

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

**Wednesday 18 September 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.

## *Motions*

### **GENEVA CONVENTIONS SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY**

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (10:01):** I move:

That this House notes that:

- (a) on 12 August 2024 the world commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions;
- (b) the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols form a cornerstone of the international humanitarian law, establishing rules protecting wounded, sick or shipwrecked combatants, prisoners of war, civilians and military support personnel; and
- (c) Australia is a strong supporter of the Geneva Conventions and was an original signatory, ratifying the treaty on 14 October 1958.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **GREAT IRISH FAMINE COMMEMORATION**

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (10:02):** I move:

That this House notes:

- (a) on 25 August 2024 the twenty-fifth Great Irish Famine commemoration took place at the Australian Monument to the Great Irish Famine in Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney;
- (b) this annual event was hosted by the Consulate General of Ireland in Sydney and the Great Irish Famine Commemoration Committee [GIFCC], with the support of Western Sydney University and Museums of History NSW;
- (c) the important work of the Great Irish Famine Commemoration Committee and Consulate General of Ireland in holding this annual commemoration and continuing to highlight and spread the important history of the Great Irish Famine;
- (d) the history of orphaned young Irish women who arrived in Australia fleeing the famine, the struggle these women endured and their incredible contribution to New South Wales and Australia;
- (e) the work of the GIFCC in continuing to commemorate these young women, commonly known as the "Earl Grey Girls", including through their partnership with Western Sydney University to provide scholarships to young refugee women today; and
- (f) the event was well attended and members of Parliament in attendance were the Hon. Susan Carter and the Hon. Cameron Murphy.

**Motion agreed to.**

### **NSW COUNCIL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES ANNUAL DINNER AND AWARDS**

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (10:02):** I move:

That this House notes that:

- (a) on 22 August 2024 the NSW Council for Civil Liberties [NSWCCL] held its Annual Dinner and Excellence in Civil Liberties Journalism Awards;
- (b) the keynote speech was from University of New South Wales Professor of Law Rosalind Dixon on the topic of "Freedom and Security: Managing the Balance in Challenging Times";
- (c) the important work done by NSWCCL in defending civil liberties and campaigning for the protection of human rights in New South Wales; and
- (d) the 2024 annual dinner and awards was a great success and was well attended, including by many leading lawyers, academics and public figures. Current and former members of Parliament in attendance included Ms Jenny Leong, MP, member for Newtown; the Hon. Cameron Murphy; and the Hon. Meredith Burgmann, AM, former President of the Legislative Council.

**Motion agreed to.**

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION**

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

That this House notes that:

- (a) 30 September 2025 marks 50 years since Australia's ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- (b) signatory nations recognise that racial discrimination and superiority doctrines are scientifically false, morally condemnable, and socially dangerous, that racial discrimination violates human rights and threatens international peace and cooperation, and racial discrimination harms all, with its elimination being a fundamental United Nations goal; and
- (c) there are 182 parties and 88 signatories to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

**Motion agreed to.**

**MRS ROSANA TYLER**

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (10:03):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
  - (a) during the 2024 local government election campaign period, corflutes of Mrs Rosana Tyler were defaced with antisemitic and discriminatory messages; and
  - (b) while individuals are entitled to their beliefs, actions that target community members based on religion are discrimination and are unequivocally untenable, and that those who attack people's beliefs undermine the core principles of Australian community values of diversity and inclusion.
- (2) That this House firmly condemns attacks on our Jewish communities, and we stand united with the Australian public in rejecting intolerance and discrimination in all forms.
- (3) That this House acknowledges Mrs Rosana Tyler's resilience and dedication to serving her community in the face of abhorrent behaviour.

**Motion agreed to.**

**AFGHAN WOMEN**

**The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (10:03):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
  - (a) Thursday 15 August 2024 marked the third anniversary of the fall of Kabul, Afghanistan;
  - (b) on that date the Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine hosted an event that brought together experts, community members and refugees with speakers including Dr Nabi Zeher, Ms Fatima Khawari, Mr Sayed Rahmatullah Hussainzada, Ms Shukufa Tahiri, Ms Farzanan Farzana, Ms Hava Rezaie and Professor Linda Briskman; and
  - (c) the event explored the impact of recent developments on human rights, personal stories of resilience and hope, and the role of the community in supporting Afghan people, both in New South Wales and still in Afghanistan.
- (2) That this House further notes that:
  - (a) United Nations experts have described the treatment of women in Afghanistan as a "gender apartheid";
  - (b) UNICEF estimates girls in Afghanistan have lost over three billion learning hours following the bans on girls attending secondary schools;
  - (c) Afghanistan ranks last on the Women, Peace and Security Index; and
  - (d) new laws adopted in Afghanistan in late August have been described by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights as "policies that completely erase women's presence in public—silencing their voices and depriving them of their individual autonomy, effectively attempting to render them into faceless, voiceless shadows".
- (3) That this House recognises the work of community members and groups, including that of Ms Zainab Khavary, to raise awareness of the current situation in Afghanistan.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Committees***PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 1 - PREMIER AND FINANCE****Extension of Reporting Date**

**The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (10:04):** I move:

That the reporting date of the inquiry into the impact of the regulatory framework for cannabis in New South Wales by Portfolio Committee No. 1 - Premier and Finance be extended to 8 April 2025.

**Motion agreed to.**

*Motions*

**MALTA INDEPENDENCE DAY**

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (10:04):** On behalf of the Hon. Mark Buttigieg: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
  - (a) on 21 September 1964 Malta achieved independence following centuries of rule by overseas powers and a long fight for self-governance, making it a day of great significance for Maltese communities;
  - (b) 2024 marks the sixtieth anniversary of Malta's independence as well as the sixtieth anniversary of Australia and Malta's diplomatic relations;
  - (c) Australia and Malta share a deep and enduring relationship, with Australia having the world's largest Maltese diaspora and a significant proportion of those residing in New South Wales;
  - (d) on 16 September 2024 the Consul-General of Malta in New South Wales, Mr Lawrence Buhagiar, and Mrs Rosieanne Buhagiar hosted a reception celebrating 60 years of Malta Independence Day; and
  - (e) the event was very well attended, with speeches from Her Excellency the Governor, the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AC, KC, the Premier, the Hon. Chris Minns, MP, the Hon. Mark Buttigieg, MLC, and Mr Mark Coure, MP, and Dr Hugh McDermott, MP, Ms Julia Finn, MP, and Kylie Wilkinson, MP, attended along with many members of the Maltese community and Consular Corps.
- (2) That this House acknowledges the sixtieth anniversary of Malta Independence Day and the deep and significant ties between Australia and Malta.

**Motion agreed to.**

**BICENTENARY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (10:05):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes the successful events to commemorate the bicentenary of the first meeting of the Legislative Council on the weekend of 24 and 25 August 2024, including:
  - (a) the gala dinner held on Saturday 24 August 2024, attended by His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor, the Premier, members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly, former members of the Legislative Council, senior parliamentary staff, former Clerks and other special guests;
  - (b) the open house on Sunday 25 August 2024, attended by 3,000 members of the public and including:
    - (i) the State finals of the Regional Public Speaking competition in the Legislative Council Chamber, won by Sophia Huckel;
    - (ii) the world premiere of *Reflect, Celebrate, Imagine*, the bicentenary music commission from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music;
    - (iii) a re-enactment of the first sitting and first year of proceedings of the Legislative Council in this Chamber by Deadhouse Productions;
    - (iv) a presentation entitled "The Building that Refuses to Fall Down" by Paul Brunton, Emeritus Curator of the State Library of New South Wales;
    - (v) a full day of historical displays, musical performances, children's activities, historical film screenings, food and tours of the Legislative Assembly; and
  - (c) the interfaith Evensong held at St James, King Street, on the evening of Sunday 25 August, hosted by Reverend Christopher Waterhouse and involving the choir of St James conducted by director of music Thomas Wilson.
- (2) That the House congratulates the President, and the President's Bicentenary Advisory Group, including the Speaker, the Deputy President, the Leader of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition, Ms Abigail Boyd, the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, the Chief Executive of the Department of Parliamentary Services, the Clerk of the Parliaments and the Usher of the Black Rod, and acknowledges the substantial contribution of former President the Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox on the design of the informative and reflective bicentenary program of events.
- (3) That the House commends the Clerk of the Parliaments, the Usher of the Black Rod and their teams, and all of the staff of the Parliament who have contributed to the professional delivery of the full bicentenary program of events, particularly the events of 24 and 25 August 2024.

**Motion agreed to.**

I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* a full list of all staff involved in the bicentenary activities.

**Leave granted.**

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Justin Burkhart  
Lewis Collins  
Amy Edwards  
Lindsay Gosson  
Kiah Hill  
Mick Kennedy  
Andrew Kristo  
Simon Lovell  
Luke Patterson  
Lee Reid  
Pat Stevens  
Patrick Vasquez  
Renne Velarde  
Martin Bryce  
Emily Garland  
Kenneth Leong  
Gayle Marshall  
Rob Nielsen  
Ryan Pantou  
Phil Siddens  
Lyndall Smith  
Khaled Alarab  
Carlos Andrade  
Kylie Cook  
Alan De Souza-Daw  
Eric Drewett  
Andrew Fitzpatrick  
Vanessa Harcourt  
Lee Kwiez  
Mai Le  
Matej Legath  
Sunny Modi  
Serevi Naivoce  
Kim Pham  
Max Sciarra  
Sunaira Barkat  
Joseph Cho  
Cameron Craig  
Jeannie Douglass  
Daniela Giorgi  
Janson Hews  
Ingrid Lane  
Daniel Ormella  
Megan Perry  
Taylah Ribarovski  
Joe Stewart  
Stacy Thomas  
Ella Williams  
Brittany Allen  
Ross Cameron  
Jenny Ross  
Jonathan Acevedo Vega  
Shakmza Shiropova  
Melissa Assad  
Ady Ady  
Deb Bennett  
Alex Carr  
Angela Ho  
Joy Philip  
Victoria Vaughan-Smith  
Ralph Ewen  
Tamara Leizer  
Anthony Macvean  
Mita Rahman  
Flax Soetjandra  
Emma Thorlby  
Carmen Vella  
Alison Buskens  
Ilana Chaffey  
Isabella Ciampa  
Eve Cranmer  
Ashlee Dunn  
Mikayla Dunn  
Jennifer Gallagher  
Nicolle Gill

Patrick Glynn  
Sukhraj Goraya  
Shanshan Guo  
Janish Hettigama  
Hayley Jarrett  
Karena Li  
Dave Macmath  
Mohini Mehta  
Monica Parsotam  
Peter Tuziak  
Maddy Winkler  
Jenelle Moore  
Tilda Sikes  
Melanie Booth  
Katinka Bracker  
Beatrice Chan  
Naureen Chowdhury  
Anthea Darmon  
Angela Finn  
Haleema Hashmi  
Rachael Ho  
Luke Hollands  
Madolyn Hollins  
Zoe Loughrey  
Alex MacRitchie  
Sam Malfitana  
Rhys Melbourne  
Nathan Stein  
Dylan Vischschoonmaker  
Min Yao  
Angeline Chung  
Beverly Duffy  
John Ferguson  
Stephen Frappell  
Stephen Fujiwara  
Lisa Gelzinnis  
Robin Howlett  
Irene Penfold  
Margaret Pollard  
Stewart Smith  
Allison Stowe

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### *Committees*

## **JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON ARTS AND MUSIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

### **Extension of Reporting Date**

**The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (10:06):** On behalf of the Hon. Emily Suvaal: I move:

- (1) That the reporting date of the Joint Select Committee on Arts and Music Education and Training in New South Wales be extended to 13 December 2024.
- (2) That a message be sent acquainting the Legislative Assembly with the resolution.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Motions*

## **FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARE WEEK**

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES (10:07):** I move:

- (1) That this House acknowledges the importance of Foster and Kinship Care Week, which took place from 8 September to 14 September 2024.
- (2) That this House thanks current and former foster carers for making a difference in the lives of vulnerable children across the State.
- (3) That this House recognises the dedication of foster carers who provide safe and loving homes to thousands of children currently in out-of-home care in New South Wales.

**Motion agreed to.**

**BICENTENARY OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

**The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (10:08):** I move:

- (1) That this House recognises the 200th anniversary of the Legislative Council, which was established in 1824 at the instigation of the United Kingdom Parliament "for the better administration of justice in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, and for the effectual Government thereof" as the first legislative body in Australia.
- (2) That this House acknowledges the pivotal role the Legislative Council has played in shaping the democratic and legislative framework of New South Wales over the past two centuries.
- (3) That this House celebrates the contribution of all members, past and present, whose service has helped guide the development of this State through its legislative review, debate and representation.

**Motion agreed to.**

**ARMIDALE MAYORAL BREAKFAST**

**The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD (10:09):** I move:

- (1) That this House acknowledges:
  - (a) the inaugural Armidale Mayoral Breakfast 2024 was held on 28 August 2024;
  - (b) that the mayoral breakfast was a free event, designed to bring community leaders together to strengthen community relationships; and
  - (c) that Mayor Sam Coupland hosted the breakfast with the intent of working collectively towards the flourishing of the town of Armidale.
- (2) That this House notes the guest speaker was the former Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon. John Anderson, AC, who spoke about faith and resilience in tough times.
- (3) That the inaugural Armidale Mayoral Breakfast 2024 was also attended by:
  - (a) Deputy Mayor Todd Redwood;
  - (b) Councillor Paul Gaddes;
  - (c) Councillor Margaret O'Connor;
  - (d) Reverend John Cooper from the Armidale Ministers Fellowship; and
  - (e) numerous other religious leaders, business leaders and community organisation leaders.
- (4) That this House congratulates the Armidale Ministers Fellowship for organising the event.
- (5) That this House recognises that events like this in Armidale and other towns in northern New South Wales will expedite prosperity in the region in the wake of recent natural disasters.

**Motion agreed to.**

**HARITALIKA TEEJ**

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (10:09):** I move:

- (1) That this House recognises the Hindu festival Haritalika Teej, celebrated by women in the Nepalese community across New South Wales in August, to encourage the wellbeing of the spouse and children and purification of the body and soul.
- (2) That this House commends the Non-Resident Nepali Association [NRNA] Australia's Nari NiKunja leadership team on hosting a successful charity fundraising event during Haritalika Teej.
- (3) That this House notes that:
  - (a) the event occurred on Saturday 10 August 2024 at the Grand Palace Function Centre, Auburn;
  - (b) the following people attended:
    - (i) Mr Sanjeev Sharma, Honorary Consul of Nepal;
    - (ii) Ms Sangita Chapagain, National Coordinator of Nari NiKunja Australia, NRN Women Forum, Australia;
    - (iii) Ms Sabala Basnet, State Women Coordinator NSW, Nari NiKunja Australia, NRN Women Forum, Australia;
    - (iv) Mr Anil Pokhrel, president, NRNA Australia;
    - (v) Julia Finn, MP, member for Granville and co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Nepal; and
    - (vi) the Hon. Jacqui Munro, MLC, co-chair of the Parliamentary Friends of Nepal.
  - (c) the event celebrated Haritalika Teej and raised funds to support the uterine prolapse project and other projects which benefit disadvantaged women in rural Nepal.

- (4) That this House acknowledges that Nari NiKunja Australia, also known as the Non-Resident Nepali Women Forum, was founded in 2010 to promote the social, health and economic development of women in Nepal and the overall wellbeing of the Nepalese community in Australia, particularly women.

**Motion agreed to.**

### COMMITTEE FOR SYDNEY AWARDS

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (10:09):** I move:

- (1) That this House acknowledges the success of the Committee for Sydney's 2024 Sydney Awards event held at the Crown on Thursday 12 September 2024, with the support of major partner Macquarie University Business School and media partner *The Daily Telegraph*.
- (2) That this House commends the Committee for Sydney for its in-depth policy research and analysis, led by CEO Eamon Waterford, which contributes to critical discussion about the future of New South Wales.
- (3) That this House congratulates the winners of the Committee for Sydney's 2024 Sydney Awards:
- (a) Corinne Kemp, Unsung Hero;
  - (b) Alexia Paglia, Young Sydneysider of the Year;
  - (c) Barney Glover AO, Sydneysider of the Year;
  - (d) Women's World Cup, Project of the Year;
  - (e) Khadijah Habbouche, People's Choice Award; and
  - (f) Sydney Metro City and Southwest, People's Choice Award.
- (4) That this House notes the attendance of the following people at the 2024 Sydney Awards:
- (a) the Hon. Anthony Albanese, MP, Prime Minister of Australia;
  - (b) the Hon. Nick Greiner, former Premier of New South Wales;
  - (c) the Hon. Prue Car, MP, Deputy Premier of New South Wales, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney;
  - (d) the Hon. Mark Speakman, MP, Opposition leader of New South Wales;
  - (e) the Hon. Paul Scully, MP, Minister for Planning and Public Spaces;
  - (f) the Hon. John Graham, MLC, 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;
  - (g) the Hon. Rose Jackson, MLC, Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast;
  - (h) the Hon. Jacqui Munro, MLC, shadow assistant Minister for the Arts, Innovation, Digital Government and the 24-Hour Economy; and
  - (i) Kyah Simon, striker for the Matildas.

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Committees*

### REGULATION COMMITTEE

#### Reports

**The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES:** I table the report of the Regulation Committee entitled *Delegated Legislation Monitor No. 9 of 2024*, dated 18 September 2024.

### *Documents*

### UNPROCLAIMED LEGISLATION

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** According to standing order, I table a list detailing all legislation unproclaimed 90 calendar days after assent as at 17 September 2024.

### *Petitions*

### PETITIONS RECEIVED

#### Correctional Centres Phone Access

Petition requesting that the Legislative Council call on the Government to provide free and readily available phone calls for all inmates within New South Wales correctional centres, received from **Ms Sue Higginson**.

### Prison Inmate Education Programs

Petition requesting that the Legislative Council call on the Government to provide New South Wales inmates with access to wider education programs and information technology devices, received from **Ms Sue Higginson**.

#### *Documents*

#### TABLING OF PAPERS

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** By leave: I table a document displaying an online petition concerning saving Pine Creek koala habitat from clear fell logging. I move:

That the document be published.

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Motions*

#### MCPHILLAMYS GOLD PROJECT

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (10:19):** I move:

- (1) This House notes that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection (Kings Plains) Declaration 2024 (the declaration) made by the Federal Minister for the Environment:
  - (a) was made contrary to advice from the Orange Aboriginal Land Council that there were no Aboriginal cultural heritage matters that would prevent the approval of the plans for the McPhillamys goldmine (the mine);
  - (b) was not based on any authoritative evidence;
  - (c) prevents the development of the mine as currently planned and approved by all New South Wales Government authorities, causing significant damage including:
    - (i) the loss of direct and indirect jobs in the local economy of Blayney;
    - (ii) the loss of royalties revenue for the Government; and
    - (iii) the loss of investor confidence for mine development in New South Wales, including for critical minerals projects.
- (2) This House further notes that the disallowance motion moved by Coalition Senator Duniam, which would, if passed, have overturned the declaration and allowed the mine to proceed as planned, was defeated by 31 votes to 29 with three of the votes against disallowance cast by NSW Labor senators Jenny McAllister, Deborah O'Neill and Tony Sheldon.
- (3) That this House notes that when asked if they would speak to NSW Labor senators about supporting the disallowance motion, the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Natural Resources all refused to do so.
- (4) That this House condemns:
  - (a) the Federal Minister for the Environment for making the declaration; and
  - (b) the three NSW Labor senators for voting against the disallowance motion.
- (5) That this House calls on the Government to actively work to get the Albanese Labor Government to revoke the declaration and allow the McPhillamys goldmine to be developed as planned and approved by all Government authorities.

In Blayney, in the Central West, there is a developing situation—that, because of national coverage, I am sure everyone in this House is aware of—over a section 10 claim made by the Federal Minister for the environment, Tanya Plibersek, about Regis Resources McPhillamy's goldmine that has been years in the making. It is fair to say that the Central West community, and Blayney in particular, is shocked and gutted by this decision. They have been left in limbo. Many people across the region are scratching their heads and wondering how this could happen in 2024 to a development that has been a decade in the making. It is important to note that the decision by Federal Minister Plibersek has been made contrary to the advice of the independent cultural assessor that section 10 not be applied to the land that is under claim.

The Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council did not support the Federal Minister's decision and openly said the council could see merit in the project for the people the council represents and the region. It is also fair to say that the project has ticked all the boxes. It has been through all the New South Wales government processes such as the planning and environmental processes. A hearing by the Independent Planning Commission [IPC] was triggered. The community raised concerns—some of which were probably legitimate—that related to environmental, heritage and cultural matters related to the development. Those matters were addressed by the IPC at arm's length from the Government, and that was the correct process. The commission determined that concerns were legitimately raised by the community and others. It is also fair to ask how any project in this country, in particular in New South Wales, can go through all those processes yet be knocked on the head by the Federal Minister to appease inner city Sydney voters in her electorate. That is unjust and unfair to the community.



It is also fair to say that the Federal Minister's decision will create a significant loss of investor confidence across the State when more than \$200 million in royalties will not be coming to the New South Wales Government's coffers. I am sure Treasurer Mookhey will have something to say about it and would not be happy with it. The reality is that I have spoken to small business people in Blayney—such as the local newsagent, the local butcher and the owners of the Tatts Hotel—and they have been to see their bank managers to extend their overdrafts. They were getting ready and had upskilled their workforce. They made decisions based on an approved project that had been given the green light from both the New South Wales and Federal governments.

The 800 good paying jobs for the region are all but gone. Investor confidence is in the toilet. The Blayney Shire Council has sought legal advice regarding Dungeon Road, which is a council-managed public road, that the council cannot touch. The council cannot grade and maintain that road. A local car rally has been cancelled because of contested claims and the Federal Minister's decision. It appears that at some point the road will have to be closed because the council is not allowed to touch it. All of this has occurred under a cloud of secrecy.

If there is a legitimate claim that the Federal Minister has sought advice on, she should share that with the community. The Federal Minister cannot hide behind a cloud of secrecy because it leaves the community in limbo and investor confidence in the toilet. That is unfair to the Blayney community. The Federal Minister has not even visited the Blayney community and talked to the people. I acknowledge and accept that Minister Houssos met with Regis Resources pretty quickly and that the Premier is talking about expediting planning processes. I would be interested to hear from Minister Houssos what that entails. The reality is that the community of Blayney in the Central West has been left in limbo. It is about time we got some answers. There is a huge role for the New South Wales Government to play in this space.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (10:24):** I lead for the Government in debate on this motion and indicate that the Government will not support it. The first thing that I would say is that protecting heritage and progressing key mining projects should not be a zero-sum proposition. As much has been said in the decision by the Federal Minister and in responses to the decision, as well as in the consequent media furore. I will begin by referring to what the Minister for Natural Resources said yesterday in question time when she made the Government's position very clear:

We are disappointed by this decision. This project had passed through the New South Wales planning system and the Independent Planning Commission and had received approval. As part of that, important cultural heritage considerations were taken into account as well as a range of environmental, geological and other important considerations.

There cannot be any doubt that this is a significant economic project involving investment of approximately \$1 billion and 800 jobs for the Central West, which includes approximately 500 construction jobs and approximately 300 operational jobs. In terms of direct and indirect projected income, the project would add an additional \$67 million into the local economy. As a resident of Dubbo in the Central West, obviously I understand how important good paying jobs are for the Central West of New South Wales and how important it is to our economy. But, as I said, the protection of cultural heritage and progressing key mining projects should not be a zero-sum proposition, which is what the Opposition has been advancing. The Opposition has been trying to make political mileage from this issue and is not looking for a constructive solution. The Premier and a range of other senior Ministers, who include the Minister for Natural Resources, have made it clear that they are ready to engage with and assist in this project in any way they can.

The New South Wales Government has met with the CEO of Regis Resources. The Minister for Natural Resources has raised this issue with the Federal resources Minister and her State counterparts. The New South Wales Minister for Natural Resources has written to the Federal Minister for the environment to explain her disappointment at the decision and offering to work together to attract investment to this critical sector. The Premier has tasked the secretary of the department to work with Regis Resources to look for a solution. These are practical steps to try to find an outcome that stands in distinction to the Opposition's grandstanding on this important issue. It must be said that I do not think we have seen so much vigour from the Opposition and the National Party in the Central West since the Voice. It seems that there is a part of the National Party's base who resent and hate Aboriginal people exercising any power. That is clearly part of the reaction to this matter. The Opposition should be focused on practical solutions, not on grandstanding.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (10:27):** Just last week, on 12 September, for this Parliament's bicentenary, the Parliament presented Gudyarra, co-partnering with the History Council of New South Wales, as part of History Week. Gudyarra is a seminar on the Wiradjuri people's resistance against European settlement in the Bathurst region from 1822 to 1824. "Gudyarra" translates into "war" in Wiradjuri. This period marked one of the earliest and most prolonged conflicts between Aboriginal Australians and European settlers in New South Wales. Wiradjuri Elder Uncle Bill Allen was at that seminar, along with members of the Wiradjuri traditional owners Central West Aboriginal Corporation, Aunty Leanna Carr and Uncle Jade Flynn. Uncle Bill Allen said that the Government is still failing to consult with traditional owners and that some of the consultations taking place are

not right. He said that land councils are not traditional owners and that they are a statutory body set up by an Act of Parliament, so they have to abide by those rules. Only traditional owners can speak for country.

But the Hon. Sam Faraway says that this project has undergone rigorous cultural heritage assessments, which have consistently shown that, in his words, the project can proceed without causing any harm to Aboriginal cultural heritage. The area is the site of conflicts during the frontier wars, as documented in the Colonial Secretary's diaries and the book *Gudyarra* about the Bathurst wars by historian Dr Stephen Gapps, who spoke at the Gudyarra event last week in this place. Dr Gapps is the president of the History Council of New South Wales, curator at the Australian National Maritime Museum and lecturer at the University of Technology Sydney. He has communicated with the Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council with an overview of the events at Kings Plains and the historical significance for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Dr Gapps, in his extensive research for the Bathurst War, states that the Kings Plains area where the toxic tailings dam is going to be is an extremely prominent and important part of that conflict. I seek leave to table a document entitled *Additional Evidence for the State Heritage Application for the Kings Plains Cultural Landscape*.

**Leave granted.**

**Document tabled.**

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** Finally, word around Blayney is that when the Hon. Sam Faraway walked into one Blayney business to whinge about how the decision will cost hundreds of jobs, the owner said to him, "Cadia has already taken all the jobs. I can't get people to work in my business as it is." The response? The wannabe member for Calare abruptly turned his back on the Blayney business owner and walked out.

**The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (10:30):** I strongly support the motion moved by the Hon. Sam Faraway. I commend the member for the important stand that he has taken on this issue, which is a big lost economic opportunity for the Central West. I join with the member in condemning the deeply misguided decision by the Federal environment Minister under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection (Kings Plains) Declaration 2024. The declaration was made against the advice of the very people it claims to protect, the Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council, which found no cultural heritage concerns that would have justified stopping the McPhillamys goldmine. A declaration that has no authoritative evidence behind it is blocking a project that had already received all necessary approvals from government authorities. I also remind the House that yesterday the Hon. John Graham stood opposite me and detailed the length of time, consideration and detail that was put into the approval process of the mine by the previous Government.

I also draw on comments by the Hon. Stephen Lawrence about what the economic and jobs loss means to Blayney. He stated that it was 800 jobs, \$1 billion in investment and \$67 million into the economy. The Central West and regional New South Wales is a critical place for industry, business and jobs, and it has to be given all the support possible. Today we see the woke agenda of the Federal Labor Minister responsible, who is, in effect, weaponising Indigenous claims over land. That is a dangerous game. It is hurting the very people who rely on those industries for jobs. Aboriginal heritage must be protected. It is agreed in this place that it should not be manipulated for political short-term gain when we know what the economic loss means to the Central West community. This is a Labor pattern: putting politics and short-term gain over the loss of long-term economic plans and jobs. I commend the motion to the House.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON (10:33):** I speak briefly on the motion moved by the Hon. Sam Faraway, and follow my colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann, who leads for The Greens on such issues. With the Government, obviously The Greens do not support this motion. There is a thing called the rule of law. We have a system of laws in New South Wales and the Commonwealth. Some of those laws are environmental laws and some are cultural heritage laws, and we apply those laws. But every now and then opportunistic politicians will jump up and scream and shout with the highest disregard for the rule of law, almost as if they think they are completely above it.

The rule of environmental law is this: The Commonwealth has some powers that apply over the lands, the waters and the cultural heritage of New South Wales. Those laws are applied, most often and usually, in a diligent way, in accordance with the principles of administrative law. When upstart, wannabe politicians wave notices of motions around and speak with the highest disrespect for the rule of law, we are in problematic territory. Let us go to the merits of this project. In no uncertain terms, this project will do serious harm to the landscape; to the cultural heritage; and to the social, economic and environmental values of the existing landscape and the communities. There is no doubt that is what these types of projects do.

A permanently disfigured landscape will be the result of this project. We will see a permanently disfigured watercourse with a tailings dam placed right in the centre of the Belubula River. It will be an environmental disaster similar to what First Nations communities experienced around the McArthur River Mine in the Northern

Territory. The existing businesses and economy will be disrupted and delayed. Most importantly, a rule of law process is happening right now. The Federal Minister followed the laws of the Commonwealth and made a decision but the kids on the other side of this House do not seem to understand the rule of law. The potential for sovereign risk is created when politicians start jumping up and down with such disregard for the rule of law.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK (10:36):** The Libertarian Party is pro mining. I thank Ms Sue Higginson for her contribution. She has told us why she is really opposing it: on environmental grounds. When we hear about the Bathurst War, it sounds like it was a big, wideranging conflict. It went for about two weeks and there was bloodshed on both sides. But the good news is, after that, the Governor invited representatives from both sides—

**Ms Sue Higginson:** It's still going.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK:** It's still going? No, that is the myth we are dealing with. Ms Sue Higginson says that the Bathurst War is still going, two centuries later. What happened afterwards was that the Governor invited the people from both sides to come to Government House at Parramatta, and they had a huge celebration. The Aboriginal leader walked in with a big hat on that had "Peace" written on it, and after that there were very good relations, generally speaking, in the Bathurst area. Getting back to the motion moved by the Hon. Sam Faraway, we reject entirely the attack on wealth generation by the Federal Labor Party and, in particular, the Federal environment Minister, Tanya Plibersek. The Libertarian Party does not believe that people should be treated differently because of their family tree. Our members believe that someone's family tree is a curiosity to them and to their friends, but they do not believe that people should be given political rights or legal rights because of their family tree. Libertarians believe in treating people radically equally. We are a race-blind party.

Minister Plibersek has relied on dodgy, secretive and racially exclusive advice from the shadowy Wiradyuri Traditional Owners Central West Aboriginal Corporation. Why is it that the public, let alone parliamentarians, the elected representatives of all Australians, cannot have access to that secret information? The left cry institutional racism, but what about Minister Plibersek's actions? That is institutional racism. I support the Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council; Wiradjuri Elder Roy Ah-See, who is a fine gentleman; and many others in their desire to see the mine go ahead. The local Aborigines want wealth for their community. Good on them. I say, "Drill, baby, drill."

**The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (10:39):** I make a brief contribution to this debate. I also have a motion to move later today. I indicate that I will support this motion. Whilst I acknowledge that the Hon. Sam Faraway has a deep interest in the Central West area, I have to say that I am a little perplexed as to why we are bothering to have a motion about three obscure Labor senators in New South Wales. In reality, I think the Hon. Sam Faraway should be focused on how the Coalition has reacted, as a combined party, to what has happened with respect to the goldmine.

What does the Hon. Mark Speakman have to say about it? What do members of the other House have to say about it? What does the shadow Minister for Energy, Climate Change and Environment have to say about it? Where is the strength within the Liberal Party coming from? We all know what the Liberal Party has been focused on: The Liberal Party has been undermining the Hon. Peter Dutton for the last three weeks. It has not been able to accept the big catastrophe that it initiated three weeks ago by not fielding Liberal candidates across most of the councils in the area.

**The Hon. Chris Rath:** Point of order—

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Clerk will stop the clock.

**The Hon. Chris Rath:** I am loath to interrupt the member when she is speaking, but I do not think her contribution is relevant to the motion, which is about mining in the Central West. It has absolutely nothing to do with the New South Wales division of the Liberal Party. Perhaps the member could be redirected back to the motion.

**The PRESIDENT:** While wide latitude is extended during debate on motions, the remarks of the Hon. Tania Mihailuk are a little too wide in this instance. I direct her to come back to the motion.

**The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK:** I know it is a very sore point for the New South Wales Liberals at the moment, so I will not spend too much time on it. What would be most fitting right now is for the Coalition in New South Wales to work with NSW Labor on how to reverse the decision federally. It is best now to work with the Premier. I would like to see the Leader of the Opposition and his team work with the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for Natural Resources to do what they can to ensure the mine proceeds in the Central West. That would be the best outcome for the people of the Central West and for the people of New South Wales.

We know we need the \$200 million in royalties. We know that the mine will create jobs now and well into the future. It is a fantastic investment for all to come together. Obviously The Greens will not. We know this. We

heard today that The Greens have clearly been giving great advice to Federal Minister Tanya Plibersek. The Minister has taken that advice, to her great detriment and to the great detriment of the people of New South Wales and her Federal colleagues. I remind the Coalition that it is now about working with Labor, who are in government, to ensure that the mine proceeds, because it is critical for New South Wales—and, indeed, for the people of the Central West—that we proceed with the mine.

**The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (10:42):** I wish to speak briefly in support of the motion, and to engage with the comments of Ms Sue Higginson, who correctly flagged the importance of sovereign risk in these sorts of decisions. When a mine has been under consideration for an extended period of months, if not years; when there has been significant planning and investment; when the multimillion-dollar decisions that create jobs and wealth and security for families have been made on the basis of the approvals that have been sought, sovereign risk happens when, almost over the top, comes the Minister, who says, "No. I've listened to people who are not represented in the months and months of approvals. I have sought advice from other people whose views were not heard before, and I am changing the approval."

That is exactly the sort of pattern of decision-making which creates enormous sovereign risk for every mining company, every manufacturing company and every investment in jobs and future security in New South Wales. We need economic security, we need the growth of good jobs, and we need to make sure that we are not seen as a place where investment is risky. I therefore support the motion, because sovereign risk is something that we should not take lightly. New South Wales needs to be a good, secure place for job growth and investment.

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (10:44):** In reply: I acknowledge all the contributions, but I must say that I am genuinely disappointed by the contributions from the alliance between the Labor Party and The Greens, which is alive and well. The reality is that not one of them has been to knock on doors in Blayney to actually ask people face to face. Instead they turn up in this place and play the man, not the policy. Instead they turn up in this place and start mudslinging. There are 800 jobs that are now gone and will not be realised because the project will not proceed. The Government talks a big game about ensuring that we raise taxpayer funds and that they are reinvested and spent well, but how will it raise the money when it does not support critical industries like mining developments? That is \$200-plus million in royalties gone. They will not be realised, because the project will not proceed.

Waiting for the 800 jobs, the small businesses in Blayney, Orange, Bathurst and the surrounding area extended their overdrafts, upskilled their workforce and made investment decisions. They put their houses and mortgages on the line to expand their businesses for a project that was approved and went through every single New South Wales and Federal agency planning and environmental process. The Labor Party and The Greens all talk about representing people, but they need to talk to the people. It is the process that stinks. Investor confidence is so severely hit by this decision. It is bigger than the Regis McPhillamys goldmine. It will have consequences for the entire Central West, the entire State and, quite frankly, the entire country.

There was a contribution about what the Opposition has done. The NSW Nationals members are fairly well on the record as to what we think about the project. The Federal Opposition has made it clear: If it wins government at the next election, it will approve the mine. It is clear and simple. I make the point that even Scott Ferguson, the outgoing Mayor of Blayney, wants to know if there is a significant Aboriginal cultural consideration in the Blayney shire, and so do his people. They want to be proud of it, but they need to know what it is. We need to know what evidence a Minister relies on to make those decisions. Instead, there is no discussion and no commitment from Minister Plibersek to release the statement of reason. A fair and just decision should be made to release that statement of reason for the people of Blayney in the Central West. It is so obvious that the New South Wales Labor Party, in coalition with The Greens, will continue to run a protection racket for Tanya Plibersek.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....16  
Noes .....20  
Majority.....4

#### AYES

Carter  
Fang (teller)  
Farlow  
Farraway  
Latham

Maclaren-Jones  
Martin  
Merton  
Mihailuk  
Mitchell

Munro  
Rath (teller)  
Roberts  
Ruddick  
Ward

## AYES

MacDonald

## NOES

Boyd  
Buckingham  
Buttigieg  
Cohn  
D'Adam  
Donnelly  
Faehrmann

Graham  
Higginson  
Hurst  
Jackson  
Kaine  
Lawrence  
Mookhey

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

## PAIRS

Tudehope

Houssos

**Motion negatived.****SYNTHETIC TURF****Dr AMANDA COHN (10:54):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
  - (a) demand for green spaces for passive and active recreation is increasing due to population growth and increasing population density;
  - (b) there has been a sixfold increase in synthetic turf installations replacing natural turf sports fields in New South Wales over the past five years;
  - (c) reasons cited for synthetic turf installations include theoretical higher limits of use hours and resilience in wet weather; and
  - (d) this winter, the closure of waterlogged sportsgrounds across Sydney has impacted participation in sports including soccer, Australian Rules football, rugby league, rugby union and netball.
- (2) That this House further notes that the draft Synthetic Turf in Public Open Space: Guidelines for Decision-Makers released by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure identified that:
  - (a) synthetic turf has a significantly higher surface temperature that can not only cause injury and exacerbate heat stress but result in more likely cancellation of matches in very hot weather;
  - (b) synthetic turf fields typically prohibit recreational use such as dog walking, picnics and informal exercise and fitness;
  - (c) air and water pollution caused by synthetic turf materials is well documented, with pollution of waterways and bushland a key concern;
  - (d) microplastic ingestion, toxic chemicals and biological pathogens are additional risks to human health associated with synthetic turf materials;
  - (e) best-practice natural turf design and maintenance can improve the capacity of existing natural turf fields, with common and affordable practices used to increase the capacity of natural turf including effective and well-maintained irrigation systems, sand slit drainage, resurfacing and laser levelling;
  - (f) innovative management practices can support greater use of natural turf fields, including strategic lighting, shifting line markings to rotate areas of high wear, and new technologies to collect data and better target maintenance and scheduling; and
  - (g) information about recent innovations and best practice for natural turf are not commonly used, and a lack of readily available information on best practice construction and maintenance of natural turf fields constrains decision-making on sports fields turf options.
- (3) That this House calls on the New South Wales Government to support and facilitate local councils and sporting clubs to enable best-practice design and maintenance of natural turf sports fields.

**The PRESIDENT:** Members who wish to leave the Chamber will do so quietly.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** There is a concerning and short-sighted trend across New South Wales towards replacing natural turf sports fields with painful, polluting and perishingly hot plastic sports fields. Over the past five years there has been a sixfold increase in synthetic turf installations.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** The final report of the independent review of the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer into the design, use and impacts of synthetic turf in public spaces found that the heat-retaining property of synthetic turf can cause heat stress and heat-related illness and is potentially hazardous for children, especially when unshaded, as its surface can be up to 38 degrees hotter than that of natural turf.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! This is the third time I will ask for members in the Chamber to speak quietly. Dr Amanda Cohn has the call.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** I ask for a one-minute extension of time to account for the interruptions.

**The PRESIDENT:** I grant a 30-second extension.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** Video recordings made by nearby residents in December last year showed synthetic turf fields in Sydney with surface temperatures approximately 30 degrees higher than adjacent concrete pavement. Synthetic turf increases water run-off because it is not absorbent, which can lead to greater pollution in waterways. Rubber infill, plastic turf blades and microplastics have been found in waterways from the run-off from those fields. The degradation of synthetic materials can lead to leaching of chemicals that pose risks to soil and water quality. Replacing natural grass with synthetic turf disrupts the ecological functions of soil and exacerbates habitat loss.

Synthetic turf increases the risk of adjacent buildings igniting in a bushfire. Knowing that, it is horrifying that several schools in the Blue Mountains have synthetic turf surfaces. Even worse, the full extent of those risks is not known, with the chief scientist making a key recommendation for further research into the chemical composition of materials used in synthetic turf as well as better data collection. That is not being done. In response to questions on notice, the Office of Sport advised that it does not even keep track of grant spending on synthetic turf fields.

Athletes also prefer not to play on synthetic turf. At the 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada, players complained of having to put up with hard synthetic pitches in searing heat, with a now retired Matildas forward describing it as "like walking on hot coal with your skin blistering and cracking". Matildas stars Sam Kerr, Caitlin Foord and Melissa Barbieri joined 23,000 signatories to a successful petition to FIFA for all future women's world cups to be played on natural turf, like the men's world cups. But do not take my word for it; here is what athletes have to say about what it is like to play rugby on synthetic turf. One said:

After playing my first ever game on turf I got a couple minor grazes ... As the turf is so dirty all 4 wounds got infected with Golden Staph.

Another athlete said:

... they really retain the heat. You can be stuck at the bottom of the ruck and it feels as if you're being cooked ...

Another said:

You better lather yourself in Vaseline at the knees and elbows but you'll still end up with ... burns.

The sustainable and sensible solution is for the New South Wales Government to invest in best-practice design and maintenance of natural turf fields. Synthetic installations are driven largely by promises of extended playing hours and resilience in poor weather conditions, but the upper limit capacity of a well-engineered and well-maintained natural turf field is on par with synthetic turf at approximately 60 hours per week. It is true that extreme weather and poor drainage have forced the closure of natural fields and the cancellation of thousands of games this winter. But a kneejerk response to install even more synthetic fields means that we will be faced with further cancellations when they heat up in summer.

