limit itself in its fiscal management when it has not even been elected yet, and then sit stubbornly for four years not changing anything despite the passage of time and an entirely different set of circumstances having presented itself, would not just be wildly economically reckless and a complete abrogation of its duties to the people of New South Wales but would likely lead to it losing at the next election for being just so utterly moronic. That is why no party should ever say such a stupid thing in the first place.

Even if we could freeze time, why on earth would anyone endorse the concept of no new taxes? Did Labor seriously think that the Coalition Government's tax settings were the absolute best they could be? Labor wanted to try to win an election against a sitting government by saying that it would not change a thing. Did it think that it would not then go through the State finances with a fine-toothed comb and work out who should be paying a fairer share towards the bottom line so that others in more need can benefit from a lower burden? Greater taxes overall mean more available for services for those who need it most. Greater taxes in one specific area can be a smart way to pay for lower taxes in another. Labor knew that and yet it still said the stupid thing. Even worse, it allowed this even more brainless motion to shame it for that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (15:22): I move:

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

- (2) That this House notes that the 2024-25 budget includes a suite of new taxes, including:
 - (a) an amendment to the land tax threshold;
 - (b) an increase to the foreign investor duty surcharge;
 - (c) an increase to the land tax rate for foreign landholders;
 - (d) an increase to developer contributions; and
 - (e) an end to the payroll tax amnesty.
- (3) That this House condemns the Minns Labor Government for breaking its election promise and imposing harsher tax burdens on the people of New South Wales during a cost-of-living crisis.

When considering this budget and the promises that Government members made when in opposition, it is worth noting that they believed in no new taxes and then they came to government and found new taxes. They imposed a \$1.5 billion tax on renters across New South Wales by freezing the land tax threshold and increasing land tax revenues across the State. This means that people who are already struggling with increased rental prices and people who are paying 13 per cent per year will be paying even more. The Government introduced a suite of new taxes and charges, including a Housing and Productivity Contribution—a \$12,000 new tax on each new home. Squirrelled away in the budget is a tax on Western Sydney in the form of a strategic biodiversity component activated by this Government. That is another \$10,000. In total there is a \$22,000 tax on new homes across Western Sydney. We know that taxes and charges account for 33 per cent of the cost of developments across Western Sydney. That is from data by the Property Council.

It is no wonder that Urban Taskforce and its acting chief executive officer, Stephen Fenn, warned that this Government is at risk of killing the goose that laid the golden egg when it comes to property taxes and charges. In this budget, property taxes and charges account for 41 per cent of this Government's own revenue—\$21 billion, in fact. This Government is seeking to make that even more, because it is addicted to revenue and taxation. As the Hon. Chris Rath said, in this budget we have seen an 8.6 per cent growth in taxes. This Government is addicted to revenue. It wants to claim that it is everyone else's fault, but the reality is that this Government is taxing New South Wales more than ever. It is slugging the State's families with more taxes and providing no cost-of-living relief. It is going to be charging more and building fewer houses, and the houses that will be built will be less affordable.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (15:26): I indicate that the Government will not be supporting the amendment moved by the member. I do not have a copy of the amendment yet, but one thing that stuck out to me was that the amendment highlighted a concern about the end of the payroll tax amnesty that featured in yesterday's budget. I am not sure that is accurate. I do not have the wording of the amendment in front of me, but I assume that it is referring to the Government's \$188.8 million bulk-billing support initiative, where it is legislating to extinguish the historical payroll tax liabilities that doctors were accumulating under the previous Government's watch, after this Government met and consulted extensively with doctors who are affected.

I particularly pay tribute to the health Minister, who I worked closely with on this issue, the Treasurer, the Australian Medical Association [AMA] and the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners [RACGP]. It is interesting to note that the previous finance Minister could not find a single opportunity to meet with them during his period in office but we have met with them on multiple occasions—and not just the AMA or the RACGP but multiple doctors and peak organisations that are affected—so that we can craft this initiative to remove the historical payroll tax liabilities accumulated over five years under the previous Government. This initiative provides an ongoing payroll tax rebate. We are actually cutting payroll taxes for contractor GPs going forward. It is interesting that the Opposition chose to highlight the issue of land tax. Yesterday marked 11 years to the day since Mike Baird implemented exactly the same changes to the payroll tax system. He upped the threshold and then froze the indexation. It is a bit cute for the Opposition to come into the Chamber and criticise us for that.

I devote my last minute to the taxes that the previous Government snuck into the Pre-election Budget Update—the PEBU document—but did not actually legislate. The first piece of legislation that, as the new finance Minister, I had to shepherd through this Parliament was implementing a tax that was committed to quietly, in the dead of the night. If members opposite want to talk about what happened in the midst of the election campaign, two significant changes were baked into the forward estimates. I will not talk about the \$7 billion worth of unfunded budget black holes we on this side inherited. Two specific tax measures were taken and never put through the Parliament. Members opposite need to take a good, hard look at themselves before they come into the Chamber and talk about implementing taxes. We are being absolutely clear and up-front with what we are doing. We are redirecting every dollar into our initiatives to increase housing for the people of the State.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (15:29): I strongly support the motion moved by the Hon. Chris Rath and the amendment moved by the Hon. Scott Farlow. It is essential that we hold the New South Wales Government accountable for the promises it made to the people of New South Wales. In February 2023 the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, then shadow Treasurer, made a clear and unequivocal commitment to the voters. He assured multiple media outlets that a Minns Government would not introduce any new taxes if elected. When asked directly on Channel 10 if Labor would raise taxes, he responded with a firm no. He also stated that Labor's election promises would be funded by redirecting existing resources, not by imposing new taxes.

Yet, following the latest budget, the New South Wales Labor Government is introducing new taxes. It holds the people of New South Wales in the utmost contempt. Labor's biggest budget tax is the \$1.5 billion housing tax. This is not just a broken promise; it is a breach of trust with the people of New South Wales. Labor promises one thing and does another—in this case, the exact opposite. Today the Property Council of Australia reported that delays and the \$1.5 billion new housing tax represent up to 40 per cent of the cost of a new home. In New South Wales, it is recognised that we are in the middle of a housing crisis. That is on top of an uncertain global economic environment and high materials and labour costs. New taxes and charges will make it even harder for families, mums and dads, the property sector and small business.

In two weeks, the biggest home building boom in living memory, with the National Housing Accord, is due to start. The timing of this new \$1.5 billion housing tax could not be worse. Freezing the tax-free threshold for land tax will serve to further slam the brakes on housing delivery. It means mum-and-dad investors will pay more. Renters will pay more. We are in a housing crisis. The way to get homes built is not to tax the sector that we rely on to provide them. Builders and carpenters are not asking for a handout; they are asking for hands off. It is putting the brakes on new housing estates like those in Oran Park and Austral. It is sending the wrong signal. It is a new barrier. It is short-sighted. It is unfair. It is counterproductive. It is plainly wrong. The Minns Government must honour its pre-election promise of no new taxes during this term of government. I commend the motion and the amendment to the House.

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (15:32): As can be seen from the fact that I am reading from the *Notice Paper*, I have absolutely no notes because I did not intend to speak to this matter. However, while I sat in the chair and listened to this debate, I was compelled to speak. I cannot exactly echo the words of Ms Abigail Boyd, who is now in the chair—but I applaud them—about how stupid it is for any political party, no matter whether they are red or blue in colour, to go to an election and say that there will be no new taxes. A pox on both your houses!

I am not in government, and I will never be in government. I represent the people out there, and the people out there are sick of politicians absolutely lying to them—and they wonder why we have no credibility! This is l-a-w, law. This is, "Read my lips: no new taxes." What did the now Treasurer say? When asked, "Will you raise taxes?" he said no. He said that Labor would stick to its pre-election promise of no new taxes, instead focusing on cuts to spending. I am critical of the Treasurer but, equally, I am critical of the mob that were there before this Government, because they have done exactly the same thing.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: We did not go to an election promising it.

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS: I reject the interjection and do not acknowledge it, because it does not deserve acknowledgement. The problem is that politicians of all stripes will continually lie to the public to get their way into power. Once they are in, they completely forget all about that. It does us no good. It does our profession no good, and it does society no good. I support the motion, not because I am a supporter of the Liberal Party but because what the motion says is, in fact, correct. However, I also temper that with the fact that it too has played the same silly games. I leave my contribution there.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (15:34): A lot has been said about the worst budget that we have had in 20 years. This has to be the worst of any budget in 20 years. That includes Matt Kean and Andrew Constance on our side of the House, and it also includes a lot of appalling ones on the opposite side of the House. I have to say, it requires some gall to try to talk up what is the highest-taxing budget in the history of New South Wales. Never before have we raised revenue like this current mob in government has sought to raise revenue from the people of this State. That is against a background—

The Hon. Cameron Murphy: Only an hour ago you were saying it is inflationary.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: I acknowledge the interjection. It is inflationary. Ask the Governor of the Reserve Bank. The Governor of the Reserve Bank had to come out and say that not only was she holding interest rates at their current level, but she was giving a warning to us all about the profligate State governments—Labor in Queensland, Labor in New South Wales, Labor in Victoria—engaging in the level of spending and running up the level of deficits like this Government is doing. That is in fact the inflationary pressure that the

Governor of the Reserve Bank has identified, which is the impact of the way that those opposite run budgets for the purposes—

[Government members interjected.]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): Order!

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: Thank you, Madam Deputy President. I have to say, it was pretty distracting. In the circumstances, I would only say that the manner in which the Government has run the budget is raising taxes, against a promise—not only that, but raising record amounts of revenue from stamp duty, which was never accounted for. The Government then has the gall to talk about the GST impact on the budget, which was an absolute myth, and try to spin that as the reason that this budget is in deficit to the extent it is. It is in deficit because of the decisions made by those opposite, and the people who will pay the price for it are the mortgage holders in New South Wales. The Government is responsible for where the budget is. The lie that the Government has told the people to get elected is now exemplified by these sorts of budgets. I repeat my remarks: It is the worst budget in 20 years.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (15:37): I indicate that I now have a copy of the amendment.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): Is the member seeking leave to speak again?

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: No. I am speaking to the amendment, now that I have a copy of it.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Point of order: The member spoke after the amendment had been moved.

The Hon. Chris Rath: And to the amendment.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: She sought to speak to the amendment, and she had—

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: Do you want to silence me, Damien? That is completely fine.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): Order! We could ask for leave to be granted.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: No, it is fine. The Leader of the Government can have the call.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (15:38): By leave: I will now speak to the amendment.

The Hon. Courtney Houssos: If you do not want me to respond to you, Damien, that is completely on you.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: That is because you will only talk nonsense.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: If you do not want the finance Minister to speak, that is a matter for you.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): Order! It has been fun and games, but we have crossed the line. The Minister has the call.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: It is disappointing that members opposite do not want to hear from the finance Minister, but that is fine. I am happy to speak on behalf of the Government. We on this side do not support the amendment. I note that the Government's amendment deals with some of the issues that were raised by the Hon. Rod Roberts. The particular point is that the Opposition's amendment is factually incorrect, particularly about the payroll issue. This is actually a measure to increase bulk billing in New South Wales. It is not a tax; it is dealing with a problem that those opposite failed to deal with. They are now embarrassed that they did not think about it at the time, and we now have the issue—

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: We are waiting on a court decision, if the truth be known. But that is okay. Don't worry about the facts.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I know that the Hon. Damien Tudehope is unhappy. Opposition is tough. That is okay; he will have many years to get used to it. Labor members did it for 12 years. We understand how hard budget day is for Opposition members and that it is very challenging when they are not quite sure what they want to say. But the Opposition's amendment is factually incorrect and cannot be supported. I reflect on the contributions of Ms Abigail Boyd and the Hon. Rod Roberts, who both made sensible points about the things that governments are confronted with when they win the support of the people of New South Wales and have to deal with the circumstances that they find themselves in. We are in a housing crisis. The Government has been very clear about its budget strategy, which is making sure that the staff who are required to help run our State—who

impact whether you can go to the hospital or whether you can have the best teacher in front of every classroom—are paid correctly.

Members opposite talk about people being union thugs and bosses. Those people are nurses, paramedics, teachers, fire brigade operators and national parks officers. They are ordinary people with ordinary families who want a fair go, and this Government is focusing on them. The Government is also dealing with changes to a range of charges that happened across the State. As I said, members opposite made over 22 different changes. Apparently in those cases it was not a tax hike, but when we on this side change things, it is. This amendment is factually incorrect and we will not support it. We know it is tough for Opposition members to deal with a budget that they are frustrated with, particularly when they have seen us do comprehensive expenditure reviews, do all of those programs and take the \$7 billion hole out of the budget to make sure that we can fund the services that the people in New South Wales deserve. Dealing with the debt trajectory that this State was on and reducing the interest rates that we have to pay is something that we in the Government are very proud of. This is a very good budget. It is doing what we said it would, which is supporting households, businesses and industry in a cost-of-living crisis.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (15:41): In reply: I thank all of the members who contributed to debate. I address some of the points raised by the Hon. Rod Roberts. It is true that, when the Coalition was in government, there were some tax increases, but it did not make some George H. W. Bush style of promise of no new taxes in the heat of the election campaign. That is the difference. Government members are now trying to weasel their way out of it by saying that charges, fees and royalties are not tax increases. Well, let me go to the definition of "tax". That is probably what is missing in this debate. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines "tax" as:

A compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on workers' income and business profits or added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions.

All of those things that are in this budget are tax increases by the very definition. The land tax threshold change is a tax increase. Land tax for foreign landholders is a tax increase. Foreign investor duty, developer contributions, coal royalties and annual liquor licence fees are tax increases. A hidden tax on New South Wales electricity bills with the new fibreglass power pole replacement is a tax increase. That is why the budget papers show a revenue increase of a generous 6.9 per cent and a taxation revenue increase of a whopping 8.6 per cent. Members opposite are increasing taxes. They pretend those things are not taxes. We are not idiots. The people know what a tax is.

An increase in taxation is when things like charges, fees, royalties and thresholds are played around with and you need to pay more money to the State Government. The Treasurer promised no new taxes during the heat of the election campaign. It is an absolute disgrace. The Government is blaming the Federal Government and the GST carve-up. But the budget shows a great, beautiful set of revenue numbers. The reality is the Government does not have a revenue problem; it has a spending problem. It would rather tax its way out of the wages issue—because 45 per cent of the State Government's budget is wages. It is drastically increasing wages and that is why it needs to increase taxes.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Chris Rath has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Scott Farlow and the Hon. Penny Sharpe have moved amendments. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Scott Farlow be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes15
Noes21
Majority.....6

AYES

Carter
Farlow (teller)
Faraway
Latham
MacDonald

Maclaren-Jones
Martin
Merton
Mitchell
Rath (teller)

Roberts
Ruddick
Taylor
Tudehope
Ward

NOES

Banasiak
Borsak
Boyd
Buckingham
Buttigieg
Cohn

Donnelly
Faehrmann
Graham
Higginson
Houssos
Hurst

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

	NOES	
D'Adam	Jackson	Suvaal
	PAIRS	
Fang Munro		Lawrence Kaine

Amendment of the Hon. Scott Farlow negatived.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe be agreed to.

Amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe agreed to.

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

Motion agreed to.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

The Hon. BOB NANVA (15:53): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
 - (a) housing is the largest cost-of-living issue people are facing;
 - (b) the Government recognises that we have a housing crisis in New South Wales; and
 - (c) New South Wales has a shared responsibility to provide solutions so that more homes are available for those who need them and for those who look after us.
- (2) That this House recognises the Government's commitment to addressing the housing crisis.

On every metric, New South Wales faces a significant and deeply entrenched housing crisis. The numbers are well known, but they bear repeating: 70,000 people between the ages of 30 and 40 left Sydney between 2016 and 2021, a home costs 14 times the average wage today compared with five times the average wage in the 1980s, and rents for apartments have risen by 24 per cent in a year and by 11 per cent for detached houses. All of those factors have resulted in Sydney becoming one of the most unaffordable cities in the world. The aspiration of home ownership is rapidly being limited to those who are lucky enough to already have their foot on the property ladder or those who are the beneficiaries of a large inheritance. Reward for effort is increasingly being pushed to the side.

The cost of inertia and inaction on housing supply was laid bare by the Productivity Commissioner, who made the obvious point that if policies analogous to the Government's Transit Oriented Development Plan were in place between 2017 and 2021, prices and rents would be 5.5 per cent lower, which is a saving of \$35 a week for the median apartment or \$1,800 a year for renters generally. It defies belief that after over a decade of inaction, any party seeking government would repeat the very same mistakes of the past and not embrace the \$1 billion worth of budget initiatives to incentivise greater density and housing supply in key communities. The Hon. Chris Rath, whom I respect enormously despite our very obvious ideological differences, said:

The crisis requires a bold policy platform from the Opposition that prioritises sustainable and adequate increases to density and private housing in established communities in Sydney.

I say to my friend with some sorrow that it looks as though he will be kept waiting sometime longer for that boldness to emerge, despite the fact that New South Wales desperately needs more homes—every type of home in every almost every part of the State, including more homes for renters and young buyers, but particularly for essential workers and for those who are fleeing family and domestic violence. That brings me to the effects of the housing supply crisis on the thousands of people who are living at the margins across the State and have nowhere to live and very few people to turn to, especially women and children escaping violence at home. It is neither fair nor constructive for blame to be attributed to one side of politics or another for the unacceptable number of women and children in urgent need of a safe place to live—it is 5,000-odd today.

It is now our collective responsibility. That is why I so very much welcome the Building Homes for NSW program, which was funded in the budget. Refreshingly, it is a signature budget initiative that is not motivated by obtaining an electoral dividend, because we all know that social housing is very rarely a vote turner. Otherwise we would no doubt have seen much greater investments in it by governments of all stripes over the decades. The program is underpinned by a challenge that is core to the Minns Government's mission. We can all have differences of opinion about policy prescriptions to deal with a range of challenges, but sometimes worthwhile initiatives ought to be welcomed with open arms.

The Building Homes for NSW program provides the largest ever investment in new, quality public homes. It provides \$6.6 billion to build 8,400 new social homes, over half of which will be prioritised for victim-survivors of family and domestic violence. The program will be rolled out in priority locations, determined not by electoral boundaries but by methodically using the latest data on social housing demand or by looking to deteriorated sites that are not fit for the purpose for which they were originally designated. We will provide safe public housing for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, offering them the dignity and respect they require after one of the most horrific life experiences one might face.

The budget also provides a boost to Landcom's funding to deliver affordable homes for essential workers close to the schools, hospitals and police stations where they work but can no longer afford to buy or rent. These are all tangible, pragmatic and long-overdue initiatives to tackle the different impacts of the State's housing crisis. The initiatives are worthy of support, not scorn.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (15:58): I contribute to debate on the motion of the Hon. Bob Nanva, which the Coalition will not be opposing. Housing is the largest cost-of-living issue that people face in New South Wales, and this Government is making the situation worse. Under the Minns Government the median house price in Sydney is up to \$1.627 million, an increase of 10 per cent, and the median unit price is up to \$806,000, an increase of 6.1 per cent. After a year of the Minns Government, rents are up by 13.6 per cent for houses and 12.9 per cent for apartments. This budget will make that situation worse. The budget will increase rents across New South Wales with a sneaky \$1.5 billion land tax increase that will be paid for by renters and small businesses across our State. It is no wonder housing has become less affordable under this Government.

In 2021-22, 42 per cent of rentals were deemed affordable. That was an improvement from 35 per cent when the Coalition came to office. Now, under Labor, only 28 per cent of rental properties are deemed affordable, and that is going to get worse as a result of Labor's latest tax grab. When it comes to building more homes, Labor is increasing costs and threatening the feasibility of developments across the State. The Property Council of Australia has indicated that the government taxes and charges account for more than 40 per cent of the cost of a development in the Illawarra and one-third of development costs in Western Sydney.

The 2024-25 budget will make it worse for Western Sydney by increasing Labor's great big tax on new homes by another \$10,000 to \$22,000 across many Western Sydney sites, as the Government introduces the strategic biodiversity component as part of its Housing and Productivity Contribution from 1 July. With those new taxes and charges, there are two alternatives. One is that the industry cannot carry the cost and will not build the homes until prices increase even further or costs in the industry decline, which will lead to fewer homes being built and higher prices. The second is that developers carry the costs and pass them on with the interest that they bear throughout the process, leading again to higher prices paid by families across New South Wales desperate to get into the housing market.

Key worker housing is important, and the budget provides for 400 key worker homes. When we consider that we have 281,410 key workers across that State, that represents 0.14 per cent of workers. It is a housing lottery. Labor's record in this budget when it comes to key worker housing programs and delivery is not good. The regional key worker housing program was contained in last year's budget with an estimated total cost of \$46.378 million. In this year's budget, that has been cut to \$37.899 million, and only \$9.5 million of its \$11.5 million 2023-24 allocation was spent. The flood housing program for police housing has also seen similar cuts. Costed at \$9 million in last year's budget, it has been cut to \$3.742 million in this year's budget. When it comes to key worker housing, look for what is delivered and not what is promised.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (16:01): I support the motion of the Hon. Bob Nanva, but I wish to amend it. Therefore, I move:

That the question be amended as follows:

- (1) In paragraph (1) (c) omit "New South Wales has a shared responsibility" and insert instead "the New South Wales Government has a responsibility".
- (2) In paragraph (2) omit "recognises the Government's commitment to address the housing crisis" and insert instead "recognises the Government is working on addressing the housing crisis but more affordable housing and rental reform is needed urgently".

There is no doubt that we are in a housing crisis. In May this year Everybody's Home held a People's Commission into the Housing Crisis. It was co-commissioned by former Labor Senator Doug Cameron and Professor Nicole Gurrán, a housing expert at Sydney University. The commission received hundreds of submissions from individuals and organisations. The submissions revealed that the majority of respondents are in housing stress and forgoing the basics to cope. In particular, it found that 76 per cent of those who rent are in housing stress. The top ways people are coping are by reducing energy use like heating or cooling their homes, avoiding the doctor and

reducing car use. One in three are skipping meals or relying on credit cards or buy now, pay later schemes. Uncertainty about the future and increased housing costs are the top reasons for concern.