The member for Parramatta has pointed out that only 16 per cent of playing fields in the City of Parramatta have slit drainage installed, and that for \$3 million Parramatta council could invest in constructing either one synthetic field, benefiting about 400 football players; three to five best-practice natural turf fields, benefiting 1,500 to 2,500 football and cricket players; or 30 slit drainage system installations, benefiting up to 7,000 football and cricket players. Some councils are already on the right track. Mosman Council rejected a proposal for synthetic turf at Middle Head Oval, instead investing in the complete natural turf redevelopment of the oval in 2018 at a cost of less than \$500,000. But councils, sporting clubs and communities need the support of the New South Wales Government to facilitate the best-practice construction and maintenance of natural turf fields, particularly in the face of lobbying from the significant vested interests in synthetic turf. As our communities grow, accessible green spaces are more important than ever. Active and passive recreation are vital for our physical and mental health, but synthetic turf is a temporary solution that will create a permanent problem.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (10:59):** Later on, I will table something that really represents environmentalism. It is a real problem hitting a hockey ball around on a synthetic field in Moorebank, but if you carpet hectare after hectare of the ground with metallic solar panels, that will save the planet.

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

*Visitors*

### VISITORS

**The PRESIDENT:** I welcome to the Parliament Mr Oliver Whitmore, who is one of two Commonwealth Youth Parliament delegates from Gibraltar who recently attended the twelfth CYP in Wellington. He is welcome here today.

*Questions Without Notice*

### CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (11:00):** My question is directed to the Leader of the Government. Given recent reports of sacked CFMEU New South Wales secretary Darren Greenfield meeting with CFMEU Lendlease delegate Bruce Cartwright, what steps is the Government taking to prevent Darren Greenfield from continuing to direct or influence CFMEU officials and impact the construction industry in New South Wales, including on government infrastructure projects?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:01):** I thank the member for his question. The answer is pretty straightforward. We have put the union into administration and we have taken the matters, particularly in relation to Greenfield, extremely seriously. That is something the Government has taken action on for a long period of time. I am not quite sure what the member is trying to suggest with his question, but the Government has taken the strongest steps in that the union is in administration.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (11:01):** I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate her answer and confirm that the Minns Labor Government, having finally acted to appoint an administrator to the CFMEU—finally—now believes its job is done and will take no further responsibility for addressing the multiple threats posed by the criminal and corrupt activity associated with that union? Is that it?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:02):** There was a bit of argument in the question. I am not sure that it was seeking elucidation—it was more of a statement—but I am happy to say the following in response to the member's partial supplementary question. This Government has done more in relation to this matter than the former Government did in 12 years when these matters were known and when these matters were actually being dealt with. You did nothing.

*[Opposition members interjected.]*

If you want to talk about that, let us talk about John Sidoti. Let us talk about the member for Kiama. How much money did the member for Pittwater put into the coffers of the Liberal Party, and are you going to return it? If you really want to get into this, it is a joke. You guys did nothing. You did absolutely nothing. This Government has put the union into administration. There are a range of activities being undertaken in terms of the way in which construction contracts are overseen. This has been well canvassed, and we have done more than you did in 12 years. Honestly, you are shameless. If you are really worried about the donations, where is John Sidoti's money? Where is Daryl Maguire's money? Where is Gareth Ward's money? Where is Rory Amon's money?

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! Members will direct their remarks through the Chair at all times. Interjections are disorderly at all times.

### AVIATION INDUSTRY AND STATE ECONOMY

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (11:03):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Jobs and Tourism. How is the New South Wales Government supporting aviation in the State, and what is the impact of increasing capacity on the New South Wales economy?

**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) (11:04):** I thank the member for his question. This is a good news story. I update the House about some big developments at airports around the State. Last week, supported by the Aviation Attraction Fund, Turkish Airlines announced non-stop flights from Istanbul to Sydney Airport, starting in December. That is significant not only because it is a whole new route out of Europe to bring visitors to our doorstep, but also because Sydney Airport will become the airline's largest base in Australia. Turkish Airlines has the world's most extensive aviation network, flying to more than 267 destinations in 120 countries. A link to that part of the aviation network to bring visitors here and for our people to go out into the world, as Australians are well known for doing, is a very big deal.

One of the first actions I took as Minister was to meet with Turkish Airlines. Sadly, I had to do that in Melbourne because Melbourne had the jump on this deal. I was not able to meet the representatives here, but I travelled to Melbourne. I do not want to use the term "cross-border raid"—it was nothing of the sort—but I had some frank discussions to ask them, "How could you not come to Sydney?" in those early days. Thankfully, that has played out and we will now have four flights a week in and out of Sydney. It really makes Sydney the home of Turkish Airlines in this country. It is a very good result. The deal provides 68,620 additional inbound seats, more than 290 jobs and an estimated \$53 million for the New South Wales visitor economy.

That comes on top of other good news at Kingsford Smith Airport. Juneyao Air announced that it will commence flights from Shanghai to Sydney Airport, Etihad announced the biggest hub for New Zealand services, Jetstar announced the launch of a route to Hamilton, and Cebu Pacific announced daily flights to the Philippines through Kingsford Smith. Looking north, a short time ago the Government announced a memorandum of understanding with Newcastle Airport as it goes international. The Government will support that to really take off. Over the next two years, international flights will come to Newcastle Airport, which will be very significant, as the international terminal opens there in 2025. Three weeks ago, there was more good news. Singapore Airlines revealed that it would be the first international carrier to fly into the Western Sydney International Airport when it opens in 2026. All those arrangements are big deal for New South Wales. They will lift the visitor economy. They give our citizens more options to reach out into the world. It is great news and we will see the economic benefits for decades to come.

### LAND CLEARING

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (11:07):** My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture. In relation to the recently released *NSW Vegetation Clearing Report*, NSW Farmers president Xavier Martin has said, "These cherrypicked numbers have been weaponised to falsely paint farmers as environmental vandals." Does the Minister agree with Mr Martin?

**The Hon. Daniel Mookhey:** Point of order: I am sure the Minister is very happy to give a view on the question, but it should still be phrased as a question that is not soliciting an opinion.

**The PRESIDENT:** I agree. I will accept the question if it is rephrased slightly so as not to solicit an opinion in that way.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** Xavier Martin has said, "These cherrypicked numbers have been weaponised to falsely paint farmers as environmental vandals." How does the Minister respond to community concerns about the report?

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:08):** I thank the member for the question. I have seen the comments from NSW Farmers last week in relation to this. I say at the outset that the Government works very closely with farmers across New South Wales. Of course they are not environmental vandals. The Government does not see farmers or the agricultural sector as environmental vandals. I have said many times that farmers and people across the agricultural sector are at the forefront of managing issues. They are working with the Government to deal with land clearing in a way that allows for the protection of agricultural land for food production, which is essential for New South Wales, while also managing land clearing and land use for better environmental outcomes. This is in the interest of everyone in New South Wales, including farmers. I have been on record many times to say that farmers are at the forefront of this. They get it, and the Government will continue to work closely with them on these issues.

The specific mapping issues that have been raised are in the remit of my colleague the Minister for the Environment, but we are working across government to get a resolution on these issues so that the maps will be useful. Farmers are entitled to have these things reviewed if they feel that there are issues in their local area or on their land. We will be working closely with farmers to deal with these issues. The Government is very supportive of farmers across New South Wales. We want the agricultural sector to grow, and we will continue to work closely with farmers. I acknowledge the frustration that they have expressed. Facts matter, and the Government deals with these issues in an evidence-based way. We are managing the protection of agricultural land for food production but also balancing that with what we need to do for the environment. Again, farmers understand that.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (11:11):** I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for her answer. Will the Minister elucidate the part of her answer where she said the Government works well with NSW Farmers? Why is Mr Martin calling on the Premier to recommit to a constructive dialogue with the agricultural sector? Does the Minister admit that the relationship is not that strong?

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:11):** As I said in my previous answer and in many of my



answers in this place, the Government has a very good working relationship with NSW Farmers. As the Minister for Agriculture, I personally value my relationship with Xavier Martin and NSW Farmers. I meet with them on a very regular basis to discuss issues of all kinds in the sector. My door is open, and my phone is on. The broader Government also values its relationship with NSW Farmers and takes it extremely seriously. We acknowledge the work of NSW Farmers as an association and its members as farmers and producers across the State. The best food and fibre that the world has is grown right here in New South Wales. The Government will work through these issues just as people would expect. I like the passion of NSW Farmers. They are entitled to express whatever views they like. The Government will continue to work with NSW Farmers, and with farmers across the agricultural sector, to make sure that agriculture is as successful as it can possibly be.

### WATER CONTAMINATION

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (11:13):** My question is directed to the Minister for Water. Yesterday *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported again on PFAS levels in our drinking water catchments after commissioning independent testing upstream and downstream of the Medlow Dam in the Blue Mountains which showed concentrations 50 times higher than those listed in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. Today it was reported that WaterNSW may upgrade drinking water filtration as a result of these reports. What will it take to get WaterNSW to commit to upgrading our filtration systems, like other jurisdictions are doing, to filter out the majority of forever chemicals in our water?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:13):** I thank the honourable member for her question. I take this issue seriously, and I am happy to answer any questions to reassure the community that Sydney's drinking water is safe to drink and that, actually, they should be drinking it. It is a fantastic, cheap and clean source of the hydration that we all need to stay alive. The PFAS issue is complicated, but let's start with the basic facts. WaterNSW does not do filtration. That is managed by Sydney Water. WaterNSW manages catchments and dams. It does not treat or filter water. It provides raw water to Sydney Water, which manages the filtration and treatment that ensures that our drinking water is safe to drink.

There has never been any test done at any point by WaterNSW or Sydney Water that has shown that our drinking water is outside the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. We have very clear and strict drinking water guidelines in Australia that are set federally. They are being reviewed at the moment, and I welcome that review. We want to ensure that we have the strictest possible standards. The process is led by Health and uses health experts to determine what is safe for the human body to consume and in what concentrations. To be clear, the responsibility of Sydney Water and WaterNSW is to test that our water is within those guidelines, and they have been doing that.

I agree with the member that we could look at doing more testing of our water to provide reassurance to the community because we want them to have confidence in our drinking water. Testing by water agencies to demonstrate that the water we drink is safe is absolutely an option that we should pursue. We are testing water more regularly, which is a good thing. All of those tests continue to show that drinking water is within the Drinking Water Guidelines. Testing raw water, and in particular foam from raw water sources, is not the same as testing treated drinking water that comes out of our taps. The advice to everyone is to not drink raw, untreated water from creeks and streams. It is not safe to consume. We do not know what is in it. Sydney Water treats that raw water to make it safe to drink. If PFAS is detected in raw water, we take immediate precautionary action—as we have done—to ensure that the water that comes out of our taps continues to be safe to drink.

### ENERGY PRICES

**The Hon. BOB NANVA (11:16):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Energy. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to help households and businesses save on their energy bills?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (11:17):** I thank the honourable member for his important question. I know that every household, small business and large business is struggling with the cost of living and the need to reduce their energy bills. That is something that the Government is extremely supportive of. I was pleased to join the Premier earlier this week to launch the *NSW Consumer Energy Strategy: Powering our people and communities*. This is the other piece of the puzzle as we transition our energy grid from coal-fired power to renewable energy over time.

Already a million households across New South Wales have put solar on their roofs and are making savings from that. We want more people to have batteries and community batteries. We want people to change out their energy-thirsty appliances for things like heat pumps and high-quality, efficient air conditioning, fans and

insulation. All of that work is in the strategy that the Government has announced. There are over 50 actions and a range of subsidies and incentives in the strategy, backed by \$290 million. This is pulling together the work that the Government is already doing with electric vehicles and EV charging. It is on top of the help we already provide to help those who are struggling to pay their bills.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! I have made it clear that peppering Ministers' answers with interjections is disorderly.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** This is the piece of the puzzle that we are really excited about. We have had bipartisan support to undertake the energy road map to build out large-scale renewable energy. This is where people can take control and significantly reduce their bills. I encourage people to go online and look at the information in the strategy to see what they can do to lower their costs straightaway. The plan also deals with all the techie stuff, the rules and the different things we need to adjust, like bidirectional charging for electric vehicles. People can use microgrids, which are now rolling out, to aggregate their use of solar panels and home and community batteries.

Those who benefit from rooftop solar and batteries can also share that benefit with the renters, apartment dwellers and others in their community. This is about not leaving anyone behind. It is about cheaper bills and working with social housing tenants. We are happy to be upgrading 24,000 households to be energy efficient and have access to solar. Consumer energy is a big piece of the puzzle. People can lower their bills and live in cleaner, healthier homes. The more people that we get on this, the less of the bigger industrial work we need to pay for.

### AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON (11:20):** My question is directed to the Minister for Agriculture. Previously I have raised with her the community's concerns about the use and regulation of agricultural chemicals that cause harm to people and the environment. There is now emerging evidence suggesting the herbicide paraquat is linked to the neurodegenerative Parkinson's disease. Paraquat has been under review by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority since 1997, and its use in New South Wales still relies on non-peer-reviewed evidence from the main producer of the chemical. What is the Minister doing to protect regional communities, farmers and the environment from exposure to chemicals that are unsafe and have been banned in many equivalent jurisdictions around the world?

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:21):** I thank the member for this serious question. I acknowledge the concerns of people, which I have seen raised in media reports. To be fair, the member and I have not discussed it before. The question stated that this has been raised with me before, but it has not. Nonetheless, it is an important issue. The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority, or APVMA, is the Australian Government's regulator of agricultural and veterinary chemical products. I advise the House that the APVMA is currently undergoing public consultation on a proposed regulatory decision, which was announced on 30 August this year. This is a Federal Government regulatory matter, and the body responsible for regulating and making decisions is currently undertaking a process to look at it. I am advised that consultation remains open until 29 October 2024. I am also advised that submissions made during that consultation process will be considered in the development of any final regulatory decision.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON (11:23):** I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate that part of her answer that related to the APVMA's review? Is the Government advocating for the APVMA to update its advice and position on paraquat? I note that our previous discussion referred to in the first part of the question occurred in budget estimates in February this year and related to chemicals in general.

**The PRESIDENT:** The first part of the question is in order. The Minister has the call.

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:23):** I thank the member for the supplementary question. Again, these are serious matters that deserve proper consideration, which the proper authority will do. This is a matter for the Federal Government and the APVMA, which is the body responsible for regulating these issues. As I said in my previous answer, it is reviewing this issue. Submissions and consultation are open now. I look forward to seeing what the Federal regulatory body and the Federal Government do in this space. We work closely with regulatory bodies, including the APVMA, and the Federal Government on issues, including this one.

### RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:24):** My question is directed to the Minister for Roads, representing the Minister for Transport. I note that, from today, the Rail, Tram and Bus Union has in place a ban on all work

on the Bankstown line, including clearing signals. Unless passenger services continue to operate, what is the likely impact of those industrial actions, in cost and delay, to the conversion of the Sydenham to Bankstown line?

**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) (11:24):** I thank the member for her question and her interest in this issue, which has received some publicity—and unsurprisingly so. It is no secret that there are discussions between the union, the workforce and the Government at the moment. It is far too early to jump to the end of the story, as the Opposition would like to do, and examine the damage it might do to the economy if this goes "off the rails".

The Government's focus is clear. We are having direct and constructive discussions with the union and workforce about the issues that have been raised. I heard media reports and discussion this morning, and it sounded to me like reasonable positions were being put. I could be wrong, but in my interpretation the tone was getting better, not worse. The simple point is that it is appropriate those discussions take place directly. Of course there are serious issues when it comes to a project of this scale. The transport agency and transport Minister are engaged in a huge undertaking. It is a big task for the workforce involved, which of course raises issues about how it rolls out and making sure the appropriate safety arrangements are in place. That is as it should be.

**The PRESIDENT:** The Leader of the Opposition knows my views on what he is doing. He will cease interjecting.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We will take the time to work through those issues. I would not be jumping to the end of the story, which I know is what the shadow Minister likes to do. It is a reasonable question but an unreasonable time to ask it.

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (11:27):** I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for his answer in relation to the discussions going on and the potential damage this action may do, particularly to commuters. I ask him to elaborate on that work. Has the Minister done modelling into the economic impacts? What steps will the New South Wales Government take to stop these acts of economic sabotage?

**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) (11:27):** I listened carefully to the question. I reassert the view that the better thing to do is to engage in the discussions rather than model the damage. In fact, doing so would be a distraction. It is better for the Government to focus on the ongoing discussions. Meetings are occurring today and tomorrow on those matters. I am advised that the parties are working through 246 items on the log of claims.

There is some complexity here, which I observe was something the former Government occasionally had issues with. Occasionally that did run off the rails. I understand why members opposite are sensitive to the economic or transport damage it might cause the State, given how this ended in some of those earlier incidents—but I will not reflect further on that. It is appropriate that the sole focus of the agencies is the task at hand. I encourage them to have the discussions and sort through those issues, which is what is in the public interest. I am grateful to have the question, though. I say that partly because I felt a bit cheated as I was working through my portfolio issues during budget estimates hearings. Because there were some interruptions during the estimates process, I feel like I lost up to 12 minutes of my estimates time.

**The Hon. Natalie Ward:** Point of order: Mr President, earlier you indicated that it is appropriate that members direct their comments through the Chair. While it might be highly amusing for the Minister to entertain his colleagues, I ask that you apply the same rules to him and that you draw him back to the question. I am not sure that budget estimates are in any way relevant to the economic issues facing New South Wales.

**The PRESIDENT:** I remind all members that they should direct their remarks through the Chair. The Minister is drawing a long bow. He will come back to the question.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Through you, Mr President, I make this observation: I felt I could not get a word in, and it is possible I could be the only Minister to ask for a recall hearing for his own budget estimates.

**The Hon. Damien Tudehope:** Point of order: Mr President, the Minister is now flouting your ruling.

**The PRESIDENT:** He is indeed, and he will no longer speak in answer to that question.

#### HOUSING SUPPLY

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (11:30):** My question is addressed to the Treasurer. Will the Treasurer update the House on what recommendations have been made by the Productivity and Equality Commission to unblock bottlenecks and support increased housing supply?

**The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (11:30):** I thank the member for his excellent question and his ongoing interest in how we can solve the housing crisis. A year ago the Government set out five principles for housing reform. It said that we need to increase density in the communities that people want to live in, we need to build well-located homes around transport infrastructure, we need more social and affordable housing, we need to make sure those homes are well designed and well built, and we need to build them as quickly as possible. Since then we have undertaken the biggest rezoning and planning reforms in Australian history to build tens of thousands of houses around train stations and transport hubs. Pleasingly, we provided \$5.1 billion in the budget for the construction of 8,400 additional new homes, the biggest investment in the expansion of social and affordable housing stock in New South Wales since World War II.

Last week the revamped Productivity and Equality Commission released its report into the housing sector, spelling out what more can be done. The report said that we are yet to hit our straps for building the capacity we need. According to the latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data, New South Wales built 46,000 new homes in the year to March. That is nowhere near enough, but what is more troubling is that the average completion time for new apartments increased from 22 months in 2015 to 30 months by the time this Government came to office. The reason why is provided in detail, with strong analysis about the 30 per cent rise in construction costs driven by higher prices for raw materials like steel and timber; the massive 15 per cent rise in the cost of land acquisition; and, obviously, building homes is much harder in a higher interest rate environment than in a lower interest rate environment.

The report says what more the New South Wales Government could and should do. While it is fair to say the Productivity and Equality Commission has once more demonstrated its fine character in providing deep factual analysis combined with provocative recommendations, it is clear those recommendations need to be looked at by all people in the Parliament who are serious about solving this problem. When it comes to building more homes, we need to make sure that all parts of the city, particularly those in which the Productivity and Equality Commission has found it to be feasible, can get on with the job. A lot of those areas are in the north and east of the city, and we look forward to working with the newly elected councils on those projects. Equally, we need to make sure that we are not playing politics with the housing crisis and that we are competing in the realm of ideas, not opportunism. This report is a good guide for all sides of politics that want the housing crisis tackled.

#### WENTWORTH PARK SPORTING COMPLEX TRUST

**The Hon. EMMA HURST (11:33):** My question is directed to the Treasurer. Wentworth Park greyhound racing track is located on Crown land and is currently leased to the greyhound racing industry until 2027. The land manager, the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Trust, reportedly owes Greyhound Racing NSW \$6.5 million on a loan that has been outstanding since 1987 and that it cannot afford to repay. Has the Treasurer been briefed on this situation, and is it his understanding that the New South Wales Government may be liable to repay the loan if the lease on Wentworth Park to the greyhound racing industry is not renewed?

**The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (11:34):** I thank the member for her question. The answer to the question as to whether I have been briefed is no. But I will probably get myself briefed now, in response to this question. The second part of the question is about the particular lease arrangements that apply to the Wentworth Park area. Apart from the fact that I know Wentworth Park, I am not across the lease details. I confess my ignorance on that. In respect to the financing arrangements that date back to 1987, it is fair to say that I was five years old at the time. As a five-year-old, I was not across that.

In the intervening 37-plus years, I have not become acquainted with the intricacies of the financing arrangements entered into by the Government at that time. For what it is worth—a slight digression, if I may—there are a few of those arrangements from 1987 that are surfacing right now. I am happy to see if I can provide further information when the President asks if we have further answers at the end of question time. We will see what further information we can provide. Otherwise, I will have to take the question on notice, get briefed and come back to the member with a detailed answer.

#### HOUSING SUPPLY AND ELECTRICAL TRADES UNION INDUSTRIAL ACTION

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (11:36):** My question is directed to the Minister for Housing. What is the impact of protected industrial action by the Electrical Trades Union [ETU] on housing construction in New South Wales, including on-costs, affordability and delays? What steps is the Minister taking to address the issue?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:36):** I thank the member for his question. As the honourable member will be aware, the question of the broad impact of industrial action on the housing market in New South Wales is not something I have at my fingertips. I am not sure that is something the Government would even be able to pull together. I would like this industrial action to be resolved.

I encourage all of the parties to the industrial action to continue to work together. I understand that is happening, and I encourage that. Ultimately, anything that causes delay in delivery of the housing that we know we desperately need is of concern to me.

I would probably put the Opposition's efforts to frustrate the entire existence of the transport oriented developments high on the list of things that the industry and I are concerned about when it comes to delays in the delivery of housing. Trying to bring the entire transport oriented development State environmental planning policy process into the Parliament as disallowable instruments would probably rank as the number one thing you could do to frustrate the delivery of housing. So I suppose the honourable member who asked the question knows what he is talking about when it comes to different things one could do to frustrate the delivery of housing. He has tried a lot of them. Thankfully, the Government has seen them off, so far. If industrial action is playing a role in delaying housing, that is of concern to me. As others have said, I am very much encouraging the parties to that dispute to continue to work together to try to resolve it. I am hopeful that will happen.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (11:38):** I ask a supplementary question. Given that the Minister has outlined that the industrial action that is potentially holding up housing supply is of concern to her, has she sought that the Minister for Industrial Relations make an application to the Fair Work Commission, under section 424 of the Fair Work Act, to stop the economic vandalism of the Electrical Trades Union?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:38):** I will tell the member what I have done to try to ensure we have a program and a plan to deliver the housing we need: I have worked with my colleague the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to bring together the work he is doing to reform the planning system with the work I am doing rolling out the \$5.1 billion Building Homes for NSW program that the Treasurer mentioned and was so gracious to support in the most recent budget. That is what I am doing. To be fair, I wish that I had a little bit more bandwidth, but unfortunately I was recently distracted working with the planning Minister in here, in this Parliament, running defence on transport oriented development, or TOD.

I wish I did not have to do that. I wish I did not have to spend my time coming in here and giving speeches—I mean I did enjoy it a little bit—about the most basic defence of building homes near transport. I wish, in a way, that I did not have to worry about those kinds of distractions and political stunts, or to have to take on the nimbys opposite—whether it is the Leader of the Opposition and housing in Cronulla or the member for Wahroonga and his constant efforts to describe delivering the most basic housing around train stations as some kind of attack on the character of communities, whereas my view is that it enhances the character—

**The Hon. Damien Tudehope:** Point of order: This was a specific question about the ETU and a section 424 application under the Act, which was available to the Government in relation to it. If the Minister does not want to address that, addressing all the other superfluous material that she is now addressing is not directed to what she could possibly do in relation to this. If she does not know about taking that action, she ought not be heard any further.

**The PRESIDENT:** Once again, I make the point to the Leader of the Opposition that debating points at the end of points of order are not helpful to his cause. That having been said, on this occasion the Minister was asked a very specific question and, while she was being directly relevant at the beginning, she has started to stray. I encourage her to come back to the question for the final 26 seconds.

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON:** The question was have I privately talked to the Minister for Industrial Relations about options to resolve this dispute. I do not need to have private conversations. I have made public comments about any efforts to frustrate the delivery of housing being of concern to me and about my hope, wish and expectation that that is resolved. I am on the record as an advocate for more housing in this State to resolve the housing crisis—and that is more than those opposite.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (11:41):** I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elaborate on her reference to the implementation of the TODs and explain to the House that the problem is not so much industrial action but the 15 per cent affordable social housing requirement, meaning that private developers are saying to the Government that they cannot turn a dollar and make a return on the TODs as they currently stand—none of them will go ahead?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:42):** I absolutely can elaborate on that. I do not accept the premise of the question. The 15 per cent requirement for affordable housing, as the member probably knows, applies only in the accelerated TOD precincts, not across all of the TODs. In the remainder of the TODs, it is a sliding scale that is being finalised right now between the department of planning

and developers from 2 per cent to 15 per cent based on feasibility. That is the critical point: based on feasibility. I have heard the concerns that the member referred to. I talk to our delivery partners in the private sector all the time. I make it my business to know what barriers might exist. I have heard those concerns.

My view is that, when stacked up alongside all of the other things that are standing in the way of feasibility right now, such as construction costs, labour costs and supply chain barriers making it more difficult to source material, the relatively minimal or as low as 2 per cent affordable social housing—which is better than nothing, but I am on the record as saying that is a baseline requirement—is not the fundamental barrier to feasibility. It is not. My conversations with private market partners are that protecting the affordable housing component in the TODs is a very important principle. We are willing to talk. We are happy to have case-by-case conversations.

I give the member that assurance. There is no world in which we will allow the settings for the TODs to be such that the housing that we desperately need is not delivered. We are actively finalising the planning process, including conversations with private market partners. We know how important it is, having talked up this important contribution to the State, that it actually happens. All of the elements, when ranked, do not indicate to me that this particular one that the member has identified is the most significant. But we remain open to conversations about making those TODs happen.

### AQUACULTURE INDUSTRY

**The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (11:44):** My question is addressed to the Minister for Agriculture. What is the New South Wales Government doing to support the development of the aquaculture industry in New South Wales?

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (11:44):** I thank the Hon. Emily Suvaal for her significant interest in aquaculture in New South Wales. Aquaculture is one of the fastest-growing sustainable food production industries in the world. In 2023 the farm gate value of aquaculture in New South Wales was \$113 million and supported over 2,000 full- and part-time jobs in regional areas. Over the past few years in New South Wales we have seen significant growth in the production volume and value of oysters, mussels and freshwater fish, such as Murray cod. The sector is primed for growth, with hopes of increasing production by 2030 to achieve a farm gate value of \$300 million. In particular, our Government will work with the oyster industry to double production by 2030 to over 7,500 tonnes.

Just two weeks ago I was delighted to attend the 2024 New South Wales Oyster Conference to launch the New South Wales aquaculture vision statement. The vision statement outlines the incredible opportunities in front of the industry and our commitment to grow the industry to \$300 million by 2030. The New South Wales Government is committed to focusing on research to boost the resilience of the aquaculture industry. This commitment is underpinned by our recently announced \$60 million commitment to our State's research facilities, including a \$3 million investment in the Port Stephens Fisheries Institute. The institute does fantastic work that is critical to the sustainability and the growth of the aquaculture industry in New South Wales. The Government is particularly assisting the New South Wales oyster industry to build its resilience to disease and climate change impacts by ensuring access to selectively bred oyster spat. For people's information, spat is young oyster developed in a hatchery and used for breeding. The Government has been developing disease-resistant and faster-growing oysters in New South Wales.

Aquaculture in New South Wales has a bright future. The Opposition might scoff at this, but it is a significant industry in New South Wales and we are going to back this industry to grow in significant ways between now and 2030. Those opposite should be supporting our oyster farmers, just like the New South Wales Government is. They are going to do a lot better under this Labor Government than they did under the previous lot. I am certainly pleased to inform the House that the Government is working with the sector to ensure that one of the most significant primary industries in the State continues to provide the jobs that I have outlined—to provide even more of those jobs as the industry grows into the future—and to support investment opportunities up and down the coast.

### RACING NSW

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (11:47):** My question is directed to the Deputy Leader of the Government, representing the Minister for Gaming and Racing. I refer the Minister to his statement in the House during debate about the extension of Russell Balding's term in November last year. He said, "The call for papers power under Standing Order 52 has been tested in the past, including in relation to organisations of similar standing to Racing NSW, and they have been found to be successful." Given that Racing NSW wrote to the Legislative Council on 3 September stating that it is not subject to the orders for papers process and it will not comply with the recent

Standing Order 52 motion passed by the House for that purpose, what action will he now take to assert the proper powers of our Chamber in relation to Racing NSW, as per his statement last November?

**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) (11:48):** I thank the member for his question. As usual, given his experience, he has paid close attention to the forms of the House. It is reasonable to examine carefully the Government's view about exactly the way in which these issues interact. I think the best thing to do, in the circumstances, is to take the question on notice. I am certainly happy to take it on notice and obtain an answer for the member. I am aware of the correspondence that the Hon. Mark Latham is referring to. I do not recall using those precise words when I put that view in the Chamber, but I am sure he is entirely correct that that is what I said.

Given the complexity of the issues the member has raised, I think the best thing to do is to take his question on notice. I will happily return both to the member and to the House with more detail about the Government's view on the matters raised. Of course, the House may well have its own view about its powers. That is not unprecedented in these matters. But it is reasonable to ask what the Government's view is, on advice, about the House's powers. I will seek such advice and return to the House.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (11:49):** I ask a supplementary question. Given the Minister was so brazen and so confident of his position back in November, what information informed his view that Racing NSW would be subject to Standing Order 52, and how did it all go so wrong?

**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) (11:50):** I think it best that I obtain an answer on notice for the member, rather than try to stretch my mind back to November to recall my feelings and what advice I had. But the member is asking a very good question. I am very happy to return on advice. Questions about where the line is, where these agencies respond and what standing orders they are caught under are entirely sensible. I will obtain advice about the Government's view and then happily update the House.

*[Business interrupted.]*

#### *Announcements*

#### **PARLIAMENT HOUSE SECURITY**

**The PRESIDENT (11:50):** Before I call the Hon. Chris Rath, I would like to reiterate some security advice that all members have received. As is apparent, there is a large event happening on Macquarie Street. It will involve road closures, loudspeakers and a large crowd for the next couple of hours. During the next couple of hours it is recommended that all visitors and Parliament House security passholders enter and exit via Hospital Road.

#### *Questions Without Notice*

#### **CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION OFFICIALS**

*[Business resumed.]*

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (11:51):** What propitious timing! My question is directed to the Parliamentary Secretary for Industrial Relations. Given the role the Maritime Union of Australia [MUA] is currently playing in undermining the authority of the CFMEU administrator appointed by the Minister for Industrial Relations by fomenting public protests in favour of Darren Greenfield and other sacked officials, who instructed the Parliamentary Secretary to agree to increase the MUA's influence on the administration of our vital courts by guaranteeing them two positions on the Maritime Advisory Council?

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (11:52):** I thank the honourable member for his question. The attempt to somehow conflate a consultative mechanism with a union which is a major stakeholder in that industry beggars belief, even by the Opposition's standards. The idea that the Government would shut down consultation with a union that has a major stakeholder subject matter expert role in that industry is laughable, honestly. Beyond that, as has been articulated previously in question time today, the CFMEU is under administration. This Government did that; it was not those opposite. It was not them. And now the doyens of free speech are suggesting that members of the Maritime Union of Australia are not allowed to come to Macquarie Street to protest their concerns. I mean, where are you people? Where are you people?

We on this side believe unions have the right to be consulted about industries which we have a stake in and administer in government. We will continue to take their advice, because they have subject matter expertise. In the matter of the CFMEU, the administrator appointed by this Government will do its job. The administrator will

do what it has to do to make sure that corruption is weeded out. It is very simple. The pathetic attempts by those opposite to try to conflate the two is laughable.

**The Hon. Natalie Ward:** Point of order: My point of order is on relevance.

**The Hon. Damien Tudehope:** They can't hear you.

**The Hon. Natalie Ward:** No, obviously they cannot hear me over the protest. Is the Parliamentary Secretary now admitting that these were Labor amendments?

**The PRESIDENT:** There is no point of order because of the inclusion of a debating point at the end. If members attempt to include debating points in their points of order, I will rule them out of order. The Parliamentary Secretary has the call.

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG:** Again I make the point that the Hon. Natalie Ward was present in this House yesterday and she knows very well that they were The Greens amendments, which we agreed to.

**The Hon. Natalie Ward:** Your amendments, fronted by The Greens.

**The Hon. Damien Tudehope:** They were your amendments.

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG:** Were Opposition members not present for the debate yesterday? Mr President, were those opposite not here yesterday during the debate on that bill? The amendments were moved by The Greens.

**The Hon. Natalie Ward:** Point of order—

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG:** They should look up *Hansard*.

**The Hon. Natalie Ward:** The member knows perfectly well that I was present in the Chamber yesterday and he is well aware that those amendments were put up by The Greens. I was informed they were handed to The Greens half an hour before the debate.

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

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Point of order: The debate is also straying into canvassing decisions of the House.

**The PRESIDENT:** I agree with the Leader of the House. It is unparliamentary to canvass decisions of the House. Does the Parliamentary Secretary have anything further to add?

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG:** No.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (11:55):** I ask a supplementary question. Will the Parliamentary Secretary please elucidate whether the Minister for Industrial Relations was consulted on this matter? If so, did the Minister oppose or support the proposed amendment to increase Maritime Union of Australia influence over the administration of NSW Ports?

**The Hon. Daniel Mookhey:** Point of order: I have two points of order. First, the member is asking an entirely new question. The question could be asked if I did not hold a second concern, which is that, again, it is an invitation for the Parliamentary Secretary to canvass the decision of the House yesterday in terms of what positions were adopted by the Government, under what circumstances. That is always a matter of discretion, but there is no way the Parliamentary Secretary can provide a meaningful answer to that question without canvassing the debate and the position that the Government took in that debate.

**The PRESIDENT:** I will not deal with the second point of order because I uphold the first point of order. The supplementary question is out of order.

### SOCIAL ISOLATION

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY (11:56):** My question without notice is addressed to the Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast. Will the Minister update the House on what the New South Wales Government is doing to address loneliness in New South Wales?

**The Hon. ROSE JACKSON (Minister for Water, Minister for Housing, Minister for Homelessness, Minister for Mental Health, Minister for Youth, and Minister for the North Coast) (11:57):** I thank the honourable member for the question. Members may be aware that this month is National Suicide Prevention Month. We had World Suicide Prevention Day last week, as well as R U OK? Day. It has become increasingly clear that there is a very strong correlation between the increased loneliness and social isolation we are seeing in



this State and poor experiences of mental illness. Loneliness is a really difficult and awkward topic to talk about sometimes. It is difficult to admit that you are lonely. Perhaps it is somewhat embarrassing to talk in the Parliament about loneliness. People feel as though they may get mocked: "You've got no friends."

The Government is trying to normalise, destigmatise and mainstream a conversation about the fact that as a society we are lonelier than we used to be. Loneliness is a really damaging thing, not just in an emotional sense for the people who are experiencing that loneliness, but also in a physical sense. There is a strong correlation between loneliness and physical ill health, in terms of economic productivity and social cohesion. The parliamentary inquiry that we have launched, led by the Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine, is the first of its kind in New South Wales. It builds on work that has been started internationally to explore why there is more loneliness, and what we can do about it.

It is not just older people who are experiencing loneliness. There is a view that loneliness is something that older people experience as their networks start to fray. That is incredibly damaging. There is evidence linking loneliness to the increased prevalence of falls amongst older people. But younger people are also experiencing loneliness more and more. There are more singles living in Sydney than any other city in Australia. Post-COVID in particular, more and more younger people are starting to feel isolated in their communities. We want to be able to have mature and sensible conversations about loneliness—why it is happening and what we can do about it.

World Suicide Prevention month is an opportunity for us to highlight the work that we are doing through our loneliness parliamentary inquiry and to encourage people to make a submission and participate. We want this to be a really broad, open-ended conversation about what we can do to build more social links in our community, such as through sporting clubs, political parties or arts and cultural opportunities. We want people to know that there are ways to break out of the spiral of social isolation that they might be experiencing. I look forward to the work of the parliamentary inquiry.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

**The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (12:00):** My question is directed to the Minister for Regional New South Wales, representing the Minister for Local Government. Given that New South Wales local government elections have just been held and that in due course new and existing councillors will be declared elected and thus will be required to submit their pecuniary interests, when will the New South Wales Government, in response to the Canterbury-Bankstown inquiry recommendations to amend section 439AA (4) of the Local Government Act, specifically amend the model code of conduct and ensure that all overseas properties must be disclosed?

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (12:01):** I thank the Hon. Tania Mihailuk for the question, which has been asked of me in my capacity representing the Minister for Local Government. I will seek an answer from the Minister and bring it back to the House.

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

#### WENTWORTH PARK SPORTING COMPLEX TRUST

**The Hon. DANIEL MOOKHEY (Treasurer) (12:01):** I have acquainted myself with some further information with respect to a loan dispute between Greyhound Racing NSW and the land manager. I will provide the information that I can, but I will still take the question on notice to see what further information I can provide. I am advised that the Public Accounts Committee investigated the loan matter as part of its examination of the Auditor-General's financial audit reports. In May 2022, as part of its *Examination of selected Auditor-General's Financial Audit Reports 2020*, the committee recommended that the former Department of Planning and Environment, as lead agency, negotiate a solution to a claim of an unresolved loan. I am further advised that the former department also engaged with the administrator of the Wentworth Park Sporting Complex Land Manager, who is the land manager, the Office of Racing and Greyhound Racing NSW to progress the matter.

No party has been able to provide loan documents, a contract, terms or conditions. However, I am advised there is evidence that a loan between the land manager and what is now Greyhound Racing NSW may exist, notably a *Gazette* notice from 26 June 1998, No. 100 folio 5112, of two repayable loans to the Wentworth Park trust of \$1.6 million and \$6.4 million. This relates to moneys paid from the Racecourse Development Fund between 1985 to 1987 to finalise construction of the grandstand at Wentworth Park. I understand that the actions the Minister has taken in this matter include responding to some correspondence that was received at the end of last year from the chair of the Public Accounts Committee and, in addition to that, I think the Minister is ensuring a search is being conducted, and that the efforts of multiple parties and agencies to date will be extended to see if we can identify missing loan documentation.

In order for this dispute to resolve itself further, or for any further action to be taken, of course it would assist if there were some more evidence of an actual loan terms and conditions. Nevertheless, if I can provide any further information as to the nature of this loan dispute, I will. Some of the other advice I have received is that it is not at all clear that, even if such a document were to be found, an obligation would arise to the State.

*Questions Without Notice: Take Note*

**TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** I move:

That the House take note of answers to questions.

**LAND CLEARING**

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (12:04):** I focus my remarks on the question I asked the Minister for Agriculture in relation to concerns of NSW Farmers about the recently reported data on land clearing. At the outset I state that we in the New South Wales Nationals have had a good and strong working relationship with NSW Farmers for a long time. I have known Xavier Martin for many years. He lives not far from Gunnedah, so he is someone I have known for a long time. He certainly is very well respected in our local community and within the agricultural sector. It is concerning when we hear of reports and have concerns expressed to us by members of NSW Farmers who are very worried about what they call "activists" within the New South Wales Government. They are concerned about data that has been released and the way in which it has been weaponised. I will not read all the comments in full, but some of the quotes by Mr Martin include:

It's very sad to see these baseless attacks on the farmers that feed and clothe our nation continue, this time from activists within the NSW Government itself.

The amount of land cleared stated as facts is wrong, alarmist and irresponsible, and it's clear they are designed to demonise farmers rather than continue a productive conversation on protecting the environment.

These are not weasel words. These are very strong criticisms coming from our peak farming organisation in this State directed solely at the Government and the way it has released and cherry-picked the figures. We all know, particularly those of us who live in the regions, that our farmers are some of the best environmentalists we have. They literally depend on the land for their day-to-day living support. It is their bread and butter for what they do and they are the ones who are most invested in ensuring not only that their land is productive but also that they have the best environmental protections in place.

We hear consistently from our stakeholders in that sector that they feel they are under attack. They also feel that they are constantly being pitted against the environment. When we look at agriculture versus environment under this Government, it is pretty clear that farmers are getting the wrong end of the deal. We know it is important to stick up for our farming communities. We know that the Minister has to deal with working with her colleagues, as she mentioned in her answer. But when we have a peak organisation that represents farmers in this State saying it is time for this Government "to recommit to a constructive dialogue with agriculture", they are clearly not happy. They do not want to be labelled incorrectly. They do not want to have the impacts on international markets when they get these sorts of data and figures being released. They are worried about the far-reaching consequences, and The Nationals back them in because we need to ensure we have a strong and sustainable agricultural industry in this State. We need to back in our New South Wales farmers. We need to listen to them, make sure that facts are on the table, and ensure that our farmers are recognised for the incredible environmentalists they are.

**CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION OFFICIALS**

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (12:07):** I take note of the answers given in relation to amendments passed last night and in particular the discussion around the role The Greens played in those amendments. What we have all learnt today is that if we have any kind of small talk with the Hon. Natalie Ward in the halls, we ought to bring with us a lawyer because she will misconstrue what was said and then bring it to this place in the form of a question. When I said to her that I had received that amendment half an hour before, I meant from the Parliamentary Counsel's Office. Members are very welcome to have a look at my emails: at 8.11 p.m. it came in from that office.

I work incredibly hard in this place. I have 10 portfolios to cover, and I am always looking at what amendments we can make to the legislation that comes before us. This was a last-minute one because we had not seen it. We worked incredibly hard—my team always works incredibly hard—to represent the unions in bringing the amendments to this place that make sense. Unfortunately, the Labor Government in large respect has abandoned the unions. We can hear union members protesting outside right now because the Labor Government is not listening to them. That means that The Greens, who have always stood up for workers and have always

stood up for workers' rights, are the party that the unions are coming to in order to get matters heard. That is what happened last night. It has happened a few times in the past few months.

But the idea that The Greens would ever take an amendment from the Labor Party and do its bidding is so offensive. For it to come from the Hon. Natalie Ward, who knows me a lot better than that and knows that I would never not do my own work, is quite offensive. We stand for the unions. We stand for the union that is outside Parliament right now protesting the heavy-handed response that they received from this Labor Government. We will continue to do that throughout the term of this Government.

### **CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION OFFICIALS**

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (12:09):** The question I was asked conflated two totally separate issues. It implied the ludicrous proposition that the Opposition expects the Government not to include the Maritime Union of Australia in a consultative body because it is somehow associated with the CFMEU, which has been put under administration. What sort of world are we living in whereby a lawfully registered union with subject matter expertise in a particular transport industry would be shut out by members opposite on the basis that a kindred or sister union has been put into administration? That was the implication of the question. Again, the Opposition are clutching at straws and conflating issues in a desperate attempt to try to get a headline or some sort of interest. It is totally pathetic.

The two issues are totally separate. As I said, the Minister for Transport made a decision that the maritime union should be involved in that consultation given its subject matter expertise and its membership coverage in that ports area, which is absolutely and totally understandable and appropriate. It was a Greens amendment, which the Government supported. Members opposite know very well that this Government has put the CFMEU into administration, and that is going through its due process. I understand that Opposition members have just suffered one of their worst defeats in history and are struggling for relevance, so why would they want to drag that up again? I say to those opposite that if they want to keep pursuing the line about unions, it will be a continuing dry gully.

The Labor Party makes no apologies whatsoever about its support of unions and the good things that the union movement does for working people, both in New South Wales and Australia. I remind the New South Wales public what workers suffered under the Coalition regime for over 12 years. There was unmitigated wage suppression and no clearing house for industrial relations. The Coalition denuded the Industrial Relations Commission, which Labor has now restored as a proper clearing house for industrial disputation. There were industrial disputes hand over fist and rail networks being shut down because the Coalition failed to talk to the unions. The truth is that those opposite hate unions, and they hate unions because the Labor Party and the unions are affiliated to secure outcomes for working people. It is as simple as that. If those opposite want to get back into government, I suggest they pick another topic. But, by all means, they can keep coming back with it. [*Time expired.*]

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT**

**The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (12:12):** I speak briefly on the question that I put to the Hon. Tara Moriarty about the local government model code of conduct. Local government elections have been finalised and in due course the new and continuing councillors will have to declare their pecuniary interests. Despite the fact that an inquiry into allegations of impropriety against agents of the City of Canterbury-Bankstown council specifically recommended that the Government proceed with amendments to the model code of conduct to ensure that overseas properties and overseas interests are declared, that is yet to take place. I asked the question to the Hon. Tara Moriarty, representing the local government Minister, and was given the response in writing that amendments are being worked on to incorporate that change to the model code. Today I asked when the amendments would take effect, and the Minister indicated she will seek advice from the Minister for Local Government. The new councillors coming in will have to declare their pecuniary interests very soon but, at this stage, the first batch of declarations will not be required to include any overseas interests or properties.

The inquiry exposed a decision made by the then mayor of Canterbury-Bankstown Council to not disclose a Melbourne property owned by his self-managed super fund. It was not just overseas properties; he did not think he needed to declare an interstate property because the advice that he received was that, under the current model code of conduct and the way the section is written in the Local Government Act, he was not required to disclose the Melbourne property. On 6 August I lodged a supplementary question to the Leader of the Government, representing the Premier, about the overseas properties and trips and other matters relating to that particular councillor. I received a response on 27 August and I have to say I was disappointed. It was a one-line response that stated that it was a matter for Canterbury-Bankstown Council. It is not; it is actually up to this Government to ensure that councillors declare their pecuniary interests properly and that all matters, whether they are overseas

or interstate properties or interests, are declared. I can guarantee that if people look further they will understand why he has not declared them. [*Time expired.*]

### CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION OFFICIALS

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (12:15):** We heard today, and indeed last night in the debate, that the Labor Party is weak on the CFMEU. It will not stand up to the CFMEU. In fact, the very protesters out the front of Parliament House today are protesting against the administration.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Point of order: This is a take-note debate of the answers given during question time, not a general opportunity to rave on about whatever the member's pet peeve is.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** To the point of order: I redirect my comments to take note of the answer given by the Parliamentary Secretary for Industrial Relations.

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** The member will proceed.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** In the answer today from the Parliamentary Secretary, we heard that the Labor Party is weak on the CFMEU. It will not stand up to the CFMEU, the very union that is protesting out the front of Parliament right now. Two of their number are going to be appointed to the Maritime Advisory Council through legislation that Labor agreed to last night through an amendment.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Point of order: We had this during question time. The canvassing of the decisions made by the House is out of order.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** To the point of order: I am taking note of the debate that took place in question time, which is this exact issue of Maritime Union of Australia [MUA] representation on the advisory council.

**The Hon. Emily Suvaal:** To the point of order: The Hon. Chris Rath is directly reflecting on a decision that was made by the House in passing legislation last night. He is no longer taking note of the debate. There were rulings earlier in the take-note debate about this very thing being out of order.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** Further to the point of order: The President did not rule on that. The President ruled on relevancy, not on the matter of a decision made by the House. I am taking note of an answer given by the Parliamentary Secretary. If members read the question and the Parliamentary Secretary's comments, they will find that it is directly relevant to canvass items that were raised in question time today.

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** It is not appropriate to reflect on decisions of the House, but if the member does proceed and makes his comments in relation to matters that have been raised, that is appropriate. This debate is to take note of answers.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH:** The MUA is, in fact, not the solution to the problem on the ports. The MUA is the problem. It is grinding the ports to a halt because of its inefficiency. I think we need another waterfront like what Peter— [*Time expired.*]

### HOUSING SUPPLY

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY (12:18):** I take note of the answer given by the Minister for Housing in relation to transport oriented development [TOD]. It ought to be called out because we have a situation where only one side of the House has a housing policy. We want to fix the problem. One would think it is evident that the sensible way of doing that is to put high-rise apartments—which is really the only way to solve the housing crisis—near transport nodes like train stations. Is it not absolutely obvious that is the way to solve the problem? Apparently it is not obvious to the Opposition. Time after time in this House or in the other place Opposition members say, "I am supportive of housing. There is an emergency. We need to fix it, but I don't want any of that. I don't want transport oriented development in my electorate. I don't want it in Cronulla. I don't want it in Willoughby. I don't want it in the North Shore." This was the problem that occurred while they were in government: no development across the North Shore.

Councils like Mosman did not even meet their mediocre targets of under 100 new dwellings. We had massive development across Western Sydney generally, particularly in south-west Sydney. Those regions took their fair share of increased development in circumstances where the now Opposition failed to invest in infrastructure at all in those areas. It has to change and the way to change it is through transport oriented development and ensuring that we have high-rise housing across the North Shore and the shire where there are good transport networks and train stations. That means that those communities, for a change, have to take their fair share. They have to bear part of the housing burden by having high-rise housing and contributing to the solution. I was a bit unfair earlier when I said "Opposition members". I single out the Hon. Chris Rath as the only yimby amongst the Opposition who recognises the problem and wants to fix it.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Jacqui recognises the problem.

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY:** The Hon. Jacqui Munro, I think maybe she is almost there. A couple of them do care. The rest of the Opposition members say they want to do something but, when it comes to the crunch, they oppose housing in their areas.

## HOUSING SUPPLY

### CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION

**The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (12:22):** I briefly take note of the answer given by the Minister for Housing, and an answer given by the Leader the Government. The Minister for Housing correctly observed that we need more houses. There is furious agreement across both sides of the Chamber on that. I simply make the observation in relation to the Minister's answer, and the further gloss put on it by the Hon. Cameron Murphy, that there could be no transport oriented development, known as TOD, without the giant capital T, which the Coalition Government provided. The Government is seeking to provide an "OD" on the transport that we put everywhere, which actually enables people to be able to get to work and to get home. That contribution cannot be overlooked.

I also take note of the answer given by the Leader of the Government to the question from the Hon. Damien Tudehope in relation to the CFMEU and Darren Greenfield. The answer appeared to be, "We have passed the legislation. What else do you expect us to do?" That, frankly, is an answer that we have heard a lot, especially from the Attorney General. "We have passed the knife legislation. What else do you expect us to do? We have passed Jack's law. What else do you expect us to do? We have passed laws that provide for electronic monitoring of people alleged to have committed domestic violence if they are allowed out on bail. What else do you expect us to do? We have passed laws that allow magistrates and not registrars to make bail decisions. What else do you expect us to do?"

We expect the Government to govern. We expect the Government to implement those laws. Being in government and being a member of the Executive means that, as well as being in the legislative arm and passing laws, the Government should take responsibility for making sure that those laws are proclaimed, they are implemented, they are funded and they work. Passing legislation is a first step; it is often a necessary step. But it needs to be followed up with consistent action. That legislation needs to be implemented. Frankly, that is what members on this side of the House, representing the people of New South Wales, expect of all members on the Government side of the House.

### CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION

#### CONSTRUCTION, FORESTRY AND MARITIME EMPLOYEES UNION OFFICIALS

#### SOCIAL ISOLATION

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (12:24):** I also take note of the answers given by the Leader of the Government and the Parliamentary Secretary. I make the observation to the Parliamentary Secretary that, in many respects, members bring a lot of their previous life experiences and affiliations to this place. But it probably also demonstrates his absolute ideological commitment to the group of people who were responsible for marshalling the votes to put him in this place. That drama in the body politic exists because of Labor's commitment to affiliation with the union movement—he who pays the piper calls the tune. It becomes difficult for Labor when a union goes rogue and aligns itself with criminality in the way that the CFMEU has.

We are now experiencing the problem of the degradation of the body politic because the Labor Party receives funding from the union movement. That is being played out in the procurement inquiry currently being conducted by a committee of this place. We are seeing it in spades. It is a problem when Labor Party members ensure that procurement benefits their union mates. I suggest to the member that he should join the Premier who, in his first speech to Parliament, said that there needs to be a break between the Labor Party and its affiliation with the union movement, because there is a stench about the way business is being done in this place.

Lastly, I comment on the contribution of the Hon. Rose Jackson. Her commitment to dealing with loneliness can be nothing but applauded. In fact, on this side of the House we will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Government to find solutions to loneliness. The fact that she is committed to it, identifies with it, and wants to find solutions, is a credit to her. I am very passionate about it because, as we move through life, we see people who go whole days without speaking to another human being. It is absolutely regrettable and we cannot, as a Parliament, fail to acknowledge or do something about it.

## TAKE NOTE OF ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (12:27):** As always, it was an interesting take-note debate. I make

the following points in response to some of the issues raised today. In breaking news, Liberal members hate unions, and their questions and their approach to those matters just show it. I do not know what the Hon. Chris Rath would do with his life if unions ceased to exist; he would not know what he was doing. He would be worried and he would need some new pet peeves. If he thinks that a democratic organisation where workers band together for fair pay and conditions is the biggest horror that afflicts Australian society, he is clearly in the right party. Again, it is no great surprise.

The other point I make is that it is just wrong for those opposite to suggest that Labor members have not taken the issue seriously where wrongdoing has become evident. We utterly reject that. I know it does not fit their narrative that we have actually done that, whereas they sat there for 12 years and did nothing on issues that were occurring at the time, but we stand by what we have done. We also stand by the rights of workers to organise and to fight for better conditions and pay, because it is their job.

It should come as no surprise—although it seems to be a constant surprise to those on the other side of the House—that people in the Labor Party understand that, because we were founded by unions and rank-and-file members. That is our structure, and that is why we support collective decision-making and allowing the powerless to join together to try to get some power in the relationship between employer and employee. It is not a big deal, but I again acknowledge that members opposite hate it and want to raise it all the time. They will continue to do so, and that is really great—except, of course, when the Leader of the Opposition is backing in the Fire Brigade Employees Union. We welcome him to do that and are very happy when Comrade Tudehope comes out, rather than cranky Tudehope. But we know that the Hon. Chris Rath is a complete and utter loss in relation to that, so he is in the right place. We do not want him; he can stay where he is.

I note some of the issues that The Nationals raised in relation to NSW Farmers. The Minister for Agriculture and I, as the Minister for the Environment, take really seriously our relationship with NSW Farmers. We are actively talking to them about a range of issues. We are working through some difficult challenges where we have disagreements, but I think it is the cheapest shot to say that we do not care about farmers or that we somehow do not recognise the incredible contribution that they make when it comes to protecting the environment.

I place on record my acknowledgement of the work that farmers are doing in private land conservation and the work that they do every day to run sustainable farms. We will continue to work closely with them, even when some of the issues are tough. We need to continue to do it. Xavier Martin is a very good president, and I am glad that he has been re-elected by NSW Farmers. Annabel Johnson is an excellent CEO of NSW Farmers. We will disagree sometimes, but our door is always open. We will continue to talk to them as we work through those issues, because we have far more to gain when we work together.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Written Answers to Supplementary Questions*

**MONA VALE ROAD WEST UPGRADE**

In reply to **the Hon. NATALIE WARD** (17 September 2024).

**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)**—The Minister provided the following response:

I am advised:

A road safety audit for Mona Vale Road West Western early works was done in August 2024 as part of the standard delivery process for road projects. The Western early works is an embankment that was built using material from the Mona Vale Road East project.

**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*

**WOMEN'S SHELTER ARMIDALE**

**The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD (14:03):** I speak to the amazing work of the Women's Shelter Armidale and its contribution to dealing with domestic and family violence. As members know, prior to joining the Parliament I was a community corrections officer. I worked with perpetrators of domestic violence on a daily basis. That role meant I got to read police reports, facts and other information. I can confidently say they painted a very different picture to the romantic view we have of relationships. It is not the fairytale ending "and they lived

happily ever after" we all believed as children. It is the reason why in 2014 I volunteered to be a member of the Women's Shelter Armidale committee and was subsequently elected treasurer. I felt passionate about helping those whose lives had been damaged and who had experienced trauma in a way that no-one should ever have to.

It is difficult to see family breakdowns in any circumstance, but it is even more tragic when family and domestic violence is involved. Furthermore, in regional centres, often there is nowhere to hide. Having a women's shelter to provide wraparound service support is integral to getting women's lives back on track. Providing care and support for innocent young children is of the utmost importance. I was treasurer of the shelter for about four years, so I was close to its inner workings. It made my day as a community corrections officer more haunting because it meant I came face to face with perpetrators and then victim-survivors. We had tools like the practice guide to intervention to encourage behaviour change, which were effective. But then I would attend a board meeting and be confronted with the depressing reality that the world can be a cruel place with nowhere to escape when one is locked in an abusive relationship.

I make the point that I was in an unenviable dual role, seeing the trauma from both sides. It was hard for me to continue without it getting to me on a personal level. I discontinued my role on the board because it was all too much. Fast forward to a couple of weeks ago, where the story becomes positive. In my new role as an MLC, I paid a visit to the Women's Shelter Armidale. I was delighted to see the dream come to fruition. They had Core and Cluster units built to transition women, children and pets to a new place where they could rebuild their lives in a personal space with security to heal with the assistance of specialist services. It is a shame that services like those are needed, but until domestic violence is eliminated in our society, they are crucial and appreciated.

### **ROUSE HILL HOSPITAL**

### **MOREE DISTRICT HOSPITAL**

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (14:06):** Today I talk briefly about two of the many great health-related facilities now underway in New South Wales. The \$700 million Rouse Hill Hospital is the first major adult hospital built in Western Sydney in over 40 years. Despite promises made to local residents over three elections, no progress was ever made by the former Government. The New South Wales Labor Government is getting on with the job of delivering the 300-bed hospital, which is set to deliver much-needed contemporary healthcare facilities for the growing north-western community. The new hospital will bring health care closer to communities in Rouse Hill, Tallawong, Schofields, The Ponds, North Kellyville, Riverstone, Marsden Park and the surrounding areas.

Rouse Hill Hospital will include an emergency and urgent care department, inpatient beds, a daycare surgery unit, short stay medical assessment services, pathology, pharmacy and medical imaging services, outpatient and ambulatory care services, paediatrics, renal and maternity services, and women's health services. There will be a health hub for virtual care and Hospital in the Home services, and prehabilitation, rehabilitation and lifestyle medicine. The new Rouse Hill Hospital is part of the New South Wales Government's \$3 billion investment for new and upgraded hospitals and health services across greater Western Sydney, which is one of the largest investments in the region's health infrastructure in recent years.

Yesterday a formal announcement was made in the Northern Tablelands about the Moree District Hospital redevelopment. Work to deliver the Moree District Hospital redevelopment is a step closer since the main works construction tender to deliver the project was released. The New South Wales Government is investing \$105 million in the redevelopment to improve health outcomes for Moree and the surrounding community. The redevelopment will deliver a new clinical services building to provide enhanced healthcare facilities in the existing hospital site to support Moree and the surrounding communities now and well into the future. The project will include an emergency department, operating theatres, medical imaging, a birthing and inpatient unit, pathology and a new main entrance. Following the completion of the competitive tender process, a builder will be engaged and the project's scope and construction timeline will be confirmed. Construction is anticipated to commence in 2025. The community will continue to be updated as the project progresses.

### **INVASIVE SPECIES AND CONSERVATION HUNTING**

**The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (14:09):** On 9 September the NSW Natural Resources Commission released a preliminary report on invasive species management in New South Wales. The report is crucial for guiding our approach on invasive species, yet once again it glaringly omits the critical role of cultural conservation hunting. Cultural conservation hunting is a significant force in our fight against invasive species. With over 230,000 dedicated hunters across New South Wales, this community contributes to the removal of tens of millions of invasive species annually. This far surpasses the combined impact of all government programs put together. Furthermore, these efforts come at no cost to taxpayers and deliver a substantial economic impact, exceeding half a billion dollars annually.

Surprisingly, or possibly unsurprisingly, the report has some 26 quotes from the Invasive Species Council [ISC], a rabidly anti-hunting organisation which has in the past been rightly labelled the "bunnies of conservation". At the brumby inquiry, the Invasive Species Council representatives—Jack Gough, a former Greens staffer in this place, and Richard Swain, one of the council's ambassadors, who is a token honorary associate professor at the Australian National University—both admitted that they had absolutely no academic or practical background in pest management. The report quoted the ISC 26 times. The Government must ensure that the final report acknowledges the value of and incorporates the cultural conservation hunters in managing invasive species and leverages their efforts in the ongoing battle against pests and invasive species, including feral pigs, foxes et cetera—as well as the Invasive Species Council.

It is time for government departments and authorities to start incorporating dedicated volunteer hunters into integrated, community-based management efforts. Their inclusion is essential for a holistic and effective approach to invasive species control in New South Wales. The current pest industry, operating under the current tired paradigm, has failed to do this time and time again, at great expense to New South Wales. Hunters produce results and cost nothing. The Invasive Species Council, the bunnies of conservation, produce nothing but hot-air advocacy. It is time to start investing energy and resources that will produce real results. Those resources are available free of charge to the taxpayers of New South Wales and produce a real conservation effort.

### STARTUP DAILY AWARDS

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (14:12):** The stars of Australian startups gathered on Wednesday 4 September at the ivy Ballroom, to shine brightly at the Startup Daily Best in Tech Awards 2024. *Startup Daily* is Australia's premier open access online publication. It champions entrepreneurs, celebrates enterprise culture, offers commentary on policy and informs on the economic environment for founders and investors. *Startup Daily* has the kind of genuine clout in the industry that can only be built on the authentic expertise and passion of its journalists and its indefatigable editor, Simon Thomsen. The night was a riot of shared joy that celebrated the success of award winners, runners-up and all the other nominees.

Startup Daily created a new award this year, the AI Gamechanger, noting that AI is "one of the hottest startup sectors". The winner, Curious Thing AI, recently launched the world's first free AI phone agent to handle missed calls. Having artificial intelligence might have been an insulting term bandied about this place well before the advent of the internet, but today the adoption of AI as a technical force has a meaning well beyond what Mr President might refer to as a pithy slur. The LaunchVic Alice Anderson Fund won the GSD, or Get Stuff Done, award. This New South Wales Labor Government could learn something about supporting women and founders here. The illustrious judging panel chose the Alice Anderson Fund because of its success in activating more than \$42 million in private sector investment into women-led businesses, having made 36 investments in women-led startups since 2021.

The fund notes that its portfolio companies have created more than 300 new jobs, that women hold 60 per cent of the executive positions, and that the companies generate more than \$2 million in export revenue. The fund hopes for similar success with the Hugh Victor McKay Fund. The Future Leader of the Year award went to the CEO of Youth in Motion, Caitlin Tanaka, who I had the privilege of meeting. She has worked for years to help young people who are struggling in remote New South Wales, by providing one-on-one online tutoring without any Government support. She has had remarkable success in literally filling in the gaps of the education system for less advantaged students.

Caitlin is now getting to a point where volunteers will not be enough to prop up her critical activities. It is time for investment to flow. I encourage the Minister for Education and Early Learning, Prue Car, to meet with Caitlin. Despite the success of these entrepreneurs, the grim reality for New South Wales startups is that, under Labor, Sydney has slipped a place, down to twenty-first place in the Startup Genome Global Startup Ecosystem Ranking. Finally, I want to acknowledge Simon Thomsen, who had this pithy observation:

NSW is home to around 40% of Australia's startup ecosystem, currently generating 342,000 jobs and contributing \$67 billion to the state's economy. It's hoped to be a key driver of jobs growth in the sector over the next several years, providing around 160,000 jobs by 2030 ... for perspective, 53x The Star casino jobs guarantee.

### KIAMA SPECIAL ENTERTAINMENT PRECINCT

**The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (14:15):** The night-time economy breathes life into our streets after dark, and supports industries including hospitality, retail, arts and culture. It drives tourism, generates jobs and builds a more dynamic local economy that benefits everyone. Kiama locals recognise this and have been passionately campaigning for a special entertainment precinct in Kiama's town centre. A special entertainment precinct is a defined area where sound from premises with amplified music is managed by a council through its noise management plan. This lets councils more easily support live music and performance in the precinct. Community advocate Katelin McInerney started a petition in June which has garnered community support from locals,



businesses and performers alike. Building on this momentum, Labor councillors Imogen Draisma and Stuart Larkins raised a motion at a council meeting, which the council supported. The motion supported Katelin's petition and reaffirmed the council's commitment to develop a night-time economy strategy.

While he was visiting tourism stakeholders in the region last Wednesday, Minister Graham took the opportunity to meet with Katelin, Stuart, community advocates, local business chamber representatives and local creatives. He listened to their ambitions for a more vibrant Kiama, and discussed next steps and reforms our Government is implementing to make it easier and cheaper for this to become a reality. What struck me was the commitment expressed by these diverse stakeholders to figure out how to bring the rest of the Kiama community along with them, and to create a consensus around activating the latent potential of the area. In particular, there was recognition that there are a wide range of models for special entertainment precincts. A precinct could be part of a street or a block, could exist just in particular months of the year or could even be in several non-contiguous zones.

Katelin McInerney has worked tirelessly to bring the community together. It is inspiring to see the momentum building. The group that met last week is committed to making sure the newly elected council follows through on the support of the previous council. With both community support and the level of leadership from Katelin McInerney, Imogen Draisma and Stuart Larkins, it is hopefully only a matter of time, once the new council is confirmed, that the Kiama Municipal Council will be utilising the special entertainment precinct framework and developing its precinct plans. It would be great for Kiama to be the first regional area to have a special entertainment precinct. It would be another string to the bow of the place that has already won the NSW Top Tourism Town award.

### **POLICE AND DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE**

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (14:18):** Yesterday it was reported that yet another police officer has been charged over the alleged domestic violence related assault of a woman in the State's south. The officer's employment status is currently under review. The latest figures given to us by the police commissioner in the last budget estimates hearing reveal that there are 54 currently serving police officers in New South Wales who have been charged with domestic and family violence [DFV] offences. The commissioner confirmed that there are at least 10 police officers who have been found guilty in court of a DFV offence but who are still serving. We could have a separate discussion about whether or not the police should be such a large part of the response to domestic and family violence. The current fact is that they are involved as the first responders in the large majority of incidents, whether they are attending an incident or a victim makes contact with them to report an incident. If we are to create a culture of trust in the police to deal with these matters, how can we have anything but a zero tolerance response to DFV incidents perpetrated by police officers themselves?

To make matters worse, the NSW Police Force still refuses to ensure that claims of DFV against a police officer are not investigated by that police officer's command. The New South Wales Auditor-General called this out, rightly identifying it as inappropriate, and recommended the policy be amended. The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission identified the same issue and similarly recommended the policy be repealed. Yet, despite those clear recommendations from independent agencies, the Government and the NSW Police Force stubbornly refuse to make that simple change, preferring to leave that consequential decision up to individual police discretion. That response underlies just how little those calling the shots in the NSW Police Force understand the experiences of victim-survivors of domestic violence. Victim-survivors need confidence that when they report their experiences, their matter will not be investigated by the alleged perpetrator's colleagues. If there is a chance that it will not be transferred and their safety could be put at further risk, they will simply not report the issue to the police in the first place. Instead, they could be forced to stay in a dangerous situation longer.

I raise this issue again and again with the Minister and the police commissioner. Last week I once again received a response from the police Minister refusing to budge on the issue. If the Minns Labor Government was serious about tackling the domestic and family violence crisis in our State and removing all obstacles women and children face when they are fleeing domestic violence situations, it would have zero tolerance of officers in its ranks charged with DFV incidents. It would ensure that a police officer does not get investigated by their mates when they are the one alleged to be a DFV perpetrator. But, as we have seen in its absolute failure to properly fund frontline domestic and family violence services and its continued arrogance in failing to listen to the evidence-based requests of the sector, this Government is not at all serious about doing what is necessary to keep women and children safe in our State.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (14:21):** Last Saturday New South Wales went to the polls to elect councillors for 128 local government areas for the next four years. The elections were robust and well contested. With cake stalls and democracy sausages aplenty, it was a great display of our unique Australian democracy. It

was a day of great success for our contesting candidates, a reminder of the strength of the Liberal Party brand and its association with mainstream values, competent management and a focus on roads and rubbish, not ideological self-indulgence like The Greens.

I saw some outstanding results on the ground in Canterbury-Bankstown, Liverpool, Blacktown, Camden and Hunters Hill. In Ryde and Liverpool, Trenton Brown and Ned Mannoun respectively won outstanding victories as popularly elected mayors against some disgraceful and disingenuous Labor and trade union campaigns. In Hunters Hill, electors returned my very talented friend Zac Miles as mayor against massive teal opposition, along with his Liberal ticket, with stars like Carol Tannous-Sleiman and Carla Kassab. In Canada Bay the Liberal Party leads the ongoing count for popularly elected mayor. I was particularly pleased to spend time with my great mate and former member in the other place Wendy Lindsay, who at Canterbury-Bankstown Council won two out of the three councillors in Revesby Ward with a top grassroots Liberal mainstream campaign against the well-organised Labor machine.

There were great results everywhere the Liberals ran. I call out the successful re-election of long-time Blacktown councillor Allan Green, who has served over 20 years on council, including as deputy mayor. I have known Allan for over 30 years and recognise his incredible record of service to the Liberal Party and the community. I also call out the successful re-election of long-time Camden councillor Therese Fedeli, who has served over 12 years on council, including as mayor. On election day she received another strong endorsement by her community. They are both stand-out councillors committed to serving their communities. I have seen the respect and high regard in which they are both held.

The fantastic results where the Liberal Party contested were remarkable. I thank each and every one of the Liberal candidates and volunteers. They exemplify grassroots politics in action, which is so critical. We need a match fit Liberal Party ready to elect Peter Dutton as our Prime Minister and end the failed, extreme and divisive Albanese Government in Canberra. That is my commitment and that of many others in the Liberal team. Bring it on!

#### **VICTORIA ETHERIDGE**

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (14:24):** With the local government election concluded, I pay tribute to an exceptional retiring Labor councillor in western New South Wales. My friend Victoria "Vicky" Etheridge has just retired as a councillor at Dubbo Regional Council after two terms. She has served her community for many years, generally unheralded and with real hard work and commitment. Before being elected to Dubbo Regional Council, Vicky was a Warren shire councillor and the deputy mayor of that council. Vicky was initially elected as an Independent but was then a Labor councillor for her second term on Dubbo Regional Council, after being elected as an endorsed Labor candidate in Central Ward in the 2021 election with almost one-third of the vote. It was an amazing result in a conservative part of the local government area [LGA], and she stood against two former mayors.

When she joined the Australian Labor Party in 2021 Vicky told me that she was "returning to her grassroots", having grown up as a Western Sydney girl. Vicky has extensive experience in the transport industry and took a real interest in matters related to that sector. She served for an extended period on the Newell Highway Taskforce and the Lachlan Regional Transport Committee and made a substantial contribution. Her concerns as a councillor were the concerns of the Dubbo region community: roads; the improvement of neighbourhood shops; crime, especially youth crime; and any other issue a resident approached her about, no matter how small. That was her hallmark. She leaves a real legacy in Dubbo, with a number of neighbourhood shopping precincts improved as a consequence of motions she moved.

Another important legacy is that Vicky moved the motion that led to the council holding a referendum to abolish the ward system. The splitting of the Dubbo regional LGA into five wards of two councillors as a consequence of the merger was never agreed to by the community and was deeply unpopular and confusing. In a relatively small regional community, it operated to deny most voters a person they actually wanted to vote for. That referendum was passed by a large margin. The election held on the weekend took place smoothly, without the widespread voter confusion that marred the elections before. However, for me, Vicky's real legacy is her integrity. In 2021 she demonstrated that in spades, and those who closely follow council matters in Dubbo know the credit she deserves. I hope Vicky and Mick enjoy her retirement from public life. I look forward to staying friends and catching up with her very soon. I thank Vicky for her friendship and integrity, and for making my time on council much more enjoyable and successful. She is a champion.

#### **CANNABIS AND ROAD SAFETY**

**The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (14:26):** I address an urgent and growing concern within our State—the outdated and punitive cannabis testing laws that continue to fail the people of New South Wales,

particularly medicinal cannabis patients and workers. This week Unions NSW submitted a comprehensive report to the continuing parliamentary inquiry into cannabis regulation that highlighted the significant flaws in our current drug testing framework. I thank Unions NSW for its comprehensive work and brilliant submission. I draw members' attention to recommendation 4 of that submission, which has now become public. It states:

Amend s. 111 of the *Road Transport Act 2013 (NSW)* to provide a medicinal-use defence to an offence under s. 111(1) relating to the presence of cannabis in a driver's system.

Again, the union movement is leading a progressive reform, representing workers in this State. I welcome it joining the Legalise Cannabis Party in calling for this reform.

Under current laws, individuals can test positive for cannabis weeks after use, even though they are no longer impaired. Workers are losing jobs, livelihoods and their dignity, all for following medical advice or partaking in legal, off-duty activities. We need a system that tests for impairment, not past use. Punishing someone for THC traces in their system days after use does nothing to ensure safety on our roads or in our workplaces. It simply perpetuates an unfair, discriminatory and ineffective approach. Medicinal cannabis users, in particular, face an impossible choice—follow the treatment prescribed by their doctors or risk being unfairly penalised under a broken system. This is not just a failure of policy; it is a failure of fairness, justice and compassion.

As the inquiry continues, I urge this Government to listen to the voices of the people, workers and patients who are relying on this Parliament to deliver the commonsense reforms we so desperately need. It is time to move towards a testing regime that focuses on safety through impairment testing rather than punishing individuals for non-impairing cannabis use. The people of New South Wales expect and deserve better, and this Government must act now.

### *Motions*

#### **SYNTHETIC TURF**

##### **Debate resumed from an earlier hour.**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (14:29):** After all this time in politics, there are still a few things that make me spit out my Wheaties with surprise in the morning. To see that The Greens have identified kids at Moorebank whacking around a hockey ball on a synthetic surface as a massive environmental problem, versus the carpeting of large parts of New South Wales with metallic, chemical-filled solar panels, beggars belief.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Those evil things!

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** You can't have it both ways. If you have a problem with synthetic sporting fields—

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** I'm not The Greens.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** You are speaking on their behalf. There are solar panels in China that form a big outline of a panda that can be seen from the moon. That is how extensive solar panels are in China. Of course, they are coming to New South Wales. The planning Minister advertises this sort thing on his LinkedIn displays. If The Greens have to worry about artificial surfaces being laid out on vegetation across New South Wales, they are well and truly barking up the wrong tree. The problem is not the odd synthetic sporting field in Camden, Blacktown, Moorebank or Liverpool; it is the many hundreds of hectares of country New South Wales being carpeted with solar panels. They cannot have it both ways. The Greens say solar panels are apparently saving the planet, but the motion of Dr Amanda Cohn reads like these soccer and hockey fields are destroying the planet. It is hard to believe The Greens have this in any kind of proportion.

The motion is misguided. The truth is that synthetic surfaces help resilience in wet weather. What is the cost to society if our young people do not have sporting fields on which to play in winter? We worry about youth obesity, but we make it worse if we consign them to endless weekends where sporting events are called off because they do not have a field that is waterproof. Synthetic fields play a useful role. The Greens normally lecture us about grassroots democracy and community activism. The fields that we are talking about are a product of well-meaning volunteers perhaps at the Moorebank hockey club saying, "We will benefit as a club, our young people will get more exercise, and we will be more successful if we have a synthetic field because we have problems in winter with rain and waterlogged grounds." The community has spoken.

There is no great wave of council activism to say that every field has to be synthetic. These are clubs that legitimately want a decent playing surface for their young people to exercise on. They are doing something about obesity and all of those commendable social goals. If we have a problem with chemicals leaching from artificial surfaces anywhere, we should have a look at what is happening in country New South Wales, with solar panels basically everywhere, as far as the eye can see. They cover hectares, over the hill, down the valley and up the

other hill. We are becoming a solar panelled State, and that is the real issue. The Greens have got this way out of proportion.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (14:32):** On behalf of the Government, I speak in debate on the motion regarding synthetic turf. The real challenge with synthetic turf is to make sure that it is safe and able to be used where it is needed. Competition for open space is challenging, particularly in urban areas. We all want the values of inclusion and the good mental health outcomes that young people and others get from sport, as the motion notes. It is also a reality that in some places around Sydney there are not enough fields for people to be able to play on them. Whether it is for hockey or soccer, which is particularly heavy on the ground, some councils have moved to put in place synthetic turf because they want as many young people as possible to participate in the sporting clubs that they operate. The real difference is that a synthetic surface can allow three times as many teams to play for a longer period so that more kids can get the chance to get out and run around. That is what this is really about.

We are trying to weigh these things up as we also deal with proper regulation and guidance, which is absolutely necessary. No-one thinks that synthetic turf should be leaching into the environment. It should be designed not to do that, and it needs to be dealt with. Members may be aware that the Government has taken this on board. The previous Government made a report on synthetic turf that was never released, and I worked on this issue with some community groups that are concerned about it. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure exhibited the synthetic turf guidelines this year, and there were 169 submissions on the issue. Synthetic fields in New South Wales are usually delivered by councils or a government agency. The guidelines are supposed to address the real issues concerning how we need to manage them, how they are to operate, what best practice looks like and if there are other options. In some instances, there are issues relating to particular sporting codes and what is better for them to be played on. I have a daughter who used to play hockey sometimes on a wet synthetic turf field. It was amazing and much preferred to playing on a bumpy old little pitch.

The NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer has reported that only 181 out of 4,669 playing fields are synthetic, representing 3.8 per cent. The Government is moving to make sure that this is regulated in a proper way. We do not think that we are going to see wall-to-wall synthetic fields. We acknowledge that there are issues with plastics, and we need to work through that. We also acknowledge that there may be grass-based alternatives that are also worthwhile, and we have no problem supporting the motion. The slight difference we might have is we think that there is a role for synthetic turf in some cases; we just want to make sure it is done well.

**The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (14:36):** I lead for the Opposition in the debate on Dr Amanda Cohn's motion concerning the use of synthetic turf in public open spaces. The Opposition supports the motion. The debate over synthetic turf versus natural turf in our parks and sporting fields has risen in prominence over the past few years. Over the past several winters in particular, everyone who participates in sport or has children who participate in sport has experienced the frustration of fixtures being washed out due to waterlogged and unusable sporting grounds. Personally, I have almost lost count of the number of times my own daughter's Saturday games of soccer and hockey were abandoned due to either the state of the natural turf pitch or the desire not to place further pressure on it and damage the surface. The frustration parents and participants have felt has been considerable. Participants pay considerable sums of money to participate in sports such as football, hockey and soccer that are played traditionally on natural turf surfaces.

Synthetic turf can sometimes be seen as a silver bullet to some of the challenges. Yes, it can be effective, yet there is a social cost when councils decide to use synthetic turf. As the motion rightly points out, it can cause injury and the surface can even become unplayable in hot weather. The infill injuries from falling on synthetic turf are not pretty. Synthetic turf is unsuitable for most passive forms of recreation like dog walking, picnics and informal exercise. From an environmental perspective, natural turf is also, obviously, clearly superior. Dr Amanda Cohn's motion highlights some of the draft synthetic guidelines from the planning department that identify important changes that can be made to improve the durability of existing natural turf fields, such as irrigation, drainage, resurfacing and levelling.

Anyone who watches a rugby league replay of the mighty North Sydney Bears from the 1990s and compares the North Sydney Oval turf then to now will see there have been amazing steps forward, particularly with drainage. They have turned what was either a rock-hard dust bowl or a bog into a durable, year-round natural turf carpet. That technology is only improving and should be embraced. There is no easy answer to the challenge. The decision should be about what is best for the interests of the community, the stakeholders, the players and the game, but what can be done in the first instance to improve natural turf should always remain the priority. I thank Dr Amanda Cohn for bringing the motion forward. I commend the motion to the House.

**The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (14:38):** I was not going to make a contribution but when I realised that this was—

**The Hon. Daniel Mookhey:** About grass.

**The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM:** Come on, mate, let me deliver my zinger! When I realised it was about grass, I could not resist. While I have some sympathy with the mover of the motion and the argument she has put forward, I put on record some of the issues that exist with natural grass or turf surfaces. I played AFL for Orange, in the Central West, and for one half of the year it was an absolute mud pit—we would be slipping over and sliding around—and for the other it was not uncommon to have soccer or football called off because of the hardness of the ground. We would be injuring our knees or breaking our ankles. The only way to deal with that in many instances is with a lot of irrigation and fertilisation. We know that a massive amount of fertiliser is used on golf courses and football fields. Natural turf needs to be irrigated and an enormous amount of diammonium phosphate needs to be used. The amount of fertiliser, pesticide and herbicide used on some of our golf courses and football fields is absolutely enormous.

There is an ecological and environmental cost with natural turf surfaces. I can understand why some sporting codes would like to make sure that they are guaranteeing the use of that area and reducing the ongoing maintenance and cost. The Minister made a good point: We are only talking about a tiny fraction of the State. Most of our sporting codes rely on fields that are sun-grown, natural grass—and they will be that way forever. Not many places, especially in regional New South Wales, can afford to spend \$50,000 or \$100,000 on artificial turf, so it is not a major issue. The Greens should be aware that when they talk about natural turf, it is very rarely natural turf. Usually, a groundskeeper or greenkeeper is fertilising, using pesticide and mowing the lawn all the time. There is an ecological and environmental footprint with natural turf and, maybe, in some instances, artificial turf is appropriate. In that regard, I do not support the motion.

**Dr AMANDA COHN (14:42):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions, particularly the Hon. Rachel Merton for her support. I respond to some of the comments made by the Minister, particularly the repetition of the myth about the capacity of synthetic turf. The Government's own work, through the chief scientist's report and the draft guidelines from the planning department, clearly stated that with best practice design and maintenance the upper limit capacity of a well-engineered and well-maintained natural turf field is on par with synthetic turf, at approximately 60 hours per week. It is an unfortunately repeated myth that, for capacity, synthetic turf is needed.

The Minister also downplayed the rate of installation of these fields across New South Wales. I understand they are uncommon at the moment, but when their rate of installation has increased six-fold in the past five years, it is clear that we will see more of these fields. That is why it is so important that councils and community sporting groups be provided with the support they need to maintain natural turf fields now, rather than turning to synthetic turf, which they might see as a quick temporary fix for issues. Unfortunately, particularly with climate change—the urban heat island effect and heatwaves increasing in Sydney and across New South Wales—matches will be cancelled in summer because of heat, especially because a soccer pitch or rugby pitch cannot be shaded. The guidelines suggest that synthetic turf installations should be shaded.