While it is true the Government is working on addressing the housing crisis, more can be done. Yesterday's budget revealed funding for a New South Wales rental taskforce at a cost of \$8.4 million. However, a rental taskforce is not going to provide any immediate relief for renters. One key way that we could give renters more certainty about the future would be to end no-grounds evictions. My colleague in the other place Ms Jenny Leong has been campaigning for that for years. Last November she introduced a bill to ban no-grounds evictions. The bill is ready to go but it was referred to a select committee for inquiry.

Providing longer leases would mean more security of tenure for tenants. In Europe, it is common for renters to live in one rental for years, sometimes decades. In Germany, renters are offered fixed-term agreements ranging between two and 30 years, with the option for indefinite leases also available. The housing Minister knows that because she heard about it this morning from a caller when she appeared on ABC Radio Sydney. She handled it pretty well. Our investment property tax incentives are a significant cause of short-term lease offerings. The Government has also made a big deal in the budget about delivering 30,000 new homes by releasing surplus government land. However, that is a small fraction of the 377,000 homes that New South Wales needs to build by 2029 in order to reach its national target. Finally, in terms of rental reform, it would be really good to see energy rebates for renters. The Government can do much more and it should.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (16:04): I support the motion of the Hon. Bob Nanva. I am glad that the language around creating more supply is distinctly lacking in the motion. The Government knows that the housing crisis is about so much more than supply, and its commitment to tackling the issue is sincere. Even taken at face value, housing is both the biggest cost in the cost-of-living crisis and one of the greatest stressors for renters and owner-occupiers alike. The recommended percentage of salary to be spent on rent is 30 per cent; in Sydney the average is closer to 40 per cent for a house and 37 per cent for an apartment. Those numbers are difficult to reconcile, and the longer the imbalance exists, the longer that people will fall further behind in being able to afford to live.

A serious consideration that should be on the table for the Government—and I understand it is partially on the table—is short-term rentals and the way they are allowed to drive up prices and lock people out of housing for personal benefit, and the poor regulation that allows for the system to be abused. Research commissioned by the City of Sydney found that while there were about 2,500 active short-term rental properties in the Sydney local government area last year, according to New South Wales government figures and data sourced from AirDNA, a rental insights company based in the United States, there were closer to 5,500 properties active in the area. According to the Government, there are now 50,079 properties registered as short-term rental accommodation options across the State. Of those, almost 32,000 are non-hosted, meaning the renter can occupy the whole property—an empty home—when it is not occupied for inflated costs. Those numbers are worryingly similar to the rate of homelessness in New South Wales and the circumstances of people for whom secure housing is harder to find and keep.

At the time of the 2021 national census, New South Wales had 35,011 people experiencing homelessness, with numbers increasing for the following groups: First Nations people increased by 10 per cent; children under the age of 12 increased by 6.8 per cent; and youth aged 12 to 18 increased by 3.7 per cent. Regional New South Wales also saw an increase in homelessness: Large regional cities increased by 15.4 per cent, the Hunter Valley increased by 32.5 per cent, the Mid North Coast increased by 25.9 per cent, and the Murray increased by 31.4 per cent. The housing system is purpose-built to boost the State government's coffers and prop up private profit, with renters, low-income earners and those in housing stress paying the price. By 2028, the New South Wales government is projected to collect at least \$50 billion from stamp duty alone and a further \$36 billion from land tax, but it is only spending \$1.275 billion annually over the next four years on new social housing. We can and must do better.

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) (16:07): I contribute to debate on the motion of the Hon. Bob Nanva. It is a pleasure as always to talk about housing. It is impossible to address all of the issues that have been raised in the housing debate and all of the reasons why the \$6.6 billion Building Homes for NSW program is such an incredibly important historic investment. I will focus on two things. The first is the legitimate question of how this Government's investment in housing will stimulate overall housing delivery. The Government will be delivering thousands of its own public homes, which are desperately needed, focusing on women and children fleeing domestic violence.

We on this side know that thousands and thousands more homes are desperately needed in the private rental market and for first home buyers. The Government leading the procurement of construction and building through its own Building Homes for NSW program will have a direct stimulatory impact on the overall building

and construction market. That is a really important point. The homes will not only be safe, secure, energy efficient and disability accessible for people who desperately need them but also lift overall housing supply. The contractors, subbies, tradies and builders will all have a pipeline of work, billions of dollars over the next few years from the Government. From that, they can deliver work on behalf of the rest of the housing market.

The direct relationship between government intervention, government leadership and the delivery of the rest of the homes we need is a really important one. That is why government intervention is so important. We know that there is market failure. Leaving it up to the private market has not worked and it got us into this problem in the first place. Government leadership and intervention using our own dollar can provide the kinds of conditions that support builders to deliver all of the homes we need, not just the government homes that we need.

The last point I make is this: Every time members of the Opposition get up and talk about housing, they fail to address the elephant in the room, which is where they think we should build homes. They talk about taxes, charges, feasibility—anything other than the core question. If we need more housing, which we self-evidently desperately do, where are we going to build it? The Government has an answer to that question. It has clearly set out that it should be linked to public transport. That is a no-brainer. But the Opposition clearly has no brain because it cannot accept that fundamental link and answer the question: If we need more homes, where will they go?

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (16:10): I support the motion and I support the amendments moved by Ms Cate Faehrmann, which are fair and reasonable. In opening, I say that the Government is not alone in being committed to fixing the housing crisis. It is committed, I agree. But so am I, and so is my colleague the Hon. Mark Latham, so are The Greens and so is the Opposition. We all have different ideas of how to achieve it, but we are all committed to it. I want members of this House to remember that it was I who first brought up the housing crisis in a motion to this House that was supported unanimously in October 2022. I remember the Minister contributing a fair and measured response to it. We are committed. We have different ideas on how to achieve it because there is no single silver bullet to the problem. It has built up over a long time.

We have spoken in this House before—in fact, I have asked the Minister in question time—about the development application process. We know from developers that if you submit a development application in Queensland and do not hear back within six months, it is deemed approved. You can start turning dirt and digging. There are numerous examples in New South Wales of developers who want to build large-scale development and have development applications sitting before councils for years. Where is the incentive for them to build in New South Wales? They leave and go somewhere else. I support the motion and the amendments. I say to the Government that it is well and good to have a commitment to build homes, but let us see some delivery. Let us see some proof in the pudding.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (16:12): The Hon. Rod Roberts is right in saying that these pressures have built up over a long time and the former Coalition Government must take responsibility for that. The North Shore councils ignored housing targets year after year and nothing happened: no sanctions, no punishment, no public criticism of the fact they were ignoring the targets to the point where, if you depopulate as a share of the New South Wales population, you lose a Federal seat. They have lost North Sydney, as they deserved to—less representation for people who snub their nose at housing targets.

The Hon. Chris Rath: She is no loss, Mark.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: She will run in Bennelong anyway, so you sort that out. Other problems built up. Talk to Harry Triguboff about how hard it was to deal with the Little Bay proposal or with Parramatta City Council. The lack of housing supply, when there was roaring immigration-driven demand in Sydney, was obvious, but the Government took no action. The Hon. Rod Roberts was the first person here to raise the problem of housing supply. It did not occur overnight; it happened over a long period, and the former Coalition Government needs to take responsibility for it.

I support transport oriented development, or TOD. I support sensible planning policy. I do not support the legislation of the Hon. Scott Farlow for the reason that I do not think a parliamentary chamber should have a veto right on the planning Minister. In this housing affordability crisis, the planning Minister needs to make decisions in the public interest and should not be ridden shotgun by this particular Chamber. Beyond that, other things need to be done. I do not know why the current Government abolished the choice that could have been available to avoid stamp duty. Stamp duty of \$50,000, on average, in Sydney is a major barrier to housing affordability. Why should you not be given a choice on how you pay that bill, whether short term or long term, to get yourself into the housing market?

There is very little focus on a major cost that is avoidable. Environmental costs have built up since the time of the Carr Government and now add \$100,000 to the cost of detached housing in Sydney and \$50,000 to the cost of apartments. This is under the delusion that improved energy efficiency in a New South Wales home can save

the planet. It is a complete and absolute nonsense, but it is adding \$100,000 to the cost of detached housing and \$50,000 for apartments, with all the green tape. Doing something there would be useful. Again, the Coalition Government built on the mistakes of the Carr Government and made it worse.

There are some born-again housing supply people in the Coalition. They tend to be younger and, I would say, perhaps even brighter than their colleagues. But inside the Coalition it is essentially a battle of the old fogies versus the young fogies. When you look at the policy they have brought forward, it looks like the old fogies are winning. Either way, they do not matter too much. The current Government should get on with housing supply, with stamp duty choice and with getting rid of the green tape costs that are so prohibitive.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (16:15): I am not sure that the Hon. Rod Roberts is correct about everyone wanting to solve the housing crisis. I have serious doubts about the Opposition's commitment. For decades a view has come from those opposite that the private sector will solve the housing crisis. The initiative of the Government in the budget is a long overdue acknowledgement that the State has a major role to play in directly intervening in the housing market to address the housing supply problem. I hope this is the beginning of something even bigger.

The announcement of 8,400 new homes is fantastic. Hopefully it is the beginning of something much bigger in terms of the role of the State in expanding the provision of housing and turning back a trend that has long been occurring around allowing public housing stock to decline as an overall proportion of the total housing stock. We need to reverse that trend. We need to make sure that the most vulnerable in our society have homes to live in or have shelter. It is a basic human right. The State has an obligation to make sure that those people are able to access that right. With waiting lists for public housing being at the extent they are, we need that urgently. I congratulate the Minister on a fantastic achievement.

I also make an observation about a comment that the Treasurer made, which I think is a dimension of the policy initiative. That is that, as the State develops the capability to directly build housing, we provide opportunities for apprentices to address the skills shortages that we are experiencing. A young apprentice appeared before the Parliament's inquiry into disability education. There are many challenges to apprentices being able to complete their apprenticeships. It is only when the State has a hands-on role, directly providing apprenticeships, that it can provide the security and certainty for young apprentices to gain the skills that they need.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (16:19): I associate myself with this motion. I thank the mover, the Hon. Bob Nanva, for bringing it to the Chamber, and the Hon. Rose Jackson for an excellent part of the Labor budget. Housing is core business for government; governments should be in the housing business. Governments should not just be providing houses for people who are in desperate need. They should particularly be providing them for emergency service and other government workers in rural and regional areas who cannot afford to live in a city like Sydney or near their workplace in a regional area. It is important that government is directly involved in the building of housing, as it is in this budget.

The budget does number of things. It provides emergency accommodation. It provides accommodation for government workers. But, more importantly, it keeps the private market honest. If a large proportion of housing is government housing, it keeps landlords and the private market in check. In my view, government housing should not be limited to people who are in need but available to the broader community. In the past, the Labor Party set up the Commonwealth Bank, the GIO and other institutions to provide necessary services like banking and insurance. Government housing keeps the housing market in check in the same way by providing the necessary competition that ensures services are available. A large amount of government housing stock is needed to make sure there are alternatives to the private rental market.

I welcome the budget announcement. I think it is incredibly important. It is going to do something positive to ease the housing crisis. Unfortunately, I do not know where Opposition members stand on it. They seem to be opposed to public housing near new transport sites and in Liberal electorates. They are also opposed to upzoning other housing. It is a shame that we cannot all be on the same page to have more housing across Sydney and the regions to solve the incredible crisis. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. BOB NANVA (16:22): In reply: I thank the Hon. Scott Farlow, Ms Cate Faehrmann, Ms Sue Higginson, the Hon. Rose Jackson, the Hon. Rod Roberts, the Hon. Mark Latham, the Hon. Anthony D'Adam and the Hon. Cameron Murphy for their contributions. Despite some differences of opinion regarding the desired policy prescriptions to deal with the housing crisis, priorities or assessments of whether the Government has gone far enough in this most recent budget, I welcome the universal acknowledgement that we must do more to address the deficit in the supply of homes in New South Wales that has been caused by a decade of inaction.

New South Wales needs more homes. For too long, the supply of housing has failed to keep pace with demand. It has resulted in runaway property and rental prices. We need more homes in areas with world-class

public transport and in neighbourhoods that people want to live in, which is why I remain disappointed with the Opposition's approach to increasing housing supply and increasing densities in inner metropolitan areas and the eastern suburbs. The Opposition is maintaining a preoccupation with shifting more density and housing into Sydney's western fringes. It is no longer tenable to do so. Infrastructure is not keeping up with demand. Frankly, we need more housing choice and supply in areas like inner metropolitan Sydney.

The community has also rightly demanded a more strident policy response from members of this Parliament to address the scourge of gendered and family and domestic violence. This budget makes an important contribution to that by providing more public housing for those fleeing difficult and violent situations at home. We do not expect to overcome in a single budget any of the issues that members have raised this afternoon, but it is most refreshing that in each and every one of the Minns Government budgets we have seen a focus on and mission to deal with the housing crisis after a decade of stagnation.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (Ms Abigail Boyd): The Hon. Bob Nanva has moved a motion, to which Ms Cate Faehrmann has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.

CFMEU CONSTRUCTION AND GENERAL

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (16:26): I move:

- (1) That, regardless of its cautious nature, this House congratulates Prime Minister Anthony Albanese for his condemnation of the conduct of CFMEU Construction and General boss John Setka regarding his threats of union chaos against the Australian Football League.
- (2) That this House condemns the CFMEU Construction and General for their gross abrogation of their duty to their members and the public by engaging in personal revenge campaigns designed purely to destabilise important projects and discredit respected professionals.
- (3) That this House calls on Premier Chris Minns to make a statement of unequivocal condemnation of these antiquated methods of industrial action of union thuggery.

The people of New South Wales are very familiar with industrial chaos. We need only cast our mind back two years to remember when, in his bid to inflict pain upon consumers, commuters, workers and businesses, Unions NSW secretary Mark Morey openly declared that 2022 would be the year of the strike. It is no surprise that John Setka, perhaps the most militant unionist in the country, is now attempting to inflict more chaos, based on nothing more than personal gripes against Stephen McBurney, who formally led the charge against union corruption and chaos. He led it well. The whole situation reeks of intimidation and a failure to accept responsibility for breaking the law.

Stephen McBurney led the Australian Building Construction Commission when it made findings against the radical CFMEU between 2018 and 2023. Indeed, the CFMEU has committed more breaches of the Fair Work Act than any other union. Moreover, it has been liable for \$16.8 million in court fines relating to almost 2,200 breaches of legislation since 2002. In essence, a union boss is trying to get a man fired from a job in which he is well respected because that man exposed that union boss's illegal and malicious behaviour. That is like an arsonist trying to get a firefighter sacked for putting out the blaze that the arsonist started. As Margaret Thatcher said, it is an attempt to substitute the rule of the mob for the rule of law, and it must not succeed.

It is clear that we need to be cracking down on the unions. In fact, we on this side of the House love the Australian Building Construction Commission. We love it so much that we tried to introduce a similar body at State level when we were in government. We love it because it has exposed hundreds of instances of union rule breaking. It is a tough cop on the beat and it has done a lot of good for the construction industry in Australia. You know the situation is bad for the militant CFMEU when its own leaders are at each other's throats over this issue. Michael O'Connor, the manufacturing division secretary of the CFMEU, was so taken aback by the actions of Mr Setka that he publicly called them ham-fisted and clumsy. Even the moderately militant unionists are not happy with the conduct of John Setka, and union members should not be happy either.

When we look at the modern-day Labor Party, it becomes clearer and clearer that the only workers it cares about are the ones heading up the powerful unions. If I was a rank and file member of a trade union, I would be looking at this situation fearfully. I would be asking if I would be comfortable with my funds being used for the personal projects of my union's boss and wondering just how many other union bosses operate in this vindictive and unproductive manner. Anthony Albanese's comments were, at best, a rejection of John Setka's conduct and,

at worst, a dismissal of the issue. That is far more than what some other leaders have had to say on the matter, even just this week. In fact, Labor's pro-union-boss stance, no matter how illegal or reprehensible the boss, has become so bad that Labor leaders like Jacinta Allen are refusing to condemn this kind of behaviour.

What is worse is that Chris Minns has also been silent. With that man, silence speaks a thousand words. Labor members are choosing to be silent about a man who has made disparaging comments about domestic violence campaigner Rosie Batty. They are choosing to be silent about a man who has been subject to harassment claims over a consistent period. They are choosing to be silent about a man described by former Fair Work Commission deputy president Anne Gooley as a bully who sees no problem with meeting and socialising with gangland figures. This is a man that some segments of the Labor Party are eager to defend. Thuggery and industrial action for its own sake do not belong in modern Australia. By failing to condemn the CFMEU, Labor will be sending a message to every voter in New South Wales that vindictive politics targeted at effective and good people who have done their job and their service to the community and country, like Stephen McBurney, is okay. We must not let that stand.

The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (16:31): I move:

That the question be amended by omitting paragraphs (2) and (3).

There is a very good reason for the amendment: The motion is mostly ridiculous. The proposition that this Parliament, in budget week, where we have been outlining our plans for building a better New South Wales, will have to spend some time this afternoon considering something that a Victorian divisional secretary of a section of a union in another State may or may not have done is ridiculous.

The motion tries to tarnish an entire union, the CFMEU, and an entire movement of people who are working towards the greater good of society and standing up for working people in New South Wales and across Australia. It is a joke. That is the reason that paragraphs (2) and (3) of the motion should be deleted. I do not know the person who is referred to in the motion. I am not at all bothered that the Premier of New South Wales is not getting involved in a discussion about a divisional secretary of an organisation in Victoria. If the amendment is supported and it comes down to the House supporting the comments of the Prime Minister on whatever has happened here, then we are happy to support that.

The Government is not going to support a motion that tarnishes an entire movement of working people who get together and form unions to stand up for their industrial rights because of one bloke in Victoria. Unions elect leaders to negotiate, including with the State Government, and include public sector workers that we are working closely with to deliver better conditions. People in New South Wales have better things to think about other than a bloke in Victoria. More broadly, the union movement should not be tarnished because of one guy, just as I would not attempt to tarnish the Liberal Party because of one guy. If the House is prepared to support the amendment, then backing in the Prime Minister's view about this guy is not a problem, but we will not support a motion that attempts to spread rubbish about an entire movement that is standing up for working people.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (16:34): On behalf of The Greens I condemn the shameful practices of the Liberal Party when it comes to its approach to the union movement. The dark and terrible days of the Australian Building and Construction Commission—the political attack dog of the Liberal Party that waged war against the democratically elected leadership of the unions in this country—are happily behind us. But the New South Wales Liberal Party is still fighting the same old tragic wars. In fact, the Liberal Party is going to single-handedly solve the housing crisis with the number of union officials they have living rent-free in their heads. Perhaps we should not be surprised. The Liberal Party is stuck so far in the past with its ideologies and ideas.

I implore the mover of the motion to please read something that is not Hayek and to come back to the real world. Sure, the argument is a bit messy, but it is rhetoric. I find it astonishing that there has been such uproar surrounding the threat of a work-to-rule campaign in relation to Victorian AFL stadiums. How this has warranted national attention, earned the rebukes of the Prime Minister and now led to attempts to draw the Premier into the fray is genuinely baffling. It is wholly inappropriate for politicians to attempt to interfere in the operations of trade unions and the way they seek to advocate for their members. I hope that one day the Liberal Party will come to see the folly of its ideological fixation in opposition to working people in this country. But I will not hold my breath.

I draw attention to the absurd image that is invoked every time the Liberal Party seeks to characterise union leaders and members as "union thugs". The Australian union movement is a diverse movement that reflects our society. The average union member in 2024 is a 45-year-old nurse. In fact, 54 per cent of union members across Australia are women. Union women have always been, and will always continue to be, a force that propels our organised labour movement forward, making stronger unions and a better, fairer and more equal society. These are the people the Liberal Party disparages every time it tries to conjure scary images of union thuggery. It is

backwards, it is archaic and it is embarrassing. There is a reason that the Liberal Party has been turfed out across this country. It is because working people are sick of the disparagement, the intimidation and the abuse. It is time for the Liberal Party to grow up, or it will remain confined to the ash heap of history. I move:

That the question be amended as follows:

- (1) Omit paragraph (1) and insert instead:
 - (1) That this House notes Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's condemnation of the conduct of CFMEU Construction and General boss John Setka regarding his threats against the Australian Football League.
- (2) Insert after paragraph (3):
 - (4) That this House congratulates the members of the CFMEU Victoria for securing a 20 per cent pay increase and improved conditions for workers.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (16:37): I support the motion moved by the Hon. Chris Rath. The Government has said that John Setka is just one person. I think the Hon. John Graham can attest to the tentacles of Mr Setka and his minions throughout other States. This is a movement that he seeks to grow into other States. It is a movement for domination throughout the building industry across Australia, and it is one that threatens New South Wales. To dismiss John Setka as just one person down in Victoria is not the reality. The reality when it comes to CFMEU practices in Victoria is that it will increase the cost of housing across Australia. We have already seen builders sign on, because the agreement is in Victoria, to the 21 per cent pay rise. That will have an impact when it comes to housing costs in New South Wales, with an already unaffordable market becoming even more unaffordable.

I have nothing against unions. Both of my parents have been members of unions—my father has now retired, and I think my mum is probably still a member. Unions have their place, and they can do a lot of good from my perspective. I would even say that the CFMEU does good. I have worked in the past with its MATES in Construction program. I think that is a good program. But John Setka's brand of unionism is something that we do not want in New South Wales, and we cannot have it holding up the building and construction industry across Australia. That will add to the housing crisis that we find ourselves in and add further costs to housing and construction across Australia.

That will imperil the ability of industry to get on with the job of building more homes. We cannot see an industry held to ransom by a militant union like the one that John Setka is fashioning in Victoria, one which even the Prime Minister has had to come out and stand against—and one that Chris Minns will not stand up to. The CFMEU and John Setka's brand of unionism is something that this House should not congratulate nor support but condemn. I support the motion of the Hon. Chris Rath.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (16:39): I make a number of observations in relation to the motion moved by the Hon. Chris Rath. This is just another one of the weekly specials from the Opposition Whip, who excels at trying to cause division in this place. Usually the topic is the Middle East, but this week it is union bashing. Every week, though, it is back to the future. It is clear that the Liberal Party hates unions. It hates workers organising and arguing for better wages and conditions, which is what unions do. Unions like the CFMEU do an exceptional job at it. I support the CFMEU. It is a great union that does the right thing by its members.