**The Hon. Mark Latham:** They're winter sports.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** I note that the Hon. Mark Latham is keen to bang on about the extent of solar panels in China but opposes support for sports clubs to maintain their natural turf pitches. I thank volunteers and local community groups for their citizen science and advocacy for kids, athletes, the future of their local communities and the environment. Those groups include the Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment, the Friends of Lane Cove National Park, the Friends of Callan Park, the Friends of Norman Griffiths Oval, Sustaining Gladesville Reserve, Greenwich Community Association, Lane Cove Bushland and Conservation Society, Mosman Parks and Bushland Association, Natural Grass at Bob Campbell Inc., Natural Grass at Norman Griffiths, North Turramurra Action Group, the Penshurst Park Community group, Protecting Your Suburban Environment, Ryde Hunters Hill Flora and Fauna Preservation Society, Save Fred Caterson Reserve, Save Westleigh Park, STEP Inc., the Glade Action Group, West Pennant Hills Valley Progress Association and the Willoughby Environmental Protection Association, and the Natural Turf Alliance. I also acknowledge my excellent colleagues Greens local government councillors Greta Werner and Mila Kasby for their tireless work on behalf of their local communities.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**HIZB UT-TAHRIR**

**The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (14:45):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes the testimony of Professor Mark Scott at budget estimates hearings on 4 September, where he indicated that the University of Sydney needed the guidance of this Parliament before it was able to limit the operation of Hizb ut-Tahrir on campus.

- (2) That this House notes that Hizb ut-Tahrir has been banned by a number of democracies, including the United Kingdom and our closest Muslim neighbour, Indonesia.
- (3) That this House notes that members of Hizb ut-Tahrir are committed to working towards the introduction of a universal caliphate and its draft constitution for this caliphate would, inter alia, prohibit women from travelling without a man and introduce punishments including stoning and amputation.
- (4) That this House further notes that the views expressed by Hizb ut-Tahrir, especially with respect to women and members of the Jewish community, are incompatible with the fundamental respect for each human person on which our democracy is based.
- (5) That this House calls on this Government and the Australian Government to follow the lead of the United Kingdom, Indonesia and many other countries, and ban its operation within our borders.
- (6) That this House notes with regret that the University of Sydney was apparently unable to provide the necessary thought leadership with respect to Hizb ut-Tahrir without the guidance of others.

We have the privilege of living in a democratic society founded on the rule of law and characterised by freedom, such as the freedom of association and of speech. Those freedoms are precious and should be protected. The action called for by this motion to ban Hizb ut-Tahrir is not a step which should be taken lightly. The exchange of ideas is important, and hopefully leads to a productive and unifying dialogue. But dialogue requires two willing partners, each listening and responding to the other. If one partner will not engage and prefers the path of shouting and terror, then productive dialogue becomes impossible. While freedom of speech is an important right, it comes with the consequent responsibility to be exercised well. When proscribing Hizb ut-Tahrir, British Minister for Security, Tom Tugendhat, said:

Free speech includes neither the promotion of terrorism nor the celebration of terrorist acts. It is not acceptable to describe Hamas as the "heroes" of Palestine or the events of 7 October as a "long-awaited victory"—

which will help establish the caliphate—

It is not acceptable to refer to the killing of Jewish tourists by an Egyptian police officer as "a simple example of what should be done towards the Jews".

And it is not acceptable that Hizb ut-Tahrir was able to act as one of the organisers of the encampment at the University of Sydney and that the university did not feel that it needed to challenge or proscribe its right to organise on campus and recruit from amongst its students. The concept of a university in many ways owes its origin to fifth century Athens and the way in which first Socrates, then Plato and Aristotle used dialogue as a teaching tool: students engaging together and finding the truth through what came to be called the Socratic method. At its core, that method was asking and answering questions in a well-mannered argument where ideas could be tested or compared, and knowledge found.

This dialectic approach has been a great strength of the Western intellectual tradition and of the university, but to work requires that universities are safe spaces for all, where students from all backgrounds, with all points of view, with a range of beliefs, can come together to engage and to grow intellectually. The encampment, with Hizb ut-Tahrir as part of the organising force, made the University of Sydney anything but a safe space for a number of students, including many women and Jews, and threatened the ability of the university to continue functioning as a space for the respectful exchange of ideas. As Tom Tugendhat also said:

Hizb ut-Tahrir has antisemitism at its very core. It rejects democracy and engages in vile homophobia. As an organisation, it does not just reject British values; it seeks to undermine them. We will not let groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir abuse our freedoms.

Why did the University of Sydney allow Hizb ut-Tahrir to abuse the traditional freedoms of the university, to create a climate of fear where Jewish students felt unwelcome and unsafe on campus? The provost, in the testimony at budget estimates hearings, seemed to suggest it was because student complaints were about protest, and protest needed to be protected at the university. Yet if a student wanted to protest about the consent module required of all students, they would simply be told it was compulsory and required before a pass could be awarded. If they wanted to protest about equal treatment for LGBTIQ+ students, they would be told that this breached university policies and was unacceptable. So why was the University of Sydney unable, of its own volition, to rule that the protests orchestrated by Hizb ut-Tahrir were unacceptable? Al-Aksha Buiyan, a regular presence at the encampment, called for the protests to continue "until Israel is completely wiped off the map". Is this not unacceptable?

The University of Sydney has told us, through its vice-chancellor, that it is unable to exercise thought leadership with respect to Hizb ut-Tahrir and that it requires the guidance of the Parliament. The traditional strength of the dialectic of this place of higher learning appears to have failed. This is deeply regrettable, but the vacuum created must be filled by this House through supporting this motion. In the words of Minister Tugendhat:

We will never tolerate the promotion or encouragement of terrorism. We have zero tolerance for antisemitism. Hizb ut-Tahrir must be proscribed.

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (14:50):** I know there is an amendment coming from the Government. I indicate that The Greens will support the amendment and, in amended form, the motion. I raise with the House what I think has become a dangerous approach to the inquiries we run and the budget estimates sessions that we hold. As the Legislative Council, we have an important role in ensuring that we uphold democratic processes, that we have accountability, that witnesses who come before us at an inquiry or in a hearing are treated fairly and shown due process, and that afterwards what they have said under privilege is not misrepresented in this place. I chaired the inquiry that Professor Mark Scott appeared at. I saw the Hon. Susan Carter ask him a set of leading questions to try to get the witness to say what she wanted him to say. I understand there was a very weak article written about it. They could only quote what he actually said, so it was not a very exciting article. But there was an attempt to create facts, to create something out of the parliamentary process. I think it is incredibly dangerous and should not be overlooked.

The vice-chancellor said, very clearly, "I can only do what the law tells me to do." He said he was humbled—which is rare for a vice-chancellor to say—by the evidence, and that when it came to security risks, he would be guided by the police, by ASIO, by the people who know what they are doing, and not by the likes of the Hon. Susan Carter, who just decides that it would be a good thing if action is taken against a group that poses no current risk. There could be loads of reasons why ASIO has chosen not to take action. I do not know what the reasons are—I am not in ASIO—but I assume it knows a lot more than I do about whether or not we should be listing an organisation as a terrorist organisation and what the impacts of that would be if we were to suddenly start singling out particular groups. I agree that, on paper, Hizb ut-Tahrir seem terrible. But this is ASIO's call. For the honourable member to attend that hearing and then come to Parliament and completely misrepresent the situation is a dangerous distortion of the facts. It should be condemned.

**The Hon. Mark Latham:** Point of order: I did not want to interrupt Ms Abigail Boyd and eat into her three minutes, but the member is quite clearly suggesting that the Hon. Susan Carter is misleading the House in the context, and with the content, of this motion. I understand, of course, that this is a debate. If there is a belief that the vice-chancellor has been quoted inaccurately, that is one thing, but it is a very serious matter in any Parliament to allege that an honourable member is providing the House with misleading information. Such an allegation needs to be made by way of substantive motion. I seek your guidance, Mr Assistant President, and ask that you monitor future contributions in this debate to steer them away from what we have just heard and to ensure that they are phrased in a way that sets the record straight but which does not go to the integrity of the honourable member.

**The Hon. Stephen Lawrence:** To the point of order: I believe that Ms Abigail Boyd was suggesting that Mark Scott's words have been taken out of context, misused, distorted et cetera. All of those things are, obviously, part of the cut and thrust of parliamentary debate. They are not a direct and clear suggestion of misconduct, like misleading the House, and are well within the realm of what is allowed in this place.

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** I thank members. No point of order was taken during the contribution of Ms Abigail Boyd. I will listen closely to the debate.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (14:55):** It is, indeed, propitious timing that students from the University of Sydney are in the public gallery to hear this debate. I welcome them to the New South Wales Parliament. For a little under two months, activists linked to Hizb ut-Tahrir were able to freely fly a flag that appeared to be a Taliban flag at the University of Sydney. Today they still have a presence on campus, and every day they are gaining more supporters, many of whom do not come from the Islamic faith. The reason this motion is so important is that until the Government recognises Hizb ut-Tahrir as a terrorist organisation and provides clear steps for universities to help them remove this group, its presence and influence in Australia will only increase.

I am aware of a student who attends the University of Sydney who was confronted and, quite frankly, terrified by the presence of what appeared to be a Taliban flag on campus. When she reported the flag to on-campus police she was met with mockery, disregard and a sincere lack of concern. That is why I support this motion today, because I stand with the side of the House that is concerned by the increased presence of radical hate groups in Australia. Hizb ut-Tahrir is not an organisation that promotes freedom and liberation. It is not an organisation that represents the views of the marginalised and oppressed. The only thing Hizb ut-Tahrir stands for is hate—hate for Jewish students, hate for women, hate for LGBTQIA+ people and hate for the West. With terrorist foundations, the group has the goal of re-establishing the Islamic caliphate to unite the Muslim community and implement sharia law globally.

As we have all seen from the shocking events in Afghanistan, sharia law is a law of oppression. It criminalises women's ability to speak in public and removes the possibility of female education. The threat of sharia law should never be a domestic concern, but when groups like Hizb ut-Tahrir are left unmonitored, it is. The University of Sydney decided to broker a deal with representatives linked to Hizb ut-Tahrir about the encampment. Some of the Hizb ut-Tahrir members who are active at the University of Sydney include an

encampment member who stated online that Muslims will "continue resisting until Israel is completely wiped off the map, from the river to the sea". Sheikh Ibrahim Dadoun, another encampment member proclaimed, after 7 October, that he was "elated" about the unfolding violence, stating that it was a "day of courage and pride". It is sickening. It is no surprise that Hizb ut-Tahrir is banned in the United Kingdom, Indonesia and many parts of the Arab world because of its radical beliefs. It is about time that we ban it here as well.

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (14:58):** On behalf of the Government, I move an amendment. I move:

That the question be amended by:

- (1) In paragraph (1) omitting all words after "indicated" and inserting instead "that if Hizb ut-Tahrir were declared a terrorist organisation they would be banned from campus."
- (2) Omitting paragraphs (5) and (6) and inserting instead:
  - (5) That this House condemns all forms of hate speech.
  - (6) That this House supports the right to peaceful and lawful protest.
  - (7) That this House notes that all students have the right to feel safe on university campuses.
  - (8) That this House supports a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.
  - (9) That this House is concerned by motions that attempt to sow division, rather than promote social cohesion.

The amendment simply corrects the record as a matter of fact and calls out the attempt, as mentioned in the debate, to divide the community instead of unifying it. In relation to what Mr Scott said, it is a bit disingenuous of the mover of the motion to try to verbal Mr Scott and imply that he needed direction from this Parliament. That is not what Mr Scott said. I have the transcript here. What he said was that it may be a matter for Parliament; if it wants to define this organisation, Hizb ut-Tahrir, as a terrorist organisation, then the powers to ban organisations from university campuses would be in place. In the absence of that power and in the absence of that definition, Mr Scott was quite right to point out that he had no authority to do that. That is a matter of fact. That is what the amendment states.

Paragraph (5) of the motion calls on the Australian Government to follow the lead of the United Kingdom, Indonesia and other countries and ban this organisation. The Government cannot do that because it is not a defined terrorist organisation and therefore the Australian Government does not have the power to eject them. In relation to paragraph (6) and being "unable to provide the necessary thought leadership with respect to Hizb ut-Tahrir", that is an inaccurate statement. That is not what Mr Scott said. The amendments that I have outlined simply restate the fact that the House condemns all forms of hate speech and supports a two-state solution and a peaceful resolution. I commend the amendment to the House.

**The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (15:01):** I commend my friend the Hon. Susan Carter for this important motion and congratulate her on the questions she asked of Sydney university vice-chancellor Mr Scott at budget estimates a fortnight ago. These are important issues. The pro-Palestinian encampments that the vice-chancellor allowed for two long months on the front lawns of Australia's oldest university represent an abject and spectacular failure of leadership. As *The Sydney Morning Herald* revealed, supporters of Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Islamist organisation rightly banned in many countries such as the United Kingdom, infiltrated these encampments. My friend the Hon. Chris Rath has detailed more of this. The intimidation and threat this represented to Jewish students and staff would be obvious to everyone, it seems, but Mr Scott. The question must be asked: Where was the university's duty of care to its students and staff?

The vice-chancellor spoke of the university's tradition of allowing protest and activism. Let us be clear: These were not peacenik hippies opposing the Vietnam War, or a day of action by the National Union of Students—events I used to see back in the nineties, when a few Labor members and the socialist left would have a crack at John Howard and voluntary student unionism. Many members in the Chamber probably participated in those rallies and demonstrations. What we saw at the Sydney campus were hardcore, aggressive and ongoing actions that infringed the rights of students and staff to attend a safe and secure campus.

When, after months, the vice-chancellor was finally goaded by the media and politicians into some sort of action, he reportedly offered the organisers of the encampment full disclosure of the university's research agreements and partnerships. Why? All investments in defence and security-related industries were disclosed. A seat on the university's working group that will review its investment policies was reportedly offered. Rather than move the encampment on, the university leadership simply caved in and capitulated to a campaign of intimidation. There is a word for that: It is called "appeasement"—what a dark day for Sydney university. The NSW Jewish Board of Deputies stated that they were cut out of discussions with the university and the activists. The university's capitulation is indicative of the broader problem we have in the West, where aggression, intimidation and breaking the law—as we have seen with pro-Hamas activists and fanatics on multiple occasions—are increasingly tolerated by appeasing and weak administrations and governments. I commend the motion to the House.



**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM (15:05):** It seems there is not much liberalism left in the Liberal Party. The advocates for freedom of speech, those who are defenders of that great adage of Voltaire—they may not agree with what we say, but they will defend to the death our right to say it—do not appear to have any supporters on the Opposition benches today. The greatest and finest moment in the history of the Labor Party was when, under the leadership of Doc Evatt, we fought and defeated a proposition to ban the Communist Party in this country. It was a turning point in Australian democracy. It was a debate not too dissimilar to the debate on the Opposition's motion: that the Communist Party presented a profound threat to democratic institutions and, consequentially, should be banned. But the Australian people had the good judgement to understand that it is better to have those organisations out in the open and out where we can scrutinise them, rather than trying to suppress them and forcing them underground.

I have a further objection to the approach proposed by the Hon. Susan Carter, and that is when words depart from deeds. The Opposition asserts that this organisation is a terrorist organisation. That is a question of fact. It should be determined on the evidence. The agencies that are best equipped to make that judgement should do so and provide their recommendation to the Government. They have not provided it. Asserting that someone is a terrorist or that an organisation is a terrorist organisation is one thing; proving it is quite a different thing. We should leave that judgement to the people who are best placed to assess whether individuals involved in this organisation in this country have engaged, or are trying to engage, in terrorist activities. To date, there is no evidence. Without evidence, we should not be acting to ban this organisation.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW (15:07):** I support the motion moved by the Hon. Susan Carter. Again, we see Government members come into this place and crab-walk. When it comes to a motion like this, they will not even call out Hizb ut-Tahrir. During all my time in this place we have had discussions of some of the antisemitic propaganda that has come out of Hizb ut-Tahrir—for example, past calls for a jihad on the Jewish people. The whole aim of that organisation is to establish a global Islamic caliphate, but for some reason the Labor Party wants to remove from the motion paragraph (5), which calls on the New South Wales Government and the Australian Government to follow the lead of the United Kingdom, Indonesia and many other countries and ban its operations within our borders.

It is extraordinary that the Labor Party, which was described as the party of Doc Evatt and the party that was part of the founding of Israel, for which I give the Labor Party credit, wants to remove paragraph (5) from the motion moved by the Hon. Susan Carter. With respect to the University of Sydney, I have great sympathy for Mark Scott in terms of the administration of the university. There is, of course, a need to be able to have peaceful protest, but Australia had somewhat of an indication from overseas as to what would eventuate if rules regarding on-campus protest activity were not laid down early. Universities like Columbia University in the United States had to take drastic action to try to reclaim their campuses when things went too far. Unfortunately, we are hearing that Jewish students and lecturers at the University of Sydney do not feel safe on campus and that is because the groundwork was not laid early as to what peaceful protest would look like.

I commend the Hon. Susan Carter for requesting the presence of Mr Scott at the budget estimates hearing to answer questions on the matter. It was clear from that hearing that the University of Sydney needs further instruction. Mr Scott outlined that if the university could take action on Hizb ut-Tahrir, then it would. By taking the step of standing up to Hizb ut-Tahrir, this motion can provide that impetus. I find it extraordinary that the modern Labor Party would once again crab walk into this place to bring an amendment to such a motion, particularly one that removes the banning Hizb ut-Tahrir, an action that follows in the footsteps of an Islamic country, Indonesia, and one of our closest allies, the United Kingdom.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (15:11):** I have a number of things to say about the motion moved by the Hon. Susan Carter on Hizb ut-Tahrir. I was part of the budget estimates hearing that Mr Scott of the University of Sydney was involved in and I witnessed the Hon. Susan Carter skilfully cross-examining him. The motion embraces the proposition that this particular organisation is active or operating on the University of Sydney campus, and there have been suggestions that Mr Scott accepted or said that. I must say that that is not my memory of what he said. I recall that he said there has been one report of such, but I do not recall him saying that they were active on the University of Sydney campus. That is an important point.

In terms of the evidence given at the hearing, I was so impressed by those university leaders, who are dealing with an incredibly difficult situation. They are not taking the default approach of taking the worst possible interpretation of particular words, or imputing the worst possible motives or the worst ideologies of particular organisations to whole groups of people. They are attempting to not be political or pursue an underlying cause. They are attempting to balance freedom of speech on campus, and that needs to be said. Part of the motion quite ridiculously attempts to enter the terrain of which organisations the Australian Parliament or the Executive Government might proscribe. We debate lots of things in this place. We talk about freedom struggles occurring

in different places and all sorts of awful things happening in the world, but we generally express opinions on those.

Frankly, I have never heard such an example of overreach as the suggestion that this House would form a view that a particular organisation be declared a terrorist organisation. That is surely a question that the Commonwealth Parliament, in crafting the legislation, and then the Executive, if it is charged with responsibility of making declarations, undertakes, balancing a range of considerations. For example, how much of a threat is the organisation in Australia? If this Parliament starts banning organisations, Executive resources have to go into enforcing that law. That is important because the people who protect our security need the resources to do that. If, willy-nilly and on the basis of certain political arguments and objectives in an attempt to create certain narratives, we start acceding to political demands to ban certain organisations, no matter how despicable their ideologies might be, the organisations charged with protecting us will not be able to do their job properly. I support the amendment.

**The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (15:14):** I contribute to debate on the motion on Hizb ut-Tahrir moved by the Hon. Susan Carter. I still need to decide whether I will go with the amended or final version. I speak about an experience I had in 2007 when I was the Mayor of Bankstown. This organisation that had space at the time in Greenacre wanted to use Bankstown Town Hall for an event or rally but a decision was subsequently made by the local Labor Party to ban it. In discussions, I raised concerns about the group, as did Robert Furolo, the then member for Lakemba. A number of Islamic groups also raised concerns about the group. Flyers with pictures of the State of Israel with blood and daggers were being issued around Bankstown, inviting people to attend the rally at the town hall. There were very negative and horrific comments being broadcast about women at the time that were associated with the group. In the end, the local police advised us to not allow the event to proceed. That caused a bit of an uproar and, subsequently, videos were made by international members of this group attacking me and others.

I seek an extension of time.

**Leave granted.**

**The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK:** I say this because I want the House to know that there is history with this organisation. If it is based at universities, there needs to be some concern about that, particularly in relation to what type of campaigns it is undertaking and who is still involved. As I said, I, the then member for Lakemba, Robert Furolo, and others all in unison raised our concerns about the group back in 2007. We had the support of the police at that time and there were discussions about the possible need for us to have further protections. The Hon. Susan Carter is well within her rights to bring this motion forward. There are clearly relevant concerns regarding the campus activities of this organisation. It may not be a terrorist organisation but it is banned in a number of countries and there are reasons for that. We are only scratching the surface of the types of activities it is undertaking here in Australia.

**The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (15:16):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate on my motion on Hizb ut-Tahrir, and I take this opportunity to address a couple of the points raised. I do not accept the amendments because, in many ways, they attempt to pervert what the motion is about. It was clear at the budget estimates hearing that Professor Scott was of the view that because Hizb ut-Tahrir was not a proscribed organisation, he therefore was not required to remove it from campus. It was also clear he has the power to remove any group from campus and, in fact, on 3 November 2023 he made it clear that Solidarity, a socialist group that was attempting to organise a pro-Palestinian rally, was not welcome on the grounds of the University of Sydney and that it needed to go elsewhere.

That is one of many examples where the university has, for whatever reason, said, "No, you are not welcome on this university campus." In fact, the encampment was finally removed from university grounds after it was declared as enclosed lands, which provided a legal trigger to remove those people. That means that Professor Scott does not legally need this Parliament to proscribe Hizb ut-Tahrir as a banned organisation. But in the budget estimates hearing he told us, "I would say about Hizb ut-Tahrir that it's a question perhaps for Parliament, in some respects"—

**The Hon. Mark Buttigieg:** Which Parliament?

**The Hon. SUSAN CARTER:** The Parliament that he was in that he was addressing. He was throwing it back to us. That was him abrogating a responsibility that he had taken in other circumstances. That is the only reason that we say, "If you have asked for this guidance, if you cannot do this by yourself and if you cannot realise what Hizb ut-Tahrir is by yourself, then we will accept the invitation that you have given us." I acknowledge the contribution of the Hon. Anthony D'Adam, who talked about the need for evidence about the nature of Hizb

ut-Tahrir, and I acknowledge the comments of the Hon. Tania Mihailuk. I offer to the Hon. Anthony D'Adam the words of Ms Jodie Harrison on 15 September 2016. Speaking in debate, she said:

So far, there has been no prosecution under this provision. That is not because there have been no examples of hate speech while the provision has been in force. In contrast, 30 referrals have been made to the Director of Public Prosecutions [DPP] under this section. Late last year the DPP was unable to charge Al-Wahwah, leader of the pan-Islamic party Hizb ut-Tahrir, after he called for a "jihad of Jews". Our hate speech laws in their current form are failing us ...

Jodie Harrison acknowledged that it is a body founded on hate, a hate that does not belong at the University of Sydney, or in any place in this State.

**The PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Susan Carter has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Mark Buttigieg has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....23

Noes .....17

Majority.....6

#### AYES

Banasiak  
Borsak  
Boyd  
Buckingham  
Buttigieg  
Cohn  
D'Adam  
Donnelly

Faehrmann  
Graham  
Higginson  
Houssos  
Hurst  
Jackson  
Kaine  
Lawrence

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

#### NOES

Carter  
Fang (teller)  
Farlow  
Farraway  
Latham  
MacDonald

Maclaren-Jones  
Martin  
Merton  
Mihailuk  
Mitchell  
Munro

Rath (teller)  
Roberts  
Ruddick  
Tudehope  
Ward

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

### MCPHILLAMYS GOLD PROJECT

**The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (15:28):** I move:

(1) That this House notes:

- (a) mining is a critical employer and key contributor to the New South Wales economy;
- (b) the McPhillamys Gold Project is anticipated to produce 800 additional jobs for New South Wales;
- (c) the Treasurer Daniel Mookhey stated in budget estimates on 29 August 2024, "The applicant has made the point that should such a mine operate they expect to be paying circa \$200 million in royalties. Given the mine has not got approval to proceed as is in respect of its tailing dams, the impact on the economy spans the impact in the construction phase, the operational phase, the export phase, as well as an impact on the State's royalties income."; and
- (d) Regis Resources has consulted with 13 registered Aboriginal parties [RAPs] since 2019, and that "[The RAP and independent experts] did not identify any significant cultural values or traditional practices as being associated with the project area [the area which would be disturbed by mining operations] itself," according to the Regis Resources company newsletter in May 2023.

(2) That this House further notes:

- (a) the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP, has halted the McPhillamys Gold Project by making a section 10 Indigenous heritage protection order over a 400-hectare section of the site designated for the mine's tailings dam;

- (b) the Minister has stated the declaration is not terminal to the project, as Regis Resources has assessed four alternative sites for the tailings dam; however, the viability of these alternative sites has been disputed by Regis Resources;
  - (c) the Minister was subject to an order for the production of documents, to make public the reasons for her section 10 declaration, by no later than midday on 16 September 2024;
  - (d) the motion moved by Senator the Hon. Jonathon Duniam to disallow the section 10 declaration was voted down in the Federal Senate on 10 September where the noes were a majority by two (29-31); and
  - (e) Premier Chris Minns stated in budget estimates on 28 August, "I'm disappointed by the decision from the Commonwealth Government. The application was made in 2019. It's gone through the Independent Planning Commission as well as every other government department in New South Wales, and to be knocked over at the eleventh hour is disappointing in terms of mining gold and other critical minerals in New South Wales, which we desperately need because coalmining is under pressure, particularly when it comes to export markets."
- (3) That this House notes:
- (a) the application for the section 10 Indigenous heritage protection order was submitted on behalf of the Wiradyuri Traditional Owners Central West Aboriginal Corporation [WTOCWAC], a group representing 18 individuals, which does not hold legal authority over the area;
  - (b) the Orange Local Aboriginal Land Council [OLALC], a body recognised under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983, has submitted a neutral position regarding the proposed project;
  - (c) a letter from senior Wiradyuri adviser Roy Ah-See to Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP, obtained by *The Weekend Australian*, reveals claims of cultural significance made by WTOCWAC were examined in a cultural audit overseen by OLALC, and dismissed as lacking authenticity. The claim found to have authenticity (that of an ochre site) was negotiated by OLALC to be protected by Regis Resources, along with one scar tree; and
  - (d) Roy Ah-See stated at The Daily Telegraph Bush Summit in August, "We have spoken to the Elder who holds the story and he says that area is not sacred ... We have done a cultural audit and there were never song lines, it was never an initiation site ... In order for people to have faith in Indigenous culture they need to know these decisions are based on truth. This one is not—the Minister has been hijacked."
- (4) This House condemns the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP, for issuing a section 10 Indigenous heritage protection order on the proposed tailings dam site of the McPhillamys Gold Project.
  - (5) This House indicates its support for the McPhillamys goldmine to proceed in Blayney, New South Wales, given the significant investment derived from the site, which will help boost national, State and local economies.
  - (6) This House formally requests the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, MP, to reconsider and reverse her stance on the section 10 Indigenous protection order concerning the McPhillamys Gold Project.

There are times when we think about particular Ministers and the decisions they make and wonder whether that really is the bitter end of their careers, like the decision that Minister Plibersek has made in relation to a section 10 protection order over 400 hectares of land across Blayney and the Central West. I am moving the motion because I am hoping that both sides of the House, both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party, understand the significance of what Minister Plibersek has done.

I know it is a joke to the Legalise Cannabis Party and The Greens, but I am sure a lot of the material that we have heard from them in the past few weeks and that we will hear in the coming days was in the advice that Minister Plibersek sadly relied upon. The decision that she made was a great detriment to the people of New South Wales, the Central West and the nation. We are sending the message to the resources industry overseas that New South Wales is closed for goldmining, at great detriment to our economy. I am delighted that during budget estimates we heard some very strong words from the Premier and the Treasurer, who made it clear that they were disappointed and angry with the decision that Minister Plibersek made in declaring a section 10 protection order. She probably made the decision last year and systematically worked her way through the legislative requirements for that declaration to ensure that she would get the outcome that she wanted.

She has now provided additional information, although it seems that some of that reiterates her explanatory statements in relation to the decision that she made. It is clear in the documents produced under the Senate's order that she did not take into account the Orange land council's view on the matter or the fact that Regis Resources had worked with 13 different parties to ensure that any heritage issues around Indigenous culture were dealt with. Comments from former Aboriginal land council chair Mr Roy Ah-See strongly condemn the actions of Minister Plibersek. He made the point—and rightly so—that her decision impacts any future decisions that governments make around Indigenous culture. Senior advisers told the Minister that the claims of the splinter group were not substantiated and there is no authenticity around them. It is a concern that Minister Plibersek chose to pursue her order regardless of that.

During budget estimates I asked our New South Wales Minister for Heritage whether there has been any communication. I understand last year Minister Plibersek wrote a letter seeking some advice from Heritage NSW, and I have asked for that to be tabled and made public. It is important that we see all the communication that Minister Plibersek initiated with New South Wales. I take the Premier at face value when he says that in his view

every department, including the NSW Environment Protection Authority [EPA] and the Independent Planning Commission [IPC], ticked off and supported the McPhillamys mine proceeding.

Minister Plibersek disingenuously stated that she believed there were four alternative sites, knowing that three of those four sites are within the exclusion zone that she has declared. The fourth site that she proposed that Regis Resources consider has more environmental issues and probably would have been knocked back by the EPA or the IPC, had it been considered. Now is a time when we need the New South Wales Government to be as strong as ever and to work with all parties to send a clear and strong message to the Federal Minister that those types of actions are not accepted.

**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (15:33):** I move:

That the question be amended by:

- (1) In paragraph (4) omitting "condemns" and inserting instead "expresses its disappointment with the decision of".
- (2) In paragraph (6) omitting "and reverse".

Members spoke about this issue in question time in this place yesterday, we spoke about it in budget estimates, we discussed it earlier today and I understand we are likely to talk about it again tomorrow. It is appropriate that we do so because it is a really important issue. It is an opportunity for a billion dollars of investment in the State's Central West, almost 800 jobs and about \$200 million worth of royalties for the State. It is an important project, and the Premier, the Treasurer and a number of our Ministers have been clear that we are disappointed in the decision of the Federal environment Minister. That is why I have moved an amendment to the motion—which, to be fair, is largely a factual recollection of what has occurred over the past couple of weeks.

I put on record that our Government is absolutely committed to finding practical solutions and a way forward for the project. We understand the important opportunity the project represents and the long history that goldmining has had in regional New South Wales. Just a couple of weeks ago I was at the Northparkes mine to celebrate its thirtieth anniversary of supporting fantastic local jobs and the local community, in a part of the world not too far from the place we are discussing. That is also why I have engaged extensively with the industry. I wrote to the Federal environment Minister immediately after she made her decision. I have been in communication with my colleague the Federal Minister for Resources, Minister King, to explain our position. As I said yesterday, I raised it at our recent meeting of Federal and State resources Ministers in Perth.

It is a significant issue, and we want to foster an investment environment that encourages more investment in those kinds of projects. New South Wales is fortunate to have 21 out of the 31 nationally identified critical minerals. While gold is not on that list, it is normally found with copper—although admittedly not in this particular mine—and those minerals offer great opportunities for our clean energy future. The Government is committed to finding practical solutions. That is why I have met with the company, and I spoke to the CEO as recently as last Friday. If the motion is amended, the Government will support it.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (15:36):** Yesterday the Minister for Natural Resources was asked about the part that the three New South Wales Labor senators played in defeating the disallowance motion moved by Coalition senator Jonathon Duniam. She described the Opposition's questions about that as stunts. I assume that the Minister, as a long-serving member of this place, understands how disallowance works as an important check by the elected Legislature on the arbitrary or inappropriate exercise by a Minister of a regulatory or declaratory power.

Here are the facts, and they are plain. After managing to persuade herself that the Blue-Banded Bee Dreaming describes the creation of geographic features consistent with the Belubula headwaters and its springs—and that, therefore, absolutely no interference with those headwaters by the proposed McPhillamys goldmine could be allowed as it would desecrate that allegedly sacred site—the Federal environment Minister used her power under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 to prohibit absolutely any mining activities within a declared area of 400 hectares by making the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection (Kings Plains) Declaration 2024.

Declarations made by a Minister under section 10 the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 are disallowable by either House of the Commonwealth Parliament. The effect of disallowance would be to nullify the declaration, allowing the mine to proceed with development and operation. Given that the Minister for Natural Resources had backed the Premier's view that the Federal environment Minister was plainly wrong, the question must be asked: Why does the Minister consider questions about whether anyone in the New South Wales Government took any steps to discuss the disallowance motion with New South Wales Labor senators to be a stunt? Is it because the Opposition should know that New South Wales Labor Senators simply do not care about the economy of New South Wales and the wellbeing of its people?

This motion formally requests that the Federal Minister for the Environment and Water, the Hon. Tanya Plibersek, reconsider and reverse her stance on the section 10 Indigenous protection order concerning the McPhillamys Gold Project. The Opposition supports the motion. However, there is one real solution for this project. If those opposite will not encourage the New South Wales Labor senators to vote for a disallowance, then this is the solution, and I urge it upon them: Vote for a Dutton government, because that will deliver this mine.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN (15:39):** This is the second motion today by members wishing to pander to the shock jocks, Murdoch and the NSW Minerals Council by deliberately hand-picking bits of information that suit an agenda that is pro big miner, anti local community and anti environment. Many claims have been prosecuted in the media—and repeated ad nauseum by politicians from all sides—that the Federal environment Minister's decision has made the project unviable. What we have not heard is that the project was already in financial difficulty. It had already been delayed for several years. The costs of the project had risen to around \$1 billion, which was almost double earlier forecasts. That was reported in the *Australian Financial Review* back in April as potentially killing the project. RBC Capital Markets told clients that the project could be dead following the cost blowouts.

Capital expenditure costs at that time sat between \$960 million and \$1.055 billion, including construction of the mine and pre-production costs. That was nearly double the \$580 million previously estimated. It was well above the consensus of major investment bank brokers and well up from the original \$275 million estimated when the environmental impact statement was submitted. Importantly, Regis Resources was not ready to make an investment decision on the mine until 2026—that was reported in July this year—because it depended on the price of gold.

In my remaining time, I share a few more facts from an email from Belubula Headwaters Protection Group to its members:

We wanted to email you all with some factual information after all of the one sided media has been shared since the declaration. We have shared our own media releases with the media, none of which has seen light of exposure. The application was made in the area of the mine site over three years ago to the then Liberal Minister, Sussan Ley who also did not reject the application. This was not a last ditch attempt or final "hoorah" effort. The assessment went through 5 rounds of procedural fairness where Regis and the applicant had opportunities to provide information to inform the Minister's decision. The decision was not made in haste, or without proper information.

The application area only included the mine site because the applicant is concerned of the permanent damage that would be caused by the mine proposal. We know the pit is not rehabilitated, and the Tailings Dam remains in place with the springs plugged and the river permanently deformed from this project. The Act this application was made under has been in existence for over 40 years, it is not new and it is not used lightly.

This is an outrageous motion. I am extremely disappointed that the Labor Party has chosen to support the motion if amended. [*Time expired.*]

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (15:42):** Unsurprisingly, the contribution from The Greens was one-sided and manipulative. That is what we have come to expect from The Greens. I thank the Minister for fronting up and talking to this motion. She was unavailable in the Chamber earlier, but it is important. The next step is that we need to hear from the Treasurer. Some \$200 million-plus in unrealised royalties will not come from this project. I accept and acknowledge that the Minister has met with Regis Resources. She was on the front foot with that, and I acknowledge it. However, all we get is talk. All we get is a Premier who has actually offered to go as far as to expedite planning processes to assist Regis. That might sound very helpful but in the budget estimates hearings, when the Minister was pressured on how she could help deliver it, there were crickets. There was silence.

The Government talks about practical solutions. There is a practical solution that the New South Wales Government could have tried. It could have rung Senator Deborah O'Neill, Senator Tony Sheldon and Senator Jenny McAllister. Were there any phone calls? No, there were crickets. There is one thing that neither the Minister nor the Treasurer will talk about: the significant damage that has been done to investor confidence for the people of this State. That is not only in Blayney and the Central West, but across the entire State and the whole country. Every single board—building, infrastructure or new mines across the State and country—would have to take into consideration what a section 10 declaration would do for their future prospects. They have to consider the effect of what a lame New South Wales Labor Government will not do for them. The Government will not stand up for them.

We talk about shock jocks—the Premier is pretty good at that. He gets on a show and he talks a big game about expediting planning processes, but there is nothing of substance. How could we have turned the disallowance motion in Canberra from 31 to 29? How could we have turned it around? We could have turned it around by a few votes and had bipartisan support here, but that would have required the Premier, the resources Minister and the Treasurer to actually do something. They would have had to pick up the phone to call those three Labor senators—Tony Sheldon, Jenny McAllister and Deborah O'Neill—and said, "New South Wales needs the

\$200 million in realised royalties. We need investor confidence not to be damaged." The people of Blayney expect better than to be left in limbo like they have been from this decision. Quite frankly, have any Government members been to Blayney to speak with locals since the decision was announced? None. [*Time expired.*]

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** Point of order: My point of order relates to the Hon. Sam Faraway's comment of who is in and out of the Chamber for certain debates. There is a longstanding convention of not drawing attention to who is in the House. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that comment. There is a longstanding convention of not making those comments. Members have to make decisions. Members are on pairs for a range of reasons. That is why we have the Whips, who deal with that in an appropriate manner.

**The Hon. Sarah Mitchell:** To the point of order: I agree with what the Leader of the Government has said in terms of the longstanding convention in this place not to weaponise members being in or out of the Chamber. Pairs, as she rightly said, are there for a number of reasons. However, I contend that the way the Hon. Sam Faraway expressed that was not in any way derogatory. He said that the Minister was unavailable. We knew that the Minister was on a pair. He also acknowledged the Minister's contribution today. I do not think the reflection was made in a manner that was in any way negative or could be seen as derogatory towards the Minister, and I do not think that was the spirit in which it was intended.

**The Hon. Sam Faraway:** To the point of order: I acknowledged that the Minister was on a pair. I acknowledged that—

**The Hon. Courtney Houssos:** No, you didn't.

**The Hon. Sam Faraway:** Yes, I did. Check *Hansard*.

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** You didn't say that.

**The Hon. Sam Faraway:** I said that you weren't in—

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts):** Order!

**The Hon. Penny Sharpe:** That's why we're so upset—you didn't say that.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts):** I call the Leader of the Government to order for the first time.

**The Hon. Sam Faraway:** I acknowledged that the Minister was not in the Chamber. I framed her contribution here today as important because we were not able to hear a contribution from any Minister to the earlier motion. I also referenced that we need to hear from the Treasurer on this. That would be incredibly important. I am the case in point when it comes to weaponising members' attendance in the Chamber or at budget estimates hearings. The Government has weaponised my attendance throughout the budget estimates process. That is totally unjust.

**The Hon. Cameron Murphy:** Point of order: It relates to the Hon. Sam Faraway's contribution to the previous point of order. It was full of debating points and did not contribute anything to the point of order. He ought to be asked to withdraw that contribution.

**The Hon. Wes Fang:** That's a new point of order.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts):** I do not need the assistance of the Hon. Wes Fang. I will make my ruling. Although I have great sympathy for the point of order taken by the Leader of the Government, I listened carefully to what the Hon. Sam Faraway said. I do not believe it was his intention to cast any aspersions upon the Minister for not being present in the Chamber this morning. Had he done so, I would have been extremely sympathetic to the point of order and upheld it. The Leader of the Government said that there is a longstanding tradition in this House that needs to be maintained. Recently members of the Procedure Committee talked about behaviour in the Chamber and resolved that we must take into consideration the intent of the maker of a statement. On this occasion, I do not believe there was any ill intent. However, all members should be mindful of making commentary on the absence of other members from the Chamber. There is no point of order.

**The Hon. WES FANG (15:50):** I was waiting for the Opposition to make a contribution to the motion.

**The Hon. Greg Donnelly:** You are the Opposition.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Yes, and no doubt Government members will soon be in opposition again. I support the motion, just as I supported the earlier motion on this subject from my colleague the Hon. Sam Faraway. This is a really important issue for those in rural and regional communities. Those of us who live in the regions know that high-paying jobs and investment in rural and regional communities are hard to come by. At the

moment, we are seeing a risk to the provision of capital by people to build up businesses because of the possibility that the disallowance of projects by the Federal Government will see that investment wasted.

The Federal Government decision is an absolute travesty for the people of Blayney and the Central West. The Government's attempt to water down the motion of the Hon. Tania Mihailuk in order to save face is an indictment of how it treats people in rural and regional communities. The Government should be on the front foot to protect the project and this investment, yet the Minister has moved an amendment to water down the motion instead of standing up to her Federal colleagues. The people of Blayney and the Central West need to see the reality of how this Government says one thing but does not deliver for them.