The Opposition would have us believe that there is some spectre out there when workers get together and then unions deliver better wages and conditions for their members. That is what this motion is really about. As the Minister said, this is an absolutely ridiculous motion. I opposed the Australian Building and Construction Commission [ABCC], which prevented workers from organising—and dangerously so. The construction industry is one of the most dangerous industries out there, yet the ABCC was inhibiting the ability of workers to even organise around important matters of safety. Those workers could not meet onsite or talk to other people about issues that had arisen, such as those around scaffolding.

It was just dangerous to have an institutionalised government organisation interfering in the ordinary things that go on in a workplace, whether it was safety or workers organising for better wages and conditions. It was absolutely disgusting to have one set of workers—those in the construction industry—with a government-backed police force breathing down their necks, unlike anywhere else in the country. I am glad the Labor Government abolished the ABCC. It was absolutely the right thing to do. As I say, I support the CFMEU. It is a wonderful union that organises well for its members and does the right thing by them. I leave my contribution there. Again, as the Minister said, this is a ridiculous motion.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (16:42): Today I support the motion moved by the Hon. Chris Rath, which condemns the reprehensible conduct displayed by CFMEU boss John Setka and his organisation. It is imperative that we as a legislature stand united against intimidation and coercion seeking to destabilise our society and undermine the integrity of respected professionals. The actions of the CFMEU, especially those under the

leadership of John Setka, have shown a blatant disregard for its duty to its members and to the public. These actions are not just a gross repudiation of responsibility but a clear demonstration of personal revenge campaigns. Such campaigns are designed purely to destabilise important projects and discredit individuals. This is unacceptable and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

When people look up the CFMEU, they are confronted with a series of references to "thugs", "law-breakers", "thugs out of control", "toxic bully boys", "dictating government policy" and more. Unfortunately, the union movement in New South Wales has become synonymous with bullying and intimidation. This culture of thuggery has no place in our modern society. It is deeply troubling that the Minns Labor Government appears incapable of holding the conduct of these unions to account. Instead of protecting the interests of hardworking families and ensuring the smooth progression and completion of vital projects, the Government seems to turn a blind eye to the disruptive antics of the CFMEU.

This evening I also remind members of a fundamental belief of the Liberal Party: the freedom of thought, worship, speech and association. Freedom of association is critical to this debate. Under this Government, union revenue goes up, conditions go up and protection goes up but, on the other hand, support for families appears to be going down. This stark reality highlights the misplaced priorities of this Government. Premier Chris Minns must make a clear and unequivocal statement condemning this antiquated method of industrial action. The people of New South Wales deserve to know the Government stands with them and not with those who seek to create chaos and disruption. The Premier has a duty to protect the interests of the public and ensure that such thuggish behaviour is not tolerated anymore. I urge all members of this House to support the motion. We will not stand for union thuggery and intimidation. Let us recognise Anthony Albanese's stand on this. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (16:45): This motion of the Hon. Chris Rath reveals a phenomenon that seems to go unacknowledged in our society: an anti-working-class, discriminatory position, a bias and hostility towards working-class people and organisations. I have not paid much attention to the issue cited in the motion—it was only his motion that made me look into what was being discussed in Victoria. I do not pay much attention to Victoria; my focus is on New South Wales. My thought was that this is quite an interesting case study. The Australian Football League is a working-class organisation. Its support base is made up of working-class people.

The position that has been adopted by the CFMEU is to say, "Why should this organisation that is supported by working-class people have someone in its leadership—someone in a very influential position, in terms of the culture of the organisation—who holds virulently anti-working-class views?" I agree with John Setka's assessment of Stephen McBurney. Setka described McBurney as an "anti-union, anti-worker fucker". Quite frankly, a person like that does not belong in an organisation that exists as part of a working-class culture and is supported by working-class people.

I compare this situation to that of Israel Folau, where a person held homophobic views and Rugby Australia said, "No, this is not consistent with our values. We don't want a person like that representing our code." There was a substantial campaign to make sure that Rugby Australia did not give sanction to the kinds of views espoused by Israel Folau. I think this is a very similar situation, where someone who clearly has views that are hostile to working-class people and institutions should not hold a senior position in a working-class organisation.

The Hon. BOB NANVA (16:48): I was not going to contribute to this debate, but I cannot allow the comment "We love the ABCC" go by without making some remarks. The Australian Building and Construction Commission was a preposterous organisation. It was so contemptuous of workers that it would choose to ignore the inherent danger in industries like the construction industry. It would get more lathered up about a Eureka flag flying from a crane than the safety incidents that might take place below. It cared more about flags than the men and women who lost their lives on construction sites. I had never seen anything like it as a union official. It cared more about flags than the communities of workers who lost their lives.

If a corner is being cut on safety, or is suspected of being cut, then we all ought to applaud a union official for taking swift action rather than condemn, jail or fine them, but the ABCC never did that. A lot of people have forgotten that the ABCC could haul an individual before it, not giving them the right to legal representation or to let anybody know that they were before the ABCC for advice or support, and give them penalties of up to a couple of hundred thousand dollars. It was a Star Chamber. To flippantly remark "We love the ABCC" should weigh heavily on the conscience of those who do so, because it was an outrageous, disgusting organisation and there is no place in this country for it.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (16:50): I will contribute briefly to debate on the motion. If a person in a position of authority is attacking working people and has a reputation for doing so, it is the job of unions to stand up for their members and to make sure that person has no truck or carriage. This person was in charge of an

organisation that was used as a deliberate political tool by members opposite, which is the reason the House is dealing with this motion. If the Coalition had its day in government again, it would do exactly the same thing and reinstate the Australian Building and Construction Commission for no reason other than to try to de-unionise and undermine the working class and the labour movement. If a reprehensible character is not interested in worker safety or working conditions but is simply used as a political tool to attack working people, it is fair game that the secretary of a union should go after that person.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (16:52): In reply: I thank all members who spoke in the debate. How good was the Australian Building and Construction Commission [ABCC]? It was a fantastic organisation. It is not Opposition members who hate the workers of this State and of this country. We hate and stand against union lawlessness and thuggery, which is why we want to restore the ABCC. It was such a great organisation when it existed, and that is why Opposition members tried to create a New South Wales version of it when last in government.

I will address some of the issues raised by the Hon. Cameron Murphy. It is not the Opposition that is going back to the future with these types of motions. This Government is going back to the future, with its 1970s style of industrial relations. Union membership in this country covers only 8 per cent of the private sector workforce and only 12.5 per cent of the workforce overall, but 100 per cent of members opposite are going back to the future. They have not picked up on the trend that nobody is joining a union anymore and people do not like the 1970s-style industrial relations systems that they so happily defend.

The Labor Party is not the party of Hawke and Keating anymore. It is going back to the days of Chifley, which is maybe what some Government members want. I think the Hon. Cameron Murphy and the Hon. Anthony D'Adam like it. I think they are members of the CFMEU. All Labor members are members of different trade unions. I think the Deputy Leader of the Government is a member of the Finance Sector Union, the Treasurer is a member of the Transport Workers' Union, the Premier is in the Australian Workers' Union, the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council is in the Australian Services Union, and the Government Whip worked at the Rail, Tram, and Bus Union for many years and is a life member.

Compare the 8 per cent of the private sector workforce who are members of unions with 100 per cent of Government members. They are the ones who are out of touch with workers, not Opposition members. We stand with the 92 per cent of the private sector workforce who are not members of a trade union. Opposition members love the ABCC and think it should be restored. We absolutely condemn John Setka and the CFMEU. Why doesn't the Government stand with the new, more moderate manufacturing division of the CFMEU? I thought it was splitting up. At least the manufacturing division has called out John Setka for his ham-fisted and clumsy approach. Why won't members opposite stand with that division? Instead, they stand with the far-left union thug John Setka. Is that really who they are going to stand with today? What an absolute disgrace.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Chris Rath has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Tara Moriarty and Ms Abigail Boyd have moved amendments. I will deal with the two paragraphs of Ms Abigail Boyd's amendment separately. The question is that paragraph (1) of the amendment of Ms Abigail Boyd be agreed to.

Paragraph (1) of the amendment of Ms Abigail Boyd agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the amendment of the Hon. Tara Moriarty be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes21

Noes15

Majority.....6

AYES

Banasiak
Borsak
Boyd
Buckingham
Buttigieg
Cohn
D'Adam

Donnelly
Faehrmann
Graham
Higginson
Houssos
Hurst
Jackson

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

NOES

Carter
Farlow (teller)

Maclaren-Jones
Martin

Roberts
Ruddick

NOES

Farraway
Latham
MacDonald

Merton
Mitchell
Rath (teller)

Taylor
Tudehope
Ward

PAIRS

Kaine
Lawrence

Munro
Fang

Amendment agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that paragraph (2) of the amendment of Ms Abigail Boyd be agreed to.

Paragraph (2) of the amendment of Ms Abigail Boyd negatived.

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

Motion as amended agreed to.*Bills***RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AMENDMENT (ANIMALS IN RESIDENTIAL PREMISES) BILL 2024****Second Reading Debate****Debate resumed from 8 May 2024.**

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (17:05): I contribute to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Animals in Residential Premises) Bill 2024 and indicate that the Government will not be supporting the bill. This Government is committed to making it easier for renters to keep pets. Government members understand the importance of these changes for renters. The ability for landlords to refuse to allow pets—other than assistance animals—in a rental property means that many renters miss out on the physical and mental health benefits that pets can bring to their lives. Many renters also need to surrender loved family members when they move. The current law means that renters with pets are not able to enjoy their homes in the same way that people without pets are able to.

Our Government made the commitment to amend rental laws to make it easier for renters in New South Wales to keep pets. We stand by that commitment. However, it is equally important that we get this change right. The bill draws heavily from the pet-keeping model in other jurisdictions, namely Victoria, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. While it is important that we draw on the experience from other jurisdictions, this does not mean that a one-size-fits-all approach will be appropriate for New South Wales. We need to keep in mind that New South Wales has its own unique market and challenges, and ensure that the chosen model is fit for purpose for our State.

The intention behind the bill is commendable. However, a model for the keeping of pets must incorporate additional protections for renters and must not be overly restrictive or burdensome for owners. The model should provide clarity for both parties wherever possible. Our Government has been doing the work to engage with the people most impacted by reforms—renters, landlords and the industry—to understand their concerns about the impact of these changes and the form they should take. We carried out an extensive consultation process last year with the community, with record levels of interest and feedback. The public consultation on rental reforms received more than 16,000 survey responses and more than 400 submissions about upcoming changes to rental laws. We are closely considering that feedback.

As part of the consultation process, we sought feedback from renters, landlords, agents and other parties on whether certain limited, specific reasons would be acceptable for a landlord to refuse consent to the keeping of a pet. We also asked whether tribunal consideration should be required in all cases, as proposed by the bill. The bill does not reflect the nuanced stakeholder feedback received on these questions. We also need to think about some of the different scenarios and realities of different renting households. Other occupants in a household may also have a view on whether they wish to live with a pet. The views of occupants are valid and need to be considered in designing a model for the keeping of pets.

We understand the intention of the Hon. Emma Hurst in bringing the bill before the House. She has been a long-term advocate on this matter. She makes very sensible points about it, and I join with her in the concern

about the impact of people trying to escape violence in particular. We know that pets are often victims of domestic violence as well. They can be held hostage in households, which makes it that much harder for people, particularly women and children, who want to leave but will not leave behind a beloved pet that they care so much for. The Government is doing important work in this area. I thank the Hon. Emma Hurst for her continued advocacy on this. We will come back with changes sometime soon.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (17:08): On behalf of the Opposition, I contribute to debate on the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Animals in Residential Premises) Bill 2024. Renters across New South Wales are deeply frustrated at the lack of action from the Minns Labor Government on rental reform. After over a year in power the Minns Government has failed to deliver on its commitments to improve the lives of renters, including by making it easier to keep pets in rentals. The Liberals and Nationals understand the disappointment felt by renters and those looking for secure and affordable rental housing towards the Minns Labor Government and its inaction.

We are in the depths of a rental crisis in New South Wales. Rents are continuing to soar, and the millions of renters across our State are doing it tough each and every day. Rents in Greater Sydney have increased by more than 13 per cent. The proportion of rental housing accessible to a median income earner in New South Wales has fallen from 35 per cent in 2022-23 to 28 per cent in 2023-24. Yet what action have we seen from the Minns Labor Government? It has been a year of little more than delays, indecision and a lack of delivery on rental reform. Prior to the 2023 election, the then Minns Opposition promised to make it easier to keep pets in rentals. To date, the Government has failed to introduce any legislation enacting that promise. The Government needs to end its paralysis and make a call to act.

There are currently no restrictions on landlords prohibiting pets in their tenancies. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition understands the value of our pets—they are part of our families—and renters who own pets should not be excluded. Some 69 per cent of Australian households have a pet—among the highest in the world—but only 36 per cent of renters own a pet, indicating that many renters are excluded. As was clear during the pandemic, pets are valued members of our households, and there are unquestionable health and wellbeing benefits of pet ownership. With the increasing trend to renting, pet ownership is becoming increasingly difficult for many people. Less than one in five rental properties allow pets, making it much harder for those with pets to find and secure pet-friendly housing. This must change.

In the current tight rental market, pet owners are tragically often having to abandon their pets. The threat of having to abandon a beloved pet is also a significant barrier in domestic violence cases, in particular. The former Coalition Government was taking tangible action on this. Our 2022 consultation paper found strong support for reform. In 2021 the Coalition Government reformed strata law to make it easier to keep pets in strata—an important first step before turning to tenancies, given many rentals are in strata properties. This successful Coalition reform has allowed many pet owners to live at home with their pets. But we know the job is not done yet.

I think there is broad agreement across this Parliament to make pet ownership easier for renters. It is a question of how the model looks. It is extraordinary, after the Coalition Government conducted extensive public consultation on pets in rentals in 2022, that the new Labor Government decided to repeat the process only a few months later, holding its own public consultation. The Coalition laid the groundwork in government. All Labor has done so far is to unnecessarily delay those reforms. We have been constantly told that a Government bill is coming and that it is being worked on. The question that this Parliament has is "Where is it?" The Government needs to get on with it. Tenants are crying out for action. Property owners want to have certainty.

The Coalition understands and appreciates the motivations behind the bill put forward by the Hon. Emma Hurst. However, it is important that we get the model right. The bill fails to strike the right balance, risking unintended consequences that would only hurt renters and overburden an already swamped tribunal. The Coalition will support well-developed and well-consulted reform to make it easier for renters to have their pets, and it calls on the Minns Government to get on with delivering for the renters of New South Wales. We are willing to work with all parties to improve the lives of our State's renters. The Coalition supports making it easier for tenants to own a pet, but we do not support the model that the bill proposes today. It lacks balance and safeguards, and therefore we cannot support the bill—although, of course, we support the intent of having more pets in rental properties.

The proposed model in the bill would amend the Residential Tenancies Act 2010 to provide that a landlord must not unreasonably refuse permission for a tenant to keep an animal on residential premises and places the onus on the landlord to seek a tribunal order that it is reasonable to refuse permission. There is no broadly accepted model. There have been diverse approaches advocated by stakeholders and from those States that have introduced reforms. As the various consultation processes have shown, there is no consensus among tenants and property owners as to how this reform should look. The Coalition wants to see a bill that makes a genuine attempt to find

common ground and allows tenants to enjoy and utilise the property, including by owning a pet, but balanced against the rights of a property owner to reasonably safeguard their asset. It is important to get the balance right, as to do otherwise will only disincentivise mum-and-dad property owners to offer properties on the rental market. In a rental crisis, that is the last thing we want to do.

I will outline a few of the particular issues that the Opposition has with the bill. The 14-day time frame in the bill for the landlord to apply to the tribunal is of concern to the Opposition. There needs to be adequate time to action and consider reasonable requests for further information and, in strata property, for the landlord to also seek and receive the required permission from the owners' corporation. There needs to be acknowledgment of the relationship between tenancy and strata laws in relation to keeping a pet in strata premises. The bill also does not provide certainty for either landlords or tenants, in that it does not lay out sufficiently in the bill the reasons that refusal can be reasonable. The tribunal "may have regard" to two special factors. Queensland's model has a more extensive list that includes excessive number of pets, likelihood of damage or contravention of another law. In Victoria, where those grounds are similarly limited, as in the bill, the tribunal almost never rules against tenants in relation to the keeping of pets.

The bill also does not include any mechanism for either landlords or the tribunal to set reasonable conditions as part of granting consent. It is black and white in its approach to consent. Whilst we would not be supportive of specific pet bonds or compulsory insurance as reasonable conditions—as concerns as to property damage or noise can be addressed through existing mechanisms—some reasonable conditions should be provided for, such as certain types of animals being kept outside. The bill also adopts a model that risks overloading an already overburdened tribunal.

The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal is already experiencing lengthy delays in its case load. In requiring all refusal of consent to be by tribunal order, we need to consider extra resources for the tribunal. To do otherwise is setting the tribunal up to fail. This is in no tenant's interest. There is no provision in the bill for the tribunal to make ongoing orders exempting a property that it has found is unsuitable for pets. The process in the bill would need to be repeated with every new tenant and, indeed, every additional pet, causing unnecessary time, expense and delays. The Opposition has outlined some of its concerns with the bill, and we hope that the Government will take them into consideration as it drafts its own legislation. I again reiterate our call for the Minns Labor Government to act in that regard.

The Government is the Government, and it needs to deliver on its commitments to the State's renters. The Coalition Government was a reforming government and implemented measures such as the restriction of rent increases in periodic leases to once every 12 months, with a 60-day notice period, providing renters with greater certainty over their rents, as well as the banning of the solicitation of rental bids. Building on those reforms in government, we have a comprehensive rental reform plan, including implementing a rental bond rollover scheme, abolishing no-grounds evictions for periodic leases, extending the notice period for termination from 30 to 45 days, safeguarding tenants' privacy, introducing three- to five-year standard agreements to encourage longer term leases and better facilitating pet ownership in rental properties. I thank the current Government for adopting much of the Coalition's reform plan as part of its own agenda. This Government now needs to get on with delivering for and easing the pressure on our State's renters, including by making it easier to keep a pet—our furry friends.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (17:17): As The Greens' spokesperson for animal welfare as well as for gendered violence, I indicate our support for the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Animals in Residential Premises) Bill 2024. The bill does what the previous Coalition Government and this current Labor Government have dragged their feet on for far too long. It is a simple yet vitally important reform that has long been championed by The Greens, the animal welfare sector, the domestic and family violence sector, the Tenants' Union of NSW and the wider community. For too long, landlords in New South Wales have had the power to unreasonably and without explanation refuse a tenant's request to keep their pet in a rental. That has had far-reaching and devastating implications on animals and their welfare, as well as the welfare and housing situations of pet owners trying to find a rental or stay in their rental.

Despite small improvements in recent years, such as changes to strata schemes, pet-friendly rentals are extremely difficult to secure, with only around 2 per cent of rentals being pet friendly. No-one should be forced to choose between finding secure and affordable housing and keeping their beloved pet. Our pounds and shelters are already overwhelmed, overflowing and under-resourced due to a chronic lack of investment from successive governments and in the absence of any rigorous and accountable animal welfare oversight. Renters are too often forced to surrender their pet because they simply have no other choice. Those pets are sent to pounds and shelters, where they are more often than not euthanised if they cannot be rehomed. In New South Wales, tens of thousands of dogs and cats are euthanised in pounds each year. Making it easier to keep pets in rentals will take a significant amount of that pressure from pounds, shelters and community-led animal rescue groups.

New South Wales's current laws disproportionately affect victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, particularly those who are trying to find a secure rental to flee from violence. Too often, women and their children are forced to make the choice between staying in a violent household, becoming homeless, surrendering their animal or leaving their animal in the violent situation, because they cannot find a rental to accommodate their companion animal, who is often also a victim of domestic violence. Domestic Violence NSW [DVNSW] has consistently cited a lack of animal-friendly accommodation in New South Wales as one of the key barriers to safety for victim-survivors. Ensuring pet-friendly rentals is a core component of domestic violence response and prevention.

We have a long way to go towards properly supporting victim-survivors staying with their animals and recognising animals as victims of such violence themselves. It is vital that domestic violence services, including emergency, crisis and transitional housing, are animal inclusive so that animals and their humans can receive the support and safety they deserve. That cannot be done without genuine and targeted investment from the New South Wales Government in frontline domestic violence services. We must also make changes to rules around pet microchipping and registration, provide increased access to veterinary care for victim-survivors, ensure that frontline services are trauma informed in relation to the intersection between domestic violence and animal abuse, and properly train animal welfare workers and veterinary professionals to recognise, respond to and refer victim-survivors.

The bill puts the onus on the landlord to obtain a tribunal order allowing them to refuse consent for a tenant's request, which The Greens support. Labor's pre-election proposal to allow pets in rentals was to put the power entirely in the hands of landlords, allowing them 21 days to consider a tenant's pet request form and then provide a detailed explanation for their rejection. That proposed model entirely fails to uphold the rights of tenants and to consider the implications on animals and tenants. This bill, on the other hand, rightly takes into account the relevant nuances and rightly follows the model recently adopted in Victoria, which is also similar to what is in place in the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. The domestic violence sector, including DVNSW, Women's Safety and Lucy's Project, has previously supported New South Wales adopting a model similar to Victoria's.

I note that stakeholders in the domestic violence sector have previously raised concerns about requiring tenants to notify real estate agents and property owners about animals at any stage of the application, as not only could that potentially bias the application but it could also potentially have implications in relation to perpetrators of violence accessing victims' information about pets. The sector recommended that legislation changes should include restrictions on disclosing the existence of animals prior to being granted a lease on a property. Right now, more renters than ever are facing a rental crisis and the Government lacks the ambition to make the necessary changes to protect them. We have a long way to go towards fully upholding the rights of renters and reforming our rental system from its current state. Housing is a human right. We urgently need to rectify the power imbalance that allows landlords to get away with unchecked rental increases, unfair evictions and often a complete dismissal of renters' rights.