During the previous debate on the motion moved by the Hon. Susan Carter, the Hon. Anthony D'Adam noted the high point in the history of Labor governments; I forget the reference he made. For me, there is no doubt the high point of any Labor government was when Paul Keating stood at the dispatch box and said, "I want to do you slowly." It has all been downhill from there. Can members imagine that person, who was an absolute fighter and warrior for the people of Australia, allowing this to happen? The Labor Party has fallen very far from where it used to be. It is beholden to the left faction of its party. It is beholden to the environmental vandalism that is absolutely tearing it apart. We cannot allow the Labor left to destroy a project like this. I note the contribution of the Hon. Damien Tudehope, in which he stated that the way to ensure this project gets put forward is to vote for the Hon. Sam Faraway.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON (15:53):** I make a short contribution to associate myself with the contribution of my colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann, in which she put all of the actual facts on record. This whole episode reminds me of the time the Federal Court overturned, by consent, the approval for the Adani coalmine in Queensland. The reaction was unbelievable. The law was applied, yet in both this Parliament and the Federal Parliament members now in opposition were in absolute hysteria and outrage about that legal process. Members should remember that the legal process we are really talking about is First Nations people's care for and connection to country. It is one of the most important but rarely accessed laws that we have in Australia to protect country. The Federal Minister for the Environment and Water did her job. She received an application full of merit, and full of actual—

**The Hon. Sam Faraway:** How do you know it was full of merit?

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Because it was clearly an application made on merit. There is enough information, going back for many years, about the significance of this piece of country and the First Nations connection to it. Opposition members think they have some cultural authority to impose upon those brave First Nations leaders who have spoken in accordance with the legal procedure afforded to them. It is one small, rarely accessed legal procedure under one piece of legislation in the Commonwealth of Australia. On this occasion it was accessed, and the Minister exercised her powers accordingly. I cannot believe that NSW Labor would undermine a Commonwealth Labor Minister, a woman standing strong and exercising her legal powers—but here we have it. This is a regrettable time both for members of the Opposition and the Government. It will go down for what it is: a bunch of bad politics by members who are ill informed and downright disrespectful, both to First Nations people and women in positions of power who exercise the law properly.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (15:56):** I share the Government's disappointment in a decision that affects \$1 billion of investment and 800 jobs. Those things are obviously really important. However, the Opposition's reaction to this issue has been equally disappointing, if not more so. For example, there was a suggestion at a budget estimates hearing that the Indigenous credentials of the applicant had not been established. That was a disgusting thing to say. All Aboriginal people who fought for this regime are entitled to make claims and have them determined. Presumably, those opposite do not even know the people involved. To call into question their identity and race as a first recourse is despicable and should not have occurred.

The Opposition has assumed a default position that if an Aboriginal cultural heritage claim is made that is inconsistent with mining interests, it must be wrong and must be rubbish. Those opposite will then find an Aboriginal person with a different view they accept. This is not a zero-sum proposition. Mining can coexist with Aboriginal cultural heritage. The decision of the Federal Minister said as much. The position of the State Government has been quite nuanced on this, so I do not accept the comments of Ms Sue Higginson. However, certainly I do not accept the comments by Opposition members. Frankly, their response to this has drifted into racism.

**The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK (15:57):** In reply: I thank all members for their robust contributions. I indicate right from the get-go that I accept the amendment put forward by the Minister for Natural Resources. I understand why the Government has moved it and do not necessarily accept that it waters down the motion. The amended motion will still send a very strong message to Tanya Plibersek that these types of actions are unacceptable to the people of New South Wales. I hope to see out of this a united front from NSW Labor and the Liberal Party in relation to this type of investment, which is so needed for our State.



It does not surprise me that The Greens are angry. I get it! Greens members have difficulty regulating their emotions on a good day. This is their opportunity to jump up and down, but they are actually not helping Minister Plibersek. The reality is that any time they jump up on this issue it hurts Minister Plibersek's standing. Minister Plibersek has had a long and at times outstanding career in Federal Parliament. The decision she made is a great discredit to herself. She flouted the Senate's call for production of proper documents and decided not to substantiate her position by providing the public a full description of why she came to her view. She has also been disingenuous in her manner of proposing alternative sites, knowing all too well that they fall within the exclusion zone she has proposed.

It is important that New South Wales sends a strong message to investors that we are keen to have resource industries, goldmining being one of them. For the record, I have not spoken to anyone from Regis Resources or the Minerals Council, nor have I spoken to Murdoch or a shock jock, as suggested by The Greens. I have come to this view simply by reading, watching and understanding, as a former shadow Minister for Natural Resources, how critical it is to support industries that provide jobs and opportunities for this State. I say to the Minister for Natural Resources that I am delighted there is still some strength of the right in the New South Wales Labor Government, unlike the Federal Labor Government, which the Hon. Wes Fang rightly says seems to be controlled by the left. It is a sad situation when the Federal government of the day turns down an opportunity like this and cannot substantiate it.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts):** The Hon. Tania Mihailuk has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Courtney Houssos has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....32  
Noes .....6  
Majority.....26

#### AYES

Buttigieg	Latham	Murphy
Carter	Lawrence	Nanva (teller)
D'Adam	MacDonald	Primrose
Donnelly	Maclaren-Jones	Rath (teller)
Fang	Martin	Roberts
Farlow	Merton	Ruddick
Farraway	Mihailuk	Sharpe
Graham	Mitchell	Suval
Houssos	Mookhey	Tudehope
Jackson	Moriarty	Ward
Kaine	Munro	

#### NOES

Boyd	Cohn (teller)	Higginson
Buckingham	Faehrmann	Hurst (teller)

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

#### *Bills*

### STRATA MANAGING AGENTS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

#### First Reading

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

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

**Statement of public interest tabled.**

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

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

**Motion agreed to.**

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

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Documents*

### **BUNGENDORE HIGH SCHOOL PROJECT**

#### **Production of Documents: Further Order**

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (16:10):** I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 1299 for today of which I have given notice by omitting "14 days" and inserting instead "28 days".

**Leave granted.**

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL:** 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 25 March 2023 in the possession, custody or control of the Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Early Learning, and Minister for Western Sydney, the Department of Education, the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales, or the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development relating to the changing of the proposed site for Bungendore High School to Birchfield Drive:

- (a) all documents, including reports, briefings, memorandum, emails, email attachments and correspondence, relating to the Bungendore High School Birchfield Drive site selection process;
- (b) all documents, including reports, briefings and correspondence, relating to the acquisition of lands for the Bungendore High School site at Birchfield Drive;
- (c) all documents specifically relating to enrolment projections and catchment areas for Bungendore High School;
- (d) all correspondence between the Department of Education, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council in relation to the Bungendore High School project; and
- (e) any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

I do not intend to take long on this motion as I know there are a lot of things on the list for today. I acknowledge the Deputy Premier's office, who came to see me yesterday about this particular call for papers. With the extension of the time frame, there is agreement from the Government that it will be supporting the motion. It is pretty straightforward. There is a long history with the high school in Bungendore. There has been universal support across both sides of the Chamber to have a high school in Bungendore. It is a growing community that needs that facility. The previous Government had funding for the project and a site had been selected. I acknowledge that there were some planning issues, as that process was underway, that overlapped the end of its time in government and the new Government coming in.

We know that as of last week the decision has been made to move the original site to a new one on Birchfield Drive. This motion is to get information from the Government on the advice from the various departments in relation to that site selection process, what discussions happened between government, the acquisition of the land that has been purchased for the high school to be built on, and relevant correspondence. I have worked with a number of members of the Bungendore community on this project over many years. They certainly have some questions after last week's announcement. There will obviously be further delay when a project is started from the beginning. The Government is talking about the school being operational by the beginning of 2027. In my experience, I think that is optimistic at best. I think it will take longer than that.

This motion is about trying to get some information from the Government as to how the new site was selected, what kinds of conversations have been happening between various agencies and local government, and providing some more information, particularly for the parents. I remember going to Bungendore a few years ago and sitting in one family's backyard with lots of other mums and dads, who said, "We just want a high school for our kids." That is still what they want. They want some more information in relation to this project, and that is what this call for papers is all about.

**The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS (Minister for Finance, Minister for Domestic Manufacturing and Government Procurement, and Minister for Natural Resources) (16:12):** I lead for the Government on this motion. Given that it has been amended, the Government will not be opposing it. The shadow Minister made the point in her contribution that this has been a long-running issue and, indeed, it is one that we pursued when in opposition. The Government is absolutely committed to building a new high school in Bungendore to respond to the population growth in the region, but that is because of years of poor planning by the previous Government that let the community down and divided the town.

I commend the Deputy Premier and the recently re-elected local MP, Minister Steve Whan, because the location of the new site was recently announced. They have been really committed to continuing to fast-track the project to make sure that there is a high school for this growing community. There will be further details about the new site, including the process that will be followed to deliver the school as quickly as possible. The details are already available on the department's website. The Deputy Premier is right across this. In order to ensure that it can be delivered as quickly as possible, the Department of Education conducted due diligence in recent months, including considering alternative sites.

It was a contentious issue. Indeed, I think I moved a call for papers on this very issue when I was in opposition. This followed the Land and Environment Court overturning the previous planning approval following a challenge by a local community group. It showed that the new site would deliver the school more effectively than the site announced by the previous Government. The Deputy Premier has got the department on the task, and they are working around the clock on the project with the goal of opening in early 2027. Master planning work is well progressed, with the community to be given a first look at the plans in coming months. As a former Minister, the shadow Minister would know that commercial transactions are commercial in confidence, but the appropriate information will be provided within the time frame we have agreed to.

Once the new school is complete, the department will engage the local community about the future uses of the Majara Street site, but the new, larger site on Birchfield Drive is located closer to the town's future growth centre and will enable an even larger school to be built. I am really excited about this project. It is certainly a part of the State that has had a large amount of growth. I was doorknocking there a few years ago, and I remember that this was a key issue raised by people that I was speaking to that afternoon. There is no doubt that there is a lot of community interest in this, and that is why the Government will provide the information.

**Dr AMANDA COHN (16:15):** The Greens support the motion. To be clear, I did not support the previous site that was chosen by the previous Government, which I visited. The reasons for that have been well ventilated here and in budget estimates hearings, and they do not need repeating today. But in terms of transparency, accountability and the role of this House, The Greens are usually inclined to support calls for papers. I note the exhaustion of community advocates who have been fighting for a new high school for Bungendore for a very long time as well as opposing the previously announced site. Now that the Government has made a decision on this, I hope it can get on with delivering the school that Bungendore really needs and deserves.

**The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL (16:16):** In reply: I thank members for their contributions and support. I will make a couple of points in response. The first is that, while there is a pop-up school now on the public school site, in the lead-up to this I never met a parent of a Bungendore High School student who was against the site put forward by the former Government. It is in close proximity to the local primary school. It is right in the centre of town. It has good transport options. The advice from the department was that that was the best location available at the time. As Minister Houssos, Minister Car and others would know, we go on the advice given by our departments and make the best decisions based on that expert advice. Very senior people who still work within the Department of Education certainly made it clear to me that the site chosen by the former Government was the best one available.

I am interested to see what comes through in the documents. Minister Houssos said that the master planning is well progressed, but it was only in May, I think, that the Deputy Premier and the current member for Monaro were talking about going to look for alternative sites, while I also put in a renewed State significant development application for the existing site. They certainly were not saying that they were definitely moving a few months ago. They were continuing with the process of the existing site but said, in parallel, "We will look at alternative locations." That was only a few months ago. Somehow, in that time, this land has been bought. I do not think master planning would be well progressed when there was not actually a site a few months ago. It will be interesting to see what these papers deliver.

At the end of the day, we on this side want a functioning high school for those parents in Bungendore who have been strongly advocating for the best for their children. We will be holding the Government to account for that delivery time frame of 2027. I do not think that is realistic. I think it is incredibly unlikely, and the Government needs to be up-front with parents about that. It takes time on a new site to go through planning, to go through the processes to build the school and to have it ready for students. We will watch this closely. At the end of the day,

despite differing views, we all want the same outcome, which is a great high school for the kids in Bungendore. It is now up to those opposite to deliver it, and we will make sure that they do.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Visitors*

#### **VISITORS**

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Rod Roberts):** I acknowledge the presence in the President's gallery of Ms Karen Horovitz and her daughter, Amit, who is a student at Davidson High School. I welcome them this afternoon.

#### *Motions*

#### **CANNABIS LEGALISATION**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (16:21):** On behalf of the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham: I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
  - (a) the Democratic Party in the United States has just become the first major United States party ticket to support federal legalisation of cannabis;
  - (b) Vice President Kamala Harris and her running mate, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, are campaigning on a platform to reschedule cannabis from schedule I to schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act;
  - (c) as Governor of Minnesota, Tim Walz signed a bill into law that created a legal cannabis market in Minnesota, made cannabis use for adults legal and expunged low level cannabis convictions;
  - (d) President Biden initiated a review early in 2024 to reschedule cannabis from schedule I to schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act;
  - (e) the Democrats are running on a platform calling on all States to expunge historic convictions for using or possessing cannabis;
  - (f) voters in the largest Republican state, Florida, will have the chance to legalise adult-use cannabis when they vote on the Amendment 3 ballot on 5 November 2024; and
  - (g) Republican presidential nominee and Florida resident, former President Donald Trump, took to Truth Social on Sunday 8 September to state his support for cannabis legalisation stating, "As I have previously stated, I believe it is time to end needless arrests and incarcerations of adults for small amounts of marijuana for personal use. As a Floridian, I will be voting YES on Amendment 3 this November."
- (2) That this House further notes that:
  - (a) the move to legalise cannabis by the major United States political parties brings to an end the 100-years-long war on cannabis and is the most significant development in global drug policy history;
  - (b) 38 states in the United States have some form of legal cannabis;
  - (c) the legalisation of cannabis in the United States will transform the international trade in cannabis, creating massive economic opportunities and a global trade that within a generation will be measured in trillions of dollars;
  - (d) the global legal cannabis market size was valued at US\$64.83 billion in 2022 and is projected to grow from US\$84.79 billion in 2023 to US\$658.91 billion by 2030, exhibiting a compounding annual growth rate of 34.03 per cent during the forecast period;
  - (e) Americans are spending \$33 billion a year on legal cannabis;
  - (f) in the United States, comparable states to New South Wales have booming cannabis economies, including:
    - (i) Massachusetts, with a population of seven million people, has 27,000 people employed in the cannabis sector;
    - (ii) Colorado, with a population of six million, has 24,000 employed in the cannabis sector;
    - (iii) Missouri, with a population of six million, has 20,000 employed in the cannabis sector; and
    - (iv) Arizona, with a population of seven million, has 20,000 employed in the cannabis sector.
  - (g) cannabis has been legalised in Canada, Germany, South Africa, Thailand, Mexico, Georgia, Uruguay, Malta and Luxembourg;
  - (h) Canada's legal cannabis market contributed \$43 billion to gross domestic product, sustains 150,000 jobs nationally and contributes \$15 billion in revenue to the Federal Government; and
  - (i) Middle Eastern Muslim nations such as Lebanon, Morocco and Pakistan have recently liberalised their cannabis laws.
- (3) That this House calls on the Government to:

- (a) form an expert advisory committee of industry and government to investigate the current and future economic opportunities of the existing and future cannabis industry, both domestically and for export; and
- (b) free the weed, baby!

I have been authorised by the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham to move this motion on a prearrangement we had to turn on a bit of a stoush and argue it out. This bloke Buckingham was going to notify the media and social media that he was going to clean me up. But he has not turned up. I have formally moved the motion on his behalf, and we should debate it on the expectation that he is not too far away, parting the smoke haze and the plants with his big sabre, cutting his way through the plantation to make his way to the Chamber, as inevitably he will.

Reflecting on the motion I have moved on his behalf—I am so magnanimous and kind these days—it has to be noted that the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham has one of the most unique political business models ever devised. He will talk about cannabis in the United States. He will, in this motion, talk about cannabis in Lebanon, Morocco—that must be a good brand of weed—and Pakistan, but he will never talk about cannabis in New South Wales because if he ever succeeded in legalising cannabis here he would do himself out of business. There would be no more Legalise Cannabis Party, and there would be no more Jeremy Buckingham. Having been kicked out of The Greens, he would then bankrupt his own operation for cannabis.

That is why the motion is completely futile. It is all about the United States. I think there is some fake news in the motion about Donald Trump. I will call it out as fake news, but who knows these days what is going on there. It has mention of Lebanon, Morocco and Pakistan, but nothing to do with New South Wales. This guy has a business model to protect his longevity here. It is no wonder, I suppose, after his near-death experience with The Greens. He will always try to talk about cannabis without ever acting on it in this State. I am calling him out for what he is.

The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham has been taunted into the Chamber! This is like the night with Matt Kean. He has come into the Chamber to face the music. The honourable member should be thanking me for moving his motion. I have consulted widely about his history in The Greens on the basis that he has consulted all of my enemies. It took him about six months. He tells me he has spoken to the taxi driver, to Brad Hazzard—

**The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham:** Mustafa.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** You name them, he has spoken to them to put on this stoush with me like the coyote Ralph and the sheepdog. We wanted to have an exercise like that. I have done my research inside The Greens party. I have a full brief from the member for Newtown, who says of this member that, when he jumps into the cesspool, the maggots jump out. That is what she told me. She says of this member that he is a cruel and sad man denying a village somewhere the perfect idiot. That is what the member for Newtown has said, and I put it on the record expecting a full rebuttal. I am expecting a full litany of my enemies—pages and pages, bigger than the Mookhey library—and the things they have said about me to come back in reply, but this sleepy Chamber needed a bit of livening up.

I did not expect that I would have to move the motion for my honourable friend, but I have done that and I look forward to his rebuttal of everything I have had to say. He has used his sabre to cut through the plantation and get here and the smoke haze has cleared. To recap for the honourable member, I made the point that he only talks about other jurisdictions. He will never actually try to legalise cannabis in New South Wales because he would be sending himself to Centrelink, as he had to do when The Greens kicked him out. The motion is not relevant here. It does not need to be supported. It is full of fake news and should be condemned.

**The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (16:24):** I apologise for my lateness. I got caught short by the Bungendore debate. I thank the Hon. Mark Latham for moving the motion. I now have only three minutes. I might seek an extension in due course because I have a lot to say about cannabis and about the Hon. Mark Latham. The motion is a very important one. As honourable members can see from it, the tide has turned on cannabis. The world is moving on, and Australia risks being left in the dust if we do not have the courage to act. We are talking about the cannabis industry—a juggernaut that is reshaping economies, overturning outdated laws and creating opportunities we cannot afford to ignore.

Across the Pacific, something remarkable just happened. For the first time in American history, a major political party has stepped up and endorsed the federal legalisation of cannabis. The Democrats, led by Vice President Kamala Harris and Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, have made it clear that cannabis does not belong on the same list as heroin. It is time to reschedule it, regulate it and reap the benefits. If we are honest with ourselves, they are not just talking sense; they are leading the way. Walz has already done it at a state level, turning Minnesota into a trailblazer for legal cannabis. He has not only legalised it for adults; he has wiped the slate clean for people with low level cannabis convictions. That is justice in action, plain and simple.

Before anyone starts to think this is just another left-wing woke idea, let us put that myth to bed. Even former President Donald Trump has literally woken up to the idea of legalisation. When you have figures on both sides of the aisle—Trump, Biden and Harris—all moving towards reform, it is clear that the cannabis debate has transcended party lines. It is about common sense, it is about fairness and it is about the future. Let us not kid ourselves: America is leading the way. The numbers do not lie. Thirty-eight states have already made cannabis legal in some form. In Florida and North Dakota—states not exactly known for being progressive—voters will soon decide whether to legalise adult-use cannabis. If they do, the floodgates will open, transforming not just the United States market but the global cannabis trade.

In case anyone is wondering how big this industry is, let me throw a few numbers around—I like to do that whenever I can. Americans are already spending \$33 billion a year on legal cannabis. That is more than craft beer. By the end of this decade, cannabis sales are predicted to rival alcohol sales. You heard that right: alcohol sales. It is a global industry that will be measured in trillions of dollars. I seek an extension of time.

**Leave granted.**

**The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM:** I thank the House for its indulgence. Once upon a time, the Hon. Mark Latham cared about jobs. In the 2024 Vangst jobs report we can see positive growth returns in the cannabis industry. In the state of Massachusetts, with a population of five million, 30,000 people are employed in cannabis—and that is a similar sized state to New South Wales. In Colorado, 23,000 people are employed. In Arizona, 20,000 people are employed. In Missouri, 20,000 people are employed. The people who have woken up to the opportunities of cannabis are the labour movement in this State, Unions NSW. In its submission to the cannabis inquiry, the union said that there are enormous opportunities for cannabis to be a transition industry as we move out of coal. The submission states:

Unions NSW recognises most jobs in the NSW medicinal cannabis industry are linked to cultivation operations in rural and regional areas, primarily in central and northern NSW. Many of these locations already function as large-scale worksites. As NSW's medicinal cannabis industry expands, it has the potential to provide secure, well-paid employment to thousands of workers.

Thousands of workers will be employed in a safe, regulated medicinal cannabis industry that will become a legalised adult-use cannabis industry in the future. It is time for people to get on board. It is time for people to get behind this industry. That is why I am calling on this House to urge the Government to form an expert committee. Let us get ahead of the curve and start seriously investigating the opportunities that a legal cannabis industry could bring to Australia, whether for domestic use, medicinal exports or opening up new international markets. I note even Muslim countries such as Morocco, Pakistan and Lebanon, as well as Israel, South Africa, Thailand and Malta, have moved to legalised cannabis. It is going to be a global industry. I will have a lot more to say in reply, especially about the disgraceful comments of the Hon. Mark Latham.

**The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (16:30):** As the Hon. Mark Latham has indicated, this motion gives us plenty of information about what the rest of the world is doing to legalise cannabis, citing not just the United States of America but taking us on a magical mystery tour around the globe. However, it fails to explain why we should follow suit. America is a great country but it is imperfect. In considering whether or not to "free the weed", which is a policy area requiring both a legal and a health response, should we really be playing follow the leader with a country that has some of the highest medical costs in the developed world while simultaneously being in the middle of the worst opioid crisis ever seen? This is not so much a criticism of the United States as it is recognition of this motion's simplistic argument that everyone else is jumping off the cliff and we should follow suit so as not to be globally uncool. We have all seen the debate the member referenced. Perhaps the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham needs to find some more lucid character witnesses who are happy to support total weed freedom.

The other argument advanced for legalisation of cannabis is "Look at all the money we could make. Look at all the payroll tax and the GST we could be harvesting, along with the weed." The Liberal Party is proud to be the party of the free market, but we do not worship the market as an unassailable deity or consider that anything that creates an income stream is a public good. We support the free market because we believe it is the system that allows individuals, families, businesses and communities to flourish, to create wealth and security, and to pursue what is good. The test for legalisation of cannabis should not be: Will it make us money? It should be: Will it support human flourishing? There are many things which could make us money but that we still prohibit because they have unacceptable consequences for human flourishing. Cannabis is one such substance.

A study conducted in 2020 by the universities of California and Oregon found that cannabis has long-term and irreversible effects on the cell structure, morphology and executive functioning of the brain. In lay terms, cannabis use completely changes the brain, and the person, permanently. The study found that the relaxation which cannabis initially brings irreversibly strips drive and motivation. Is this an outcome which we truly believe supports human flourishing? Perhaps this explains the 2015 study which found that daily use of cannabis correlates with lower wages and lower contributions to the economy. The argument being put for legalisation that everybody

else is doing it so we should do it sounds like a teenager pressuring his friend to smoke a cigarette rather than a solid foundation for a public policy change.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK (16:33):** I will be brief, because there is not too much to say on this subject. The Libertarian Party supports the motion. We believe that cannabis should be as regulated as carrots. We believe that regulation is fuelling organised crime and getting young, innocent, good people into the criminal justice system. We are repeatedly told that Donald Trump is some right-wing, far-right dangerous person. He has recently publicly said that he will be voting in favour of a legalisation measure in his home state of Florida, which the motion makes reference to. I should note that it is not decriminalisation that the so-called "evil" Donald Trump is supporting; it is full legalisation. Of course that legislation will get through. Florida is supposed to be one of the most conservative states, but it is going to vote in favour of full legalisation. In the United States, states are falling like dominoes to legalise cannabis. It is interesting to note that whenever it has been legalised, it has not been through the legislature, the state congress; it has been through citizen-initiated referendums.

When the people get to have a vote, rather than the know-all politicians, they almost always vote for legalisation. I cannot remember a case where the people have voted against it. I do not want to step on the toes of the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham, but I urge him to move forward with a bill to bring about a plebiscite in New South Wales so that the people can make this decision for themselves. I know how they are going to vote: They will vote in favour of legalisation. We can then put this issue behind us. It is completely inevitable that this reform is going to get through at some point. Of course the handbrake is this House, because politicians are scared of losing votes. That is what they are scared about. When cannabis is legalised, what will happen? There will be no campaign to then repeal the legalisation. It will just be a part of life. I have a high regard for the Hon. Susan Carter, but I truly believe that alcohol is more dangerous than cannabis. I support the motion.

**The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (16:35):** I oppose the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham's motion to "free the weed". I do not want to see the suburbs and the towns of New South Wales awash with the corrosive social impact and stench of a ghetto drug like marijuana. I note remarks made earlier by the Hon. Mark Latham regarding the mover of the motion's reliance on what the Democratic Party in the United States is doing and the detailed list of the 38 states in that country that have made cannabis legal. The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham suggests that we should follow the international trail of cannabis legalisation and put New South Wales on the map. Quite frankly, as a legislator, whether Colorado, Canada or Thailand have decided to legalise cannabis is irrelevant to me. As a New South Wales parliamentarian, my duty is to act in the interests of the people of this State; it is not to copy some foreign jurisdiction that has thrown in the towel and said, "It's all too hard," or has legalised illicit drugs for some perverse ideological reason. My priority is to defend our young people from illicit drugs and to protect the amenity of towns and cities from an influx of dangerous, unnecessary, illegal drugs, including cannabis.

The dangers of cannabis are well known. My colleague the Hon. Susan Carter outlined the risks and consequences of the drug. The increased risk of psychosis for young men, especially, has been well documented. Other risks include impaired cognitive function, addiction and, of course, the very real danger that marijuana ends up being a gateway drug for the use and abuse of more obviously dangerous illegal drugs like ice. This motion trumpets the purported economic benefits available to our State if we sell our soul to the cannabis industry and allow its product to have free rein in our streets.

We have heard lots of big numbers and about how there is big money to be made, and plenty of potential extra tax revenue for big government, which is always an attractive proposition for left-wing legislators. However, the idea that we should legalise cannabis to pursue a fistful of dollars for the economy, as has been done in other international jurisdictions, is not what is best for New South Wales. On the same basis, I assume that the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham is also happy for New South Wales to develop its own methamphetamines industry, so long as there is a dollar to be made. Where does the legalisation of drugs begin and end? How low will New South Wales sink? What sort of legacy do we, as legislators, want to leave this State? I oppose the motion.

**Dr AMANDA COHN (16:38):** It is no secret that The Greens support the legalisation of cannabis. I acknowledge the really excellent work towards that end by my colleague Ms Cate Faehrmann and my Federal colleague Mr David Shoebridge. Of course, cannabis, like any drug, can be harmful. Alcohol is harmful. Cigarettes are harmful. Every prescription and non-prescription drug can be harmful. But in my own experience as a GP and as a health professional, the greatest harm that came to my patients who used cannabis was not from the use of cannabis. The harm was caused by their interactions with the criminal justice system. We need to legalise cannabis because that is the way that we look after people's mental health. It is the way that we look after vulnerable people, not because it will make money—although that is also noted. Of course, I am concerned about the mental health of young people, but what we need to stop is their interactions with the criminal justice system.

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (16:39):** The Government opposes the motion. The New South Wales Government is taking a measured and evidence-based approach to cannabis regulation. NSW Labor made an election commitment to host a drug summit and, as the Premier and Minister for Health announced in July, we

are doing it this year. The Government will hold a multi-day drug summit comprising two days of regional forums in October 2024 and two days of forums in Sydney on Wednesday 4 December and Thursday 5 December. Medical experts, police, people with lived and living experience, drug user organisations, families and other stakeholders will come together during the drug summit to share their views and build a consensus on how New South Wales deals with drug use and harms.

It has been over 20 years since the last drug summit. The terms of reference will be finalised in due course, following discussions with stakeholders. We expect that cannabis use will be discussed at the upcoming State drug summit. However, as the Premier said at budget estimates in February this year, the Government does not have a mandate to make such a significant change in its drug law reform policy at this stage. Our Government recognises that there are legitimate therapeutic uses for cannabis and will continue to take an evidence-based approach to the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes. The Government is committed to supporting individuals, families and communities who are recipients of cannabis for medical purposes. The Government is committed to hearing from a wide range of people at the summit, including medical experts, police, people with lived and living experience, user organisations, families and other stakeholders. The Government notes, in particular, that it cannot support paragraph (3) (b) of the motion, which states, "Free the weed, baby!" However, I would have liked to have amended it to add "Bring back the Cheech and Chong kombi", but I was overruled.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (16:42):** On behalf of Mr Jeremy Buckingham: In reply: This was supposed to be the stoush where the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham cleaned me up, but it is the greatest outflanking since the Maginot Line. He has not learned any of the lessons from the Liberal Party's local government nominations. I say this to my friend: The most important lesson in politics is "Be on time." You cannot be elected if you do not get your nominations in on time, and you cannot move a motion unless you appear in the Chamber on time. I know he has some distractions and handicaps in that department, but still he needs to get his staff to push him out the door and get him down here a bit faster than we have just seen.

I moved the motion and I thank all the speakers who contributed to the debate: the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham, the Hon. Susan Carter, the Hon. John Ruddick, the Hon. Rachel Merton, Dr Amanda Cohn and the Hon. Mark Buttigieg. I note that in terms of what I was supposed to cop, and what I was promised, it was like being hit by a wet lettuce. Nothing really happened.

**The Hon. Jeremy Buckingham:** Point of order: The Hon. Mark Latham, who can take a seat, has made a series of very serious reflections upon my good character. That is particularly egregious considering he is a rank hypocrite. I seek leave to table this document entitled "Latham caught smoking dope in Parliament House", which is a document from September 2005 when the Hon. Mark Latham apologised for smoking cannabis in Parliament House, Canberra, and another document. He is a rank hypocrite. Mr President, I ask you to ask him to withdraw all the egregious remarks he made about my good character.

**The PRESIDENT:** Can I ask specifically what the member particularly found egregious?

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** I withdraw whatever he wants, but I had retired from Parliament by the date the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham quoted. Again, he has been too much on his substance to know what is really going on. I resigned in January of that year, not September.

**The PRESIDENT:** Order! The Hon. Mark Latham has helpfully withdrawn his comments. Is leave granted to table the documents?

**Leave granted.**

**Documents tabled.**

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** Furthermore, there is a reference to Donald Trump in the motion and in the debate. Clearly, Trump was on the hooch when he said we should drink detergent to get rid of COVID. There has been a problem in the United States that Trump identified recently: If you get on the hooch, you get the munchies. That is why in Springfield, Ohio, people are "eating the dogs; they're eating the cats; they're eating the pets". This is the problem that cannabis has caused in relation to Donald Trump. I will say one thing about the drug summit that the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham mentioned: He is living in fear of that summit recommending the legalisation of cannabis because it will do him out of a job. That is the last thing he wants from the summit. It has been a fascinating debate. I thank all the contributors. I notice, though, that when I moved the motion, the Hon. Anthony D'Adam jumped up to take a point of order. He jumped up so quickly I thought his pager had gone off.

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

**The House divided.**



Ayes .....8  
 Noes .....31  
 Majority.....23

#### AYES

Boyd	Faehrmann	Martin (teller)
Buckingham (teller)	Higginson	Ruddick
Cohn	Hurst	

#### NOES

Banasiak	Kaine	Munro
Borsak	Latham	Murphy
Buttigieg	Lawrence	Nanva (teller)
D'Adam	MacDonald	Primrose
Donnelly	Maclaren-Jones	Rath (teller)
Fang	Merton	Roberts
Farlow	Mihailuk	Sharpe
Farraway	Mitchell	Suvaal
Graham	Mookhey	Tudehope
Houssos	Moriarty	Ward
Jackson		

#### Motion negatived.

### NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

**The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (16:53):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes that September marks National Suicide Prevention Month as well as World Suicide Prevention Day and R U OK? Day.
- (2) That this House acknowledges people with lived experience of mental ill-health and recovery and the experience of people who have been carers, families or supporters.
- (3) That this House notes and supports the work the Government is doing to develop whole-of-government suicide prevention legislation.
- (4) That this House further notes that we must all strive towards zero suicide.

If this debate raises any distress or concern for individuals in this Chamber or watching online, people are encouraged to contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or the Suicide Callback Service on 1300 659 467. I am mindful of the sensitivities regarding this debate, particularly in light of media reporting today and the front page of *The Sydney Morning Herald* about the tragic loss of a 12-year-old girl. This month marks National Suicide Prevention Month, as well as World Suicide Prevention Day and R U OK? Day. It is an important time to reflect on the impact of suicide and mental health issues on our community. In Australia nearly 10 million people have been affected by suicide, representing almost half of our population. That number represents not only those who have died by suicide but also their families, their friends and their peers. It represents first responders and workers. It is an alarming figure and it highlights the importance of suicide prevention for our community.

As we well know, over two in five Australians aged 16 to 85 are estimated to have experienced a mental health disorder at some point in their life. Alarming, according to the NSW Suicide Monitoring System, in 2023 around 934 people died by suspected or confirmed suicide in New South Wales. That equates to losing two or three people per day to suicide in New South Wales. It is an issue of significant concern and a problem that has sadly only worsened in the past decade. It is a problem that the New South Wales Government and my colleague Minister Jackson are determined to address. We are committed to doing all we possibly can to better support the mental health of people all over New South Wales.

Since coming into government the Minister has acted immediately, commissioning a gap analysis as an initial step to understand the size of the problem and prioritise immediate actions. This year's budget saw an investment of \$2.9 billion towards mental health services in New South Wales, the largest investment on record. The investment includes \$143.4 million to the Towards Zero Suicides initiative, which addresses the priorities in the strategic framework for suicide prevention. That is also complemented by suicide prevention initiatives co-founded with the Commonwealth Government under the bilateral Agreement on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, a combined \$338 million investment over the five years to 2025-26.

The New South Wales Government has also committed to introducing legislation that establishes a comprehensive approach to suicide prevention across the entire government. The legislation will aim to foster a culture within government where suicide prevention is a shared responsibility, with clear mechanisms in place to ensure accountability. While the Government has confidence in our State's services and our frontline workers, it is clear that there is much need for improvement and much more work needs to be done. While suicides often have a mental health component, there are also many other factors at play that contribute to suicide. Those include social issues, housing and financial stresses, and cost-of-living pressures. Addressing the other factors that can contribute to suicide will reduce the likelihood of someone reaching the point of crisis.

As I mentioned, it is estimated that 934 people died by suspected or confirmed suicide in New South Wales in 2023. That number is simply too high. The fact of the matter is that any number above zero is simply too high. No-one should be in a place where they have reached that absolute crisis point. It is tragic that today, still, people are reaching that crisis point. Our Government is dedicated to preventing any more lives from being tragically lost. We have delivered record investment into our mental health services and are introducing landmark legislation that will better prevent more lives from being lost by suicide. I commend the motion to the House.

**The Hon. AILEEN MacDONALD (16:58):** I contribute to debate on the motion moved by the Hon. Emily Suvaal concerning National *Suicide Prevention Month*. The Coalition will support the motion, which acknowledges that September is National Suicide Prevention Month and 10 September is World Suicide Prevention Day, which will be followed by R U OK? Day. It is hard to believe but, in Australia alone, nearly 10 million people a year are affected by suicide. It is a disturbing figure because it equates to almost half our population. It is deeply personal for me because, indirectly, I fall into that 10 million.

In 2013 I volunteered as a telephone crisis support person for Lifeline. I took on the role because I, too, had experienced times when I felt down and struggled with my mental health. I wanted to give back and be there for someone else. Thankfully, I was able to find my way back to feeling good about my mental wellbeing. It was that journey which inspired me to help others who were going through their own difficult times and who had no-one to talk to. Volunteering for Lifeline allowed me to offer empathy, a listening ear and a reminder that people are not alone in their struggles.

The theme for this year's R U OK? Day is asking, "Are you okay?" on any day. It is pertinent because it reminds us that those conversations should not be limited to just one day a week or month; they should be part of our everyday lives. The message is especially poignant given that, according to recent data from the Suicide Prevention Australia Community Tracker, 72 per cent of Australians report experiencing elevated levels of distress. In any year, one in five Australians experience a mental illness. Compounding that is the confronting statistic that about 54 per cent of people do not seek treatment. Rates of psychological distress in New South Wales have almost doubled over the last decade. At the same time, mental health funding has flatlined.

It is a stark reminder of the prevalence of mental health challenges and the urgent need for all of us to have a proactive role in supporting each other. My Lifeline training was more than 10 years ago, but I feel confident to ask the question, "Are you okay?" I have learned that, when confronted with such situations, we need to reach for understanding and empathy, not stigma. I urge us all to strive towards the goal of zero suicide and lift others up when it comes to offering hope and support to those who need it most.

**Dr AMANDA COHN (17:01):** On behalf of The Greens, I support the motion with one small amendment. I thank the mover for the opportunity to discuss such an important issue today. In New South Wales, there were 936 suspected or confirmed deaths by suicide in 2023, and another 467 in the first half of this year. Of course, they are not just numbers on a page; there is a whole person, and bereaved family and loved ones, behind every single statistic. Men are three times more likely to die by suicide than women. First Nations Australians are twice as likely to die by suicide than non-Indigenous Australians. LGBTQIA+ people, and particularly trans and gender diverse people, are far more likely to die by suicide. That is linked to trauma, discrimination and social exclusion.

Under the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement, Australian and State and Territory governments have a shared responsibility to ensure the sustainability and enhance the services of the Australian mental health and suicide prevention system. Days like World Suicide Prevention Day and R U OK? Day, which primarily raise awareness, are not the solution in isolation. I have spoken in this place before about the challenges, particularly facing men, in accessing mental health services and the need to reduce stigma associated with mental health care.

There is more work to do to encourage people to seek help when they need it, but it really grates when people take that step and then cannot access the care that they need. It was heard loud and clear through the recent Portfolio Committee No. 2 - Health inquiry into community and outpatient mental health care in New South Wales. A whole-of-government response to suicide prevention is absolutely welcome. I acknowledge that the

Government has released a discussion paper and is currently consulting on its proposed suicide prevention legislation. I move:

That the question be amended by omitting in paragraph (3) "supports" and inserting instead "anticipates".

The Greens will be strongly supporting the motion as amended. The Greens welcome the important work the Government is doing, but it is a bit rich to ask The Greens to support it before we have seen the draft legislation. Finally, it is not a problem that we can legislate our way out of when funding is also critical. We need funding for outpatient and community mental health services, funding for step-up and step-down accommodation, funding for psychosocial support services, funding for social and public housing, and funding for family and domestic violence services. We need to pay mental health clinicians and frontline emergency what they are worth. Of course, that list is not exhaustive. I hope that the Government will follow up its intended legislation with the funding that those services need.

**The Hon. Dr SARAH KAINE (17:04):** I support the motion and thank the Hon. Emily Suvaal for bringing it to the House. I have a couple of points. Firstly, the Minister spoke this morning about loneliness. I draw a line between the motion and the Standing Committee on Social Issues inquiry into loneliness, which I think will converge on some of the issues that contribute to the prevalence of suicide. I am not looking forward to gathering that evidence, but I anticipate that we will learn a lot about those intersections and, hopefully, how that might inform future policy for the Government in this area.

Secondly, I thank the member for particularly acknowledging the role and impact of carers in this area. While we acknowledge the absolute grief of those families that have been impacted by an actual suicide, we also need to acknowledge the impact of attempted suicide, consider what support we give to families of people who attempted suicide and were unsuccessful, and recognise the daily grief, panic and pressure experienced by families who find themselves in that situation. I acknowledge that there is a particular cohort of carers who live with suicide, not as something that has happened, but as a fear that constantly stalks them and makes sure they are never far from their phones.

Thirdly, while the Government is very focused on mental health and is investing in mental health services—and there has been an inquiry, which has suggested other actions—I urge the Government to consider supporting research into mental health, even though that is not strictly in the State Government's remit; it is also a matter for the Federal Government. I have spoken before in this House about how the suicide risk for people with bipolar disorder is between 10 and 30 times higher than for the general population. Mental health research does not receive the same support as research into other illnesses, and that directly impacts those who experience mental health issues and the prospects of family and carers recovering and living a full life. I commend the member for the motion.

**The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (17:07):** I support the motion and commend the honourable member for bringing it to the House. Members talk about a range of issues in this House, but the motion concerns one of the most important things about which we will speak, on this day or any other. It is sobering to hear the figures that we have heard today. It is sobering to reflect on the fact that at least 500 people in New South Wales have died through suicide this year. However, I do not think that it really helps us to focus on those figures because looking at numbers as large as that allows us to distance ourselves from the very real trauma that people are experiencing.

If someone you love has committed suicide, it does not matter that there are hundreds of others; it matters that the person is forever gone from your life. It also matters that you will forever ask yourself, "How did our circle of care not hold that person up?" I thank the Hon. Dr. Sarah Kaine and the Hon. Emily Suvaal for bringing the attention of the House to the wider circle of impact of suicide, and the wider trauma of asking, "Did it happen? Will it happen?" They are tremendous burdens to carry. I commend the Government for its legislative response. Of course there is a role for government to play, and there is an important role for funding. We need adequately funded mental health services, but the beauty of the message of R U OK? Day is that it reminds us that the question is not always out there.

It is not always a question that a government, State or Federal, has responsibility for. Of course there are areas that they must be responsible for, but it is an area that we are all responsible for. At the end of the day, by being open to others, by being able to offer kindness to others and by being able to instil hope in others, we are always part of the solution. By being able to offer care to people who have experienced that deepest of grief, we are all able to be part of the healing. Yes, government has a role and everybody in this place has a role, but everybody in the community also has a role. I encourage all of us to reach out in hope and care to those around us—to check that we are okay and that we then have the strength to offer our support and our love to those around us.