The Greens have always stood up for renters. We will continue to fight for stronger protections and reforms to make renting a genuine, secure and truly affordable option for people in our State. Labor has been dragging its feet for far too long on both the rental and animal welfare reforms we were promised. After being in government for well over a year, Labor has yet to deliver anything for animals or renters in our State. If the Government was serious about addressing the rental crisis and protecting animals, it would have already followed through with its commitments, or at least begun to. I thank the Hon. Emma Hurst for introducing this bill, which does exactly what is needed to make rentals pet friendly, to uphold the rights of both animals and renters, and to meaningfully and immediately address the housing crisis as it impacts on victim-survivors of domestic abuse. The Greens support the bill and urge the Labor Government to do the same.

The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (17:23): I will not support the Residential Tenancies Amendment (Animals in Residential Premises) Bill 2024. I understand the intentions of the Hon. Emma Hurst. I think they are honourable. I need to make a couple of disclosures. First, I am a pet owner myself. Our five-year-old kelpie Ruby lives at home with me and my wife. Secondly, I am a landlord as well. Also, as most members in this Chamber would know, I was a licensed real estate agent and auctioneer for over 10 years. So I bring a little experience to this debate. As there are good and bad people in this world, there are good and bad tenants, and there are good and bad pets.

People might say, "Oh, well, you've got a bond." Let us look at an example where a tenant has failed to pay the rent for three or four weeks. By the time the landlord makes an application to the tribunal, they have lost another three or four weeks. Now they are down eight weeks in rent. In the meantime, the tenant's pet has been inside and has literally destroyed the premises. I have heard examples where dogs have been kept inside premises and have urinated on the carpet. Everybody says, "Well, you can get that steam cleaned." Well, no, you cannot,

because the urine soaks through the carpet and goes into the floorboards. Once that smell is in the floorboards, you cannot remove it.

Not all pet owners are bad people—I want to put that on record. But landlords should not have to wear the cost for such things. If the Government is looking at introducing a bill like this one, it should introduce an additional bond so that costs can be recovered, because a four-week rental bond alone will not recover such things. I have seen examples where people have applied to keep a pet and have put down that they have a little indoor-type dog. The landlord accepts that in good faith yet, on the first inspection by the agent three months into the lease, they find out that, in fact, a rottweiler is living inside the house. There are lots of pitfalls in the bill. Its intention is good, but it is not the way to do things. There are lots of issues for landlords. We need landlords. We have discussed that today in relation to the housing crisis. The Government cannot afford to build and maintain enough rental accommodation; therefore, it is incumbent upon the private market to do the heavy lifting. We need to support landlords to do that. Unfortunately, because of the way that this bill has been drafted, I cannot support it.

The Hon. EMMA HURST (17:26): In reply: I thank all the members who contributed to debate: the Leader of the Government, Minister Sharpe; the Hon. Scott Farlow; Ms Abigail Boyd; and the Hon. Rod Roberts. I will address some of the concerns raised particularly by the Hon. Scott Farlow. Many of those concerns have been well ventilated. I am not sure why we are still talking about those issues. In regard to the concerns about inundating the tribunal, New South Wales has a unique situation; we can actually look at other jurisdictions that have had such laws in place for a long time. We know that they are working very well in Victoria, and this bill is modelled on the laws in that State. The tribunal is not inundated in Victoria, so fears that that may be the case in New South Wales are actually totally unfounded.

The concern about putting the onus on landlords, again, is rather an odd argument, especially given that the previous Liberal-Nationals Government's own consultation showed that the majority of landlords actually wanted a model exactly like the one in this bill, where the landlords are the ones who take issues to the tribunal. The landlords in New South Wales agree to this model; they do not want the model that Queensland has. In fact, the Queensland model was not supported by renters or landlords, so it is unclear why anyone would prefer that model when it is not supported by the majority of people in New South Wales.

The huge majority of landlords recognise that such laws are necessary in New South Wales to protect people leaving domestic violence situations, as shown again in the former Liberal-Nationals Government's own consultation. So it is not clear to me why the Opposition would pretend that landlords are the problem when its own consultation shows that they are not, that they support this legislation and that the majority of them support the bill as it has been drafted. The consultation showed that only agents did not want the laws to change to allow animals in rentals. They were the only group that did not want these legislative changes and that did not recognise the link between domestic violence and rental laws and the necessity to change our laws to support people leaving violence. I agree with the Hon. Scott Farlow that the delays in these reforms to run a re-consultation are not acceptable, but this bill is the result of the former Government's consultation.

That is what renters and landlords wanted in their preferred model, so I do not understand why the Opposition does not support the bill. It would suggest that Opposition members do not support the results of its own consultation. The Opposition has encouraged the Government to consider its arguments and use a model that its own consultation proved is not supported by members of the New South Wales community. I encourage the Government not to support that consultation. I encourage it to look at the results of that consultation and the Government's own consultation and to ensure that the model that is adopted is the one that is supported by the majority of renters and landlords, which is the exact model that is put forward in the bill before the House.

Animal-friendly housing is a major barrier to leaving domestic violence. The reality is that delaying this legislation puts more victims of violence at risk and limits their opportunities to leave violent situations. As outlined in my second reading speech, it is virtually impossible to find a rental property that allows animals. The consequence is that people are ending up houseless or sleeping rough with their animals because they have nowhere else to go. People are surrendering their animals to overfilled pounds, where they are likely to be euthanised. That is the real reason why a lot of people do not leave violence: They know the reality is that, if they do surrender the animal, there is a high chance they will be euthanised.

I should not have to bring on the bill for debate today. The Labor Government made an election commitment to the people of New South Wales to change the law to allow animals in rentals. There is really no excuse for why that has not happened yet. It has been 15 months since Labor was elected and we are about to go into the winter break. I honestly worry about what will happen between now and when Labor introduces its legislation. It is too long to wait on an issue that should be relatively easy to rectify. Two back-to-back consultations have made very clear the legislation that we should bring to the House for debate. There is no excuse for the delay. This is not complicated legislation, and it is not new legislation. The bill will save both human and animal lives, and it will make good on Labor's election commitment.

Debate adjourned.*Motions***STATE OF ISRAEL INDEPENDENCE DAY****The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (17:31):** I move:

- (1) That this House acknowledges the State of Israel's seventy-sixth Independence Day.
- (2) That this House recognises the celebrations for the State of Israel's seventy-sixth Independence Day held by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Zionist Federation of Australia, the Zionist Council of NSW and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry held in Sydney on 28 May 2024, and hosted by Mr David Ossip, CEO of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies.
- (3) That this House notes the attendance of His Excellency Amir Maimon, Ambassador of the State of Israel to Australia, and the following parliamentarians at the Sydney celebrations:
 - (a) the Hon. Chris Minns, MP, Premier;
 - (b) the Hon. Mark Speakman, SC, MP, Leader of the Opposition;
 - (c) Dr Marjorie O'Neill, MP;
 - (d) the Hon. Natalie Ward, MLC;
 - (e) the Hon. Michael Daley, MP;
 - (f) the Hon. Stephen Kamper, MP;
 - (g) the Hon. Ron Hoenig, MP;
 - (h) Dr Hugh McDermott, MP;
 - (i) the Hon. Scott Farlow, MLC;
 - (j) the Hon. Susan Carter, MLC;
 - (k) the Hon. Rachel Merton, MLC;
 - (l) the Hon. John Ruddick, MLC;
 - (m) the Hon. Jacqui Munro, MLC;
 - (n) Mr Alister Henskens, SC, MP;
 - (o) Mr Tim James, MP; and
 - (p) Ms Kellie Sloane, MP.
- (4) That this House reaffirms the strong and enduring relationship between New South Wales and the State of Israel.

The motion acknowledges the State of Israel's seventy-sixth Independence Day and reaffirms the strong and enduring relationship between New South Wales and the State of Israel. I was privileged to attend the celebrations hosted by the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Zionist Federation of Australia and the Zionist Council of NSW on 28 May 2024. The evening included an address by the Israeli Ambassador to Australia, His Excellency Amir Maimon, which was marked by a sense of unity and celebration. The event enjoyed significant bipartisan support, evident by the presence of numerous parliamentarians including Premier Chris Minns, Leader of the Opposition Mark Speakman, and Leader of the Libertarian Party the Hon. John Ruddick.

The event underscored the deep connections and shared values between our communities. Of course, Australia was the first country to vote in favour of the 1947 UN partition resolution that ultimately led to the creation of Israel as a nation-state, a place where survivors of the Holocaust, which saw six million people murdered, worked to build a new nation. Australia established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1949 and, in the same year, presided over the vote admitting Israel to the United Nations—we were one of just 37 nations to do so. Australia has a proud bipartisan history of supporting the State of Israel. The celebrations in Sydney for the seventy-sixth Independence Day of Israel were an appropriate recognition of the birth of a State—the only liberal democratic State in the Middle East and a close and firm friend of Australia.

The celebration was a recognition of not only Israel's statehood but also the partnership and close friendship between Israel and the State of New South Wales. It was a celebration of what the State of Israel has achieved in all walks of life not only since 1948 but also prior to that. The Jewish people have an enduring and profound connection to the land that is now Israel. The bond extends well beyond the 76 years since the establishment of the modern State. That historical relationship spans millennia, with roots tracing back to biblical times. Indeed, I endorse and celebrate the remarks of Premier Minns at the event. He said of Israel:

What other place in the entire world manages to combine history and modernity, east and west, and nod to the past while firmly and courageously embracing the future?

It's one of the very special places on earth.

The strong relationship between New South Wales and Israel is built on mutual respect, shared democratic values and a commitment to progress and innovation. Of course, I acknowledge the situation in Gaza is deeply concerning. It is crucial to differentiate between the Palestinian people and the deplorable terrorist organisation that is Hamas, which governs Gaza. Like all people, the Palestinian people deserve peace, security and the opportunity to thrive. Unfortunately, Hamas has undermined those prospects by continuing unspeakable violence, murder and terrorism. As a sovereign State, Israel has the undeniable right to defend itself and protect its citizens. That right is fundamental to the sovereignty of any nation, especially one that has faced persistent threats since its inception. I endorse the words of Leader of the Opposition Mark Speakman, who spoke at the seventy-sixth anniversary celebration. He said:

We pray for peace, which is only possible when Israel's right to exist is acknowledged and embraced by all.

New South Wales, through its enduring relationship with Israel, can play a role in fostering dialogue and understanding. We must continue to support initiatives that promote peace, economic cooperation, cultural exchange and our shared values of democracy, innovation and resilience from the foundation of our relationship. Those principles can guide us in our efforts to support a peaceful resolution in the region. I call on all members of the House to support the motion, to acknowledge Israel's right to exist, and to celebrate its seventy-sixth Independence Day. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (17:36): I acknowledge the seventy-sixth anniversary of Israel's independence and the function that was referred to in the motion moved by the Hon. Rachel Merton. The Chifley Government's Minister for External Affairs, Herbert Vere Evatt—or Doc Evatt, as he was better known—chaired the UN Ad Hoc Committee on Palestine, as it was then known. In November 1947 Evatt's committee passed the resolution to partition Palestine and establish two independent States, one Arab and one Jewish. This year's anniversary comes at a troubling time for Israel, with the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.

I unequivocally condemn the attacks by Hamas on 7 October 2023. I also acknowledge the growing concern around antisemitism in our community. That is why the Attorney General has asked the Law Reform Commission to review the effectiveness of section 93Z of the Crimes Act 1900 in addressing serious racial and religious vilification in New South Wales. In addition, as members would recall, last year the New South Wales Government amended the provisions of section 93Z so that both a police officer or the Director of Public Prosecutions can commence a prosecution. Achieving a two-state solution is the way to achieving lasting peace in the Middle East. The Australian Labor Party's national platform states its support for an enduring and just two-state solution to the conflict. I move:

That the question be amended by inserting after paragraph (4):

- (5) That this House supports the recognition and right of Israel and Palestine to exist as two states within secure and recognised borders.

I acknowledge the remarks of the Premier at the event when he said that Israel is a country that has experienced 76 years of peace. Palestinians deserve the same.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (17:39): On 15 May 1948 the Israeli declaration of independence was proclaimed. The Palestinian people commemorate this day instead as Al-Nakba, Arabic for "the catastrophe". This occurred following a years-long campaign of massacres, bombings, looting, land confiscation and destruction of entire towns committed against the Palestinian people, killing around 15,000 Palestinians and making refugees of another 800,000 by 1949. Seventy-five years later, the atrocities committed against the Palestinian people continue. The catastrophe continues.

The Greens cannot support the celebration of the events that occurred on 15 May 1948. Members will note that The Greens also cannot support so-called Australia Day on 26 January. Instead we refer to it as Invasion Day in respect for those who are mourning the invasion of Australia by the British and the devastation that it brought to First Nations people then and ever since. It is a day in which we show our solidarity with First Nations people. The same day can mean two very different things to different groups of people.

The Greens were founded on four key pillars, one of which was peace and nonviolence. As a party, we have a well-developed and sophisticated understanding of peace, violence, militarism and settler colonialism. That is why we have been consistent in our support for the human rights of Palestinian people and have expressed our opposition to the Israeli Government's illegal occupation of the West Bank and its continued oppression of the Palestinian people, long before the horrific events committed by Hamas on 7 October 2023 triggered the latest escalation of attacks on Palestinian civilians.

Once again I state that criticising the actions of the Israeli Government is not a criticism of Israeli people, either as individuals or as a population. Just as when the Australian Government is criticised for its human rights

breaches in relation to the horrific harms it has inflicted on First Nations people, refugees and asylum seekers, and we on the left are grateful for the international condemnation of the Australian Government's actions, there are many people living in Israel who are grateful for those who are calling out the Israeli Government's continued human rights abuses and war crimes.

Many people are unhappy with The Greens criticising the actions of the Israeli Government, or even simply standing in solidarity with the Palestinian people in the midst of the utter devastation being inflicted on them—for simply calling for peace for all. They have resorted to calling us antisemitic. Antisemitism is a real and very serious problem in Australia, fuelled primarily by a rise in right-wing fascism. Using the term to refer to any critique of the Israeli Government not only disrespects those who have suffered from real antisemitism but also cheapens and devalues the seriousness of its impacts. The Greens have consistently led the way in the condemnation of antisemitism and of creeping Neo-Fascism. Nothing has changed in that regard.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (17:42): In politics we understand symbolism. We understand that gestures can communicate ideas and sentiments. We understand timing. We understand context. The event referred to in the motion occurred on 28 May 2024. Two days before that, on 26 May, the Israeli State conducted an air strike on a so-called safe area of Al-Mawasi, killing 21 women and children—45 people in total. The air strike was inflicted on an encampment of makeshift shelters just north of Rafah city. When the strike happened, many shelters burst into flames with their occupants still inside. People might have seen the horrific video that emerged in the aftermath of that, where a man came out holding up the corpse of a young child without a head.

It is in this context that I do not really understand how people who understand politics, gestures, symbolism, context and timing could think that celebrating Israel in this way is appropriate. That strikes me as odd. It strikes me as utterly insensitive. It also strikes me as quite disturbing that for some members in this House and people in our community, no atrocity will cause them to pause in their unequivocal support of Israel. To attend the event and to bring forward the motion in this context, I do not understand it. I do not understand how they can do it. It beggars belief.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH (17:45): Unfortunately this year I could not make the event that I had so often been to celebrating Israel's independence. I was actually in Canberra for the inaugural speech of the new member for Cook: Simon Kennedy, a very good man. But I also want to pay tribute to the State of Israel on the seventy-sixth anniversary of its independence. The Opposition will support the amendment from the Treasurer, although cautiously. I understand he is putting the amendment forward for a little bit of peace and unity within his own side. The Opposition supports a two-state solution, but a two-state solution must not involve kowtowing to the terrorist organisation Hamas.

By recognising and celebrating the importance of Israel as a State, we affirm the need of safety and survival for one of the most persecuted peoples in history. Israel acts as a beacon of hope for the Middle East, being the only democratic nation that values the rights of all its citizens, Jewish or not. As a progressive nation, Israel is recognised as one of the safest places for LGBTIQI peoples in the world, which is remarkable for the Middle East, noting that all surrounding countries still punish homosexuality with brutal and inhumane measures. I always find it quite funny when people are promoting absurd suggestions of "Queers for Palestine" on social media. That notion is like "Chickens for KFC". If there is anywhere in the Middle East that gay people have a right to live peacefully and free from persecution, it is Israel; it is nowhere else.

The forced removal of Jews from their homeland has been occurring since 700 BC. Contrary to the misinformation peddled by brainwashed virtue signallers, the State of Israel exists as the only example of organic decolonisation in the world, as the Jewish indigenous peoples reclaimed their land in 1948. During that time, around 300,000 Holocaust survivors and persecuted Jews from the Middle East sought refuge in the safety of the Jewish State. Since the devastating events of 7 October 2023, the critical threat to Israel as a State should be a global concern. The Hamas charter, which is the basis for the attack, calls for the complete destruction of Israel and the Jewish people who live there. Yet, in the face of Hamas terror, it is clear that the only nation that will ever be punished for removing terrorism is a Jewish nation. Some of our State's social media warriors have forgotten history, especially with the suggestion that in military conflicts all conflict needs to be proportionate to military gains. [*Time expired.*]

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (17:48): I speak in opposition to the motion moved by the Hon. Rachel Merton. Israel's ongoing murder of civilians for more than eight months now, despite worldwide calls for a ceasefire, is so sickening, wrong and criminal that even its own war generals are condemning it. Last week two former Israeli generals, Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot, quit Netanyahu's war cabinet after initially being brought into it following the events on 7 October 2023. According to ABC reports, they have accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of using and prolonging the war in Gaza for his own political ambitions to stay in power and claimed he had no feasible plan to end the war and rescue hostages through a ceasefire deal. In fact, Israel is on the brink of a second war against Lebanon right now.

Israeli citizens are protesting in the streets, begging for the government to end the war, call a ceasefire and get their hostages home. Knowing this and seeing firsthand this genocide play out as tens of thousands of innocent people are slaughtered, left without food, water or medical supplies, and driven from their homes and all they have ever known, we cannot celebrate the State of Israel and Zionist organisations, or those MPs who are supporting them through this war.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, since 7 October at least 37,372 people have been killed and 85,452 have been injured in Israel's war on Gaza. Let that sink in. At least 37,372 people have been killed since 7 October. Aid can barely flow into many parts of Gaza, leaving children, women and men on the brink of starvation. While Israel's military said it will pause attacks for 11 hours each day on a main aid route in southern Gaza, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency chief has said that hostilities continue and nothing has changed. Gaza's government has said that this severe lack of aid is putting at least 3,500 children at risk of dying from malnourishment.

Investigations by the Associated Press have led to the discovery of at least 60 Palestinian families who have had more than 25 people in their family killed during Israeli attacks. Some have lost more than 50 family members, and some have no family left. They are massacring entire blood lines. We cannot continue to gloss over the death and destruction of an entire group of people in the name of reaffirming "the strong and enduring relationship between New South Wales and the State of Israel". That statement does not represent the New South Wales community, with many of us calling for a permanent ceasefire and an end to the occupation of Palestine. It is a disgraceful motion.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (17:51): I support the motion moved by the Hon. Rachel Merton, which recognises the seventy-sixth Independence Day of Israel and the celebration that was held in Sydney, and reaffirms the robust and lasting relationship between New South Wales and the State of Israel. Israel's path to independence on 14 May 1948 marked the revival of a nation with a rich ancient history. Over the past 76 years Israel has emerged as a symbol of democracy in the Middle East, showcasing remarkable innovation, resilience and cultural diversity. It has not only endured; it has flourished, making significant contributions to the world in technology, medicine, agriculture and the arts.

The relationship between New South Wales and Israel exemplifies the mutual respect and shared values that unite us. Our connections are strong and varied, covering economic, cultural and educational exchanges. Israel is a key trading partner of New South Wales, with joint ventures in sectors ranging from high-tech industry to agriculture, reflecting our shared dedication to innovation and progress. Furthermore, the cultural and educational links between our communities enhance our societies. The vibrant Jewish community in New South Wales greatly enriches our State's cultural diversity, promoting greater understanding and solidarity. Our educational institutions frequently engage in collaborative research and exchange programs, which strengthen our bonds and nurture future leaders and innovation.

As we commemorate Israel's seventy-sixth Independence Day, we also celebrate the shared democratic values and commitment to human rights that form the foundation of our relationship. Both New South Wales and Israel uphold the principles of freedom, equality and the pursuit of peace and security for all. Those values are the bedrock of our respective friendship. In reaffirming our strong ties, we acknowledge not only our historical and current connections but also our shared aspirations for the future. Finally, I take the opportunity to recognise the following organisations and the pivotal role they play in strengthening the State's relationship with the Jewish community: the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies, the Zionist Council of NSW, the Zionist Federation of Australia and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. We look forward to continued collaboration and partnership, contributing to the prosperity and wellbeing of our regions.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (17:53): War is a terrible thing. No-one is pretending that anything that is happening in Israel, in Gaza or in the Middle East is good. There are terrible stories of loss on both sides. We have heard stories of tragedy from the people of Gaza. There are stories of tragedy from families in Israel—those families who get up every morning and still do not know where their children or loved ones, who are hostages, are. A family came to this Parliament. I do not know how many people had an opportunity to speak with them, but they had been in the kibbutz the night that Hamas came. A father, whose nine-year-old daughter had gone to a sleepover at her cousin's house, was sending worried texts all night as to whether she was going to be safe.

What is happening in that part of the world is terrible. But let us not confuse the fact that war is awful and we all want peace. Peace is built by building good relationships with other countries and by recognising what is good and important to them. Having regard to the relationship that New South Wales has built with Israel, it is appropriate that it should be recognised. In its 76 years of existence, I doubt there has been a year that has not been marked by some sort of military intervention or exercise. What an incredible way for the people of Israel to live. But how remarkable is it that it is still a democracy.

We know that the generals in the war Cabinet are unhappy with Netanyahu because it is an open society and they are able to come out freely and voice their opinions. We know that people in Israel are unhappy about the direction of the war because it is an open society. It is a true democracy where people can express their opinions. We know about some of the terrible atrocities because there is a free press and we know that, imperfect as it is, aid is getting in. Just take a minute. How many other wars have there been where anybody has said, "We need to stop because the aid convoy is coming in." Ask the people of Stalingrad what aid was coming in during the siege. These are signs of a society that is a democracy, that shares our values, and it is appropriate to recognise what it has achieved over 76 years.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (17:57): I support the motion moved by the Hon. Rachel Merton with respect to Israel's seventy-sixth Independence Day. I remember there being a lot of reporting about Israel's seventy-fifth Independence Day and there were questions about its future. The people of Israel have come to appreciate more and more the importance of that country and its solidarity with the rest of the world after the events of 7 October. Having attended the event for many years, even before I came to Parliament, I noticed a very marked difference in the views of people in that room on that night because, sadly, in our community and throughout the world we have seen rising levels of antisemitism.

Our Jewish community in New South Wales is inextricably linked to Israel, but it is not responsible for what is going on in Gaza or in the Middle East. Each and every day our Jewish community feels for those hostages who were kidnapped and remain under the control of Hamas. They yearn for them to come home. We saw the outpourings in the street on the release of four hostages, one whose friend was in this Parliament last year in the Bring Them Home movement. We have seen our Jewish community is under increasing attack. I note the actions that have happened to many in our community; the images we have seen, particularly in Victoria; as well as the desecration of the office of Federal member Josh Burns and the sustained attack he has been under. I know him from having been at the McKinnon Institute with him, and he is a wonderful man. He does not deserve the attacks that he has seen simply for being Jewish. That is unfortunately rising in our community, and our community is concerned.

I commend the Hon. Rachel Merton for bringing this motion today. I also commend the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the Zionist Council of NSW for bringing together not just the Jewish community but also so many other communities. Every time I go to this event, I note how many other people are there from other multicultural communities across New South Wales. The Jewish community tries to bring them all together and has led the cause when it comes to creating a diverse community in New South Wales. Sadly, there are those who do not recognise the State of Israel. We cannot have a two-state solution until the first state is recognised, and that is Israel. Am Yisrael Chai.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (18:00): In reply: I thank all members for their contribution to this important debate. I thank those members for sharing their perspective and I recognise the emotion, thoughts, passion and feelings that members bring. I recognise the contribution of the Hon. Daniel Mookhey for informing us of the Australian Labor Party platform of a two-state solution. I also recognise the contribution of many other members, including Ms Abigail Boyd, the Hon. Anthony D'Adam, the Hon. Chris Rath, Ms Cate Faehrmann, the Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones, the Hon. Susan Carter and the Hon. Scott Farlow. I acknowledge that the situation in Gaza is deeply concerning. It is crucial to differentiate between the Palestinian people and the deplorable terrorist organisation Hamas, which governs Gaza.

Like all people, the Palestinian people deserve peace, security and the opportunity to thrive. I also recognise that the relationship between New South Wales and Israel can play a role fostering dialogue and understanding. As my colleague the Hon. Scott Farlow made reference to, the anniversary event and bringing communities together, particularly at this time, was evidently greatly needed. We must continue to support initiatives such as this to promote peace, economic cooperation and cultural exchange. Our shared values of democracy, innovation and resilience—the foundation of our relationship and principles—can guide us in our efforts to support a peaceful solution in the region. I thank members for their contributions.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Emma Hurst): The Hon. Rachel Merton has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Daniel Mookhey has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

Amendment agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Emma Hurst): The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (18:03): I move:

- (1) That this House notes that The Greens NSW support:
 - (a) increased density done well in appropriate locations to meet the housing needs of community;
 - (b) new housing that is supported by adequate infrastructure including:
 - (i) transport,
 - (ii) health,
 - (iii) education,
 - (iv) open green space,
 - (v) deep soil and tree canopy, and
 - (vi) in perpetuity affordable and public housing;
 - (c) planning reforms that are undertaken in close collaboration with local councils and communities;
 - (d) prioritising the provision for safe, sustainable, accessible and secure housing over developer or private profits; and
 - (e) developments that allow for the natural environment to recover and thrive alongside the built environment.
- (2) That this House affirms its support for:
 - (a) increased density done well in appropriate locations to meet the housing needs of community;
 - (b) new housing that is supported by adequate infrastructure including:
 - (i) transport,
 - (ii) health,
 - (iii) education,
 - (iv) open green space,
 - (v) deep soil and tree canopy, and
 - (vi) in perpetuity affordable and public housing;
 - (c) planning reforms that are undertaken in close collaboration with local councils and communities;
 - (d) prioritising the provision for safe, sustainable, accessible and secure housing over developer or private profits; and
 - (e) developments that allow for the natural environment to recover and thrive alongside the built environment.

The changes to the planning system that the Government has undertaken have been characterised in the Parliament, community and media as primarily a housing conversation. I accept that the majority of the changes that we have seen so far relate primarily to housing and particularly to density. The focus on housing supply and increasing density has disguised the constructive conversation that we all need to have about a better planning system that is good for communities and making homes, and that is also good for the environment and the natural living world, which we so often, at best, forget, and more often, at worst, exploit. Yet it is the very thing that we all completely depend upon.

The unique position of the planning system, and the breadth of the impact that humans have on this planet, means that almost no corner of our world is not touched, in one way or another, by planning instruments and laws. It should not be reduced to a two-dimensional issue, and it certainly should not be allowed to become a political football. In this context, the New South Wales Government is allowing planning reform to be reduced to a "housing supply or nothing" argument. It is using housing as a critical, relatable and meaningful tool to argue for reform, but the critical needs of planning are so much deeper than just the delivery of more housing. The Opposition, predictably, has come out swinging and highly critical. It serves its function as an opposition with gusto, and sometimes with puff, but with no solutions or policy being put forward.

Into this highly contentious debate that seems hell-bent on setting communities against communities, I thought it was right that The Greens should inject some sense and harmony. The position of The Greens, as outlined in the motion, is a set of principles that should be supported by this House and exactly consistent with what the Government, the Opposition and the community knows should be done. To address the housing supply elephant in the room, I share some evidence that was given during the inquiry into the development of the Transport Oriented Development Program. Mr Carnuccio from the Community Housing Industry Association said:

Transport-oriented development represents an opportunity to address the housing crisis by delivering more homes in areas with good access to transport and services. This is a sound and well-established concept, but to be effective the focus needs to be on more than just overall supply numbers. It's not as easy as increasing the total number of homes on the market. Even with the most ambitious of supply targets, it will not reduce housing costs sufficiently for those on the lowest of incomes.

On this point, and others, the Government has demonstrated a willingness to listen, to refine and to adapt to community expectations and the voices of experts. However, the starting point for affordable housing, set at 2 per cent, is far too low. The arguments put forward about keeping development viable is, disappointingly, just pandering to the development lobby.

To address the other critical needs in planning reforms, especially in our cities, we must turn to the need for liveable cities that have the potential to regenerate their natural environment. I will borrow words from the plea of the now Minister for the Environment as spoken in opposition in 2017:

The plea is for better recognition of the economic, social and environmental benefits that flow from our natural assets and heritage. Our trees, wetlands, waterways, parks, urban bushland, beaches and oceans are not just nice to have. They are fundamental to our State's sustainability and the wellbeing of our community.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: It's true.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I note the interjection. She said:

Density done well has to preserve our natural assets not just because it is good for the environment but it would also go a long way to improving community trust and willingness to accept greater density.

The precise policy settings will remain something that our diverse parties will probably disagree on. That is fine; it is even good. The debate will roll on, but what has been lacking from the debate, in both this place and in the community, is a respect for the agreed principles of the type of housing that should be delivered and how the community and environment should be treated through the process.

Once the political game playing and posturing are stripped away, planning principles, particularly as they apply to housing, are incredibly simple. Admittedly, the pathway from principle to practice is a trickier road, but it is a massive opportunity for all of us to grow and listen to each other with respect. The ambition to deliver diverse and well-located homes must be balanced with the necessary planning reforms that guarantee the liveability of those same homes. We are traversing a very interesting new path. We are introducing planning reforms, and we can get it really good when we try to work together.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (18:08): The Government supports the motion of Ms Sue Higginson. Positive planning reform is precisely the agenda of this Government and the focus of the planning reforms it has introduced over the past 12 months. It is a purpose we have largely been pursuing alone. The Opposition seems to oppose everything while saying it supports housing. The Greens members say they support all of it, but we have plenty of examples littered across local government of people saying, "We're not against housing, but we're against this housing." I have lived with that in my community, in supporting things like boarding houses and affordable housing in particular.

We genuinely welcome this motion because it states all of the things that we are actually trying to do. The rubber is about to hit the road, though, in relation to these matters. The New South Wales Government is unapologetically pursuing a reform agenda that supports the rights of young people, families and key workers to live closer to their jobs and within their local communities. The introduction of the Transport Oriented Development Program [TOD] has rightly been described as the largest planning and housing transformation in the history of New South Wales.

The Government's TOD program did something else for the first time in New South Wales: put meat onto the bones of what inclusionary zoning really means. The Government has included the mandatory provision of affordable housing within all of the TOD program areas. The accelerated precincts will have up to 15 per cent of homes as affordable, while TOD State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP] locations will have as a starting point a minimum of 2 per cent of homes as affordable. That is before we even get to the announcements made in yesterday's budget of 8,400 social homes to be built—the largest contribution to social housing in the State's history. We are getting on with the job of dealing with that.

Issues relating to biodiversity and the importance of the environment are also part of what we are doing, which is why the planning matters. As an example, we cannot continue to expand Sydney street by street and strip tree after tree on the outer edges of the urban sprawl. We are fortunate that those who came before us planned properly, with a green belt that surrounds our city. A person can get to a national park and green space within 50 kilometres of our already sprawling city. The important thing is that we need to do the planning right. The principles laid out in The Greens' motion are very welcome. Now is the time for talking about that. However, it is also time to actually support moving away from urban sprawl into higher density housing, with good-quality

communities that have access not only to green space but also to cultural and other community space. That is where we are at and what we need to do.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (18:11): Planning is important. The community in which we live is our home. Members see density done well all across this city. An example is Thornton, in Penrith, with the Landcom leadership development—a diverse area with high-rise, medium-rise and terrace housing. A great development and a great community has been built there. It is transport oriented—right next to the train station—with more to come. Those are great communities, but we need to have planning.

I acknowledge Ms Sue Higginson's motion on the importance of planning. Funnily enough, if we do not have planning in place, we do not actually deliver more homes. Members have heard from councils and the Planning Institute of Australia about how looking at the footprint that is in place enables one to actually design and plan things better, achieving higher densities while having less impact on neighbouring residences when it comes to shadow diagrams and the like. You can actually allow for more to be built, in terms of the orientation of the block. Planning is important in delivering more homes.

Unfortunately, this Government has just drawn a couple of circles around what is now 37 train stations, without the proper planning or infrastructure in place to support that development. That is not good planning and will not create communities. It will not create better homes for the people of New South Wales. As members have already heard, when it comes to the assessment of that program, in most places it will not even be viable to develop. I challenge the Government to tell members how many homes it will deliver in Teralba as a result of its transport oriented development at that site. Why choose it? Why continue with this furphy that it is the silver bullet for the State's housing crisis?

Of course, the issue around the feasibility of developments and encouraging the private sector to build is complex. It is a complex arrangement to strike the right balance in terms of the management of properties by community housing providers. We have heard from the Community Housing Industry Association about the challenges it faces in managing the properties under some of the Government's reforms. If a community housing provider has one property in an apartment block, it becomes difficult for that provider to manage. Instead, you want to consolidate it.

Planning is important. This House and this Parliament should support good planning, which underscores better communities and actually delivering more homes. That is what all members should be looking to do. The Minister can talk about the record of The Greens in the past, and its members saying, "Housing—but not this one." But when it comes to our record in government, more homes were delivered. When we came to government 29,000 were delivered. Over our time in government 50,000 homes, on average, were being delivered each and every year, with a record number delivered. Members on this side of the House put our money where our mouths were and delivered more homes.

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) (18:15): As the Leader of the Government has indicated, we are supportive of this motion. We are supportive of good planning and we are supportive of housing. But one thing that is incredibly important to put on the agenda in this conversation is that when the State finds itself in a crisis of this depth, it is not good enough—and it is disingenuous—to say, "This is what we are not for." Members have to put on record what indeed they are for. When members of any political party come to this Chamber and say they are for more housing, it is not good enough not to indicate what that actually looks like. That is exactly the kind of thing that got the State into this problem in this first place.

The first half of nimby, or "not in my backyard", is "I support housing, but". Those sentiments sit together. A nimby says, "I support housing, but not in my backyard. Not here. Do it this way, do it that way; have this requirement; have that requirement." That is the world of "no", which is the world of pain that people in this city are living in. Consistently, we see so many participants in his debate speak out of both sides of their mouth. They say, "Yes, we support housing for a young person living at mum and dad's or in some dirty share house until they are 30. They can't bring their boyfriend around. They have to move rental five times a year because they can't find a place and can't keep a steady job. They can't keep their kids in school." Those participants in this debate want to say to those young people, "Yeah, we're for housing for you, but not here. Not this way. Not over there. Not like that." It is not good enough. We have been very clear as a government on how many houses we want to build and where we want to build them. Those are not always easy conversations. The easy thing is to say, "You haven't done it this way and you haven't done it that way." I say no more hand-wringing; it is time to get on with it.

The proposition from the Opposition is that we should cancel the transit oriented developments. However, putting housing next to public transport, resulting in fewer cars, is the way to deliver good environmental outcomes. Mandating inclusionary zoning for the first time, mandating required affordable housing—that is good

growth. These proposed developments are near public transport with affordable housing as part of them, precincts planned and clearly articulated. That is good growth—but the Opposition wants to cancel the whole thing.

Do members want to talk about good planning? How about the suggestion to put the planning powers in the hands of this Parliament! Make this Chamber responsible for making these decisions—what an absolute disaster that would be. It would be *Wacky Wednesday* on steroids, doing planning for the State. Members should leave it to the experts. The work has been done. The planning system can support these outcomes. We have been up-front about the consultation that has happened. The Government has talked to any council that wants to talk. We have engaged with councils deeply. The only council that does not want to talk is a Liberal council. That is just more "no".

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (18:18): I continue from where the Minister for Housing left off in this debate in the contribution prior to mine. It is exactly where this debate should be. When the shadow Minister talks up his support for housing—saying, "We want housing, but we've got to get the planning right," "We want housing, but we've got to get the shading right," "We want housing, but we've got to get the locations of it right," or "We want housing, but we've got to make sure that it fits in with communities"—members should make no mistake: The Opposition is saying no to housing.

Opposition members are perpetuating the situation that existed under the previous Government, which was not having any high-density housing in Liberal electorates. There was a ridiculous situation when the Liberal State Government imposed targets for new dwellings over a five-year period that they were in the tens of thousands for councils like Canterbury-Bankstown and Blacktown—58,000 here and 60,000 there—and in the tens for councils like Mosman. I cannot remember what the exact target was, but it was something like 40. It is simply not fair to continue in that vein where the view of the Liberal Party seems to be "We're all about housing, but not in any of our areas on the leafy North Shore or in Liberal-held electorates. Increased density ought to go somewhere else." The problem with that approach is it is not going to do anything to solve the housing crisis.

What is required to solve the housing crisis is exactly what our Government has done, in line with this motion: putting high-density housing around transport zones. Frankly, people do not want high-density housing away from transport zones. Everybody I speak to says that they would rather have 10-storey buildings and high-density housing and apartments close to a train station than have every suburban street filled with duplexes, causing parking problems and other issues. The sort of planning that our Government has put in place is transport oriented development around public transport and train stations so that we can build homes for young people and solve the housing crisis. It is an enormous problem that will take years to fix, but at least the Government is taking action and doing something about it. There is nothing altruistic about the Opposition. When they throw up planning, shading and other concerns, it is really code for "No, we don't want new homes, and we definitely don't want them in our electorates." [*Time expired.*]

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (18:21): In reply: I thank members for their contributions. I am a little disappointed because, whilst I hear the Minister for Housing and understand the gusto, it is exactly that kind of divisive, continual shouting about this issue that is counterproductive to really good planning outcomes. To get good planning outcomes, we need to listen to each other really respectfully. One thing that I fail to hear from people in important positions right now is the community genuinely leading the approach. They talk about consulting councils, but they consulted with councils that wanted to talk to them only after the event.

I spoke with the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces just last week. He accepted that it was a bit of a disastrous rollout because of the leakage of the Transport Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy documents to announce these planning changes. The planning changes were announced to deliver some of the Government's ideas for its approach to dealing with the housing crisis. He accepted that the consultation therefore happened after the event, and that was a shame. But it still does not go to the point that we know from across the world and that all the experts continuously tell us, which is that it is communities that best lead how to address planning in local environments. We know that to be the case. Communities know their local environment much better than somebody sitting in Parramatta or at 52 Martin Place.

The Hon. Rose Jackson: Or somebody sitting here?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I acknowledge the interjection. I could not agree more with the Minister for Housing. On that, I think everybody should acknowledge the unspoken: The shadow planning Minister has not brought forward his bill today. I think we should all acknowledge and be grateful that we have not had to have that debate. I do not necessarily think that would have been constructive.

We are talking about planning. I take members back to that expert view that I have had the benefit of hearing when chairing the inquiry into the Transport Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy, and the inquiry that is looking at the planning system and really big issues like climate change, biodiversity and

community voices. We know that just drawing lines on maps and saying, "You can develop more here; you can do it now and you can do it quickly", is not going to build the liveable communities and the homes that we know we deserve. We hope through this process, with some more tolerance of each other's views, we will get there.

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

Motion agreed to.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Emma Hurst): I shall now leave the chair. The House will resume at 8.00 p.m.

Documents

BUDGET EFFICIENCY DIVIDENDS

Production of Documents: Order

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (20:04): I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 1020 standing in my name by omitting "21 days" and inserting instead "28 days".

Leave granted.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Accordingly, I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 28 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents created since 26 March 2023 in the possession, custody or control of the Treasurer, the Treasury, the 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, or the Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade relating to budget efficiency dividends:

- (a) all documents relating to the efficiency dividends applied to the budgets of each of the following agencies in 2023-2024 and in forward estimates 2024-2028:
 - (i) Australian Museum;
 - (ii) Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences;
 - (iii) State Library of NSW;
 - (iv) Museums of History;
 - (v) Art Gallery of New South Wales;
 - (vi) the Sydney Opera House; and
 - (vii) Destination NSW.
- (b) 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.

This motion is a simple call for papers. I will not take up too much of the time of the House on this matter. I am asking for those documents so that we can have a clear understanding of the way in which our key cultural institutions are funded and how efficiency dividends are being applied. Without that understanding, we simply cannot determine whether our great community assets—the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, the State Library of NSW, the Museums of History, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Sydney Opera House—are being funded sufficiently.

Efficiency dividends are aimed at encouraging fiscal prudence—by itself a good goal. However, we need to ensure that efficiency dividends do not have a chilling effect on the operating capacity of our cultural institutions. Efficiency dividends are essentially a reduction in funding with the expectation that organisations will absorb that loss by becoming more efficient, effectively doing more with less. That can be a tall order in the arts, where resources are already stretched and where efficiency is not easily measurable. It is not just about the numbers; it is about what those numbers signify for the future of the arts and how they reflect our social values and our cultural investment.

The arts challenge us to think, feel and engage with the world from new and varied perspectives. They enrich our lives in ways that numbers and data cannot capture. While budget pressures require a government to make decisions about what is funded and what is not, without a full and accurate picture of government funding, we cannot operate effectively as a house of review. The Government has pledged to be transparent. I applaud it for that. This is an opportunity to put that pledge into action by providing that information so that we can be assured that our cultural institutions are properly funded both now and in the future. I commend the motion to the House.

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) (20:07): The

Government will not be supporting this call for papers. However, the Hon. Susan Carter's questions are not particularly unreasonable, and I will be moving an amendment to the motion. I note that the member has pursued the question of efficiency dividends particularly in relation to the Art Gallery of New South Wales in the Chamber and at estimates. Those have been appropriate questions to ask. As I have indicated to the House previously, as a result of some of the issues with funding at the Art Gallery of New South Wales as it expands, last financial year we added \$12 million to its budget. Since that time we have conducted a review and the budget handed down this week will add \$8.8 million to the art gallery for the future financial year. I place those matters on record. The amendment I will move will give us a perspective on that from 2018-19. I move:

That the question be amended as follows:

- (1) Omit "created since 26 March 2023" and insert instead "created since 26 March 2018".
- (2) In paragraph (a) insert "2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023" before "2023-2024".

The amendment would give the effect of not only looking at the period that the member is asking for but also putting it into perspective in the context of the efficiency dividends that might have been applied earlier. That is relevant because some of those dividends are still rolling through the budget process. While the Government will oppose the motion, it is reasonable to ask those questions. If the House does intend to proceed with the order for papers, then we will look at it in the relevant perspective. Finally, in the budget more than \$500 million was committed to our cultural institutions. That is a very strong investment in those cultural institutions on behalf of the State. They do remarkable work and I applaud them for it.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (20:09): In reply: I thank the Hon. John Graham for his contribution to debate on the motion. I shall not trouble the House by adding anything more to what has already been said.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): The Hon. Susan Carter has moved a motion, to which the Hon. John Graham 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 now is that the motion as amended be agreed to.

Motion as amended agreed to.

Bills

WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY AMENDMENT (INDUSTRIAL MANSLAUGHTER) 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: According to standing order, I declare the bill to be an urgent bill.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): The question is that the bill be considered an urgent bill.

Declaration of urgency 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.

ENERGY SECURITY CORPORATION 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.

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

Statement of public interest tabled.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: According to standing order, I declare the bill to be an urgent bill.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): The question is that the bill be considered an urgent bill.