**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) (17:10):** I thank the

co-chairs of the Parliamentary Friends of Mental Health for their contributions and my colleague the Hon. Emily Suvaal for moving this important motion. The statistics that we have already heard paint the very problematic and confronting reality of the impact of suicide in New South Wales. I will add just a few more, although I accept the point made by the Hon. Susan Carter that statistics can be a reductive way of addressing such a personal challenge. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death for young people, and that is a very sad and distressing thing in and of itself. Of the 934-odd people who died by suicide last year in New South Wales, 50 per cent had never reached out for support through formalised mental health services. That speaks to the incredible importance of the point made by many members that we all have a responsibility to look out for the mental wellbeing of those around us.

We cannot just assume mental health clinicians and the health system will resolve it; many people have no interaction with that system before we lose them to suicide. Of the 50 per cent who do reach out, 50 per cent of those will discontinue their support. That goes to the point that Dr Amanda Cohn raised, which is that the support systems that we have in place need work. Those people who have taken the step to reach out for help should not be failed by the system because of inadequate funding, training or other support. It is not enough for government to talk about the problem and lament it. As the Minister, I have a responsibility to actually do something about it. That is the intention of the suicide prevention legislation—a landmark whole-of-government response to the challenge. Importantly, it is being led by NSW Health, but it is not intended as a health-based response.

The whole-of-government approach to the challenge is emblematic of the whole-of-community approach that is required to confront the issue. Yes, it is about housing. It is about how our workplaces operate, how our schools operate and whether we have programs in place for social isolation and loneliness. That is the intention of the legislation, and I welcome the opportunity for members in this place to be part of the consultation process that is happening right now. I encourage them to use that as a way to make sure that if they, the people around them or their communities have something to say on the topic then they are given the opportunity to do that. I thank the member for bringing the motion to the House. We will have that debate next year, and I look forward to it.

**The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (17:13):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to debate. I thank the Hon. Aileen MacDonald for sharing the story of her experience volunteering for Lifeline and how that experience was part of giving back. It is a really important example of the value of lived experience, and she would have been a really wonderful voice to hear on the end of that phone. Conversations should not be limited to R U OK? Day. I thank Dr Amanda Cohn for her contribution and indicate that the Government will support the minor amendment that she moved. We need to reduce the stigma that exists for people accessing help and around suicide generally, particularly for men. We need more funding for services that are proven to work. I acknowledge the efforts of the Minister and the Government in securing additional funding, and I look forward to seeing how that continues in that space.

I thank my colleague the Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine for bringing the perspective of loneliness into the debate. An upper House inquiry is looking into that contributing social issue, and it will be interesting to see what that surfaces for us. It was also a welcome contribution to hear the perspective of carers. It is really important that their voices are heard in this debate, and the unimaginable grief of someone who has cared for someone who has either taken their own life or attempted suicide. That is an unimaginable situation for someone to have to be in. As a government and as members of Parliament, we ought to do all that we can to support people in those positions.

I thank the Hon. Susan Carter for talking about the trauma that exists for people who have been impacted by suicide, whether it is the immediate family or loved ones. The trauma might recede at times, but it does not go away. We all have a role to play in reducing the harm that suicide can cause. I thank the Minister, the Hon. Rose Jackson, for talking about the statistic of the 50 per cent who never reached out to services. That is a really sobering number. Yes, statistics can be reductive at times, but that is a stark reality that indicates the need for us all to do as much as we can in our own time and in our own capacity to ensure that we are all okay.

**The PRESIDENT:** The Hon. Emily Suvaal has moved a motion, to which Dr Amanda Cohn has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

## **OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS**

**The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (17:17):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:

- (a) in August 2022 the Australian Minister for Climate Change and Energy announced six proposed regions for offshore renewable energy developments around Australia, including zones in the Hunter and Illawarra off the coast of New South Wales;
  - (b) on 12 July 2023 the Hunter Renewable Energy Zone was declared, with a significantly smaller footprint than previously proposed, and pushed out to 20 kilometres offshore;
  - (c) 15 June 2024 saw the Illawarra Renewable Energy Zone declared, also with a smaller footprint and further out to sea than proposed;
  - (d) of the six declared zones, five are not suitable for fixed turbines due to the sea depth and conditions, subsequently requiring the floating variety of turbine;
  - (e) there are four main types of anchors for floating offshore wind turbines:
    - (i) drag embedment anchors;
    - (ii) suction piles;
    - (iii) gravity anchors; and
    - (iv) driven piles.
  - (f) most used in oil and gas industries, drag embedment anchors consist of various steel plates welded together, totalling approximately six by six metres and weighing anywhere from 30 to 40 tonnes each, and these massive anchors are secured to the seabed by embedding themselves into the sea floor through sheer drag force up to a depth of around 10 to 20 metres;
  - (g) the most common configuration for mooring lines is a ground line and an upper section both consisting of chain and a middle section consisting of fibre rope, where the upper and ground lines are made of heavy and durable steel chain and can be four to eight times the depth of the sea at the placement location;
  - (h) each link of chain on these mooring lines is approximately 1.1 to 1.5 metres in length and 55 to 74 centimetres wide, weighing between 500 to 700 kilograms per link;
  - (i) ground anchor lines need slack to account for the rising swell and are constantly dragging on the seabed, back and forth, creating massive sediment displacement;
  - (j) 3,250 tonnes of grey steel is required for a single 15-megawatt offshore wind turbine, generating around seven to eight kilotonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>, which equates to around 500 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per megawatt; and
  - (k) despite early promises of local jobs and declaring the zone at the BlueScope Steel site in Port Kembla, Minister Bowen stopped short of guaranteeing local steel manufacturing.
- (2) That this House acknowledges:
    - (a) just because something is called renewable does not necessarily make it green or good for the environment; and
    - (b) BlueScope Steel being used as pawns for Minister Bowen's defence, with their instant reward being no guarantee of local manufacturing.
  - (3) That this House calls on the Government to listen to the people of New South Wales and withdraw their support for Federal offshore wind projects.

I have been quoted several times as stating that all energy technologies come at a cost and that we need to be honest about all the costs to debate energy policy constructively. This motion merely highlights some facts about the costs of offshore wind—the reality of the impact those towering structures will have on our communities, our environment and our local industries. They are not just minor inconveniences; they are serious. The uncomfortable truths that many choose to overlook need to put on public record. It is time we faced them instead of clinging to fantasies. Unlike fixed-bottom turbines, the floating variety have dynamic cables that allow the whole thing to move around before it attaches to the seabed, so they are constantly under immense structural force. Securing those massive turbines requires serious anchoring, not just to keep them from drifting but also to ensure that they do not topple over.

The most cost-effective and widely used anchors in oil and gas operations are drag embedment anchors, which are what will likely be used in this case. They are essentially massive steel plates welded together. The anchors are not small—each one typically measures six metres by six metres and weighs in the vicinity of 30 to 40 tonnes. They are designed to bury themselves more than 10 metres into the seabed. Members who think concrete gravity blocks might be a better option should think again. Those blocks can be as large as 20 metres by 20 metres, each one weighing nearly 1,000 tonnes. Producing that much concrete emits nearly as much carbon as the weight of the block itself. Even the most ardent carbon counters cannot deny the carbon cost of that massive concrete production.

If we move up the chain—literally—each link that anchors the turbines is a behemoth, measuring from 16 to 22 centimetres in diameter and roughly 1.5 metres long by 70 centimetres wide. They are not just any links; they weigh a staggering 500 to 700 kilograms each. The chains are not kept tight, either. They need slack to accommodate the rise and fall of ocean swells. In fact, the chain lengths can be two to three times the depth of the

ocean where the turbines are placed. Those worried about the impact on the sea floor are right to be concerned. The chains often lie comfortably on the seabed, dragging back and forth with the currents. Just one project with 20 15-megawatt turbines would consume the entire global supply of chain for a year. Consider the Illawarra zone, where 105 turbines are planned. Even basic maths shows that this would halt chain production worldwide for more than five years. The sheer scale of the demand is staggering and it would ripple across industries and economies globally, only to have many of the components replaced, like the ones in the United Kingdom, six years later.

Imagine a semi-submersible platform for a 15-megawatt turbine. It is a colossal structure, spanning about 100 by 100 meters and towering 10 storeys high. Each pontoon guzzles up to 4,500 tonnes of steel and 22,000 tonnes of concrete. The tower weighs over 1,000 tonnes. The gearbox is a ticking time bomb containing 1,200 litres of oil perched precariously above our fragile ocean. Let us be clear. Catastrophic failures have happened and will continue to happen. In the United States, they are already having to replace gearbox oil more frequently because seawater is contaminating the oil. This is a massive environmental disaster waiting to happen. It is not a question of if, but when. The environmentalists often raise concerns about offshore gas and oil, but offshore wind projects in the Illawarra will require similar-sized substations to boost power to shore.

Minister Bowen suggests that whales are smart enough to simply swim around cables, but we are talking about hundreds of turbines, each anchored by multiple strands of massive, heavy chains and synthetic rope interconnecting cables between them. Mr Bowen's comments are devoid of any evidence but loaded with plenty of spin. The fact is that the only other small floating wind factory exists outside whale migration zones. Southern right whales glide along our coastline, often just two kilometres from shore, and venture as far as 15 kilometres out. Humpback whales, on their epic journey, usually stay within 30 kilometres of the coast. These turbines are set to be planted right in the middle of it.

I have not even got to the transmission lines, which will have to go through sensitive environmental areas. The Government's promise of local jobs sounds great on paper, but the reality is that these positions will be short term and require specialised skills that our local workers do not have. There is no mandating of local jobs; Bowen ruled that out. We have seen a similar situation with solar farms in the Central West, where most of the workers are international contractors. Many of those workers end up sleeping in their cars. With the high costs involved, jobs will be outsourced. The promise of local jobs sounds appealing, but it is a fantasy. We cannot even produce the steel here in the Illawarra. BHP has declined the work as the trucks will not fit under the bridge when loaded.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (17:22):** I thank the Hon. Mark Banasiak for moving the motion, which the Government seeks to amend. I move:

That the question be amended by:

- (1) In paragraph (1) (b) omitting "Renewable Energy Zone" and inserting instead "Offshore Wind Zone".
- (2) In paragraph (1) (c) omitting "Renewable Energy Zone" and inserting instead "Offshore Wind Zone".
- (3) Omitting paragraphs (1) (i) - (k).
- (4) Omitting paragraph (2) and inserting instead:
  - (2) That this House notes that there are many issues which need to be considered before offshore wind projects could be built, including:
    - (a) environmental assessments;
    - (b) onshoring of transmission cables;
    - (c) harmonisation of State and Commonwealth planning regimes;
    - (d) port laydown areas; and
    - (e) supply chain readiness.
- (5) Omitting paragraph (3) and inserting instead:
  - (3) That this House calls on New South Wales to take into account these issues as any development of offshore wind progresses.

The Government wishes to make corrections to the names of the wind zones in the motion and include some other information. Most importantly, the amendment omits paragraph (3) and inserts instead that this House calls on New South Wales to take into account these issues as any development of offshore wind progresses.

Offshore wind is emerging as a potential future source of large-scale renewable energy generation that could support New South Wales's long-term energy needs. The development of an offshore wind industry in Australia could accelerate deep electrification, green hydrogen production and low-carbon manufacturing. It also

presents a transition opportunity for workers in our traditional industrial heartlands, with a higher job density than some onshore generation. The Australian Government has declared areas in the Pacific Ocean adjacent to the Hunter and Illawarra regions of New South Wales as suitable for offshore wind development. Together, these two offshore wind zones offer a total potential generation capacity of up to eight gigawatts and the potential to create thousands of new jobs in regions with transitioning industries and workforces.

However, the New South Wales Government acknowledges that there is concern in some local community areas around these potential developments. The fixed offshore wind industry has been maturing over the past 15 years and is delivering large amounts of green energy in key locations in Europe and East Asia. By the end of 2022 there was more than 60 gigawatts of operational fixed offshore wind capacity globally, with almost nine gigawatts installed in 2022 alone. However, the depths off the coast of the Hunter and Illawarra regions mean that the offshore wind projects in New South Wales would need to use floating platform technology. Floating offshore wind is a relatively new technology and will progress along a learning curve as it scales up.

It is important to note that development in New South Wales has a long way to run. Applications for feasibility licences are currently being considered by the national regulator. If awarded, those licences provide the licence holder with seven years to undertake all the necessary environmental, geotechnical, financial and other research and analysis required to determine whether an offshore wind project is feasible in the area. That work will take time and require detailed consideration and assessment of all material impacts, including impacts on bird and marine species; local economies, including tourism; commercial and recreational fishing; and visual impacts for coastal communities. Only after all commitments and studies have been completed under the licence conditions, and all impacts have been clearly shown to be manageable, can licence holders apply for a commercial licence which would allow the licence holder to construct the wind farm.

Any proposed project would need to be assessed and approved under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 before it could go ahead. It would also require State approvals as well. While the projects off the coast are still many years away—

**The PRESIDENT:** The Minister's time has expired.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I seek an extension of time.

**Leave granted.**

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I will be quick. While offshore wind projects off the coast of New South Wales are still many years away, all licence holders will be required to engage in rigorous community consultation as they explore the potential for offshore wind to power our State. It is important for people to keep that perspective, but we should also look to the long-term opportunities. There is an opportunity for New South Wales to play a part in the development of an offshore wind industry in Australia. That opportunity could involve transitioning workers and repurposing infrastructure from existing industries. It could also involve New South Wales businesses supplying elements of the extensive supply chain required for projects, as well as setting us up for export for hydrogen and low-carbon manufacturing.

I acknowledge the concerns that people in communities across Newcastle, Port Stephens and the Illawarra have in relation to these zones. Outstanding questions must be worked through, and more discussions will be had as the Australian Government progresses with its offshore wind licencing regime and the New South Wales Government addresses the technical aspects related to the State jurisdiction.

**The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM (17:26):** I oppose the motion but would support the motion as amended by the Government. The International Energy Agency has identified offshore wind energy as one of the "big three" solutions for renewable energy alongside onshore wind and solar. The Australian Government is currently assessing six high priority areas around Australia. Expanding offshore wind power is a key element to reduce the cost of energy by expanding renewable production. The latest generation of offshore wind turbines are up to 250 metres tall and have a generation capacity of up to 15,000 kilowatts. One of those turbines can produce enough electricity in a year to power approximately 20,000 households and save around 38,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions.

Technology continues to advance at pace, with floating offshore turbine technologies allowing access to a far greater range of suitable offshore locations for energy generation. Among the advantages of floating offshore wind farms are the potentially low environmental impact and the ease of manufacture and installation, as the floating turbines and platforms can be built and assembled on land and then towed to the offshore installation site. In addition, they can take advantage of the strong winds blowing in the deeper areas, which improves energy production.

The fundamentals of this technology have been borrowed from the fossil fuel industry, which first began pioneering floating oil rigs in the 1960s. It is of little surprise, then, that the leaders in Europe's floating wind sector are also its biggest oil producers: Norway, the United Kingdom and Italy. The Hywind Tampen floating offshore wind farm of 11 turbines off the coast of Norway began operating in August 2023. Prior to construction in 2022, fish species abundance, condition and diet were studied, and acoustic data was collected. A follow-up survey was carried out to investigate fish distribution during construction and in an early stage of operation. Trends in fish abundance were similar to the baseline survey.

WindFloat Atlantic has been operating in Portugal for four years. The turbines are anchored with chains to the seabed and connected to the onshore substation in the Portuguese municipality of Viana do Castelo through a 20-kilometre cable. In July 2024 they produced 320 gigawatt hours, providing power to 25,000 households, while preventing more than 33,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions and creating 1,500 direct and indirect jobs. The project has been shown to have minimal impact on the seabed and biodiversity, as shown by ongoing surveys identifying over 270 species coexisting with the wind farm, and to have no significant adverse effects on marine mammals or endangered bird species. Additionally, surveys show that the floating structures have fostered marine life and contributed to a conservation and reef effect underwater. Building offshore wind is much better for ocean—[*Time expired.*]

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (17:29):** There has been extensive misinformation and disinformation peddled by conservatives around the world when it comes to offshore wind. The keen observer will notice the similarities in these campaigns and correctly conclude that there is a lot of fossil fuel money backing them. The fossil fuel industry has long funded misinformation about renewable energy, and offshore wind is the industry's latest target. Several fossil-fuel-funded think tanks promote policy positions supporting fossil fuels and opposing renewable energy. Offshore wind is a renewable resource with the capacity to generate huge amounts of energy 24 hours a day and poses the greatest threat to the continued use of large coal-fired and gas-fired power stations. The links between the fossil fuel industry and seemingly grassroots organisations opposing offshore wind have now been well documented.

Conservatives, like Dutton and the MPs from the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, are trying to brand themselves as environmentalists. They peddle misleading industry lobbyist claims about the potential environmental impacts of these projects. What a joke! If they truly cared about the environment, and not just about propping up their own interests in a dying industry, they would stop supporting new coal and gas projects. Local communities are right to ask questions and express concerns about offshore wind infrastructure being built nearby, but those concerns, whether valid or not, are being exploited by fossil fuel servicing networks in an effort to keep people reliant on fossil fuels. Onshore and offshore wind energy has substantial environmental and economic benefits. It does not emit greenhouse gases or pollution; it does not deplete scarce water supplies; and it creates jobs.

There are much worse threats to fishing than offshore wind. Overfishing is the greatest threat to the fishing industry. There are multiple places globally where the fishing industry and offshore wind coexist. Climate change is a major threat to fishing, and offshore wind could help mitigate some of the challenges that it poses for the industry by reducing emissions. There is no evidence to suggest that offshore wind sites have killed or could kill whales. Ship strikes and fishing gear entanglement, on the other hand, are two dangers that do pose significant threats to whales. Climate change is a major threat to the food chain that whales rely on, and offshore wind is part of the solution. Offshore wind turbines are durable and built to last 20 to 25 years on average. More than 80 per cent of turbine components are already recyclable or reusable, and researchers and organisations are working on recycling or reusing wind turbine blades.

In light of emerging social licence issues that are being weaponised by right-wing forces, The Greens are calling on Labor to commit to mandating stronger community benefit sharing measures to deliver much-needed funding to nearby communities as soon as possible. The Greens' support for offshore wind is grounded in the scientific, environmental and economic necessity and desirability of this form of energy generation. Offshore wind carries enormous potential for us to transition away from fossil fuels quickly, which is of course why the fossil fuel industry and their political puppets are fighting so hard to stop it. The Greens support the Government's amendment and will seek to add our own new paragraph (4), which will reflect Labor's own policy platform, as well as the call from Unions NSW to ensure that we have strong community benefit scheme requirements and a secure local jobs code. I move:

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

(4) That this House further calls on the Government to:

- (a) urgently mandate strong community benefit scheme requirements for all neighbouring communities of large-scale renewable energy projects; and



- (b) introduce a secure local jobs code applicable to new renewable projects, and mandate local content procurement and manufacturing requirements.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (17:33):** The Opposition is committed to an orderly transition to renewable energy, including solar and wind projects where they can deliver the needed power efficiently. Like all major projects, all aspects need to be evaluated thoroughly, including their impact on the environment. The Opposition is also committed to appropriate consultation with local communities in relation to specific projects that may impact on their way of life, local businesses, community amenities and character. Raising concerns about where and how a particular project is to be implemented should not be interpreted as entrenched, blind opposition to the transition to renewables. The transition will only succeed if we take the whole community with us, and if we show due respect for community concerns. The Opposition supports the motion as amended.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (17:34):** By leave: In response to The Greens amendment, and to understand what they are doing with this, the first point I make is that the offshore wind program is a Federal Government program. I put on record that the Government totally supports strong community benefit schemes. The schemes already exist for our onshore renewable energy zones and access schemes under the Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act, and the most advanced example so far is Central-West Orana. Over the next four years over \$128 million will be going into community benefits there, and that is on top of what goes to the impacted landholders.

I understand what The Greens are saying, but it is actually a Federal program, so the Government will not be supporting their amendment. We totally support local jobs. That is what the Renewable Energy Sector Board does under the Act passed through this Parliament. At the moment it is only able to deal with the onshore part of it because, again, this is not a State project. The member should feel confident that the Government is working through all of those issues. We anticipate that, if this becomes feasible, it is something that we would work with the Federal Government on. We will not support the amendment today.

**The Hon. MARK BANASIAK (17:35):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate, including Minister Sharpe, the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham, the Hon. Damien Tudehope and Ms Abigail Boyd. I thank the Minister for actually taking the time to make the distinction between fixed and floating turbines. It is important that we make that distinction because the technology is different. I know that a lot of the concerns from the Illawarra are about that technology and whether it will be compatible and have an impact. This motion is not an exercise in bashing State Labor for a Federal Labor decision. It is about having some honest conversations about the potential impacts of floating offshore wind turbines. Some of those impacts are very technical.

I thank the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham for his contribution. I draw his attention to some of the data that is coming out of the United States, showing that power generated from offshore wind is currently exponentially more expensive than some of the other alternatives. In response to Ms Abigail Boyd's comments, I can inform her that I am not backed by the fossil fuel industry at all. Unlike her, I have never worked for an oil sheikh or oil baron. She commented that there was no evidence of the impact on whales. A lot of the free-floating turbines do not currently exist within whale migration areas, so putting turbines in a whale migration area down in the Illawarra will be the first test of whether there will be an impact. Caution should be exercised when doing these things.

The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will be supporting the Government's amendment, but we will not support Ms Abigail Boyd's amendment for many of the reasons that Minister Sharpe has indicated. I thank members for mostly contributing to this debate honestly and without hyperbole. The motion is about putting some facts on the table about the very technical details of what is being planned off our coastline. There are real concerns from residents around those technical details and their impacts. As Ms Abigail Boyd indicated, the members of those grassroots groups are very concerned, but they are not backed by the fossil fuel industry. I know many of them personally. There are people who vote for The Greens in those groups; there are people who vote for Labor in those groups; and there are people who might vote for us in those groups. They are community-minded people who are very concerned. They are not backed by the fossil fuel industry in any way.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Emma Hurst):** The Hon. Mark Banasiak has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Penny Sharpe and Ms Abigail Boyd have moved amendments. The question is that the amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe be agreed to.

**Amendment of the Hon. Penny Sharpe agreed to.**

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Emma Hurst):** The question now is that the amendment of Ms Abigail Boyd be agreed to.

**Amendment of Ms Abigail Boyd negatived.**

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

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

### SEPTEMBER 11 WORLD TRADE CENTER TERRORIST ATTACKS

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (17:40):** I seek leave to amend private members' business item No. 1340 for today of which I have given notice by omitting in paragraph (1) (b) "10" and inserting instead "22".

**Leave granted.**

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Accordingly, I move:

- (1) That this House recognises that:
  - (a) Wednesday 11 September 2024 marked 23 years since the Al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in the United States of America;
  - (b) 2,977 lives were lost in the attacks, including 22 Australians;
  - (c) the unprecedented terrorist attacks changed the global geopolitical landscape and led to the first invocation of the ANZUS Treaty by Prime Minister John Howard; and
  - (d) the terrorist attacks were designed to instil fear and discord amongst populations in liberal democratic nations around the world.
- (2) That this House thanks:
  - (a) Rabbi Dr Dovid Slavin and Laya Slavin for hosting a commemoration event at Our Big Kitchen in Bondi Junction to honour the bravery of first responders; and
  - (b) members of the New South Wales emergency services and first responder communities, including the Police Force, firefighters, paramedics and ambulance personnel for their attendance and ongoing service.
- (3) That this House notes the attendance of:
  - (a) Christine Elder, Consul General of the United States in Sydney;
  - (b) Matt Cross, MP, member for Davidson;
  - (c) the Hon. Jacqui Munro, MLC;
  - (d) councillors from Waverley Council; and
  - (e) April Palmerlee, CEO of AmCham, the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia.
- (4) That this House endorses Australia's ongoing strategic military alliance with the United States of America.

I firstly acknowledge the service of the people who ran towards danger when the World Trade Center towers in New York City collapsed with the impact of two hijacked planes from Boston. Out of the 2,977 people who died on 11 September 2001 in the Al-Qaeda terrorist attack, 22 Australians lost their lives. Prime Minister John Howard noted that people from about 80 other nations, 14 of which have Islam as their predominant faith, were counted in those deaths. I thank Rabbi Dr Dovid Slavin and his wife, Laya Slavin, for hosting a commemorative event at Our Big Kitchen in Bondi Junction to pay tribute to first responders and emergency services personnel serving in New York on September 11, and to those serving in New South Wales and across Australia today—the fires, ambos, cops, SES and other people who run towards danger to keep us safe.

At the commemorative event, there were volunteers, chaplains and frontline personnel from each of those organisations and many more people who dedicate their careers to emergency service. Christine Elder, United States Consul General in Sydney, spoke at the event, highlighting the strength of the Australia-United States relationship. She noted John Howard's fortuitous presence in Washington at the time of the attacks, where he was commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty with President George W. Bush. Howard witnessed the attack on the Pentagon from the window of his hotel and felt compelled to invoke, for the first time, the ANZUS Treaty. He said:

The consequence of that is that we will consult the Americans regarding responses which might be deemed appropriate to what does amount to an attack upon the metropolitan territory of the United States in accordance with the provisions of the ANZUS Treaty.

We all have memories of that tragic day. I was in year 6, my final year of primary school, at 11 years of age. I woke up to Dad's phone call in the morning before school saying that a big attack had occurred in New York. It seemed like a long way away. My teacher, who was never able to muster up the courage to be a disciplinarian to 30 precocious kids, allowed us to sit in the classroom in front of the TV all day, watching the footage of two planes crashing into the towers over and over again, surrounded by fire, screams and chaos and panicked commentary on the news.

I understood that it was a day that changed the world, and I am sure it changed mine. That day changed the West's perception of its own safety and supremacy. It brought forces of evil across the world and into our worlds, from New York to our living rooms. That day I learnt, very clearly, that there are people willing to destroy their own lives and the lives of others to destroy a whole liberal society, because they did not like our ideas or way of living. Therefore, our strategic alliance with the United States [US] should be based on a call to moderation over extremism and on allyship rather than division. However, I believe we must staunchly defend our moderation and liberal democracies. That means demonstrating the strength of societies that can flourish from good education, a liberal democracy and an open economy.

Again, quoting Howard from his address in Melbourne to the Australian Defence Association, just over a month after the September 11 attacks, he said, "Passive indifference in the face of evil achieves absolutely nothing." I might go further and suggest that it does worse than nothing; it allows aggressive and oppressive activity to flourish. Where similarities exist between our political ideologies, there should be a natural alliance to preserve and protect the values we cherish as a bolster against hostile forces—values of the rights of women; individual liberty and expression, including homosexuality, democracy and accountability; and a transparent economy. Those are values shared by societies in Taiwan, Ukraine and Israel, all under attack from forces that wish to crush freedom and impose autocratic regimes. The strength of our defence of our shared values can be measured in the support we are willing to provide as a nation to those places that closely reflect our own.

Underlying long-lasting military and security cooperation of mutual benefit must be a set of irrefutable shared values. That is why the Australia-United States alliance, including the AUKUS agreement, is so valuable. The diggers and the doughboys first fought side by side in 1918 in France, in what I believe is also one of the very few examples of US troops training and fighting under foreign—at that time British—command, led by Sir John Monash. The alliance has continued since then, with US and Australian troops fighting in every major war together, based on mutual trust and understanding. I am not saying that Australian society is perfect, nor is America's. But to improve what we have we must first defend what is good and protect the institutions that allow us to reflect and change when we should.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE (Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage) (17:45):** Last Wednesday marked the twenty-third anniversary of the September 11 attacks. This day belongs, in a special way, to those directly affected: victims and their families, survivors and their loved ones, first responders and those who helped in the aftermath. But it is also important that we, together with the wider community, remember and pay tribute. I welcome the motion. The scale of the tragedy is difficult to comprehend, even 23 years later. I remember the night, as everyone does. I was with a small toddler, staying up late. I had the television on and could not believe what we were seeing. And I had it easy. Nearly 3,000 people were killed, over 6,000 people were injured and more than 3,000 children were left without a parent.

The United States has a proud tradition of welcoming people from all over the world. New York is one of the world's great cities. Violence on such a scale was always going to be a global catastrophe. Among the dead were victims from over 90 countries, including 10 Australians. In this House, we join with mourners from around the world to pay our respects. While those numbers speak to the scale of the tragedy, they are still just numbers. Behind every casualty is a person who was loved and with a story to be told. We remember each of them today. In our special way, we honour the 10 Australians killed, six of whom were from New South Wales. Their reasons for travelling to the United States were as varied as they were. They were there to comfort their sister undergoing life-saving surgery, to begin retirement after decades working with the Red Cross, and to embrace work opportunities as option traders, conference organisers, reinsurance brokers and computer experts. Like millions before them, the United States promised opportunity, health, connection and fun. And all of that was taken from them. We remember their loss and the loss of their families.

Today's motion is also a welcome opportunity to celebrate the resilience and bravery of first responders. Many paid the ultimate price for their courage. I am pleased to see that their sacrifice continues to be honoured by the community, especially by our emergency service personnel. We remember how everyday people caught up in this tragedy responded with courage, kindness and hope. If the unthinkable should ever happen to us, we hope to be brave and kind like they were on that day. The people who inflicted this terrible violence did so on purpose. They wanted to create fear and division—to tear communities apart. Yet here we are today. With 23 years of hindsight, we can see how unequivocally Al-Qaeda failed. Despite the tragedy of that day and many that followed, the United States, like Australia, remains a vibrant and welcoming multicultural society. Our diversity is a tremendous source of strength. We continue to cherish our freedoms and uphold our values like diversity, inclusion and mutual respect. On the twenty-third anniversary, we also reassert our commitment to support the United States. We recommit ourselves to one another in Australia. We should never allow hatred to divide us but work together to preserve our freedom and way of life into the future.

**The Hon. SUSAN CARTER (17:48):** There are a few days in world history where we all remember clearly where we were, and September 11 is one. I, too, had a toddler but in Denver, Colorado. In a sense, we were in the safest place in the world because we lived literally up the road from the headquarters of World War III, deep in the mountains of the Rockies at NORAD. It was an amazing time to be in America. Denver is an airport hub and, until all the planes go quiet, people do not realise how often they are hearing those planes. More frightening than the quiet was that one heavy warplane that would patrol the skies every hour on the hour. I am not sure what it was going to do, but it was certainly meant to protect us after the attack.

There was a tremendous loss of life and tremendous grief. In the way that the whole world lives with six degrees of separation, everybody knew somebody who had been directly affected. One of the great blessings of that day was that, happily, a number of people knew somebody who had nearly been affected. My aunt slept in, so she was not at her desk in the World Trade Center when the planes came in that day. The brother of a close friend of mine was on his way to a meeting at the Pentagon but was delayed by watching the terrible, unimaginable images of the twin towers on the television. He pulled into the Pentagon car park to see the third plane go into the building where he would have been going to a meeting. But for every story of a close call, there is a story of terrible loss, of children who grew up without their parents, and of people who suffered not because they had been combatants but because they were part of a society which a terrorist group decided it did not care for and wanted to punish.

The grief that I saw was palpable, but I also saw, in some ways, the best of American values and what keeps us united in a very important alliance. It is a strategic alliance and a military alliance, but it is also an alliance of values. Two days after 9/11, when everybody just wanted to nuke whoever was responsible—and that is all anybody was talking about in the supermarket—George W. Bush pulled that country back almost from the brink. He called a national day of prayer and reflection, which everybody observed. It was an amazing thing to see. After that he said, "We will seek justice, not revenge." Those are really powerful values, and they are values that underlie our continuing alliance with the United States to this day, because we too, I hope, are a people of justice, not revenge.

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (17:51):** I contribute to debate on the September 11 commemoration motion. As others have said, many of us can clearly remember where we were when we heard the news of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington. I happened to be in France at the time, but I had been in New York just the day before. I remember clearly the sense of the world shifting and of my sense of safety and security in so-called Western countries being shaken. I remember going from thinking that those sorts of things happened to other people in other places to knowing that none of us are ever, in reality, safe from those sorts of unthinkable horrors. Almost 3,000 people were killed, and it felt very close to home. People I knew lost their colleagues, friends and family members.

Going back to Sydney shortly after, I found that the high-rise office tower I was working in had beefed up its security. We had installed turnstiles, we needed to show our security pass to get in, and we made sure that we all knew how to get from the sixtieth floor down the stairs to the ground floor, if the need arose. I remember reflecting at the time very clearly on how much more we collectively seem to care about events like these when they involve people we think of as being like us, who are going about their lives in a way similar to the way we go about our own—there but for the grace of God go I. And although the reality of international conflict and terrorism and war is so much more complicated, we are prone to consider these events in the binary sense of us versus them.

Stoked by politicians and media that make hay in the middle of division, it was relatively easy in the aftermath of 9/11 to stoke fear of Middle Eastern countries and, with it, to demonise anyone who looked even vaguely like they were from the Middle East. In the midst of fear, grief and despair, and in the absence of leadership and hope, the sparks of racism and persecution were stoked into an inferno that gave cover to the United States to wage war on its enemies. The tragedy of 9/11 was then weaponised and exploited as an excuse to invade Iraq, drawing the United Kingdom and Australia into more war in the Middle East, which resulted in untold terror and devastation that profoundly destabilised the region. That is the same neo-imperialist United States that this motion urges us to double-down on our terribly misguided military allegiance.

That is a reckless and dangerous position, and it will do us no good. It has now been three years since we signed on to the ill-fated AUKUS alliance, yoking ourselves to a dangerous and warmongering alliance that will cost us hundreds of billions of dollars and make us less safe, barrelling the entire world towards war. The best time to pull out of that agreement was three years ago; the second-best time is today. No war, no weapons deals, no more government-mandated horrors and no more genocide. We need to build a movement for peace and nonviolence, not double-down on a psychotic pathway of Western chauvinist warmongering that risks destroying the world. I am proud to stand with the global peace movement and say enough is enough. No more wars.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (17:54):** I speak in debate on the September 11 commemoration motion. It was indeed a day that changed the world and, as the Hon. Susan Carter said, I think we all remember where we were on that day. My experience was not dissimilar to the Hon. Jacqui Munro's. I remember waking up early to watch cartoons, and every single TV station at the time showed that horrific incident. I remember waking my mum and saying that something truly, absolutely awful had happened. That was my experience as a child, and I remember being quite terrified. What if it happened in Australia? Would we be next? Soon after that there was the Bali bombings and the terrorist attacks in London. There was a real sense at the time, no matter how old one was, whether a child or quite old, that the world was indeed a less safe place after September 11 than it was in the 1990s, which was probably a unique time in world history when the world seemed to be absolutely brilliant.

It was incredibly safe in the unipolar moment, as some people call it, when America had almost no threats in the world. But that all changed on 11 September 2001. I pay my respects to the almost 3,000 people who lost their lives and, in particular, to the first responders, over 300 of whom died while saving others and another 300 who died from related illnesses. I also pay tribute to governments around the world at the time for keeping us safe in the aftermath of September 11. Governments do not always get credit for the terrorist attacks that they prevent, but after September 11, governments around the world—whether it was the Howard Government, the Blair Government or the Bush Administration, or Liberal or Labor governments in Australia—did a fantastic job ensuring that there was not a repeat incident to the scale of 9/11. We should give them credit for that.

September 11 also marked the beginning of the global war on terror, and I think that it is not over just yet. For instance, on 7 October we saw an example of that continuing war. Just a month ago, Australia's terror threat was also moved to "probable", which I am sure is deeply concerning to all of us. Finally, as the motion says, I pay tribute to Rabbi Slavin and to Our Big Kitchen. I visited Our Big Kitchen with the Hon. Jacqui Munro some time ago, and I pay tribute to him and his contribution to the community.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE (17:58):** I contribute to debate on the commemoration motion. I remember exactly where I was on 9/11, and that was in this place. I recall that none of us knew what to do. It was a sitting day and, at 7.30 a.m., the then Leader of the Government, Michael Egan, called all of us together. I was Government Whip at the time. The then Leader of the Opposition was asked to come, as was my colleague from the Opposition the then Opposition Whip, and we met in the office. Of course, one of the issues was that there were New South Wales State Government offices located in the twin towers. None of us knew what was going to happen. We did not know where, what, who or how, as has been described by other members. Michael was obviously very distressed for the people that he knew and did not know what their circumstances were. But we all agreed that we needed to go. There were things that the House had to do and then we would close down as soon as we could so that people could go about their day and spend time with their loved ones, which is what we all wanted to do. And that is exactly what happened.

One of the many lessons that I took out of the situation was that, while it was momentous in terms of history and momentous for all nations and peoples, it reminded us how petty many of our squabbles were and the significance of the things that are really important to us. We could put aside petty squabbles, do those things that needed to happen and then spend time with the people who were really important to us. That is what I took away from 9/11. I was really pleased how, on that day, everyone—the Clerks, the members and everyone associated with this House—responded. I sincerely hope it never happens again, but I am sure that the people in this Parliament today would respond in exactly the same manner.

**The Hon. BOB NANVA (18:00):** I make a brief contribution to debate on the motion. I share the sentiment that has been expressed by all other members around the barbaric attacks on 9/11. I vividly recall where I was that day, like everyone else. But there are other aspects to what came to pass—the flow-on effect for many people of Middle Eastern extraction—as result of those attacks. I vividly remember that those terrorists brought out the very worst in the nature of a very small minority of people. I vividly recall routinely being referred to as a terrorist because of the colour of my skin and the heritage of my parents. It was—and I mentioned this in my inaugural speech—probably the first and only time I had been dealt the hand of racism. I was spat at during that period while catching a bus to Manly. I vividly remember where I was going. The only real contribution I want to make to this debate is that violence should never beget violence and hate should never beget hate.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (18:02):** In reply: I thank all members for their contributions, including the Hon. Penny Sharpe, the Hon. Susan Carter, Ms Abigail Boyd, the Hon. Chris Rath, the Hon. Peter Primrose and the Hon. Bob Nanva. I thank the Hon. Bob Nanva in particular for reflecting on the personal impact of a global event. It impacted him as a person and as a family and community member. That is not acceptable and should never be acceptable. One of the great things about our society, I hope, is that when we can find our similarities and our shared values, they can transcend race, religion, skin colour and background in general. We treat people as individuals.

I thank the Hon. Penny Sharpe for calling out the victims and families. I understand from the comments made by Christine Elder, the United States [US] Consul General, that in New York there has been a real shift in language about how the commemoration occurs. It really is very much about people who lost so much at that time and the people who continue to suffer, including first responders who went into the fray and are now suffering cancers from the exposure to chemicals that they experienced and ongoing mental health issues. There are still victims of September 11 in the US and around the world feeling social and physical impacts.

I note that there might be some confusion about how many Australians were involved. I was referring to Prime Minister John Howard's comments of 22 people. It may be 10. I must say I am not sure what figure is correct in that case. In many ways it is unquantifiable, I suppose, which is what America is experiencing. I visited the World Trade Center site when I visited New York in 2014. People want to see that place and pay their respects because of the impact that the attack had on the world. It is clear from so many of the contributions today that leaders—particularly political leaders, as well as community leaders—stepped up with courage to ensure that there was, as much as possible, a sense of working together for the betterment of the world. It was not isolated to individual places, although individual communities played their role. I thank everyone for their thoughtful contributions today.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

#### *Documents*

### **GREYHOUND RACING NSW**

#### **Production of Documents: Order**

**The Hon. EMMA HURST (18:06):** I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution all correspondence received from Greyhound Racing NSW since 1 May 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, or the Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (Office of Racing), and any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

This narrow call for papers seeks correspondence from Greyhound Racing NSW in the possession of the Minister for Gaming and Racing and his office since 1 May 2024. I say narrow because that is exactly what it is. It is only correspondence since May, which is a very short time frame, and it is only correspondence sent to the Minister and his office from a single organisation, not anything broader. I would be surprised if there was copious correspondence within that short period of a few months. This is by no means a broad or burdensome call for papers.

During budget estimates hearings I asked the Minister if he was aware of the deaths of additional greyhounds as part of the Aussie Mates in the States export program, noting that to date only two deaths had been publicly reported. The Minister initially claimed not to know anything about the additional deaths. This was a surprise to me, given that Greyhound Racing NSW has a responsibility under its operating licence to immediately disclose to the Minister any information capable of adversely affecting the reputation or integrity of the industry. However, it then came to my attention that the Minister had been made aware of the deaths some months prior, with emails proving that he and his staff had in fact been made aware of the additional deaths of greyhounds, Alby and Katana, in the United States, bringing the total death tally of the export program to at least four that we know of.

Once it was brought to the Minister's attention that I had seen the emails, he admitted that, after complaining to Greyhound Racing NSW about the historic lack of disclosures pursuant to the operating licence, former CEO Mr Rob Macaulay had in fact sent the Minister a "mass of emails" about "everything". The Minister conceded that the deaths of Alby and Katana may have been included in one of those emails. This again seemed odd to me, given that the emails were dated as being sent the day after the death of the two dogs, so it seems that the then CEO had informed the Minister immediately after the deaths occurred, rather than as part of a backlog mass of emails as claimed. This has raised some major red flags for me.