Declaration of urgency 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.

Motions

HOUSING POLICY

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (20:13): I move:

- (1) That this House supports the decision of the New South Wales Liberal Party, which voted in November 2023 to develop a comprehensive policy to address the current housing crisis.
- (2) That this House notes the New South Wales Liberal Party endorsed the following measures in its State convention of November 2023:
 - (a) supporting the Government's plan to privatise vacant Crown land to enable housing development;
 - (b) rewarding councils for meeting housing targets by providing a building bonus;
 - (c) imposing a "not in my backyard"[NIMBY] penalty on councils that fail to meet their housing targets by withholding infrastructure dollars;
 - (d) rezoning all lots within a five-minute walking radius of existing train and metro stations in Greater Sydney according to R4 high density;
 - (e) rezoning all lots within a 10-minute walking radius of existing train and metro stations in Greater Sydney according to R3 medium density;
 - (f) rezoning lots within a five-minute walking radius of a light rail stop within Greater Sydney and Newcastle to R3 medium density;
 - (g) undertaking a council land audit whereby councils must submit a portfolio of all land holdings for a suitability assessment by the Government and, if not approved the Government, may commence steps towards acquiring the land;
 - (h) undertaking steps towards abolishing local environmental plans [LEP] and development control plans [DCP] in favour of an integrated standardised planning solution where planning controls are linked to zoning;
 - (i) moving development application [DA] approvals to a State level and imposing mandatory deadlines by which the DA must be resolved by; and
 - (j) reforming the Heritage Act 1997 to prevent arbitrary heritage protection orders being issued to prevent housing development.

As a diligent crossbench member I will conduct a comparative analysis of the various devolving housing policy positions of the New South Wales Liberal Party, especially when compared with one of the Government's key housing policies, the Transport Oriented Development [TOD] Program, which amends the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021, or the SEPP. It is crucial that we understand the policy positions of the Government and the Opposition on the critical issue of housing supply in this State, which is a cost-of-living issue of incredible importance to millions of individuals, families and communities in this State. The issue is fundamental to the future aspirations and prosperity of those who have been shut out of housing ownership and forced into a brutal and expensive rental market. It is a crucial issue for those waiting for social housing, affordable housing or any housing.

I have moved this motion for debate not only because of the importance of housing but also because it gives us an opportunity to ventilate these issues in the mysterious absence of the Hon. Scott Farlow's Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Disallowance of Transport Oriented Development SEPP) Bill 2024, which seeks to give this House the power to disallow the provisions of the TOD SEPP with a further motion of the House within 15 days of its commencement. Someone was in a hurry, but now maybe not so much. A bill of the utmost urgency and importance a few days ago is now chilling at the back of the fridge, mouldering up behind Sunday night's spaghetti bolognese, a bill now chilling in the frost of intraparty discord until at least August—or maybe forever.

But it did not have to be this way. A fortnight ago in a take-note debate I warned the Hon. Scott Farlow of his cavalier folly—that, like the Light Brigade at Balaclava charging into the Russian cannons, courage can tip over into recklessness. I warned him that he was likely leading his nimby and National Trust brigade into the political valley of death, or the teeth of catastrophic and humiliating defeat and backflip—a defeat at the hands of a passionate corps of tenacious yimby Liberals. What have we seen since then? It all came true. A savage salvo

smackdown, a veritable barrage fired in *The Sydney Morning Herald* by senior Liberals Andrew Bragg, Maria Kovacic and Jenny Ware. In response to the bill, yimby Field Marshal Bragg said:

We need to be unambiguously on the side of supply and development and turning the tables on cultural concern about developers.

...

If we are pro-NIMBY, it is impossible to deliver intergenerational fairness. We need to be pro-supply, pro-development and anti-NIMBY.

Boom—shots fired! But with the first sniff of grapeshot, it seems the nimbys are in retreat and the bill is in the freezer. "What was the ammunition and the salvo?" I hear members ask. It was the Liberal Party's own State conference resolution from last November. I thank the Young Liberals and the Hon. Chris Rath for making it available on Twitter to those who are disinclined to attend such stirring affairs. What did the Liberal Party resolve in November? Firstly, it resolved to rezone all lots within a five-minute stroll of existing train and metro stations in Greater Sydney according to R4 high density—all lots within a five-minute dawdle of 174 train and 46 metro stations, stratospherically above and beyond the relatively modest TOD SEPP. Secondly, it resolved to rezone all lots within a five-minute plod of all light rail stops within Greater Sydney—all 42 of them—which is way above and beyond the Government's TOD SEPP. The third resolution is a cracker: to abolish all local environmental plans and development control plans—boom! All of those are Liberal policies. Finally, the mother of all bombs—the MOAB—to move all development approvals to a State level and to impose mandatory deadlines.

Talk about disempowering local communities and local planning! There goes the neighbourhood. Will no-one think of the amenity? The Opposition needs to get its line straight. It must bin the disallowance bill and get behind the TOD SEPP, which offers a reasonable, consultative and considered way forward that will build desperately needed houses sooner. It is a more modest and consultative way forward than the Opposition's very own policy. Liberal members have been hoisted on their own petard. They have blown their own credibility to smithereens by cynically and recklessly attempting to derail the Government's good housing plans. I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (20:18): It is always polite to let a Government member contribute to debate first, but I am happy to assume the mantle. I contribute to debate on the motion on behalf of the Coalition. I am glad the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham has taken such an interest in Liberal Party State conventions that he has moved a motion in support of the development of our proactive party's comprehensive policy to address the housing crisis. I suggest that the member is not an expert in the practices of the Liberal Party. The parties that he has been part of may behave slightly different in the compulsion of their members.

The Coalition's policy development in planning and public spaces has been underway throughout this term of Parliament. In November last year Liberal Party members encouraged the parliamentary party to continue that important process. The membership has asked the parliamentary party to support increasing density along transport corridors to meet ambitious housing targets. I am glad to say that the parliamentary party supports such a concept, while making refinements to the position so that such a proposal is workable. The Coalition highlights that a proper master planning approach is the way to deliver more housing density connected to investments in infrastructure and in consultation with local communities.

The Coalition has made clear that councils should have a strict time frame to formulate their local controls to meet housing targets. If councils refuse to engage, it becomes appropriate at that time for the State to impose local planning controls, and not at the very beginning. A Coalition government would do things differently to address the housing crisis by working with communities to identify suitable locations for extra housing, with access to infrastructure; standing up to Canberra and calling on it to reduce Australia's record immigration; removing the burden of stamp duty on young people by reintroducing the First Home Buyer Choice program; providing stamp duty exemptions for older people looking to downsize, or right-size, to free up larger homes for families; and providing greater incentives to local councils to meet and beat their housing targets through a \$2 billion community benefit fund.

I recall that in opposition Labor never provided any solutions. It did not have a plan to build more housing to address the housing crisis through supply. It had one line in its flimsy "fresh start" plan about addressing supply. All of its current policies were not on the table before the last election. The Coalition has announced its policies up-front already, one year into opposition. The Coalition's policies from September last year have already inspired the Government, but Labor providing 10 per cent of the Coalition's proposal of a community benefit fund will not touch the sides in addressing the housing crisis.

Our discussions with key industry stakeholders about how industry and government can work together to make it more viable to build new housing supply have been productive. Industry has warned time and again that projects to deliver new supply to the market have been rendered unviable, with Labor's new taxes making it more expensive to build fewer new homes. Labor's new and higher taxes have made it unviable to build new homes to

address the housing crisis, with recent analysis from the Urban Development Institute of Australia—where Stuart Ayres, Labor's new favourite lobbyist, works—outlining that only two of the 37 Transport Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy sites are viable to build on. The Minns Labor Government needs to reverse course and lower the taxation burden to build new housing supply, or else any ambition to increase housing supply will fail. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (20:21): On behalf of the Government, I support the motion of the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham. Those within political parties would well know that motions passed at conferences often form the basis of a party's platform and its policy development process. That informs what the party does and its takes on policy, and legislation might be proposed in Parliament. It is clear that the New South Wales Liberal Party has that completely around the wrong way. It appears that the Liberal Party brings in legislation that directly opposes motions that are passed at its conferences.

In this House two weeks ago today, shadow Minister for Planning and Public Spaces the Hon. Scott Farlow introduced a bill to disallow the Transport Oriented Development [TOD] State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP]. That was embarrassing for him and for members sitting behind him who stood up and waved the flag at their conference to talk about the importance of building housing for young people and the need to move ahead. It is good to know that the Hon. Scott Farlow was ready to completely ignore those views.

The TOD SEPP comprises the planning controls that apply in 37 metro stations and train stations across Greater Sydney, the Hunter, the Central Coast and the Illawarra. It is a policy designed to provide more well-located, well-designed and well-built homes so that young people, families and key workers can live closer to their jobs and to transport, and in the vibrant communities that they are part of. But even a motion from the Liberals at State conference could not sway the nimby philosophy of the shadow Minister and those with whom he is allied. The entire shadow Cabinet is not supported by the backbenchers, it appears. The Liberal Party is intent on making it difficult to build more homes in New South Wales.

Instead of getting on with the job, taking steps to confront the housing crisis and tackle the biggest cost-of-living pressure on New South Wales households, as the Government is doing, the shadow Minister and the Liberal Party want to stop mid-rise apartments being built next to train stations in Greater Sydney. That was one of the most stupid pieces of legislation they have ever brought before the Parliament and should be their great shame. It appears the shadow Minister forgot to consult the Liberal Party before introducing the legislation. He also clearly has not spoken to the councils who have signed up to deliver the TOD SEPP. The legislation is in direct conflict with the motions endorsed as part of the Liberal Party platform.

The motion from the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham is very interesting, but I do not have time to go through all of it, which is a great shame. I will mention a couple of things. The Liberal Party endorsed calls to develop Crown land for housing. The Government is already doing that, and its land audit has been considered and is ready to go. It calls to reward councils for meeting housing targets. The Government is doing that as well, with \$200 million committed for that purpose. It calls to rezone all lots within a five-minute walk of all train, metro and light rail stations. It talks about a 10-minute walk. That all sounds great but would make us one of the densest cities in the world, with no consultation and the ability to override local government local environmental plans and development control plans, which the Government will not override. Do we want to build more housing or not? The Liberal Party needs to get out of the way and get on board.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (20:24): When we last gathered in this Chamber, the Government lost one of its Parliamentary Secretaries. Noting that vacancy, what a magnificent audition by the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham to be the Parliamentary Secretary for planning. The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham has blown away the smoke, stepped forward as a planning realist and delivered an excellent motion to this Chamber. I note there was some mention of Stuart Ayres. Earlier in the day we pointed to the planning failures of the former Government on the North Shore, where it did not lift a finger to have any of the councils meet their housing targets.

It was even worse at Bradfield city, where Stuart Ayres thought he could build a city out of press releases. That is all he ever delivered there. He wanted to build houses out of paper. Apparently, that has been one of the great planning debacles of recent history in New South Wales, where nothing was delivered. They delivered a house or two at Mosman but at Bradfield, nothing. All that is there is a crane—one solitary government-funded crane that Ayres must have funded as a product of all those useless press releases and memorandums of understanding that have not delivered a single job or residence. The housing policy at the Liberal Party State convention has been an interesting product of the power struggle between the young fogies and the old fogies in the party.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Hang on, hang on!

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Sorry, the ancient fogies as a third faction. And we know how these conferences—

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: Point of order: In view of the fact that the member pointed to me when he used the expression "old fogies", I ask him to withdraw that expression.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): I remind the Hon. Mark Latham to direct his comments through the Chair, and I remind all members to act respectfully to one another.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I did not point at anyone. I did not know the honourable gentleman was behind me. He outed himself. But for the purposes of the House, I apologise and withdraw. This is relevant for the member's own participation at the convention because clearly the old fogies had clocked off and gone for a nanna nap and left the numbers in control of the convention to the Raths. They felt the wrath of the yimbys who wanted to get on with a bit of housing development. Where is the Hon. Jacqui Munro? Where is the Hon. Chris Rath? Perhaps they are abstaining in the vote on this motion. The Liberal Party had it right the first time round: This Chamber should not have a veto on planning decisions. A lot of planning work needs to be done. Look at the disasters in Western Sydney of the so-called Bradfield city, the ghost science park at Luddenham—and on the list goes—and then the North Shore, where not much has happened. A lot of planning needs to be done and we should be supporting the planning Minister to get on with the job.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (20:27): On behalf of The Greens, I contribute to debate. I move:

That the question be amended by omitting in paragraph (1) "supports" and inserting instead "notes".

With that amendment we take a much more cautious approach to the motion by noting those things. It is important that the Chamber notes what the Liberal Party does. I do not think it is appropriate that we stand as a whole Chamber in support of what the Liberal Party does. I have spoken to the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham and given him notice of my amendment. I appreciate that he has brought the motion to the House. It is very important we continue this much-needed discussion about the planning system and the changes that are being made. I also, once again, plead with all members to stop the division in the way we talk about nimbys and yimbys. We are talking about real people who care about their local environments, local communities and the way we will progress and develop them as we move forward.

As the Leader of the Government said, the idea of abolishing local environmental plans [LEPs] and development control plans [DCPs] is very concerning. It is misguided and unwise. Portfolio Committee No. 7 is doing incredibly good work at the moment in an inquiry where we are analysing the Transport Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy. We have the benefit of having heard from so many incredible witnesses who have come forward and given their expertise, their opinions, their lived experience and their local knowledge.

One of the things that we have heard over and over again from experts and communities, and particularly those really hardworking, committed public servants who are drawing away as council staff, is that those LEPs and DCPs are not instruments. They are living documents that are the translation of a lot of work, local environments, local communities and public participation, and it is their way of giving life to the plans for their local environment. No matter where we go with our State environmental planning policies, we must understand the importance of the work of those LEPs and DCPs. With the amendment to this motion, The Greens will happily support it.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (20:30): I have a great sense of déjà vu. We have debated this matter a number of times today and each time I learn new and interesting things about the Opposition's policy in relation to it. I was listening intently to the shadow Minister and it was more of the same: "getting planning right" and putting up the sorts of roadblocks that we have heard about all day to stop housing. But there was a new one in his speech earlier, one that I had not heard before, and it was something to the effect of standing up to Canberra and reducing migration rates. It is now not even a policy about building new homes; apparently it is about saying, "We don't need to because we're going to change the migration rate, and then we can preserve the leafy North Shore and not do anything in this space."

What is absolutely clear, from the debates that we have had today, is that the Opposition really does not have a policy on housing. All it has is a position of throwing up every reason under the sun to not do something. Opposition members will keep saying to us, "We are in favour of housing. We love new housing. We want more of it and we want to do all of these things," and, ultimately, they will say, "No, we can't do it because the planning isn't right" or "We can't do it because this bit isn't right." It is the shading, or it is something else.

Opposition members are always going to put roadblocks in the way of building new housing for the young generation. What is interesting about the motion is that they had it mostly right at the Liberal Party conference. There are some highly objectionable elements to the policy but, frankly, it was a pretty clear position: They are

YIMBYs and they want housing. What have we had since then? We have had the shadow Cabinet and the shadow Minister taking every opportunity to walk it back, right up to the point of introducing their ridiculous bill. The Opposition thinks that the most appropriate way to deal with housing is to give the Parliament a veto over where it is built. What sort of bill is that?

It would be totally inappropriate for members of this House to be making decisions about whether to stop transport oriented development. It demonstrates clearly that Opposition members really do not have a policy in this area. They really do not care about providing homes for young people; otherwise, they would just get on board with the Government's policy—a policy that has already been accepted by the community and by councils—and let us get on with solving the housing crisis. That is what they ought to be doing.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (20:33): The reality is that, if the Government was serious about housing policy, it would not be imposing extra costs on people who want to buy a home. That is the fundamental thing about ensuring people can get into homes. In fact, the fake debate that we are having today ignores the crux of the problem: This is a government that introduces a budget which in fact makes it more costly to own a home. For Government members to say that the Opposition does not have a policy, while they are adding massive costs for those people who want to get into a home, is the height of hypocrisy.

Talking of hypocrisy, I used to be the member for Epping. Members will remember that Epping got a new metro through Cherrybrook and a new station. Guess what? I was out there saying, "Where do you build high-rise? Near train stations." I was a big proponent of high-rise near train stations. There were demonstrations against new high-rise developments near train stations. There were big protests at Cherrybrook, and guess who turned up to every one of those demonstrations against new housing at Epping and Cherrybrook? The Hon. Peter Primrose—he was there every time! He was the master. He turned up to support The Greens.

The Hon. Peter Primrose: I turned up to attack you!

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE: You turned up to oppose the projects. The leader of the anti-housing project sits in the Chamber, mute; he does not say a word, but we know what he thinks because he has history in this area. He got out there wanting to make sure that not one new house was ever built in Cherrybrook or Epping. He was out there supporting The Greens. We did not want any of that, did we? We wanted to support the blue gums, a protected tree species.

Members opposite were more interested in protecting some tree or some heritage house. But here today, they say, "Get out of the road! That is no longer important. It's more important that we make it more costly." If it was not for me, they would not have any housing in Epping or in Cherrybrook. We know that they have history, and we know that all of them, if they really had their way, would not be having any housing there. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (20:36): In reply: I thank all honourable members for their passionate contributions. I begin my speech in reply with Thomas Macaulay's poem "Farlow at the Bridge," which of course we can all recite. Out spoke brave Farlow, the Captain of the Gate:

"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods ...

The duality, hypocrisy, cynicism and folly of the honourable member and the Liberal Party are on display when it comes to housing—the North Shore boomer-con NIMBY brigade, in a glorious last stand on the bridge, facing the hordes of Gen Z and Millennial voters, facing the merciless and relentless Bragg and Rath local governments and now Stuart Ayres heading up urban development. The Opposition spent last year attacking the Government for the \$12k developer contributions to infrastructure, then cried crocodile tears that there was no infrastructure to support the transport oriented development [TOD], wilfully ignoring this very developer contribution regime, ignoring \$520 million in infrastructure funding and ignoring the fact that TODs capitalise on intergenerational investment New South Wales has made and continues to make to its roads, schools, hospitals, trains, light rail and metro networks.

The honourable member has decried the loss of heritage and sacred amenity, yet his own party's position is to reform the Heritage Act 1997 to prevent arbitrary heritage protection orders being issued to prevent housing development. Don't tell the National Trust, Scott! I remind the Opposition that the crossbench and voters of New South Wales—those fearful political hordes—are watching and they understand hypocrisy. There is too much at stake for petty politicking. Women and children escaping brutal violence are living in cars. The elderly are being evicted from their homes and communities. Young people are living under bridges. The homeless grow in number. This crisis requires collective effort, not petty pointscore. It requires all political parties to put aside

their self-interest for the public interest. It requires the Liberal Party and the Hon. Scott Farlow to bin their stupid bill. I commend the motion to the House.

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

Amendment negated.

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

Motion agreed to.

Business of the House

POSTPONEMENT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: On behalf of the Hon. Taylor Martin: I postpone private members' business item No. 1139 until the next sitting day.

Motions

NUCLEAR ENERGY

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (20:40): I move:

That this House agrees that nuclear energy has no future in the energy mix for New South Wales.

Today we saw the Federal Opposition launch a half-a-trillion-dollar energy policy with a 20-minute press conference and a single-page media release. Frankly, I have seen Nigerian email scams with more detail than that. There is no future in which nuclear power is a viable part of our transition away from fossil fuels. The 20-year Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap is already underway and driven by low-cost renewables. New South Wales already has approximately 53 per cent of its total generation capacity from renewables, including large-scale and rooftop solar, hydropower and wind power.

Over the past five years, the share of solar and wind in the electricity generation mix of our State has tripled. We have almost 200 large-scale renewable energy projects in planning, which represent \$50 billion of investment in our State. This is a clean, green future that is already happening, and yet we have been hearing increasing chatter—and now an announcement from the Liberal Party and The Nationals—that we should somehow undo this work to pursue the arcane and expensive fantasy of a nuclear future. There is no future with nuclear power. It is not safe, not cheap and not able to be delivered on time to replace fossil fuels. The Coalition professes to be concerned about energy bills but wants to stop the rollout of the cheapest energy technologies and replace them with the most expensive.

There is, to be sure, a lot of debate around nuclear power and whether it is really, really, really expensive or just really, really expensive. It is a myth that a nuclear reactor could plug into the old coal power station transmission lines. It is just not true. The transmission lines are already nearly full with energy from new renewables. In truth, a nuclear reactor would need new transmission lines, which is the exact thing that the Liberal Party and The Nationals often complain about in this place. Two weeks ago in this House, I drew honourable members' attention to the most recent CSIRO GenCost report, which thoroughly and systematically debunked the Opposition's nuclear fantasy. The report looked at the real cost of energy generation and storage and, at the request of stakeholders, it also undertook to look at the cost of large-scale nuclear power. The report was authored by our trusted national scientific agency and said exactly what we have already heard from industry—that the cost and time frame of both large-scale nuclear power and small modular nuclear reactors are unworkable from a purely dollars-and-cents perspective.

As a consequence of high bill cost, strong regulation and the lack of existing planning capacity or skilled workforce, nuclear would be the most expensive technology option. It would be at least 50 per cent more expensive than large-scale wind and solar backed by batteries. This is a cost that would, of course, be passed on to consumers. It makes no sense. Renewable energy is the cheapest form of power generation in Australia and, unlike nuclear, will place downward pressure on power prices. Not only is nuclear too expensive; it also has enormous lead times to be put in place. We are talking a minimum of two decades into the future. The CSIRO concluded that the earliest possible deployment of large-scale nuclear power plants would be by 2040. Even this time frame would require bipartisan support, which nuclear simply will not have.

Today we heard the Federal Leader of the Opposition say that the Coalition would produce nuclear power plants by 2035. This is the same Coalition that, when in government, could not even complete a car park. This means that it is just too slow, as 2040 is well after when we will need to replace our ageing and outdated coal-fired

plants, and it is well after when we will need to transition our communities. That process is already well underway. We have seen again and again that the Opposition's push for nuclear energy in Australia is regarded with amusement and scorn by experts and industry leaders. The CEO of AGL, Damien Nicks, said in March:

There is no viable schedule for the regulation or development of nuclear energy in Australia, and the cost, build time and public opinion are all prohibitive.

I commend the motion to the House.

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (20:45): I move:

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

this House supports:

- (a) the transition to renewables; and
- (b) the investigation of alternative technologies.

The manner in which this motion has been framed epitomises exactly the way the Government and members of the Labor Party approach any opportunity for us to have the best technology to deliver cheap alternatives to ensure that the lights stay on and to ensure the stability of the power system. I describe that as the greatest anti-intellectual approach to the delivery of energy that one would ever want to embrace.

The way this motion is currently drafted says there is no place for nuclear at all. Well, we have some at Lucas Heights, for those who want to know. We are going to have nuclear-powered submarines made in Australia. To have a motion that says there is no place for nuclear in New South Wales is absolutely moronic. The position of Opposition members is that we are more than happy to embrace the road map, which was developed by our side of the House. Our side of the House was very happy to embrace the renewable energy project.

We gave the Government the blueprint for delivery, which it is absolutely destroying under the Minister for the Environment. We are left with the coal-fired power stations—which the Minister happens to love—staying open for longer because she cannot deliver the road map that we gave her. To have a motion that says that we have no place for any other technology to deliver energy is, quite frankly, anti-intellectual and is a disgrace to those who draft motions like this to outlaw this sort of development. The Hon. Peter Primrose should be calling for exploration of the technology, not prohibiting it.

Ms Abigail Boyd: Point of order—

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): The member's time has expired. I will hear the point of order.

Ms Abigail Boyd: That is a shame. According to Standing Order 113 (4), the amendment moved by the Hon. Damien Tudehope is obviously a direct negative of the question. Members have had this discussion before. When we talk about an amendment being a direct negative to the question, in some circumstances it has been taken to mean basically inserting the word "not". However, it also must be relevant to the question it proposes to amend. If we get to a situation in this House where every motion can be amended by taking out all words after the word "notes" and replacing the motion with something completely different on a different topic, that is a terrible precedent to set.

The Hon. Damien Tudehope: To the point of order: By virtue of the fact that the point of order gives rise to querying the amendment, the amendment goes to the substance of the motion that is the subject of debate. It is not an amendment that takes members away from the debate we are having in relation to nuclear energy. It states that we seek to frame the debate in a different manner.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): I will confer with the Clerk. The Clerk will stop the clock for the debate. I thank members for their patience. Having conferred with the Clerk and having consulted the standing orders, I allow the amendment on the basis that it is not a direct negative and is relevant to the area of energy proposed in the question. Mr Tudehope, while I allow your amendment, the time for your contribution has expired.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (20:52): This nuclear debate is a dangerous distraction. Peter Dutton's brain-fart announcement of seven supposed locations for new nuclear power plants consists of a one-pager and a 20-minute press conference. There are no details, no plans, no consultation, no support from the local communities and no support from industry. The Liberal-Nationals Coalition is attempting to wage a campaign based on deception, delay and bluster. The majority of locations announced by the Coalition in this supposed plan are sites already committed for major renewable or battery projects. Others are on top of existing and still-operating coal power stations. In New South Wales, the proposed site at Liddell Power Station already has works underway to construct a \$750 million, 500-megawatt grid-scale battery. But Peter Dutton thinks the best deal for Australia will be to

compulsorily acquire this site for untold billions of dollars, against the wishes of the current owners and local community. That is before the first sod is even turned in construction.

It is self-evident that the plan here is not to actually deliver nuclear energy as much as it is to disrupt and delay the rollout of committed and planned future renewable energy development. If this was a serious plan, it would have more than just a list of names. Absent is any information at all on how much it would cost; what reactors would be used; a plan for how they would purchase the privately owned power stations and sites; or a plan for overcoming the States' objections, which have come swiftly and definitively. There is no plan for where the waste will go, of which there will be a lot. We do not know how on earth the Coalition plans on building two of the reactors within the supposed 2035-37 timeline. We do not know where the funding would come from. There is no explanation of how it will manage the astronomical amount of water that would be required to operate these reactors—not a great look for regional communities already struggling with water security in Australia, the driest continent on earth. There is no plan, because the truth is the Coalition is perfectly happy with the fossil fuel status quo.

Perhaps the most frustrating thing of all about this renewed debate about nuclear is just how beneficial it is for the two major parties and their fossil fuel donors. While Labor and the Coalition publicly squabble about something that has no realistic prospect of actually happening anyway, the public is distracted from the fact that both of these major parties support the active expansion of coal and gas in Australia, with Labor still approving new coal and gas projects. That is not to mention how setting up yet another so-called climate election drowns out the conversations about other important issues like housing and the cost of living, for which neither major party appears to have any real policy ideas to take to the next election.

Nuclear energy is slow to build and uses vast quantities of water. It is expensive, dangerous and not a useful part of a modern energy mix. The debate about nuclear is a deliberately placed red herring in a sea of real and pressing challenges that deserve our attention. Thankfully, the renewables revolution has finally taken hold in Australia. It is time the Coalition just got out of the way and let the rest of us get on with economically and environmentally responsible energy policy.

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (20:56): It is 2024. We need to replace our coal-fired power stations in the next 15 years. It is a fantasy to say this could be done with nuclear in that time frame or at a cost that is okay for taxpayers and consumers. As this House has heard me say many times before, it would cost too much and take too long. It is not a serious proposal. It could just be dismissed as politics, but the reality here is that it fundamentally undermines the transition to renewables and puts at risk \$32 billion of investment going into regional New South Wales. At current 2024 rates it would cost \$211.7 billion to replace New South Wales's 8,300 megawatts of coal-fired power stations with small-scale modular reactors, and \$70.1 billion using a large-scale nuclear reactor. Those opposite do not have the figures, but we on this side do. We actually know what is going on.

In the countries with nuclear energy, small and large nuclear reactors are running over budget and behind schedule. The first United States reactors built from scratch in decades, located in Georgia, have been described as "maybe the most expensive power plant ever". The project is running seven years late and \$26 billion over budget. In the United Kingdom, the Hinkley Point C station is running \$55 billion over budget. It is costing an eye-watering \$92 billion. Late last year the only company to have small nuclear power plants approved in the United States cancelled its first project due to rising costs. Given the cost and time barriers, the case has not been made for why we need nuclear in New South Wales.

We have a strong renewables sector, access to land and some of the best solar and wind resources in the world. Other countries do not have these advantages. Nuclear is expensive and could not be delivered within the time frame New South Wales needs to exit coal-fired power stations. Australia has no nuclear energy industry, and it would take decades to develop the capability to do this. For the benefit of members, AUKUS is not an energy generation project; nor do we have a workforce in place. Lucas Heights is not an energy generation project. There is a workforce that has been there for years, but it cannot build a nuclear power plant. I know this comes as a shock to some members. But do not trust me; trust the Chief Scientist and Engineer of New South Wales, who actually is a nuclear scientist and worked on the British submarines. He states:

The hard reality is Australia has no skills or experience in nuclear power plant building, operation or maintenance—let alone in managing the fuel cycle. Realistically, Australia will be starting from scratch in developing skills in the whole nuclear power supply chain.

We do not have a regulatory framework. Again, the chief scientist states:

There is currently no regulatory environment for nuclear energy in Australia.

... Nuclear regulation is still a major issue even in countries such as the US, Japan and UK—where there is fifty years and more of operational experience—let alone in NSW.

The amendment moved by the Opposition is a joke. Those opposite should stand up for what they believe in. They say they believe in the road map, so they should support it. Reject nuclear so we can get on with the job. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (20:59): I will make a short contribution to support the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition because I know other members wish to speak. He is right in that the motion as written is ludicrous. For any government to completely rule out an energy source forever is so short-sighted. The best way to ensure that New South Wales has reliable energy in the future is to have a mix of energy sources. The Nationals have been very clear on this. We support coal, gas, renewables and nuclear, because that is what people in regional New South Wales want us to stand up for. They want affordable and reliable power, and they want the Government to be innovative when looking at the technology that will secure the State's energy supply.

The Minister spoke about how in many parts of the regions there is access to land for solar and wind farms, but those farms have a massive footprint and some communities are really struggling with that. The Government must find ways to have a good energy mix that supports a constant, affordable and reliable supply of energy. It also needs to keep the power cheap for the community, which is why the Government cannot, with any good sense, completely rule out any particular source of energy. The last thing I will say is that members opposite often criticise The Nationals and say that we are dinosaurs.

The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham: Hear, hear!

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham will have his opportunity. When I was education Minister in the previous Government, we canvassed the eight million square metres of roof space on top of public schools to put in solar panels and make sure that the State has battery power. We were leading the way in looking at opportunities in renewables, but only where there would be limited impact on the community. That is the balance the Government has to get right. The Nationals are very clear on nuclear. At our conference on the weekend we passed a motion saying that we support the rollout of nuclear and that it must be part of the energy mix going forward. The motion as written is nonsense.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM (21:01): It needs to be exposed that the position of the Labor Party on nuclear, as stated by the mover of the motion, is absurd. They support a nuclear reactor sitting in a submarine in Sydney Harbour—that is fine, safe and essential to the defence of Australia—but the motion opposes a nuclear reactor generating electricity at Liddell or Lithgow. Furthermore, the Labor Government's position is that it needs to continue with the Eraring coal-fired power station to keep the lights on in New South Wales, maximising carbon emissions in the name of climate change, but that it is bad to have nuclear power, which is carbon free. It is an absurdity to have those conflicting positions. To use the analogy of the mover of the motion, you would find more logic and rationality in a Nigerian email scam than in the position of the Labor Party. Submarines with nuclear reactors are fine but apparently nuclear power generation is bad. The Leader of the Government had the hide to talk about cost and skills. What is the Holy Grail of new renewables in New South Wales? What is the Holy Grail of this whole rollout, the great flagship program of the renewable advocates?

The Hon. Rod Roberts: What is it?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It is Snowy 2.0, the \$30 billion white elephant that is unlikely to generate a gigawatt of anything. The Government lacks the skills and know-how to do the geological testing to bore through the ground without being bogged in slush or locked into hard rock, as is currently the case. The Government should not lecture members about skills and costs. Snowy 2.0 is the greatest fiasco in the history of Australian infrastructure. Nuclear is a logical part of the State's energy mix. We are lectured about climate change and how New South Wales must follow the international trends, but why is Australia the only G20 economy that does not have nuclear when New South Wales is geologically sound and has uranium in the ground?

The Federal Leader of the Opposition has no problem selling uranium to India for power generation and manufacturing to destroy Australian jobs. That is all fine. Australia would be the most logical and rational nuclear-powered country in the world. It is only because of the Neanderthal element of the Opposition, who do not want a mix of energy sources in Australia, that we have not already gone ahead with it. It is logical in Australia to back up renewable energy sources, but they are not being backed up by Snowy 2.0 or pumped hydro.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: We can buy batteries. What about the battery project?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Battery projects? We have fewer than 10 in New South Wales. The Government will be breaking out the candles. If the Government is going to rely on renewables, it is logical that it should at least have the backup of 24/7 base load nuclear power. If nuclear is okay for the defence industry and

if the Government is going to support Eraring, we are better off with nuclear and the policy that was announced today by the Federal Opposition leader.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (21:04): I support the motion of the Hon. Peter Primrose. However, I move:

That the question be amended by inserting at the end:

(2) That this House:

- (a) notes the Leader of the New South Wales Opposition has stated today that his party is "open to lifting the ban on nuclear in New South Wales";
- (b) notes that New South Wales has a plan to replace coal-fired power with renewables through the Energy Infrastructure Roadmap; and
- (c) calls on the New South Wales Liberal Party and The Nationals parties to continue to offer bipartisan support to the transition to renewable energy in New South Wales.

It is absolutely true that nuclear power generation has no future in New South Wales because it has had no past. If we were going to build nuclear in this country, we should have been pioneering this energy in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, but we did not do it. That boat has sailed. Speaking of boats, if members are worried about nuclear energy, when a nuclear submarine parks at Garden Island it will make New South Wales a nuclear target. I would not worry about the reactor; I would worry about the Trident II D5 thermonuclear warheads on that submarine. If one of those goes pop, we are all fried. Who will be fried by nuclear? It will be the Federal Opposition, which has fried its electoral chances. Today on Sky News Peta Credlin, that hardcore leftist, said that Peter Dutton faces an uphill battle on nuclear. This one-eyed backer of the Coalition said straight out of the gates that their goose is cooked and they are dead on arrival.

The Opposition should take its nuclear policy to Muswellbrook, which has had its community upturned by coalmines for 100 years. They have been covered in dust—the cancer cluster—and powered the economy for 100 years and now they can have a nuclear reactor as a thank you. I will tell members who would hate it: the thoroughbred breeders, the coalminers, the vigneron and the big end of town. They will be on the phone to Opposition members in the next 48 hours, saying, "We want to keep you out of Pokolbin. Look at our yearlings and our vineyards. We don't want a nuclear power station sitting on the hill at Muswellbrook." The Opposition will back down. Dave Layzell and Paul Toole have already done it. The Opposition's disallowance bill was the stupidest thing I have heard for a long time. It was like gold. Just as Peter Dutton was hitting the lead, he has totally and unnecessarily blown his electoral chances to pieces with a nuclear reactor. Opposition members should go to Lithgow and Muswellbrook, and they will be run out of town with pitchforks and torches.

The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (21:07): The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham will be a hard act to follow. I support the motion. I will use the member's words from one of his earlier speeches, when he introduced me to the phrase "the mother of all bombs"—the MOAB—which landed for me in terms of Peter Dutton's announcement today. To use the words of my wonderful Labor colleague and Federal member for Hunter, Daniel Repacholi, "They didn't even have the balls to come to the Hunter to announce it." The sites that Peter Dutton proposed in his announcement include Liddell. Recently the Government made a huge announcement of \$250 million for the SunShot program in Muswellbrook, where I stood with Minister Houssos, Minister Sharpe, AGL and our Federal counterparts. It is completely ludicrous and crazy to even entertain the idea of nuclear reactors in our backyard in the Hunter Valley. It is a shame that "Fukushima Faraway" is not in the Chamber for this debate.

There has been no discussion about what New South Wales would do with nuclear waste. At the moment we export it all to France. The cost, which Peter Dutton has conceded is going to be very expensive, will be borne by all the people of New South Wales in skyrocketing electricity prices. At a time when our communities are facing huge cost-of-living issues, to pile on and turn the screws even further with skyrocketing energy prices because of this stupid idea that nuclear energy could possibly be a solution in any way, shape or form is just laughable. I support the motion moved by the Hon. Peter Primrose and the amendment moved by the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham.

The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (21:10): With the short amount of time I have to speak, I will be quite brief. I am sure this subject will come up many times over in this parliamentary term. I oppose the motion. Nuclear energy is clean energy. It is secure, 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week energy. It is reliable and it does not depend on the weather. Since decades past, a lot has changed and a lot will change going forward. It is a shame to see the old lefties continue to argue against nuclear energy and to push these bans. Those outdated arguments should be in the rubbish bin. A 2013 report in the *Environmental Science and Technology Journal* found that "global nuclear power has prevented an average of 1.84 million air pollution-related deaths" by keeping pollution out of the air. If we continue to support these bans, how many more deaths would not be prevented?

As other members have touched on, today the Federal Coalition announced that a future Federal Coalition government will introduce zero emissions nuclear energy into Australia. That is excellent news. Nuclear energy is not a novel idea, as we have heard from previous members. The United States has nuclear energy. France has a whole lot of nuclear energy and exports it to neighbouring European countries when their windmills and solar panels are not working. Many other countries have it too. A novel idea is the suggestion that Australia can obtain its energy solely from the weather—from solar and wind. In 2019 an inquiry of this House found that solar and wind—even firming with gas, batteries and pumped hydro—would not be an adequate solution to our State's needs. In 2021 the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe said:

... nuclear power can be seen as part of a broader portfolio alongside deploying other sustainable low- or zero-carbon technologies to decarbonise the global energy system and energy intensive industries to deliver on the Paris Agreement ...

My humble request would be for the anti-nuclear activists of the 1980s who are still in the Chamber moving motions such as this to take a good, hard look at what the future may well look like.

[*Business interrupted.*]

Business of the House

CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I move:

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

Motion agreed to.

Motions

NUCLEAR ENERGY

[*Business resumed.*]

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (21:12): We could not get a bigger indictment than the person who set those opposite on the right track announcing his retirement yesterday because he has had enough. Is there a bigger signal that the members opposite have lost their way? And then their Federal leader, Peter Dutton, today announced seven sites, with two of them being in Liddell and Mount Piper in New South Wales. And then we have poor old Speakman, the Leader of the Opposition, who does not know what side of the bed to get out of. Back in May he said, "We can't wait for nuclear," but today Max Maddison from *The Sydney Morning Herald* stated:

NSW Coalition leaders Mark Speakman and Dugald Saunders have both told this masthead they are open to lifting the ban on nuclear energy, allowing for the construction of reactors in the state.

Speakman caved in to Dutton. As recently as May he was saying, "We can't wait for nuclear. It takes too long," and now he is on board with it. I add that this morning Premier Minns categorically ruled out the idea, so everyone knows where we stand on the matter. And then we have the Nats. I wish the Hon. Wes Fang was in the Chamber to tell us about the reactors in Wagga Wagga. They are all over the place. They would not have a clue. They are clinging to a 1970s technology and ideology, equating this masculinity of base load power. "We've got to have base load power, otherwise we'll never power the economy." The CSIRO, no less—an authority—has come out and said that it will take 15 years to build and cost 50 per cent more than wind and solar. This is unbelievable. The paragon of nuclear energy, France, turned the bloody things off last week because there is too much solar and wind. Where are members opposite? Wake up.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): Order!

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Meanwhile, the sensible centre on this side of the House—the Labor Government—is moving the State on a trajectory towards renewables, jobs growth for the future and a clean energy economy where we do not have to worry about waste and half-lives of thousands of years. My advice to members opposite, if they want to get in government, is to drop it. It gives me joy and heart that they keep coming into the Chamber and doubling down on failed, ridiculous policies that will not get this economy or country anywhere.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK (21:15): The nuclear energy debate in this country, and indeed the entire energy debate, reflects how woeful our political culture has become. We have a crisis and both sides of politics are playing games. It is juvenile. Every right-winger in Australia today is out there saying, "Nuclear is the greatest thing ever." The Liberal Party has run the country for most of the past 25 years and it did not think of nuclear then. Every left-winger in the country is out there saying, "Nuclear is the biggest bogeyman of all time." It is juvenile, partisan, tribal nonsense.

The mover of the motion, the Hon. Peter Primrose, and the Leader of the Government have both said, "We can't have nuclear. It's too expensive." I ask members: Has there ever been a product in history banned by government because it is too expensive? When cars or mobile phones or aeroplanes came along, did government say, "No, you're not allowed to have that industry. It's too expensive"? No. It is all nonsense. The Government wants to ban nuclear because the crony capitalists who have cosied up with both big parties and are making billions of dollars through all these government subsidies through the renewables do not want it because it will embarrass them and they will not continue to get all their subsidies when we have cheap energy via nuclear energy.

The Hon. Penny Sharpe: It's not cheap.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: The Leader of the Government says that it is not cheap. If it is too expensive or it takes too much time, so what? Why ban it? We do not want the Government to ban it; we want the private sector to ban it.

Ms Sue Higginson: It is already banned.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: It should not be banned. We do not want the Government being authoritarian and stopping a new industry from coming along. The much vaunted renewable revolution has failed. We were told 20 years ago that renewables would give us cheap, reliable energy but prices keep getting higher. Why are we experiencing inflation at the moment and no-one knows what to do about it. There are two reasons. The first reason is COVID hysteria and paying everybody to stay at home. "Here's a trillion dollars. Stay at home. Shut down your business. Don't do any work. We'll pay you to stay at home."

The second reason is that the foundation of our whole civilisation is our energy supply. Australia is such a successful country because we have unlimited coal. We have all this cheap coal, which has made us a rich and prosperous country, and now the geniuses on both sides of this place want to shut it down. I am a fan of the coal industry, but the truth is that I am a fan of all forms of energy. I just want government to get out of the way. Government does not know how to run businesses. The more government does, the worse it gets. It is hurting Australians. The Dutton plan is just more central planning. I am pro a nuclear industry. [*Time expired.*]

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine): There are too many audible conversations in the Chamber. I understand that it is late on a Wednesday and it is an interesting debate, but members will take their conversations outside.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (21:19): In reply: I thank all honourable members for their participation and commend to them the amendment by the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham, which is sensible and reasonable. As for the Leader of the Opposition, as much as I respect him, the fact that he believes that Lucas Heights is a power station leads me to question the basis of what he has proposed. I certainly do not support that.

Here is one of many questions about this policy for the Liberals and The Nationals: Under its Integrated System Plan, the Australian Energy Market Operator forecasts that the amount of rooftop solar in Australia is going to nearly quadruple from current levels of more than 20 gigawatts to nearly 72 gigawatts by 2040. With all that rooftop solar, how does the Coalition suppose it is going to inject all its nuclear power into the grid? Is it going to rip out all the rooftop solar?

In Ontario, the nuclear nirvana often cited by the Coalition, the provincial government has just ordered two of the world's biggest batteries to soak up the excess nuclear power, particularly in the middle of the day when it is not needed. They do not even have much rooftop solar. In France, as my colleague the Hon. Mark Buttigieg mentioned, the government entity Électricité de France, already bailed out on multiple occasions because of the soaring cost of nuclear, is now being forced to switch off nuclear in summer because there is not enough demand.

Rooftop solar photovoltaic systems are already going to push grid demand to negative levels during daylight hours in coming years. By 2040, which the Coalition now begrudgingly concedes is the earliest it can bring any nuclear plants online, rooftop solar will be eating much of the daylight grid demand. Flexibility is the key. Always-on, so-called base load nuclear is just not going to fit. In March, during budget estimates, we heard from the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte. He said:

Who is going regulate it? Who is going to provide the skilled workers? Seventy thousand people in Canada work in the nuclear industry; we have nobody in this country who has even the faintest idea how to build a nuclear plant. What about reprocessing? What about shipping, fuelling—who is doing that?