The fact that the Minister had not taken seriously these disclosures from the former CEO of Greyhound Racing NSW and was not even briefed on them prior to the budget estimates hearing—when he must have known that he would be asked about greyhound welfare—is seriously concerning. I want to be clear that this call for papers is not just about greyhounds. It is about transparency and accountability. It is about holding Ministers to account for their portfolios and making it clear that Ministers need to come to budget estimates properly briefed. Not knowing crucial information that is of interest to members and to the public is not acceptable. 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) (18:09):** The Government does not object to the motion moved by the Hon. Emma Hurst. I acknowledge her efforts in narrowing the scope of the call for papers and thank the member for this resolution. It is helpful. Having dealt with a much broader, wideranging call for papers in another area, I can say this request is a lot more targeted. We appreciate the effort the member has gone to. The Government recognises the important role the House plays in ensuring that the Government is held accountable. I will not respond in detail on behalf of the Minister for Gaming and Racing in relation to the budget estimates issues. The member is entitled to her view. Minister Harris is one of the Ministers of the Government who is across a wide range of contentious issues and is following them diligently. He has certainly been taking a close interest in the greyhound racing industry issues.

I place on the record some caveats on the Government's view, and some cautions that I have been advised the House should be made aware of. Some of the documents sought by this motion are sensitive. The Government notes that the call for papers is likely to return documents that are important to Acting Commissioner Drake in the conduct of her inquiry into Greyhound Racing NSW. While not objecting to the motion, the Government is concerned that the release of documents relating to an active inquiry runs the risk of prejudicing the ability of Acting Commissioner Drake to do the job required of her. In addition to potentially prejudicing the inquiry, this call for papers poses a risk that potential witnesses may be dissuaded from providing the acting commissioner with the important evidence she requires. I ask members to be cognisant of these concerns. We all have an interest in making sure that inquiry goes well and operates properly. I am certain that is the view of the Minister and of the Hon. Emma Hurst. The Government does not object to the motion.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (18:12):** I indicate that the Opposition will also be supporting this call for papers under Standing Order 52, for the reasons outlined by the Hon. Emma Hurst. More transparency and accountability is a good thing. The Opposition supports the motion.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

### *Motions*

## **INFLATION AND COST OF LIVING**

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (18:13):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes that:
  - (a) since Labor took government, food prices have risen 5 per cent, housing prices have risen 11 per cent and rent in Sydney has increased 8.1 per cent on the year;
  - (b) from March 2022 to March 2024, Australians' disposable income fell by an average of 8 per cent, the worst known figures in the world; and
  - (c) under the State and Federal Labor governments, Australia is in the longest per capita recession in 50 years.
- (2) That this House notes that the public sector wage increases led by union bosses have not coincided with increases in productivity, as promised by the Labor Government, and have led to a \$9.5 billion hole in our State's finances, further fuelling inflation.
- (3) That this House notes that the Reserve Bank of Australia's monetary policy and the Labor Party's fiscal policy are currently working in a directly contradictory manner, with the RBA stating that "further growth in public demand ... could sustain aggregate demand above the economy's supply potential and delay the return of inflation to target".
- (4) That this House supports the independence of the RBA, one of the most effective monetary policy institutions in the world, and condemns calls by Labor Ministers to undermine this independence.
- (5) That this House condemns the Hon. Daniel Mookhey, MLC, and the Hon. Dr Jim Chalmers, MP, for their inappropriate discretionary spending and budgetary mismanagement, which has directly contributed to the ongoing high rate of inflation and cost-of-living crisis.

There is a famous story of a frog in water. If the frog jumps into a pot of boiling water, it will jump back out immediately. But if the water is cold and the temperature of the stove is slowly increased, the frog does not notice the rise in the water's temperature and will sit there until, eventually, it gets cooked alive. For our State this rising temperature is inflation. Inflation is a silent killer. Since Labor took government, food prices have risen 5 per cent, housing prices have risen 11 per cent, and rent in Sydney has increased 8.1 per cent on the year. Disposable incomes have fallen by an average of 8 per cent, the worst known figures in the world. To top it all off, under the State and Federal Labor governments, Australia is in the longest per capita recession in 50 years. Of all the economic metrics, this is probably the one that matters most, because it means that Australians are not better off today than they were 18 months ago. Their standard of living has, in fact, fallen.

High levels of immigration might be propping up the overall GDP figures, but individuals are poorer today than they were when Minns and Labor were elected 18 months ago. It is frustrating that, despite countless warnings given by the Opposition, the Treasurer's economic strategy was flawed. This Labor Government pushed on with inappropriate discretionary spending during a period of already heightened demand. We saw the extent of its waste during budget estimates. But what is more damning is what we did not see. The Treasurer failed to acknowledge in budget estimates that public sector wage increases, led by union bosses, have not coincided with productivity increases. Of course, this has then fuelled inflation. It is Economics 101 that wage increases without productivity improvements lead to a wage-price spiral. In addition, the Government still has \$6.4 billion in unfunded wage increases, led by union bosses, and that is locked in as future spending. Instead of looking after families and small business owners in New South Wales with responsible spending, the Government would rather make their CFMEU thugs and union buddies rich.

Just when Australia needs a strong and reliable government, Labor has failed. We are the only major advanced economy where core inflation has not fallen. Inflation is a pernicious secret tax. This is Mookhey's secret tax. This is the Government sapping money from the future to pay for vanity in the present. The pain will only continue. Economists, like the very distinguished Chris Richardson, have modelled that for every \$7 billion in extra government spending, the RBA has to add another rate rise of 0.25 per cent. That means that the Treasurer's unfunded wage increases will delay any rate cut for hardworking families. It means that the Government will be forking out \$8.6 billion in interest payments on our debt in 2027—more than double what was paid by the previous Government. This cost would increase if New South Wales were to lose its prized triple-A credit rating, which is looking likelier day by day.

But where do the Hon. Daniel Mookhey and the Hon. Dr Jim Chalmers look when the situation goes south? Are they introspective and self-critiquing for their irresponsible spending? Do they try to fix the errors of their ways? Of course not. They blame the one institution that is trying to tidy up their mess: the Reserve Bank of Australia. The Reserve Bank is one of the most successful monetary policy institutions in the world and it is doing its job to squeeze out inflation. But the RBA has also been crying out for the Government to stop supercharging the economy. RBA Governor Michele Bullock said:

... further growth in public demand ... could sustain aggregate demand above the economy's supply potential and delay the return of inflation to target.

It does not take a genius to figure out that if one person pulls on one end of a rope and another person pulls on the other end, the rope will not move in the right direction. We are now at risk of both sides pulling so hard that the rope snaps and instead of falling inflation we experience falling living standards. I commend the motion to the House.

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (18:18):** What a lot of rubbish. I am not much of a capitalist, but I understand how capitalism works. It astounds me that we continue to have this sort of misinformation and lack of understanding about how the basic principles of a capitalist economy work. It has now been made very, very clear that inflation was never demand-side driven; it has always been, in the past couple of years, about supply. It has been about shocks to supply, price gouging and a bunch of other things. The truth is that as capitalism ages in an economy that already has seen significant growth—at this late era, end-of-life part of capitalism—we end up with the capitalists effectively eating themselves. That is what we have with an economy that has two completely different speeds. We have the very, very wealthy, who are getting wealthier and wealthier—and we only need to look at statistics to see that happening—and then we get the rest, which now includes even people who used to think of themselves as relatively wealthy, who are finding it incredibly tough to even feed themselves.

When we read the data that was released just last month we can see what is happening in the economy. We can see it very clearly. Although we are beginning to see wages creeping up after all of the stagnant years that we saw under the Coalition, they are not keeping pace with the cost of living. People are still ending up with less in their pockets than they had a couple of years ago. They can spend less than what they had a couple of years ago. The data shows that there is no spending. People are not spending lots of money on haircuts or whatever the Reserve Bank of Australia [RBA] was being silly about. They are spending their money on rent, on their mortgage, on food and on everything else that is getting more and more expensive every day because of faulty government policy. These things are also more expensive because of the wrongheaded ideas that the Reserve Bank had in lifting interest rates to try to deal with inflation, which was never the right response and should never have been done. The Federal Reserve in the United States is now putting interest rates down because it can see the folly of its ways.

This is a ridiculous motion. The economy does not have anything to do with Labor's policies. I wish Labor had some type of effect on the economy, I really do. I wish Labor would put some policies in place that actually make a difference. I would start with removing negative gearing to address the drivers of the housing crisis, but



Labor is not doing that. We need an independent RBA. It is absolutely appropriate for the Treasurer of the day to criticise the RBA. This is a nonsense motion. The Greens oppose it.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Emma Hurst):** I welcome to the gallery year 12 school captains from Domremy College, Rosebank College and Concord High School, who are here with Stephanie Di Pasqua, MP. You are very welcome.

**The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK (18:21):** The Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will not support this simplistic motion. Opposition members must share some of the responsibility for the issues they have raised in the House. Notwithstanding that, we feel it is important to highlight that the Federal Albanese Labor Government has failed woefully to address core issues that affect every Australian—the current cost of living and housing crises. As we are witnessing, the crises are the direct result of loose fiscal and excessive net migration policies of the current Federal Labor Government—a self-congratulatory government that from the outset has focused on woke leftist ideals instead of genuinely addressing the needs of everyday Australians whom they purport to represent. It is essential to recognise the impact of their policies.

The Federal Labor Government's approach has been marked by a series of ineffective measures that do little to alleviate the substantial financial pressures faced by our families. For instance, the so-called tax cuts implemented by the Federal Labor Government are nothing more than a piddling gesture. They fail to provide meaningful relief to the battlers struggling to keep up with ever-increasing everyday bills. These minimal cuts are inadequate and do not address the core issues of our economic struggles. Moreover, the Federal Labor Government's fiscal policies have long-term consequences that are being felt today. By pursuing such loose fiscal policies, the Federal Labor Government is consigning future generations to a reality of higher interest rates, higher energy costs, higher taxes, ballooning government debt and a lower standard of living.

This pattern of ongoing mismanagement and poor policy decisions is a hallmark of the current leftist Federal Labor administration. It is a troubling trend that has consistently failed to improve the economic conditions for ordinary Australians. The Business Council of Australia is on the warpath and is setting up an interesting campaign for Labor at the next Federal election. Additionally, we cannot overlook the role of the current immigration policy in this crisis. While immigration can provide certain economic benefits, the current Federal Labor Government's approach is nothing short of an addiction. This unchecked influx, though beneficial in some respects, has exacerbated an already dire housing market crisis. The resulting increase in demand has driven housing and rental costs to new highs, further straining the financial wellbeing of many Australian families.

We need governments that prioritise practical solutions and fiscal responsibility over ideological pursuits, and that truly address the needs of their people. Only then can we hope to see the real improvements in the cost of living and housing affordability. However, the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party will not support this simplistic motion.

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (18:24):** The Government opposes the motion. It is an absurd attempt to foist the economic failure of the previous Government onto a government which, since its election, has been working to help families with the cost of living while controlling our spending to help cool down inflation. The motion fails the test of basic economic accuracy and, indeed, economic literacy. It is as ignorant of its own bad management as it is callous about the real struggles many families are facing in the higher interest rate environment with a once-in-a-generation cost-of-living crisis. The Government is helping families. Those opposite are playing politics.

We know people across the State are doing it tough. It is why the New South Wales Government has ensured this budget is all about the must-haves—investing in essential services that people rely on and getting the State back on track. The best thing we can do to address cost-of-living pressures is to put downward pressure on inflation. This budget does exactly that by controlling spending through cutting waste and limiting any new spending to only the must-haves. By reducing debt and cutting waste, we can deliver \$8.7 billion of responsible cost-of-living relief to households, such as our \$561 million investment over two years to cap tolls at \$60 per week after the former Government privatised motorways and made Sydney the most tolled city in the world. The motion moved by the Hon. Chris Rath states:

... public sector wage increases led by union bosses have not coincided with increases in productivity, as promised by the Labor Government, and have led to a \$9.5 billion hole in our State's finances, further fuelling inflation.

The Government has made a baseline wages offer of 10.5 per cent, including superannuation, over three years to New South Wales public sector workers. The offer also includes an annual \$1,000 cost-of-living payment to protect workers if average annual Sydney CPI to the March quarter rises above 4.5 per cent. The offer is part of a collaborative approach to bargaining, which includes negotiating productivity gains and the right to have the independent umpire assess and determine union and departments' claims. The approach is designed to deliver agreements that attract, reward and retain essential workers, including hospital staff, school staff, police and all

other public sector employees. This approach will drive productivity and efficiency in public sector workplaces to deliver enhanced services for the people of New South Wales.

Is it not just like those opposite to laud the Reserve Bank for screwing working families by increasing interest rates and, on top of that, to criticise the New South Wales Labor Government for giving working people wage rises in a cost-of-living crisis. It is a hypocritical motion. It should be condemned.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (18:27):** We hear some rubbish spoken in this place, but the speech of the Hon. Mark Buttigieg was the greatest load of rubbish anyone would ever want to hear. We also heard from Ms Abigail Boyd, the arch-communist who wants to give us The Greens economic policy, which is fairies in the garden stuff. The motion absolutely and fundamentally nails the manner in which the Labor Government has lost control of the budget. After the latest wages data was released in mid-August, Sean Langcake, the head of macroeconomic forecasting for Oxford Economics Australia, said:

... absent an improvement in productivity growth, the current pace of wage growth is still ... too strong for inflation to return to target quickly.

KPMG Economic commented:

But while wages growth in the private sector softened ... the real story is the public sector, where wages rose ... and now contribute 25% of overall wage growth this quarter ...

**The Hon. Mark Buttigieg:** You don't want that.

**The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE:** It goes on:

... the ramping up of government spending ... adds to our concern that there is an ongoing disconnect between fiscal and monetary policy, which makes the RBA's job of curbing inflation even more challenging.

The Hon. Mark Buttigieg does not want the RBA to be involved; he wants to slag them off. Labor went to the election with a formal commitment that any wage rises above the existing wages policy would be fully offset by productivity gains. The Parliamentary Budget Office expressed extreme scepticism that that could be achieved but, forced to accept Labor's costing request on the basis that it was an actual commitment, assessed the budget impact as zero dollars over four years. It was only out by a cosy \$9.5 billion. That is how much it was out in terms of an estimate on the impact on the budget bottom line.

The Government's current baseline offer of a 10.5 per cent wage increase over three years has not, as the Treasurer confirmed at budget estimates, been accepted by a single union. How is wage bargaining going? Not one has been accepted. We will not know the real hit to the budget and the consequent impact on growth, public demand and inflation until the now unrestrained Industrial Relations Commission [IRC] hands down its first arbitration determinations in several months time. Demands from the Nurses and Midwives' Association, the Police Association, the Fire Brigades Employees Union and the Rail, Tram, and Bus Union alone would, if successful in the IRC, add around \$7.5 billion to the State's wages bill. Guess who is paying for it? It is the ordinary mums and dads out there who are having their mortgage payments increased as a result of interest rate increases by the RBA. It is the rent payers who have had their rents increased— [*Time expired.*]

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (18:31):** I am far from an economist, but even I can tell that the motion moved by the Hon. Chris Rath is fundamentally flawed. It is completely inaccurate, so as to cover up for the failings in economic management under the former Coalition Government. The Government understands well the twin crises of inflation and cost of living, and the impact that they are having on New South Wales households. The difference between those of us in this Government and the those in the previous Government is that we are actually doing something about it instead of spreading inaccuracies about the causes of these crises.

Firstly, part of the motion states, quite misleadingly, that from March 2022 to March 2024 Australia's disposable income has fallen by an average of 8 per cent, the worst known figure in the world. The OECD data that the Hon. Chris Rath is referencing also shows that household disposable income has fallen only by 2 per cent since March 2023, driven by higher mortgage rates. That means that 6 per cent of that 8 per cent happened under the watch of those opposite. That is the point that Ms Abigail Boyd made earlier: that it is really just an attempt to pin on the Labor Government some aspects of economic development that are not within its control.

What is within the Labor Government's control is giving cost-of-living assistance to families. In contrast to the approach of those opposite, the Minns Government has delivered the first real wage increases since March 2021. I am of course referring to the smashing of the wages cap and the negotiations for fair wage increases with the State's public servants. In fact, the OECD data shows household disposable income is higher now than it was in September 2023. The best thing the Government can do to address cost-of-living pressures is to take action to put downward pressure on inflation.

There is over \$8 billion in the 2024-2025 budget for targeted support to assist households with the growing cost-of-living pressures. That support helps families without unnecessarily adding to inflation. The budget is doing exactly that by controlling spending through cutting waste and limiting any new spending to only the must-haves. That approach has meant that the Government has been able to deliver \$8.7 billion in responsible cost-of-living relief, including the bulk-billing incentive of \$189 million; the First Home Buyers Assistance Scheme, which is waiving or reducing stamp duty for first home buyers purchasing homes up to \$1 million; and energy rebates of \$435 million in the 2024-25 year.

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

**The Hon. RACHEL MERTON (20:01):** I support the motion of the Hon. Chris Rath, which draws attention to the dire economic mismanagement under the Minns and Albanese Labor governments. Since Labor took office, the reality is clear that the people, families and seniors of New South Wales are facing one of the harshest cost-of-living crises in recent memory. Food prices have soared by 5 per cent, housing prices have spiked by 11 per cent and rent in Sydney has increased by 8 per cent. Families and individuals across the State are grappling with skyrocketing costs while their disposable income has fallen by 8 per cent. These are the worst figures in the world. For the first time in 50 years, Australia is in a per capita recession, and all of this occurred under the watch of Labor. Labor's fiscal recklessness has resulted in a public sector wage increase, pushed by union bosses, that has not come with the promised productivity gains.

We were once told it would be offset, but we heard nothing further. Instead, we have seen a staggering \$9.5 billion hole in the State's finances. This is fuelling inflation, not easing it. The Government has completely lost control of the budget. It is forcing everyday families to pay the price. Today we were reminded of the unions, their influence and their wage deals with the CFMEU protesting at our doorstep. Over 1,000 members were here, backed up by the Maritime Union of Australia, allegedly protesting the forced administration of the CFMEU due to alleged criminal activity. Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of Australia is fighting to bring inflation down, and yet Labor's contradictory fiscal policies are working against the RBA's efforts. This was highlighted by the RBA's warning that further growth in public demand could delay returning inflation to target levels.

We must condemn the attempts by Labor Ministers to undermine the independence and integrity of the RBA, which is one of the world's most effective monetary policy institutions. This reckless discretionary spending by the Hon. Daniel Mookhey and the Hon. Dr Jim Chalmers has exacerbated the inflationary crisis and put further pressure on households. The Liberals and The Nationals have a proven record of strong economic management. They have delivered surpluses, maintained two triple-A credit ratings and kept net debt in check. We need a government that will stop the reckless spending, ease pressures on households and deliver the infrastructure our State so desperately needs. If voters in this State are in doubt about that, they should ride the metro and see for themselves. I commend the motion to the House.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (20:04):** In reply: I thank all members who contributed to this debate. The reality is that inflation, which has been a persistent problem for the past year or two, is when too much money chases too few goods. There are two ways to deal with it. First, you can take money out of the economy, which is the way that the Reserve Bank does it through increasing interest rates. That is its job, and it is independent. That monetary policy reform was in many ways founded by the Labor Party, and in particular by Hawke and Keating. It is funny how the members opposite slam the Reserve Bank for doing its job when it was their very creation. It is a fantastic institution.

Secondly, you can produce more stuff, which means you need to be more productive. Both the State and Federal Labor governments are attempting to pump more money into the economy through increased discretionary spending, which means more inflation. In particular, wage rises that are not offset by productivity improvements just lead to more inflation. As I mentioned in my speech, it is sort of like a rope. On one end, the Reserve Bank is pulling and trying to take money out of the economy. On the other end, the State and Federal Labor governments are pulling and pumping more money into the economy. Monetary policy and fiscal policy are working in a contradictory manner. The cash rate has remained stubbornly high because inflation is stubbornly high.

I reject the attacks on the Reserve Bank. It is doing its job, and it is independent. It is doing a fantastic job. Yes, the medicine is harsh, but it is all the harsher because of increased government spending at a State and Federal level. Only a few days ago Michael Read wrote in *The Australian Financial Review*:

The Albanese government may have underestimated state and federal government spending by \$70 billion, and consequently misjudged the inflationary effects of wage rises, subsidies and public sector employment, as well as the scale of the Reserve Bank's task in bringing inflation under control.

He went on to say:

But economists say Treasury may have undercooked budget forecasts for public sector demand, and in turn underestimated the inflationary effects of recent spending decisions.

There you have it. According to the experts, it would be good if fiscal policy and monetary policy were moving in the same direction. We are in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis, and the State and Federal governments are making it worse. I commend the motion to the House.

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....12  
Noes .....16  
Majority.....4

#### AYES

Carter  
Fang (teller)  
Farlow  
Latham

MacDonald  
Martin  
Merton  
Munro

Rath (teller)  
Roberts  
Ruddick  
Ward

#### NOES

Boyd  
Buttigieg  
Cohn  
Donnelly  
Faehrmann  
Graham

Higginson  
Houssos  
Hurst  
Kaine  
Lawrence

Moriarty  
Murphy (teller)  
Nanva (teller)  
Primrose  
Suvaal

#### PAIRS

Farraway  
Maclaren-Jones  
Mitchell  
Tudehope

Sharpe  
D'Adam  
Jackson  
Mookhey

**Motion negatived.**

#### *Members*

### LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL VACANCY

**The PRESIDENT:** I report receipt of a message from Her Excellency the Governor convening a joint sitting of the members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly for the purpose of the election of a person to fill the seat in the Legislative Council vacated by the Hon. Bronnie Taylor. I announce that members shall assemble for such purpose on Thursday 19 September 2024 at 2.30 p.m.

#### *Documents*

### ANTI-SLAVERY COMMISSIONER

#### **Reports**

**The PRESIDENT:** According to the Modern Slavery Act 2018, I table the report of the Anti-slavery Commissioner entitled *Be Our Guests: Addressing urgent modern slavery risks for temporary migrant workers in rural and regional New South Wales: Report under section 19 (4) of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (NSW)*.

#### *Bills*

### TRANSPORT ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024

#### **Messages**

**The PRESIDENT:** I report receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly agreeing to the Legislative Council's amendments to the bill.

**GOVERNMENT SECTOR FINANCE AMENDMENT (INTEGRITY AGENCIES) BILL 2024****Returned**

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

*Committees***PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND WORKS COMMITTEE****Extension of Reporting Date**

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD:** According to paragraph (8) of the resolution establishing the standing committees, I inform the House that on 16 September 2024 the Public Accountability and Works Committee resolved to extend the reporting date for its inquiry into Western Sydney Science Park and Aerotropolis developments to 28 February 2025.

*Documents***INDEPENDENT FORESTRY PANEL AND FORESTRY INDUSTRY ACTION PLAN****Production of Documents: Order**

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON (20:18):** I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 21 days of the date of passing of this resolution all documents created since 25 March 2023 in the possession, custody or control of the Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Climate Change, Minister for Energy, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage, the Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales and Minister for Western New South Wales, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism and Minister for Sport, the Premier's Department, the Cabinet Office, the Natural Resources Commission, the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water, the Environment Protection Authority, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Local Land Services, the Forestry Corporation of NSW, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Landcom, the Treasury, Infrastructure NSW, the Audit Office of New South Wales, or the Independent Planning Commission relating to the Independent Forestry Panel or the Forestry Industry Action Plan, and any legal or other advice regarding the scope or validity of this order of the House created as a result of this order of the House.

Native forests, their future and their continued existence are matters of significant interest in New South Wales. I understand that there is unlikely to be any opposition to this call for papers. The recent announcement of an Independent Forestry Panel and the associated Forestry Industry Action Plan have caused some consternation about the genesis of those things and concern about the direction that the Minns Labor Government may be taking. I made inquiries about the panel and the plan in recent budget estimates hearings, and the responses were somewhat interesting.

When I asked the Minister for Agriculture about who was appointed to the panel, she replied, "We've asked Peter Duncan, who I understand is of the industry world, to chair that panel and to do that work." When I asked the Minister for the Environment how the panel was selected, she said:

The decision about who was discussed internally in Government and it was decided by Cabinet.

When I asked whether the Minister for the Environment knew that a former CEO of the Forestry Corporation was on the panel before their appointment, she stated:

I've become aware of that. Whether it was actually before that, I actually couldn't tell you.

It would appear that the Government, in whatever process it followed in the creation of both the panel and the plan, has prioritised the interests of industry and possibly left behind the most critical forest issues. The panel seems to be lacking in the expertise necessary to account for the tremendous destruction that native forest logging has on the environment, culture, climate change and communities. This is not casting any aspersions on the actual members; it is the absence of expertise on the panel. More than half of native forests in New South Wales have been lost since European invasion. At least 150 species threatened with extinction have had their habitat impacted by native forest logging between the years 2000 and 2022. Of those species, 13 are listed as critically endangered and, without intervention, are expected to go extinct in the very near future.

Ending native forest logging in New South Wales would reduce emissions associated with the land use sector by an estimated 3.6 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions per year. To put that into context, the ongoing burning of coal at Eraring Power Station will contribute at least four million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions for each year of operation. That could and should be immediately offset by the end of native forest logging. We also know forest soils are rich in nutrients and organic matter that are crucial for maintaining healthy ecosystems. Erosion can lead to the loss of nutrient rich topsoils, reducing the land's

fertility and making it more difficult for native plants to regrow. Trees help filter water by absorbing rainfall and reducing run-off. Logging disrupts that process, resulting in increased run-off and sedimentation in nearby rivers and streams. That leads to a decline in water quality, affecting both human communities that rely on these water sources and aquatic ecosystems.

For thousands of years First Nations people have maintained a deep connection to the land and its ecosystems, with forests playing a central role in cultural practices and knowledge systems. Logging activities not only destroy the physical landscape but also erode the cultural heritage and identity of First Nations people. Proponents of native forest logging argue that the industry provides jobs and economic benefits. Those claims simply do not stack up and are lacking in credible evidence. The economic benefits of logging are often short-term and unsustainable. Once a forest is logged, it takes centuries to regenerate fully, meaning that the economic returns diminish over time. Logging native forests can undermine other more sustainable industries such as ecotourism, which relies heavily on the preservation of natural landscapes.

Those critical issues do not seem to have rated much inclusion in the Government's considerations, which is either a significant oversight or wilful neglect. This call for papers should clarify how the Government has decided on this course of action and, hopefully, shed some light on why forest ecologists and other scientists have not been sought out as authorities who can speak about the real future of forests—not just forestry. This call for papers is important in trying to get a glimpse and have some clear understanding. It is about transparency and accountability. This is a really important process for the people of New South Wales and the living landscapes that we all rely on so much for our own health and wellbeing.

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (20:23):** I speak to this motion on behalf of the Government and say at the outset that we will not oppose this call for papers. As the Minister for Agriculture, which includes forestry, and on behalf of the entire Government, I am happy to be very transparent about the process here and the decisions we will be making. While we are not opposed to this motion, I do have an amendment that I understand is acceptable to the mover of the motion. I move:

That the question be amended by omitting "21 days" and inserting instead "28 days".

The Forestry Industry Action Plan will map out the next few decades for the industry in New South Wales. It will help provide certainty for the industry and security for the workforce, and ensure that we can also protect our environment. It will be chaired by Peter Duncan, who is experienced in this space, and will include former Chief Scientist and Engineer Professor Mary O'Kane and the Hon. Mick Veitch, who is known to everyone in this place and will make a terrific contribution to the panel. They will be consulting with industry, unions, environmental groups, Aboriginal communities and recreational users of our forests. The consultative work that is set to go with this action plan will ensure that all stakeholders are listened to and we arrive at the best future for the timber industry and sustainable State forests.

The key areas the plan will address are the sustainability of current and future forestry operations in New South Wales; the environmental and cultural values of forests, including threatened species; community demand for timber products, particularly as it relates to New South Wales housing, construction, mining, transport and retail; the future of softwood and hardwood plantations and the continuation of private native forestry in helping to meet timber supply needs; the role of State forests in maximising the delivery of a range of environmental, economic and social outcomes; and opportunities to realise carbon and biodiversity benefits, support carbon and biodiversity markets, and mitigate and adapt to climate change risks, including the greenhouse gas emission impacts of different uses of forests and assessment of climate change risks to forests.

We are very transparent about what the panel will be looking at. It is essential that the industry, the people who work in it and everyone in New South Wales who has an interest in the future of this sector be clear about what the Government is considering. The former Government had no plan for this space, and this is an important part of the plan for the future of this industry.

**The Hon. WES FANG (20:26):** I make a contribution to this motion and note from the outset that this is nothing but a Greens—

**Ms Sue Higginson:** Motion.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** It is correct that it is a Greens motion, but I am trying to find the right words. Effectively, this is a fishing expedition. We know that because the people that the Government have elected to put on this panel are, in effect—

**The Hon. Cameron Murphy:** It's a forest expedition.

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** Order! I ask that the honourable member be heard with the same courtesy that he conveys to others.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I note that the person making the interjection is the Hon. Cameron Murphy. Members know that the Hon. Mick Veitch is part of this panel. He had to find a new job because the Hon. Cameron Murphy made sure he did not return to this place. From that perspective, the Labor Party is doing itself and the industry a favour by appointing the Hon. Mick Veitch to that position. This is nothing but a fishing expedition from The Greens. We have the former Chief Scientist and Engineer of New South Wales on this panel. We have people like Mick Veitch on this panel. Who do The Greens think should be appointed to this panel when we have people of that calibre representing the interests of the State and looking at this action plan for forestry?

Greens members want to shut down native forestry in this State, and that is an absolute travesty for New South Wales. Not only are they prepared to try to shut down mining and critical minerals in this State but they are now also trying to shut down forestry. When building our houses, we will not find better material than hardwood timber for flooring. We will not find better material for furniture. It captures carbon, and if we use native forest timbers from New South Wales we are not importing them from overseas, which means less carbon for transport. We have better environmental controls here and we are producing the fibre in the State. It is a much better thing to do. By doing so we are being responsible in our own backyard and not putting the cost and the impetus on another part of the world to provide us the fibre. I again call out The Greens' hypocrisy for coming into this place and trying to shut down native forestry. I indicate that the Opposition will not oppose the motion.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON (20:29):** In reply: I thank the Minister and I accept the amendment. I appreciate that it may take 28 days as opposed to 21. We understand that it can take that time. I want to respond to some of the things that were just said. Quite seriously, it really is time that members on the other side get with the real program.

**The Hon. Wes Fang:** The real program? What's the program I'm on?

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I will address my remarks through the Assistant President. It is 2024. This hyperbolic nonsense about what is actually happening in the industry is reckless, negligent and actually quite dangerous when we think about those few workers who are left in the industry. A handful of people are still working in the public native forest estate outside of the plantation forest estate. We know that most of the construction timber that goes into high-value end worth products comes out of the softwood plantation sector. It is important that this Government—and it appears this Government may have the appetite, unlike the reckless, farcical Opposition who did nothing—

**The Hon. Wes Fang:** Point of order: The Assistant President has already indicated that all comments should be made through the Chair. I think that the member standing at the lectern and pointing directly at me as she is making her contribution would indicate that she is certainly not seeking to make her contribution through the Chair. I ask that she be directed to—

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** I understand the intent of the point of order. I remind all members to make their remarks through the Chair.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** As I said, it is farcical and reckless that members on the other side did nothing for 12 whole years when they were in power. They were pretending to represent regional and rural New South Wales, and particularly our forest communities. They did nothing to invest in the plantation sector, to expand it or to support the transition which is coming. There is a cliff edge for the native forest timber industry, and we are getting close to it. I hold 100 per cent hope that members on this side of the Parliament will work with all those genuinely engaged and that we actually get out of the public native forest estate that is really suffering and experiencing degraded health because of the work of members on the other side of this House.

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** Ms Sue Higginson has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Tara Moriarty has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

*Motions*

## ENERGY TRANSITION

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (20:33):** I move:

- (1) That this House notes:
  - (a) the success of the New South Wales Parliament in passing major climate and energy policies in a bipartisan cooperative manner; and
  - (b) the importance of all parties working together to take action on climate change and deliver reliable energy.
- (2) That this House calls on all parties to continue to support the timely delivery of the energy transition in a bipartisan way.

This is, I think, an important motion.

**The Hon. Wes Fang:** You would.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** Yes, I suppose I would. It calls upon all members to commit to a bipartisan approach to the energy transition in New South Wales. It is definitely the case that our State Parliament has a proud history of bipartisan support for action on energy and climate. Our Government also has a great track record of giving credit where it is due. We are happy to give that to the Opposition for introducing the road map. In fact, I am very happy to say that the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone [REZ] is a legacy of Dugald Saunders. He introduced it, I support it and he should be very proud of it. The need for sticking to the road map is obvious. Our coal-fired power fleet is retiring—that is a fact—and to replace it in a timely fashion and keep the lights on, we have one option: to finish building the renewable energy road map. We need to secure affordable, reliable renewable energy. Those opposite, including The Nationals, know this. They knew this when we all shook hands on it on the way forward in 2020.

**The Hon. Wes Fang:** I definitely didn't shake hands on it.

**The Hon. Sam Faraway:** You weren't here.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** I was trying to be here. When the now Opposition created the REZs and set us on this path, they had the support of Labor. Now, as we take this from an idea to delivery, The Nationals are starting to flake off. That involves a massive degree of hypocrisy, and it needs to end. In saying all of that, I actually do understand the pressure that Dugald Saunders is under. There are landowners impacted by transmission projects who are creating pressure. There are also some, but by no means all, landholders not happy about neighbours accepting renewables projects in their areas. There are also plenty of Nationals—State and Federal, and some State who are trying to go Federal—who do not accept the climate change science or are wedded to nuclear power, and again some opposite.

In that difficult political context, Dugald had two choices: one, stand on his record, recalling he was a key part of the energy transition road map, and work on real issues but stick with the principle and play a role in defending his legacy—because the REZ is his legacy—or, two, be an opportunist, start to signal opposition—

**The Hon. Sam Faraway:** Point of order: If the Hon. Stephen Lawrence wants to make particular remarks and try to put himself forward as the future member for Dubbo, he needs to do it by way of substantive motion. He cannot bring other members into disrepute. If he wants to make those remarks about a member of the other place, he needs to do it by way of substantive motion.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** To the point of order: I suggest that is putting the bar way too low. All I am saying is that he is a political opportunist. That is not unparliamentary. That is well within the realm of reasonable debate.

**The Hon. Wes Fang:** To the point of order: The honourable member would know a political opportunist because he is clearly one.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** I think that proves my point.

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** This is a serious debate. I ask all members to respect the dignity of the House and to proceed without insulting each other and members of the other place. The Hon. Stephen Lawrence has the call.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** The second option was to start to signal opposition, to call for a moratorium et cetera—start pretending to oppose the transition but do not do it entirely openly because you know you will lose all credibility. Do it in the code of a call for a pause et cetera. That is what Dugald Saunders has done—he has chosen the latter—and it is really unfortunate. It is also quite politically unfortunate for Dugald because no-one actually believes him.

**The Hon. Wes Fang:** Point of order: The member is now reflecting on a member of the other place. If he wishes to do that, he knows he should do it by way of substantive motion. He is trying to sneak it through in the motion. That is unparliamentary and he should be called to order.



**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** To the point of order: If we cannot say in this place that nobody believes things that people say, we cannot say very much. That is an absolutely spurious abuse of the point of order process.

**The Hon. Wes Fang:** Further to the point of order: He is now reflecting on the member.

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** Order! The time for the member's contribution has expired. I again ask all members to bear in mind that this is an important debate. In this timed debate, insulting each other and taking points of order is simply a waste of time. I am not going to rule on saying that someone is believed or not believed. I will seek advice.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** I seek a short extension of time of two minutes, given the interruptions—some quite spurious.

**Leave not granted.**

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** I conclude my ruling by saying that I will take advice on the point of order that was raised.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO (20:39):** I move:

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

- (3) That this House calls on the Government to ensure adequate consultation with all local communities impacted by renewable energy projects.

This motion is very important. I commend the Hon. Stephen Lawrence for coming to this place in a spirit of bipartisanship and collaborative intent, and then for his hubris in proceeding to spend three minutes attacking one of the core political parties in this place and a member of the other place for his actions around this issue. I note that the Electricity Infrastructure Roadmap was, of course, a project delivered under the former Coalition Government, with the support of the majority of members in this place and the other place. I also note that the former member for Hornsby, the Hon. Matt Kean, said of former Deputy Premier John Barilaro:

Few people deserve more credit ... for landing the biggest reforms to the energy sector.

I emphasise that The Nationals have been a core partner in this progress. The Labor Party had to be dragged kicking and screaming to a stronger net zero target. The Coalition, along with other members in this place, had to put pressure on this Government and this Minister to implement a target of a 70 per cent reduction in emissions by 2035. That was an interim target on the way to net zero by 2050, and it was critical. We went through a whole inquiry, talking to experts and hearing from people who thought it was absolute madness for the Government to come into this place and say it was going to legislate net zero but not have a milestone in between. Professor Penny Sackett, one of the very impressive witnesses, emphasised that part of the legislation.

So I think there is a lot of hubris in the Hon. Stephen Lawrence coming into this Chamber and suggesting that the Labor Party is better at taking action on climate change and energy transition, now that it is in government, when it is not quite true. I note that this Government decided to put aside half-a-billion dollars to extend the life of a coal-fired power station. It is absolutely remarkable that the energy Minister decided when in government that it was more important to spend taxpayer money on keeping a coal-fired power station open than putting that money, and leadership, towards ensuring this State would have renewable energy into the future, which the Australian Energy Market Operator has said is possible.

**Ms ABIGAIL BOYD (20:42):** I have a few comments about this motion. Firstly, I do not think anything is bipartisan any more. I do not know whether anyone has been paying attention, but the vote of the major parties—the Labor Party and the Coalition—has been declining election after election. I do not know what is meant by bipartisan in this context. I think it is time that the Labor Government acknowledges it is in minority government and the Parliament needs to work in a multipartisan way. Secondly, I think it is pretty unfortunate to refer to the renewable energy zones in relation to getting so-called bipartisan agreement. It was one of the rare moments in this Parliament when we had real negotiation, and that was led by the former member for Hornsby, the Hon. Matt Kean.

It is notable because of his approach in relation to those renewable energy zones. He did not need The Greens' support and yet he sought to work with us to make sure that we, and the people whom we represent in this place, were recognised. Although we did not love everything about the end result, we managed to secure amendments and see some of our party's work in the legislation. I think it was a rare example of this Parliament working in a multipartisan way. I am concerned that I am yet to see the Labor Government come into its stride when it comes to treating the crossbench in the same way. I would like to see that multipartisan approach brought into this term of Parliament.

Finally, I am concerned that this is a code for silencing dissent. We have seen Labor do quite a bit of that at the Federal level as well. I would honestly like some clarification on what the strategy is. Is it that, despite forming government, Labor will not act without the Coalition's support, which we have seen at the Federal level on a number of really important reforms? Or is it that if you do not agree with what Labor is proposing, then you are somehow not singing Kumbaya enough and you are going to be called out for somehow causing dissent? It is a very strange strategy that we are seeing at the State and Federal levels, and I honestly do not understand it. I call on this Government to have a little more backbone and a bit more commitment to the principles that it brought to the election—if it believes in a thing, do the thing—and to work in a productive manner with the crossbench in achieving its aims.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK (20:45):** This motion celebrates the bipartisanship of global warming laws, but I want future generations to know that dissent exists. I dissent from the belief that taxes and laws change the weather. I dissent from the idea that an apocalypse is nigh. I declare that Al Gore and Greta Thunberg are charlatans. I have high regard for the mover of the motion, but it is a curious thing that often the brightest can be the most gullible. In the 1920s and 1930s, many great minds were intellectually persuaded by Marxism. We see this in the movie *Oppenheimer*. Even Albert Einstein was a declared socialist. Intellectuals are brilliant in one field but then assume their brilliance extends everywhere. So often it is the common man who has more common sense. Prophets of doom are an ancient phenomenon. These witchdoctors are skilled at beguiling the masses in the hope the weather will be more favourable. Global warming is the twenty-first century version of this hocus-pocus. But it is more insidious now than ever, because these high priests have captured governments around the world.

Australia's magnificent coal-powered electricity has underpinned our success, but foolish politicians and bureaucrats are dismantling it in name of the failing renewable revolution that needs to take ever more taxpayer funds to prop it up. Onwards we march to stagnation. Why is it that members of this House cannot see that global warming is fiction? None of the predictions have materialised. Doomsday cults are incapable of resisting a date for doom. Gore and Thunberg have done so repeatedly but have not been held to account. Proponents of global warming preach, "The science is settled." That is the most unscientific statement ever made. How is it that the lawmakers of this Parliament cannot see that? Science is about subjecting a hypothesis to as much scrutiny as possible. Deep down, surely the members of this House know what is going on. Debate on the hard science of global warming is kryptonite for all the spivs enriching themselves off this hoax. The world's top scientists in the realm that matters, atmospheric physics, overwhelmingly object to the orthodoxy, but the public does not get to hear from them.

Every year hundreds of children's stories are published. Very few of them endure for centuries, but those that do contain profound truths. What is the wisdom of *Chicken Little*, *The Emperor's New Clothes* and the *Pied Piper of Hamelin*? Why have these stories passed the test of time? It is because they warn us about perennial charlatans who amass wealth and power through fraud—like Al Gore. I will have more to say about Al Gore tonight in my adjournment speech. But I urge everyone to keep an eye out for a soon to be released film called *The Climate According to Al Al Gore* by filmmaker Joel Gilbert. I oppose the motion and hope there is at least one other member who will call a division so we can put on record that everyone else has fallen for a dangerous fiction that imperils our prosperity.