All of these unknown elements add to the risk of attempting to set up and subsidise the fantasy of a nuclear future.

The PRESIDENT: The Hon. Peter Primrose has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Damien Tudehope and the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham have moved amendments. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Damien Tudehope be agreed to.

The House divided.

Ayes12
 Noes22
 Majority.....10

AYES

Carter
 Farlow (teller)
 Farraway
 MacDonald

Maclaren-Jones
 Martin
 Merton
 Mitchell

Rath (teller)
 Taylor
 Tudehope
 Ward

NOES

Banasiak
 Boyd
 Buckingham
 Buttigieg
 Cohn
 D'Adam
 Donnelly
 Faehrmann

Graham
 Higginson
 Houssos
 Hurst
 Jackson
 Kaine
 Latham

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

PAIRS

Fang
 Munro

Lawrence
 Moriarty

Amendment of the Hon. Damien Tudehope negated.

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

Leave granted.**The House divided.**

Ayes30
 Noes5
 Majority.....25

AYES

Boyd
 Buckingham
 Buttigieg
 Carter
 Cohn
 D'Adam
 Donnelly
 Faehrmann
 Farlow
 Farraway

Graham
 Higginson
 Houssos
 Hurst
 Jackson
 Kaine
 MacDonald
 Maclaren-Jones
 Merton
 Mitchell

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

NOES

Banasiak
 Latham (teller)

Martin (teller)
 Roberts

Ruddick

Amendment of the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham agreed to.

The PRESIDENT: The question now is that the motion as amended be agreed to. Is leave granted to ring the bells for one minute?

Leave granted.

The House divided.

Ayes19
Noes16
Majority.....3

AYES

Boyd
Buckingham
Buttigieg
Cohn
D'Adam
Donnelly
Faehrmann

Graham
Higginson
Houssos
Hurst
Jackson
Kaine

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

NOES

Banasiak
Carter
Farlow (teller)
Farraway
Latham
MacDonald

Maclaren-Jones
Martin
Merton
Mitchell
Rath (teller)

Roberts
Ruddick
Taylor
Tudehope
Ward

PAIRS

Lawrence
Moriarty

Fang
Munro

Motion as amended agreed to.

Adjournment Debate

ADJOURNMENT

The Hon. PENNY SHARPE: I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

STREETWORK

The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD (21:38): I recently had occasion to visit Streetwork, which operates in Sydney's northern region. This worthy organisation works with vulnerable young people to turn their lives around. A team of specialist youth caseworkers seek to support them, regardless of the issues that they face, through a focused mentoring program. As members are aware, young people are referred due to a range of challenges, whether it be a mental health crisis, disengagement from school, homelessness, substance abuse or crime. As Father Chris Riley told me recently, kids are not born bad. In my role as shadow Minister for Youth Justice, naturally I support any diversionary or early intervention programs to keep them out of jail in the first place. It is not just Streetwork; many similar organisations hold the same noble ambition, like Just Reinvest NSW, BackTrack, Youth Off The Streets, Uniting's Foyer Central, the Koori Court and the Exodus Foundation, to name just a few.

We know that young people who get caught up in the State's criminal justice system come from some of the poorest and most disadvantaged parts of New South Wales. They are vulnerable, and a highly disproportionate number of them are Indigenous youth. To reduce the numbers of children on the trajectory of becoming adult offenders, there is a critical need for a strengthened focus on early intervention and prevention programs. Are we investing enough in those programs and organisations? Surely, by tackling disadvantage and the causes of offending, crime is prevented and expenditure on courts and prisons is reduced.

I recently wrote in support of a proposed Just Reinvest partnership in Armidale between BackTrack and the Nēwara Aboriginal Corporation. The initiative holds tremendous promise for the community as it addresses underlying social issues and diverting resources towards prevention and rehabilitation. By strategically investing in the local community's wellbeing and empowering that community, it is possible to create a safer and more

inclusive community for all. If successful, Armidale stands to benefit significantly from the initiative. It will reduce recidivism. By focusing on early intervention and support services, it is possible to break the cycle of crime and incarceration, leading to better outcomes for individuals, families and the community. It will enhance community safety by investing in community-led programs that address the root cause of the crime. And it will increase social cohesion and empower the community by being Aboriginal led and ensuring that solutions are culturally appropriate and sustainable.

It makes so much more sense to divert youth who have committed minor offences away from the system and towards community-based treatment involving the youth's family and/or services and support options. It stands to reason that employing diversionary programs rather than going through the formal system is a much more productive way of addressing and preventing future delinquency, thus reducing recidivism. Early intervention not only prevents the onset of delinquent behaviour; it also supports the development of a youth's assets and resilience. In March this year the Parliament introduced the Bail and Crimes Amendment Bill 2024 to create sweeping new changes to youth bail laws and to make it harder for children aged over 14 and under 18 to get bail. I am not going to knock that bill; the Coalition supported it. What I am saying is it is obvious that there is a better way.

That bill was a bandaied solution that does not address the problem in the long run. Evidence suggests that, if bail is denied, children are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system. Surely by now we have learned that youth detention has been found to aggravate the trauma and behavioural issues that young people experience. The social cost to our communities is obvious, but I would like to conclude on the economic costs. The average cost per day for a young person to be detained in a youth detention centre is approximately \$2,800. The average cost per day for a young person to be supervised in the community via Youth Justice is around \$293. That is roughly 10 per cent of the cost of keeping kids in detention for what I daresay is a 10 times better result for our troubled kids and their communities.

ENERGY SECURITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (21:42): As I stand in this Chamber on one of the coldest and almost the shortest days of the year in Sydney, ahead of the winter solstice on Friday, I am reminded of the importance of energy security and affordability for everyone trying to keep their home and family warm tonight. The New South Wales Labor Government's priority is keeping energy accessible for everyone in the State. We plan to do that in an ambitious way to protect and preserve our environmental commons to enjoy now and for future generations. Part of energy accessibility is getting on with the job of delivering practical solutions to keep the lights on in New South Wales, using the cheapest, cleanest and most reliable form of power: renewable solar and wind energy, backed by battery storage. Reliable renewable energy is a long-term strategy to put downward cost pressure on people's household bills as we invest in proven lowest cost technology to generate our power.

The 2024-25 budget includes \$3.1 billion to help deliver New South Wales renewable energy zones, which are part of the ambitious plan we have to replace ageing coal-fired plants with green infrastructure. Those zones are areas where multiple renewable energy projects come together with storage and transmission facilities, creating hubs to deliver cheap and reliable clean energy to homes and businesses in New South Wales. We have also allocated \$1 billion in seed funding for the Energy Security Corporation to accelerate investment in clean energy projects. That is planning for the long term to make sure that, on nights like tonight, the energy grid delivers the power that people need to keep their homes warm. It is also planning for the long term to make sure that our world-renowned natural heritage in New South Wales is protected as we move forward to reduce emissions and replace our ailing coal power supply.

But in the short and medium term we are also supporting people to make their homes more energy efficient in a way that lowers household emissions through lower power use. The budget has allocated \$238.9 million to the upcoming Consumer Energy Strategy to support households to upgrade their homes to be more energy efficient and comfortable. The benefit of that to people is that it also keeps the bills to heat and cool their homes lower. Crucially, we are investing in our social housing stock and in the comfort of our most vulnerable people, who I am also thinking of this evening. For people in social housing, we have allocated \$87.5 million to make energy-saving upgrades and to keep their homes cooler in summer and warmer in midwinter.

One side of the coin is building green power infrastructure to reduce emissions and protect our environment; the other side is enjoying and celebrating our natural heritage. This budget has delivered \$75 million to maintain the almost 900 national parks in New South Wales, where people will go to camp, bushwalk, picnic, explore and just enjoy the fresh air during the upcoming school holidays. I am also delighted that we have been able to protect the Butterfly Cave, an Aboriginal place in the Hunter, which will now become part of our national parks and wildlife estate to ensure that connection to country continues for future generations of the Awabakal people.

We are also providing \$87 million in funding to the Environmental Trust, the independent statutory body that supports projects from researchers, community and Aboriginal groups, industry and government to enhance the natural environment. Those kinds of projects reduce pollution, restore and rehabilitate our environment, and create research and education to develop solutions to environmental problems that benefit all of us into the future. We are ambitious for our accessible green future. We are taking the steps for long-term planning to protect and enhance our environmental commons in our infrastructure delivery decisions and in our protection of the beautiful and special places in our natural environment so that comfort and beauty are available to everyone in New South Wales. In finishing, I say to all members in the Chamber: Stay warm.

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Ms SUE HIGGINSON (21:47): Dutton and Littleproud and their Federal Liberal-Nationals Coalition cronies have now pressed the nuclear button in Australia. I hope that one thing will come from it—that they blow themselves up once and for all. Nuclear is currently banned by two separate Federal laws, which will require the Federal Coalition to not only win government but also control the Senate to repeal. The Coalition has not controlled the Senate since 2004 and it did so for only three years. Dutton has announced that two of his seven fantasy nuclear power plants will be in New South Wales: one in Lithgow and one in Muswellbrook.

Nuclear is also currently banned in New South Wales, as it is in Victoria and Queensland. In New South Wales, Labor and The Greens oppose nuclear power, and The Greens will not under any circumstances change that position. In fact, it seems that government and opposition in at least Queensland and Victoria—although not, as of tonight, in New South Wales—oppose nuclear and are not remotely interested in budging. Dutton has dribbled that he will somehow compulsorily acquire the sites and then make his fantasy government own the plants and work with industry. That is with no consideration for the communities around those sites. In that fantasy he has ignored the fact that energy industry participants and experts in Australia have zero interest or expertise in building large nuclear reactors. In fact, any first large reactor would likely cost more than the combined valuation of Origin, AGL and Energy Australia combined.

Who will Dutton and his fantasy government partner with for this nuclear dystopian fantasy? Dutton is not living in real time; he is living in fantasy time. The newest reactors in the United States took 18 years from announcement to commercial operation. In the United Arab Emirates, where lawmaking, planning controls and social licence do not apply like they do in Australia, it took 13 years. Dutton, in his fantasy and desperate last-ditch effort for political relevance, cannot put a time on it. Why would he? He will not achieve power and he will not be around in 2045, which is the earliest that Alan Finkel reckons it could be established.

Dutton's fantasy is recklessly expensive. Analysts say, very optimistically, that the first unit would cost \$24 billion if all goes well, the fifth and subsequent units might be around \$12 billion and the cost of 16 units would be \$221 billion, assuming there are no cost blowouts, which is not the experience. Costs blowouts normally go to around 238 per cent for storage and 120 per cent for the power plant—and all for what? The CSIRO conservatively costed that electricity from nuclear power in Australia would be at least 50 per cent more expensive than solar and wind. Which insurer will provide the disaster insurance? There would be none! While serious nuclear power accidents are very rare, when they happen they are freaking nuclear! The Fukushima clean-up is projected to cost between \$350 billion and \$750 billion.

Of course, then we are back where we always land: How will the waste be managed? Where will it go? I know the Coalition does not remotely care about environmental health, but we cannot make nuclear waste pollution disappear in a giant nuclear waste capture and storage machine. Then there is the energy gap—the gap that all responsible policymakers, providers and industry participants are working around the clock to ensure does not eventuate. That is the gap that Dutton will guarantee happens as he plays out his reckless fantasy, loaded by political relevance deficit disorder. The reality is that his fantasy of pressing the nuclear button and his lame attempt to reignite the climate wars may just slow down the rollout of and investment in renewables.

Like it or lump it, coal is coming to an end. The nation's biggest electric utilities including AGL, Origin, Energy Australia and Alinta, which own major coal- and gas-fired power plants and are also investing heavily in renewables, say coal is coming to an end and they do not want nuclear. Dutton and Littleproud and their Coalition cronies are by definition morons. A "moron" is defined as a stupid person. The example of the use of "moron" in the *Oxford Dictionary* is, "We can't let these thoughtless morons get away with mindless vandalism every weekend."

CITY OF PARRAMATTA SMALL BUSINESS

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (21:52): Small businesses are the backbone of our local communities and the economy in New South Wales, employing 43 per cent of the New South Wales private sector workforce. Small business in our State is inherently multicultural, with 35 per cent of small business owners born overseas. It is a

source of great pride for our State and it is a bridge between our communities. The New South Wales Labor Government has been tepid in its support for small businesses, as they face increased energy and supply costs in a high inflationary environment. I have become even more alarmed by recent actions of the Labor-held City of Parramatta Council to undermine local small businesses. Last week I visited Little India in Harris Park to listen to small business owners about planning issues in the area that have led to recent ridiculous enforcement activity from the City of Parramatta Council.

I thank the President of the Little India Harris Park Business Association, Sanjay Deshwal, for organising my meetings with local business owners. I thank also the Federal Liberal candidate for Parramatta, Katie Mullens, for her attendance. For those who are unaware about the area, Wigram, Marion and Station streets in Little India are lined by incredible businesses, including more than 20 eateries that are run from food carts, food trucks and restaurants. The area at night is a site to behold and a source of great pride for our city. When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Sydney last year, together with Prime Minister Albanese he unveiled a plaque in Little India to great fanfare. That global attention for a small part of Western Sydney was a great source of pride for the local community.

But the significant potential of Little India has been squandered by council. Policy settings must be in place to encourage the liveliness of communities such as Little India. At present they are not. Council has levied significant fines against businesses for operating at what are reasonable hours for a vibrant business district. Many Indian food businesses operate into the later hours of the night. Businesses on Wigram Street have received fines in the thousands of dollars because they were operating after 7.00 p.m. in areas zoned R2 low-density residential. Little India is the victim of inconsistent zoning arrangements. Marion Street and Station Street are zoned E1, allowing for business operation, while Wigram Street is zoned R2, giving rise to this enforcement action. Anyone who has been to Little India or Wigram Street knows that it is not a residential area.

Due to zoning, only part of the Little India cultural and food precinct is zoned for business activity. One business owner showed me the ridiculous scenario of a warning being letter issued to his business on the same day as a \$6,000 fine was issued. That warning went to the owner of property, so the business owner did not even receive it. Fines have been issued under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 and the Local Government Act 1993 by the City of Parramatta Council. It appears that is a byproduct of subdivision 27A, mobile food and drink outlets, in the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008. The Little India area in Harris Park may have been a comprehensively residential area 20 years ago, but it is mainly used for commercial activity, with residential communities in a different part of the suburb.

So much effort has been put into the development of Little India by local businesses, the local Indian community, the community at large across Sydney, and Parramatta council itself. But the council is undermining the success and opportunities that are available for the further development of Little India as a vibrant heart for our Indian community in Sydney by issuing fines to local businesses. The very point of living in Harris Park, and the significant benefits of the community that has been built around it, is to embrace the lively commercial activity so close to where people live and where so much housing is going on around it. The Minns Labor Government can choose to back its nimby councillors on City of Parramatta Council or the business owners in Little India who are making a significant contribution to the Parramatta economy and working hard to get ahead.

I am frustrated to see the Government using red tape to get in the way of resourceful and passionate business people making a contribution to our multicultural society through the establishment of small and vibrant businesses, which make our city great and make Parramatta a lively centre of our city. The people of Parramatta will have an opportunity to send a message to the Labor Party in the local government elections in September. They can kick Labor off council by supporting candidates who back the entrepreneurial spirit of Parramatta and its businesses. The Liberal Party backs these small businesses in Harris Park from ridiculous enforcement activity from an overzealous council that is determined to make it harder for small businesses to operate, which is killing the life and vibrancy of Little India. I look forward to working towards a resolution for small businesses in Little India in their planning issues and their unfair targeting by council. I implore the State Government to get behind those initiatives as well.

ANIMAL CRUELTY

The Hon. EMMA HURST (21:57): The human capacity for cruelty is heartbreaking. Who would impale a living animal and then drag him or her along by the wound for recreation? Most of us would shudder at the thought, yet there is no difference between the pain and suffering felt by a fish and the pain and suffering felt by a companion animal. Would we cut the eyes off a live animal for profit? Of course not! Yet in the prawn industry, female prawns have eyes crushed or cut off, with no pain relief, to force them into a state of extreme stress so they produce more quickly. This procedure is called eyestork ablation. In commercial farming, we cut off chunks of a lamb's skin, leaving these small, baby animals with raw and bleeding bodies. We use a laser or a hot iron blade to

sear the sensitive beaks off chickens, we force them to lay eggs beyond their capacity, and we grind up male chicks alive.

We forcibly impregnate cows, only to take their babies away so their milk can be taken away and sold for human consumption. Former dairy farmers report that the mothers cry out all night for their babies who were taken to slaughterhouses and killed. All of that is excused for profit. We even interfere in wild ecosystems. 1080 poison is routinely used to bait wild animals. It is a vicious and indiscriminate killer. 1080 kills dogs and any other animal that is unfortunate enough to ingest it. The use of 1080 poison is cruel, dangerous and irresponsible. My office is contacted regularly by devastated families who have lost a companion animal to this hideous and indiscriminate poison.

For many people in rural areas, a vet is hours away and they are faced with having to try to find a gun to put their friend out of their misery or let them shake, vomit and have frenzied fits for hours. I have attempted to ban 1080 poison but have had no support from other political parties. Members might think that would make us give up but instead it makes us all the more determined to outlaw this cruelty. The issues where no-one listens are when we need to yell the loudest.

In the deserts of Australia we use a device called a Judas collar. A wild camel will be darted and fitted with a Judas collar which contains a tracking device. Later when the camel rejoins his or her herd, aerial shooters will track them down. The camels will be chased by helicopters and shot from the air. All the camels will be killed, except one. The camel wearing the Judas collar will be left alive. That camel will roam the desert until they join a new herd, at which point the camel is tracked and the herd is killed again, leaving the same survivor. The process repeats itself. The psychological toll on the individual camels who repeatedly experience mass shootings of their herd is hard to think about. I imagine they eventually isolate themselves and remain alone even once the battery in the collar has run out.

The psychological and physical suffering that we inflict on animals is unforgivable. We keep them in cages, we keep them from ever experiencing sunlight, we force them to race, we mutilate them, we test on them, we skin them, we rip parts of their bodies off without pain relief, we poison them and we kill them in their wild homes. That is happening all the time all around us. When people finally realise the extent of what we do, they ask, "How can this be legal?" It is legal because it is hidden, and the industries that harm animals expose themselves when fighting for laws to keep their practices in the dark, with gagging legislation to make it illegal to expose animal cruelty in New South Wales. That legislation is backed by the Liberal-Nationals Coalition, the Shooters and former One Nation MPs.

But there is good news. Despite the best efforts of those political parties to help industries keep their acts of cruelty hidden from the public, people are finding out anyway and are standing up with disgust towards anyone who would work to keep those practices legal, and they are fighting for change. As a species, we have an immense capacity for compassion, for reason and for learning. So amid all the cruelty, I also know of the human capacity for kindness. I see examples of this in my work every single day. We can change the way we treat animals, and we damn well will. A kinder, more compassionate world is already on its way.

ONE RACEWAY

The Hon. BOB NANVA (22:02): Australia has a unique motorsport culture. In times gone by, it was simply the Ford and Holden rivalry which dominated the scene, and our screens, but today Australia boasts a variety of revhead subcultures, from Aussie muscle enthusiasts, Japanese domestic market aficionados, four-wheel drive trail bashers and good old-fashioned lovers of bitumen, tarmac and putting a time on the scoreboard. Wakefield Park, now known as One Raceway, contributed to that last subculture for many years before its closure.

It is not so long ago that Wakefield Park was discussed in this Parliament under unhappier circumstances. Almost two years ago the raceway—one of the few that remained accessible to motoring enthusiasts in regional New South Wales—was forced to close its doors. The Goulburn community lost not just a local landmark but also a part of its character and a contributor to its local economy. Understandably, what followed was an outpouring of goodwill by motoring enthusiasts and the broader community, culminating in an e-petition presented to this Parliament with one of the highest number of signatures recorded in the Parliament's history.

It was clear that the people of regional New South Wales wanted a future for this iconic park, which leads me to Steve Shelley, who purchased Wakefield Park last year and began a serious effort to reinvestigate the site as One Raceway. Having recently visited the park and seen firsthand the work Steve and his team have put into it, the rejuvenation is nothing short of remarkable. They have taken to their project with ambition, passion and genuine ingenuity. Nothing has been done by halves but with an eye to the future and the longevity of the facility.

From rebuilding relationships with neighbours to drainage, track layout and spectator facilities, Steve and his team have worked methodically and thoughtfully, and at significant personal cost.

I particularly note Steve's resourcefulness with respect to his noise attenuation initiatives, which also double as viewing platforms to provide an incredible bird's-eye view of the entire racetrack. The view is quite unlike any other that I have seen or experienced at other racetracks in New South Wales. Beyond reducing the amenity impacts on neighbouring properties, the measures will also improve the spectator experience in a way that will genuinely excite racegoers. Steve has put his own money and time into ensuring that, when reopened, One Raceway will be a staple for motorsport in our State and even nationally.

It is clear that this project is deeply personal to Steve and his team. It is a personal project for a motor enthusiast and proud local who is putting his money where his mouth is, and the broader community stands to gain an enormous benefit from that investment. The direct and indirect economic benefits that the racetrack once contributed to the Goulburn area, such as in hospitality and service industries, will no doubt find their way back to the area and in greater volumes as a result of the track's reopening.

Wakefield Park held a special place among the community, not only because of its pedigree, having been opened almost 30 years ago by Sir Jack Brabham, but also because of its ease of accessibility for all motoring enthusiasts, from mere spectators of motorsport to those who take their own cars down for a track day. I am pleased that the Government has provided some support to One Raceway. It will be a worthwhile investment in motorsport and in the Goulburn community. I am hopeful that the extra funding will assist with the already significant works that have been undertaken by Steve and his team to ensure that the park is enjoyed by car enthusiasts for many years to come. I will continue to follow the progress of One Raceway, and I look forward to visiting it again in the future.

The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose): The question is that this House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 22:06 until Thursday 20 June 2024 at 10:00.