**The Hon. SAM FARRAWAY (20:48):** I contribute to debate on the motion to point out that while the mover has lots of words in the motion and it is warm and fuzzy, there are a couple of really important points impacting upon people within the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone [REZ]. It is the only active REZ. It was established by the former Coalition Government and is being fully implemented by the current Labor Government, but the point is about consultation. What we have learnt, no matter who is in government, is that the consultation around renewable energy projects is not good enough. I have heard countless stories at countless town hall meetings throughout the Central West about the consultation not cutting it. It just does not cut it. That is something that government needs to work on. The community expects a government to sort it out, regardless of who occupies the Government benches.

One of the huge issues with the Central-West Orana REZ is that it is too successful in the sense that it has reached saturation point because it is the only active renewable energy zone in operation in the State. If the other renewable energy zones were to come online and were active right now, the developmental load could be shared. But, instead, it has reached complete saturation; that is what is frustrating communities right across the Central West. It is the saturation point, the disruption and the grief that communities feel when managing the disruption. My colleagues will move an amendment to address consultation and what the government should be doing. A little more should be done to ensure that proponents and developers of renewable energy projects are doing better in that space.

The second point I make is that energy transmission is important. I support net zero by 2050. But the difference is I believe that nuclear energy is part of the mix, and so do Peter Dutton and David Littleproud. Where modern politics has gone wrong—and The Greens and Labor have fallen for this trick—is saying that the renewables-only approach is the silver bullet. The reality is—and we are seeing this now—that we cannot run a full-time grid on part-time energy generation. We need 24/7 dispatchable energy if we are to phase out coal-fired power stations. As the mover of the motion said, a renewables-only approach will not work and it will not matter who is trying to implement it. Operationally, it will not work. Governments will not be able to meet their targets. We must take the risk. The Federal election will be interesting. Rather than amending the Hon. Stephen Lawrence's motion to include nuclear, I have taken the decision to run for the Federal election to push nuclear energy as part of our transition and energy mix for the future. [*Time expired.*]

**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) (20:52):** I thank members for their contributions to this debate. I am grateful to the Hon. Stephen Lawrence for moving the motion and for the most important reminder, among a number of others, about the real bipartisanship or, in the words of Ms Abigail Boyd, multipartisanship that has set this State up for a much brighter future than could otherwise have been the case. If we think about it from an investor's point of view or from the point of view of money moving around the globe to find safe places in which to invest as the transition rolls out, there is no doubt that the State has set itself up well with some of those decisions that were hammered out—including decisions made in this Chamber—over many days while a number of members held the rest of us almost hostage—

**The Hon. Rod Roberts:** Captive.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —or captive, in an outstanding feat of endurance. I thank the Hon. Stephen Lawrence and members generally for reminding us where National Party members were during those months as John Barilaro stood firm in defence of renewable energy or, as Dugald Saunders said in 2020, when welcoming REZs being declared urgent:

A Renewable Energy Zone transmission project in NSW's Central West has been declared Critical State Significant Infrastructure as a result of its importance to future energy supply and security.

It was welcome, and I welcome it now because of the investment certainty that has been provided. I will emphasise a couple of points members have raised. Firstly, this is a policy-driven approach. I commend the Minister for the work she is doing. There are a lot of tough calls to be made in this portfolio, and where she has had to make tough calls she has taken a very policy-driven approach, including making the tough decision about Eraring. I was surprised to hear tonight the Opposition again calling for Eraring not to be extended and for the money to be ploughed into renewables.

I take the comments made by the Hon. Sam Faraway very seriously about the lack of consultation, no matter who is in government. I think that was fair and I accept that there is more work to do on consultation. I indicate that the amendment is acceptable to the Government because there is a high burden of consultation. These projects are having a big impact on people's lives. Finally, that stirring call for dissent and that searing critique of the hope that the weather will be more favourable was issued by our friend in the Libertarian Party. Is that not the human condition—the hope that the weather will be more favourable? That is something that seizes me at the start of every week and I am often disappointed. [*Time expired.*]

**The Hon. WES FANG (20:55):** This motion is really dressed up as something else. As Ms Abigail Boyd said, it has become a strategy of members opposite. The two Labor members who contributed to the debate belled the cat by describing the way the motion has been put and by trying to draw in good members of Parliament, like Dugald Saunders, and trying to criticise him for some of the decisions now being made by the Labor Government. Mr Assistant President, you will note that the motion and amendment that have been moved talk about the consultation process and the failure of members opposite to properly consult in relation to REZs. The local member certainly has made the feelings of his community known and has represented his community in the way a good local member would be expected to when there has been a lack of consultation by the government of the day. By railroading landholders and forcing projects upon them by using shock tactics, which I exposed in previous estimates sessions, State-owned organisations, such as EnergyCo, are ensuring they will be able to get their projects through.

Government members have moved this motion in an attempt to sledge the current Opposition for standing up for their communities in relation to decisions that they have made. Members opposite have tried to dress that up in a call for bipartisanship. I think most people see through that. Most people in the electorate represented by the Leader of The Nationals know that he is fighting for them and ensuring that their voices are heard. When the government of the day ignores community opinions of projects that are being forced upon them, he is standing up to the Government and fighting for the community to make sure that their voices are heard. That is getting under

the skin of Government members, so they are moving motions like this one to try to wedge the Leader of The Nationals. That is how effective he is. We know how little the community respects the Government when the Government moves a motion such as the one before the House. That is the motive for moving this motion. All members can see what is happening here. That is a real shame for democracy.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (20:58):** In reply: I thank all honourable members who contributed to the debate: the Hon. Jacqui Munro, Ms Abigail Boyd, the Hon. John Ruddick, the Hon. Sam Faraway, the Hon. John Graham and the Hon. Wes Fang. I agree with the Hon. Jacqui Munro that Matt Kean certainly deserves much credit for the road map and the transition. I inform Ms Abigail Boyd that this motion is not at all an attempt to silence dissent, but when people change their positions within a year or two, one is well entitled to cast doubt on the credibility of their latter position.

In relation to the contribution of the Hon. Sam Faraway, no-one is questioning the importance of consultation. However, I find his reference to the amount of generation in the Orana Renewable Energy Zone somewhat concerning because the Leader of The Nationals is trying to justify the backflip through press releases that conflate transmission capacity with generation capacity, which falsely conveys the notion that this Government has somehow dramatically expanded the Orana Renewable Energy Zone operations. There was a hint of that in the contribution of the Hon. Sam Faraway, but that is certainly not accepted. With those brief remarks, I thank all honourable members.

**The ASSISTANT PRESIDENT (The Hon. Peter Primrose):** During this debate a number of points of order were taken. I refer members to the ruling of President Willis on 14 October 1992 when he said:

Members of Parliament occupy a very special and privileged position in our society, and nowhere more so than within the precincts of the Parliament. Parliament is not a school: there are no prefects; there are no schoolmasters; and the good and orderly conduct of the Parliament depends on the common sense, courtesy and observation of propriety by members. If that were not the case it would be open to any member to do things which may be found to be excessive by his or her colleagues. This line of propriety is very fine and completely ill defined. It relies entirely upon the good sense and courtesy of members.

The Hon. Stephen Lawrence has moved a motion, to which the Hon. Jacqui Munro has moved an amendment. The question is that the amendment be agreed to.

**Amendment agreed to.**

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

**The House divided.**

Ayes .....26  
Noes .....4  
Majority.....22

#### AYES

Boyd  
Buttigieg  
Carter  
Cohn  
Donnelly  
Faehrmann  
Farlow  
Graham  
Higginson

Houssos  
Hurst  
Kaine  
Lawrence  
MacDonald  
Maclaren-Jones  
Merton  
Moriarty  
Munro

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

#### NOES

Latham  
Martin

Roberts (teller)

Ruddick (teller)

**Motion as amended agreed to.**

*Bills***UNIVERSITIES LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 2024****First Reading**

**Bill received from the Legislative Assembly, read a first time and ordered to be published on motion by the Hon. John Graham, on behalf of the Hon. Rose Jackson.**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** According to standing order, I table a statement of public interest.

**Statement of public interest tabled.**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I move:

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I move:

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Documents***NSW POLICE FORCE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION****Production of Documents: Further Order**

**The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (21:11):** I move:

That, under Standing Order 52, there be laid upon the table of the House within 14 days of the date of passing of this resolution the following documents in the possession, custody or control of the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism, and Minister for the Hunter, or the NSW Police Force relating to document No. NPF.0001.0011.0002 returned to the order for papers regarding police management and administration:

- (a) any document, including records accessible by Business and Technology Services, which provide the document properties metadata for document No. NPF.0001.0011.0002;
- (b) the version of document No. NPF.0001.0011.0002 current as at 31 May 2023;
- (c) the version of document No. NPF.0001.0011.0002 current as at 31 July 2023;
- (d) the version of document No. NPF.0001.0011.0002 current as at 30 November 2023;
- (e) the version of document No. NPF.0001.0011.0002 current as at 30 June 2024;
- (f) all documents relating to the creation of document No. NPF.0001.0011.0002;
- (g) all documents relating to the administration of document No. NPF.0001.0011.0002; and
- (h) 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. The motion is a very simple call for papers. It is relatively unique in this House, but it is something that has been charted before. In fact, I am looking at the Deputy Leader of the Government. He is my master and I am merely the apprentice when it comes to seeking metadata. I recall that many years ago he and the now Treasurer sought metadata on a document from the previous Government. Let's go back a little to consider why we are in this position. On 7 August this House passed a Standing Order 52 motion for a number of documents, one of which was in relation to the possession, purchase and distribution of gin by the Commissioner of Police. As a result of that motion, on the afternoon of 7 August, police commissioner Karen Webb appeared on the Chris O'Keefe show on 2GB radio. I quote from the transcript of that conversation. There is some talk about the gin, and then Chris O'Keefe says to her:

C: The register. Are you happy to make that public? Put this matter to bed?

Ms Webb says:

K: Well. There's a standing order 52 that Mr. Roberts has called for, and the register will be captured in that, and that will be provided.

C: So, the register will be furnished to parliament, so we'll all see it.

K: That's right.

C: Is the 100 bottles correct?

K: No. No. I don't know where he's got that from either.

C: So how many bottles?

K: Ah, 50. That were invoiced for. 50. And I've distributed 24. ...

This is the Commissioner of Police on live radio. It is not a door-stop interview, but a prepared interview where she rings in to Chris O'Keefe's show; he said in the introduction, "Thanks for ringing in, Commissioner." She says 24 bottles have been distributed. I have here, from the NSW Police Force's own website, a statement from Commissioner Karen Webb, APM, saying two days later on Friday 9 August, "I can now confirm that 32 bottles have been distributed." At one stage the commissioner said there were 24 bottles. Then there were 32.

I tell members why she said that: because there was never any register at all. I have it from very good sources—and I think it would be a very brave person who questioned my sources in relation to police—that the register was made up the day that this House passed the original Standing Order 52 motion. It was panic stations: "We better have a register ready. Let's get something put together." If there was a register, why did the commissioner tell O'Keefe there had been 24 bottles, then have to come out and correct herself two days later? She had to do it because there was no register. I asked her about it in budget estimates. I quote, shortening it due to my limited time:

**KAREN WEBB:** The register has been provided. It's on the public record, redacting names of individuals ...

**The Hon. ROD ROBERTS:** I'll get right to the point then. Commissioner, I've been informed from a very reliable source that the register is a recent fabrication. The NSW Police Force has an excellent ... cyber security unit. ... will you provide the metadata to this inquiry showing exactly when the entries were made on that register?

**KAREN WEBB:** I have provided the register. In relation to if this is going to the point of the 24 versus the 32 bottles, I had initially been advised that only 24 bottles had been gifted. However, following the review ... I confirmed that 32 bottles had been distributed ...

**The Hon. ROD ROBERTS:** I just asked, will you provide the metadata to this inquiry—

**KAREN WEBB:** I don't see the need to provide the metadata given that I have—

**The Hon. ROD ROBERTS:** —so we can prove the authenticity of that register?

Then my time expired. It was a very simple request. The police have a unit called the business and technology service, which is linked into every single computer inside the NSW Police Force. They can simply press a button and it will show every time a document was added to, created, made or deleted. It is not a massive search; it is a very easy search. It is very important when it comes to the integrity of the NSW Police Force. I have to do this because the commissioner's own actions and words have led us to this position. If she had nothing to hide, she would have said at budget estimates, "Sure, here is the metadata. This is a legitimate document." But I know that the document is not legitimate. The commissioner is misleading the Parliament and it is important that members get access to the information so that we can put the matter to bed.

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY (Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales) (21:16):** I speak in debate on the motion on behalf of the Government. We will oppose this motion, but I say at the outset that the Government has nothing to hide. The NSW Police Force and the Minister for Police and Counter-terrorism have been more than obliging in producing documents for the previous order for papers made by the Hon. Rod Roberts. Additionally, I am advised that the Minister and the commissioner have been forthcoming about the range of issues raised in this place in previous Standing Order 52 motions through statements to the Parliament, media and in budget estimates. Members have heard from the honourable member that he has referred to a register of people who received a gift of gin from the Commissioner of Police. I note his contribution in moving the motion. Again, I emphasise that the Government has nothing to hide in relation to the issue.

Commissioner Webb is a public servant of 37 years. The public criticisms levelled at her have gone well beyond what would be considerable reasonable accountability of public sector leaders. The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission, the LECC, has investigated the matter and determined that the purchase was in accordance with policies and procedures. The matter of the additional 50 bottles, which was subsequently raised, has been referred to the LECC for further investigation. The commissioner has accounted for all items purchased. I raise some concerns with the motion—again, not because there is anything to hide or because the Government wants to obstruct the process, but because of the uncertain nature of what has been requested by the member and the precedent that would be set. The motion would set a rather incredible precedent in this place, firstly, for requesting what the member has referred to as metadata and, secondly, for requesting what the member referred to as versions of documents, not drafts.

The precedent that agencies will be expected to provide versions of documents raises a number of questions, including what constitutes a version; whether a version in and of itself is a document in its own right; and how many versions should be produced, particularly if significant edits have been made over time by multiple people. It also assumes that producing a version is possible. That will depend upon the software used, where a document may be saved, whether metadata can be produced in every circumstance and what metadata could be

or should be made available. I also make the usual arguments about agencies having to collect and go through the information and the time that it takes from them doing their job. The Government opposes the motion.

**The Hon. MARK LATHAM (21:19):** I support the motion, and I marvel at how quickly Labor has turned from poacher to gamekeeper on questions of Standing Order 52. Questions regarding metadata were pioneered in the last Parliament. With regard to the Hon. Tara Moriarty, I have never heard someone say so often that there was nothing to hide but then oppose a motion under Standing Order 52 to expose the truth of what has gone on. On the credibility of this matter, as we heard in the matter of public importance, the Hon. Rod Roberts has been impeccable every step of the way in the information he has provided to the House and to the public. This evening he has laid a grave charge against the police commissioner—or, at a minimum, those around her—as to the fabrication of an official police document.

There is no history in New South Wales of a government sticking to a police commissioner for political reasons and ever prospering when a problem has obviously gone on. I know there is a habit that goes back to the Askin era of sticking to police commissioners for political reasons and saving face, rather than a clear-eyed assessment of the integrity matters at hand. I strongly advise the Government to make a clear-eyed and objective assessment of what has gone on here and to be more cooperative with the incredibly accurate and technical forensic work of the Hon. Rod Roberts in pursuing this matter.

Of course, whether it is 24, 36 or 100 bottles of gin, it does not even amount to a bottle shop. But it is more the principle of whether the police commissioner has at any stage in the versions of the documents—and we all know that a version of a document is something saved on a computer, which is easy to access in the metadata—been party to covering up the truth and fabricating material in a way that gives a very false impression. This would otherwise not be seen as a frontline matter in the complete work of the NSW Police Force. In another regard, the call for papers is worth supporting because the material was sought at estimates. Where a witness at estimates—in this case the police commissioner—does not cooperate, of course a member will seek that material through the call for papers powers of the House.

At every step, despite the material that the Hon. Tara Moriarty read out from the police Minister's office, she cannot doubt what the Hon. Rod Roberts is saying, the integrity of what he has put forward or the forensic and accurate nature of what he has advanced. It would be a foolish government indeed if it was not making its own inquiries about what is going on. This is a very grave charge, and I would have thought that an active, intelligent police Minister would make their own inquiries about what has gone on and we would not even need this motion.

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (21:22):** I offer the Opposition's support for this call for papers under Standing Order 52. The Opposition always supports more accountability and transparency. I have followed the issue a little bit, including when the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission appeared in our own estimates hearing. I find the reasons put forward by the Hon. Rod Roberts compelling, and the Opposition will support the motion.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON (21:22):** The Greens support the motion and the call for papers. It is not necessarily just about bottles of gin now; we have moved into new territory. I was in the budget estimates hearing when the Hon. Rod Roberts was questioning the commissioner, and it reached a point where he asked the commissioner if she could assist us some more and produce the documents and the metadata associated with the register or the document. There was an interesting response, and I take the commissioner at her word. She said, "I don't see the need to," and essentially that she had told the world at large what she had done.

I would like to trust what the commissioner has said, hand on heart, but the reality is that we are now in the position where somebody has questioned it. It is now really important to be transparent. If the truth is the truth, then bring it on and all will be said and done. The forensic exercise of seeking that accountability will have worked. But the reality is that, to date, nobody seems to have denied that the register is some kind of fabrication that came after the event. We do not yet have that in the public arena, so at the moment there is unfortunately a shadow of doubt.

We are talking about the police commissioner; it is one of the highest offices of law enforcement in the State. Truth and integrity cannot be compromised at all. At all times, if they are questioned, the burden reverts automatically to that office to produce the evidence that the truth is the truth, in no uncertain terms. Without that, we are all placed in the position where on the basis of integrity and the forensic interrogation of the truth of the office—for me it is not the person; it is the office—we now need to have that on the public record. We have traversed down a path of no return, and therefore The Greens will support the call for papers.

**The Hon. ROD ROBERTS (21:25):** In reply: I raise a few quick matters. As for the time taken, I have already said it is the business and service technology unit, which is manned by public servants, not frontline police officers. We are not taking the rare resources of police officers away from doing their job. The Government has

nothing to hide; nobody is levelling any allegations against the Government here. The Government has been snowed, and that is because not one member of this Chamber has gone down to the Clerk's office and looked at the documents that the order for papers under Standing Order 52 provided except for me. If Government members have a look, they will know that I am barking up the right tree, but nobody has bothered to even look yet. Government members should do themselves a favour and have a look, but they will not have to because I have applied for the documents to be de-privileged. I do not know what the Arbiter will do; that is his determination. But hopefully they get de-privileged and the public will see what is really taking place.

The Hon. Tara Moriarty has said various things. But as a member of the Legislative Council, she should go down to the Clerk's office, have a look at the privileged documents and see what has come back. She says that the commissioner has made statements in public, but her statements have been misleading. If the Hon. Tara Moriarty looks at the privileged documents, she will see an email sent from the commissioner's office to the Minister telling her, "We've only bought 50 bottles of gin." The commissioner even misled the Minister, but nobody is mentioning that. Members should go and have a look at the documents.

The Hon. Tara Moriarty said that the Law Enforcement Conduct Commission [LECC] has looked at it. She should go and have a look at the suppressed LECC report, which will not be released, not because it is privileged but because it was suppressed by LECC. She should have a read of it and see what she finds there that LECC has not said about the relationship between Karen Webb and Michael Hope. Members can have a look for themselves; it is all there. I challenge members of this House to go and have a look.

The Hon. Tara Moriarty said that this was unprecedented. As my good friend the Hon. Mark Latham brought up, it was the Hon. John Graham and the Hon. Daniel Mookhey who taught me the trick of seeking metadata. Do not say it is unprecedented; it has been done before. We heard that the Government has been very obliging in providing documents, but Government members were not obliging at all. They were forced to provide the documents under Standing Order 52, so they should not say that they are committing a public service by providing them. They were forced to do it and they debated against it. The Leader of the Government shut me down when I asked for an extended period of time, so they were not very cooperative at all. Anyway, I have counted the numbers—I am very good at doing that—and for the benefit of the House I will leave my contribution there.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

*Adjournment Debate*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**The Hon. TARA MORIARTY:** I move:

That this House do now adjourn.

## **PACIFIC AUSTRALIA LABOUR MOBILITY SCHEME**

### **MARION BROWNE**

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE (21:29):** Rural and regional New South Wales is now an epicentre of modern slavery risks. It is an epicentre for the mistreatment and exploitation of foreign workers on short-term visas, or no visas, brought to Australia from developing countries in our regions to perform important but low-paid work. In the last sitting period I spoke about that mistreatment and particularly highlighted the urgent need for reform of the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility [PALM] scheme, including the need to change the scheme to give workers the right to change employers. As I said then, in 2024, as a matter of principle, no worker should be indentured to a particular employer.

Since that speech I have visited the irrigation area in the south-west of the State and met with various organisations that assist migrant workers. I heard harrowing stories of vulnerable people being the victims of mistreatment, exploitation and fraud. This morning the Anti-slavery Commissioner, James Cockayne, released a report that has lifted the lid on the humanitarian crisis that confronts regional New South Wales. The report is important reading. It speaks of an estimated 16,400 people trapped in modern slavery in New South Wales. It also speaks of PALM workers in several industries being at risk of debt bondage, forced labour, deceptive recruiting, sexual servitude and human trafficking, and identifies individual cases that could constitute modern slavery offences. Many of those cases are workers who disengaged from the PALM scheme because of its inequities and found themselves in worse situations.

To prevent and combat this emerging modern slavery crisis, the report recommends a range of things. The first is trauma-informed and worker-centred investigation of modern slavery risks faced by PALM workers and



other workers in agriculture, horticulture and meat processing in rural and regional New South Wales. The second is suitable training in modern slavery for New South Wales government frontline agencies. The third is a review of visa settings and protection requirements. The fourth is the creation of regional migrant hubs, and the fifth is additional funding to support locals to create a more active role in monitoring conditions and providing support. I commend that important report to all members and thank the commissioner and his staff for producing it. I hope it is taken extremely seriously, especially by the Federal Government, which needs to undertake serious reform to the migrant worker scheme it inherited from the Liberals and The Nationals.

With the local government election concluded, I also pay tribute to my friend Marion Browne, who is retiring from Broken Hill City Council after 36 years of distinguished service. Marion was first elected to Broken Hill City Council as an alderman on 20 September 1983 and served until 2004, when she did not contest the 2004 election. She was then re-elected as a councillor on 5 December 2009 and served until the recent election. Her service to the community of Broken Hill and the Australian Labor Party has been simply extraordinary. She is widely respected by all sides of politics as a kind, caring and compassionate person—the sort of person whose involvement in politics is so obviously for all the right reasons that it could never be questioned.

Marion has strongly advocated for many important matters affecting Broken Hill, including the city's water supply, the health of the Darling River and the lakes system, and the establishment of alternative industry and employment. She was a strong advocate on important environmental factors, especially the environmental lead issue. She has been an extremely active councillor, serving in numerous roles and committees. I had the opportunity to spend some time with Marion recently. As usual, she was working for the Labor cause and helping to elect her successors.

Marion has been a mentor and advocate for many, and was of great assistance to me when I sought preselection to this place. Recently she was awarded the prestigious New South Wales Ministers' Award for Women in Local Government in the Elected Representative for Regional/Rural Areas category in recognition of her outstanding contribution to local government and her community. I wish Marion all the best in her retirement from public life. I know I will be seeing her soon as we both continue our service to the cause of Labor in western New South Wales.

### LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN (21:33):** Over the weekend, residents of New South Wales went to the polls to elect representatives for their local councils. I take a moment to pay tribute to some of those newly elected councillors, and others who are retiring—some due to circumstances outside of their control for reasons which have been well canvassed elsewhere. In Maitland, I pay tribute to Ben Mitchell and Kanchan Ranadive for their hard work on the council over two terms. It was a real loss for Maitland and the Liberal Party that Ben Mitchell was unable to recontest, but I know we have not seen the last of him in public life. I acknowledge Deputy Mayor Mitchell Griffin and Councillor Sally Halliday, who are currently waiting on further results to confirm their re-election. It looks promising and I have my fingers crossed for them.

On a personal note, I say well done to Melanie Shortland, who was the Nationals candidate in Ward 4. It looks like she was unsuccessful, but on her first run she has done very well and can be very proud of herself. It is a tragedy that there will no Liberals on Cessnock City Council this time around. Over the past three years, Paul Dunn, Karen Jackson and John Moores have flown the flag in a difficult part of the State to be a Liberal. I acknowledge their contribution to the region. They always put locals first and worked with everybody in the chamber, particularly former Mayor Jay Suvaal, who was sadly not re-elected. I know we have not lost him from public life altogether, and I look forward to seeing him again. I hope that representation does not change too much on that council. The members got on very well and achieved a lot for their local constituents.

I congratulate Nathan Errington, who was elected to Port Stephens Council. Locals can trust Nathan and depend on him to advocate for them. I congratulate Chris Doohan on his re-election. He is a hardworking local Independent who is sensible and dependable in Port Stephens. I acknowledge Matt Bailey from Port Stephens, who sought to move across to Newcastle. It is very disappointing that he was unable to contest that election. I congratulate Jenny Barrie and Callum Pull on their re-election to City of Newcastle council. I also acknowledge Katrina Wark for her service to Newcastle over the past three years.

On the subject of Newcastle, I must acknowledge the service of Lord Mayor Nuatali Nemes, whom I worked with across party lines in my previous role as Parliamentary Secretary for the Hunter. I hope to catch up with her at the completely revitalised Newcastle Gallery, which was one of the many projects that we worked on together. It is only there due to her efforts. Finally, in Lake Macquarie I congratulate Jason Pauling and Jack Anteliff on their re-election. They will be joined by Matt Schultz. The Liberal team on Lake Macquarie City Council have been excellent representatives for several terms and I look forward to seeing their success continue.

I highlight that the Central Coast Council has held its first election since 2017 after a lengthy period of much-needed administration. The Central Coast Council election was the largest of all the elections held over the weekend. The failures of Central Coast Council during the term from 2017 to 2020 are well publicised. I spoke about it in this place in the lead-up to administration being called, and I continue to place blame for the failure on the majority bloc that consisted of Labor councillors and left-wing Independents or closet Greens.

The catalyst for administration was a major financial crisis. The council came to a point where it could not even meet payroll. It could not pay staff for work that had already been done. The varied causes were outlined by the commissioner in her report from the public inquiry. In summary, poor financial management was caused by poor governance. That poor governance led to a significant deterioration in the already festering culture within the organisation and a major drop in confidence in the council from the government of the day and locals. Such a situation, with untamed spending increases and financial blowouts, cannot arise again.

I am hopeful that the new council will be willing to learn from the mistakes of councils past. I hope that personal ambitions and party politics can be put aside to see the councillors working together for the benefit of ratepayers. I note that the count is ongoing, and the make-up of the council is still to be determined. It looks like there will be at least four Liberals, including John McNamara, Rachel Stanton, Jared Wright and Trent McWaide, plus the potential for a handful of sensible Independents such as Lawrie McKinna and others. I hope to see more certainty in those results in the coming days.

### WESTERN CIVILISATION

**The Hon. CHRIS RATH (21:38):** From the fall of Rome to the Renaissance, the West was a miserable backwater, while the Orient was home to dazzling civilizations. In 1400 AD, any objective observer would have looked to the great empires of the East and probably concluded that it would be the Chinese that would travel around the world and discover Europe, rather than the other way around. Yet over the next six centuries, the West would come to define excellence and progress when compared to the rest of the world. But what made the West the best, and why does it matter today? It was Europe's plethora of small nation-states, rather than a single empire, that created competition, especially after the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. United Kingdom Conservative Daniel Hannan offers the explanation that Europe eclipsed Asia:

Precisely because there was competition, there was a rivalry. You could pilot and trial new ideas and copy what worked elsewhere. You could take your ideas as an entrepreneur round to different governments, as Christopher Columbus did. Or as a government you could send out your agents the way Peter the Great did and say "look at what works elsewhere, how do the English do their theatre, how do the Dutch do their ships, how do the French do their cannons, let's copy what works best". Basic conservative free-market principles that apply within a nation also apply among nations.

Niall Ferguson, in his marvellous book *Civilisation: The West and the Rest*, refers to six "killer applications" that led to the West's global dominance. Like Hannan, competition is also the first killer app that he identifies as central to liberal philosophy. European decentralisation fostered the growth of political and economic competition and birthed the nation-state and the rise of capitalism. One of the world's oldest corporations, the City of London Corporation, was founded in 1067 and continues today. Nothing like it existed in the East.

The industrial revolution, and the development of limited liability and a perpetual lifetime for corporations, created the global capitalism that has made us rich. In addition to competition, Niall Ferguson identifies the killer apps of Western civilisation as follows. The first is a commitment to science. While Eastern Muslim powers slowed scientific progress, like destroying the Taqi ad-Din observatory, the Christian West advanced militarily and academically. The second is medical advancement, with a doubling of life expectancy and major breakthroughs against infectious diseases through surgery and sewage treatment. The third is property rights. Private property was celebrated and even given to emancipated convicts here in Australia. The fourth is consumption-based economies. American goods and fashion carried the message of Western freedom in the twentieth century. The fifth is incentivising work, with institutions that stemmed from the Protestant work ethic.

Those six killer apps are contrary to the spurious argument pushed by the woke left that the West stole or exploited the rest of the world. There is also a moral dimension to Western power. I would add to Niall Ferguson's work that transcending all of these six apps is the Christian ethos. It is faith that inspired the founding fathers of Western civilisation. They were motivated by the advancement of God's glory and the common good. We simply cannot extol the West without simultaneously praising its Christian foundations. In 2002, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences drew the conclusion that the superiority of Western civilisation was based upon Christianity rather than advanced military technology or Western economics. It argued:

In the past twenty years, we have realized that the heart of your culture is your religion: Christianity ... The Christian moral foundation of social and cultural life was what made possible the emergence of capitalism and then the transition to democratic politics. We don't have any doubt about this.

In spite of everything the West has given the world, there are those who unfortunately seek to destroy it. The threat comes from external foreign actors and the internal left elite at home. The external threats take many forms,

namely Chinese Communist Party militarism, authoritarian Russian neo-imperialism and radical Islamic terrorism, but perhaps most striking of all is the internal threat at home. [*Time expired.*]

### SOCIAL MEDIA AND MENTAL HEALTH

**The Hon. EMILY SUVAAL (21:43):** In today's world, social media plays a significant role in shaping how we perceive ourselves and others. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok and Facebook are spaces where millions share their lives, opinions and, more importantly, images. While social media has many benefits, including keeping us connected and informed, it also poses serious risks to body image, particularly for vulnerable individuals including teenagers and young adults. Research has shown that exposure to unrealistic beauty standards on these platforms can contribute to body dissatisfaction, which is a key risk factor for eating disorders. Evidence also confirms that social media is more damaging for eating disorders than for any other illness.

Approximately half of young people worldwide report negative effects on their wellbeing due to body image concerns, and the prevalence of eating disorders is on the rise. Social media companies know this; they know the extent of the harms of body image and eating disorders. Late yesterday Meta announced that Instagram purports to "give parents more control" with new privacy settings. The reality is that social media companies have the capacity to do more to minimise harm, and they must be held accountable to do so.

What makes social media particularly concerning is how it amplifies harmful beauty ideals through functions such as algorithms, filters and content moderation—or, more accurately, the lack thereof. Algorithms are designed to maximise engagement, often by promoting content that reinforces unhealthy beauty standards or encourages extreme dieting, weight loss and even pro-eating-disorder behaviours. Vulnerable users can get caught in a cycle where harmful content is continuously pushed to them, deepening their body dissatisfaction and increasing the risk of disordered eating. Moreover, beauty filters, which are commonly used on platforms, allow users to alter their appearance to conform to unrealistic beauty ideals. A staggering 80 per cent of girls have used such filters by age 13. The result is a distorted sense of self, as young people start comparing themselves to digitally enhanced images they can never realistically achieve.

It is not just the direct content that is harmful. Cyberbullying, especially appearance-based bullying, has become a significant issue on social media. When comments or images focus on physical appearance, they can severely impact mental health, leading to body image struggles and, in extreme cases, eating disorders. Governments worldwide must take immediate action to regulate social media to make it safer. Both the European Union and the United Kingdom have already grappled with this and put in place suites of legislation to make social media safer, with significant penalties, including fines and criminal charges, if companies do not comply. Raising the age will not be enough. It is also likely not to be the most effective single strategy we could pick to reduce harm as it relates to body image and eating disorders.

The good news is that a group of leading Australian academics and experts have produced a position paper on social media and its impacts on body image and eating disorders, with clear recommendations for achievable policy actions that governments can take to make social media a safer place for our kids and community members in general. We need to target the algorithms. We need to legislate to make them safer. We need to give users control of their social media algorithms, to reset them and shield themselves from the harm they cause. We can do a lot more, and there is a high level of consensus among our experts and the community on these issues and a lot of data available to support what we need to do.

Raising the age may help with some things. But, at 16, which is the peak age of onset for eating disorders and many other mental illnesses, we will have all our young people on social media anyway. We need to make it safe for everyone. The following are policy recommendations from the experts: one, enforcing age limits on social media platforms to protect younger children; two, removing pro-eating-disorder content and enhancing the detection of appearance-based bullying; three, making social media algorithms more transparent or completely transparent and giving users control over what content they see; four, banning beauty filters from children's accounts to prevent the promotion of unattainable beauty standards; and, five, increasing the visibility of diverse body types and appearances in online spaces, promoting body positivity and inclusivity.

It is crucial that we act now to create a safer social media environment, especially for young people. I thank Dr Jasmine Fardouly, senior lecturer of psychology, for the research program she is leading at the University of Sydney, investigating positive and negative social media content for users' body image. Much of the evidence referred to here is attributed to her and her team, and I thank them so much for their work.

### AL GORE AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK (21:48):** Some have heard of the malady "Trump derangement syndrome". I confess that for 24 years I have suffered Al Gore derangement syndrome. It started during the Florida recount in 2000, when I noticed Gore had an extraordinarily high level of political ambition and skill at media manipulation.

I embarked on a study of Gore's life, reading multiple biographies and keeping a close eye on him. I was convinced the world had not seen the end of Gore.

Gore is one of very few United States presidents or vice-presidents since World War II who has not written his memoirs. He is a prolific author, but why no memoirs? Gore's life story is one of endless inconsistencies. When Gore first ran for President in 1988, he was anti-gay, pro-gun, pro-tobacco and supposedly a born-again Christian, and he race-baited Jesse Jackson. Gore was the last of the Southern Democrats—the remnants of the old Confederacy. I became the pub bore. Two beers in and I couldn't stop warning friends, "I don't know what Gore is up to, but believe me: He's planning a comeback and you'll notice it."

In 2006 Gore wrote a book and made a film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, demanding humanity change the way it lives to stop catastrophic global warming. By that time, President Bush was deeply unpopular because of Iraq, so the press clamoured to agree with anything those anti-Bush said. Whatever Gore said, the corporate press uncritically lapped it up, and weak minds fell for a *Chicken Little* narrative. The world went into a hysteria. Almost everyone fell for Gore's apocalyptic global warming predictions. He won an Oscar and a Nobel Prize. He was elevated to the ranks of a Gandhi or Mandela. Along the way, Gore enriched himself immensely, but if the apocalypse Gore had predicated was true, would he really care about mammon? But the oceans did not rise, the polar caps did not melt and the temperature remained stable. So Gore quickly rebadged "global warming" as "climate change"—the fits-all explanation for any weather conditions.

Last year this Parliament foolishly passed the Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill. One or two other members and I spoke against it, and I spoke about Gore as the great deceiver of this generation. Soon after, a filmmaker, Joel Gilbert, from California reached out to say he enjoyed the speech and mentioned he had once worked for Gore. We got chatting and I sent him some articles I had written about Gore for Australia's finest journal, *The Spectator*. I then suggested to Mr Gilbert that the world needs a film exposing the true life story of Gore and the truth about how someone with no standing to teach science tricked the world. Mr Gilbert has spent most of this year flying around America, researching archives and doing a far deeper dive into the life of Gore than I could have managed Down Under.

I am pleased to report that Director Gilbert's film is complete. He has made a beyond compelling case that Gore based his climate science on scientific fraud and rampant plagiarism. The film is called *The Climate According to Al Al Gore*. The world premiere will be in Brisbane on 3 October at the Elizabeth Picture Theatre. I thank Andrew Cooper and his team at the Conservative Political Action Conference for hosting the film's world premiere. Mr Gilbert will be here for the premiere and will embark on a tour of Australia's east coast, where the film will be shown at select theatres, including at the Federal Parliament and this Parliament's theatre. Director Gilbert and I will conduct a Q and A after each screening on the politics of climate change. I urge all Australians to come out to watch this film in person. The trailer can be seen at [www.climatealgore.com](http://www.climatealgore.com), where tickets to the screenings in Australia can be bought.

Climate change is enriching a few spivs and impoverishing the rest of us for a political agenda. For a successful economy, industries must have a cheap, reliable energy supply, but we are in the process of ripping it down and replacing it with grand, central plans around renewables. Why are our electricity prices going up so sharply, and why is our economy so tepid? Gore has skilfully tricked those who think of themselves as the smartest among us with his bogus climate science. I especially encourage young Australians not to be fooled and become depressed about global warming. The world is not coming to an end. Do not listen to those people who are trying to make you depressed. Please watch this important film by Joel Gilbert, *The Climate According to Al Al Gore*, and check the website. I have no financial interest in the film. I do have an interest in saving the world from a dangerous pseudo-religious doomsday cult known as global warming.

### ANTISEMITISM

**The Hon. NATALIE WARD (21:53):** As a former Minister for multiculturalism, it is with a heavy heart that I stand here as a witness to discrimination—particularly, antisemitic acts—in New South Wales in 2024. Antisemitism pervades our schools, universities and communities. Make no mistake: This is discrimination in our State. This is an attack on our Australians. Yet the Labor Government, led by Chris Minns, has sidestepped when it comes to antisemitism.

Mrs Rosana Tyler is a respected member of the inner west community whose campaign in the local government elections faced repeated antisemitic attacks. Mrs Tyler's corflutes were hung from trees, set on fire and had antisemitic markings placed on them. They were defaced. These acts of vandalism occurred in the high-profile State electorate of Summer Hill, represented by Jo Haylen, and the Federal electorate of Grayndler, represented by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese. These areas are in Labor's backyard, yet not a single word of support for Mrs Tyler from Minister Haylen or Prime Minister Albanese was heard by the community.

The defacements targeted Mrs Tyler's Jewish heritage, sending a clear message of religious intolerance and discrimination. For what reason, for what purpose and to what end? Discrimination based on religion is unacceptable in all forms, in all circumstances and regardless of differing personal political views or beliefs. However, it seems that the Labor Government has forgotten these local communities in their time of need. Despite the incidents taking place in their own electorates, Prime Minister Albanese and Minister Haylen were nowhere to be seen when times were tough. They did not make an appearance in their community, they did not express support for Rosana Tyler and they did not condemn these horrific acts.

In New South Wales, Minister Haylen is meant to represent this community, but it seems she was too busy to comment on the issue, condemn the acts or express support for Mrs Tyler. In Australia, Prime Minister Albanese seems to be too busy destroying the economy and toying and froing with census data to care about this community and express support for Rosana Tyler. I ask where they are in this time of need in their communities, when stabbings are becoming more frequent and women are being attacked for trying to serve their communities. These communities deserve better.

The foundation of Australian communities was built on diversity, inclusion and mutual respect, and attacks on individuals based on their beliefs strike at the core of those values. It was the opportune time to step up. The situation is absolutely untenable and must be met with condemnation from all levels of government. While the acts are shocking, they are not reflective of the broader communities in Summer Hill or Grayndler, where respect and tolerance are the prevailing sentiments. They are good communities, but only by working together do we have any chance of living peacefully and maintaining a harmonious multicultural and diverse community.

The individuals responsible for these hateful acts represent an isolated minority. They do not speak for the majority of Australians, who value acceptance, tolerance, harmony, peace and coexistence. We celebrate being a multicultural community. In fact, it is one of the strengths of our Australian communities. I believe that Australians are, on the whole, good people who look after one another and value the Australian spirit. They love the outdoors and the sense of community and embrace a relaxed but resilient approach. The Australian public overwhelmingly reject hate speech, religious discrimination and acts that divide communities rather than build them up, bring them together and celebrate them.

Members on this side of the House stand in full support of Jewish communities and unequivocally condemn the targeted antisemitic attacks against Rosana, who was merely seeking to serve her community. It is essential for all Australians to remain vigilant, call out intolerance and work together to protect values of unity and diversity. Mrs Rosana Tyler's resilience in the face of such abhorrent behaviour is admirable and sets a strong example for others. Despite the challenges, Mrs Tyler remains steadfast in her commitment to serve her community and earn the trust and support of voters. Let this serve as a reminder that acts of hatred will never prevail in a society committed to equality and inclusion. I am proud to be part of a team who will not stand idly by and watch but will always call out this abhorrent behaviour. Labor should do the same.

#### **SOUTH ASIAN FILM ARTS AND LITERATURE FESTIVAL**

**The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG (21:58):** This evening I was honoured to host the South Asian Film Arts and Literature Festival 2024 at Parliament. The evening included a screening of *Tara the Singing Anklet* and we were honoured to have the film's subject, the renowned Tara Rajkumar, OAM, attend, with Nithya Gopu Solomon representing the film's producer. The Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations Sydney made the evening possible and I thank them. The night also included a short film competition. I acknowledge the hosts of the event from the Australian South Asia Forum, led by President Ash Gholkar and Chairperson Kedarnath Pagaddinnimath.

**The DEPUTY PRESIDENT (The Hon. Dr Sarah Kaine):** The question is that this House do now adjourn.

**Motion agreed to.**

**The House adjourned at 21:59 until Thursday 19 September 2024 at 10:00.**